



TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD		Page	2
THE EARLY YEARS	1920-1940	Page	3-15
WAR YEARS	1940-1945	Page	16-83
Paris, France	May 1940	Page	19
Villeneuve-d'Aveyron, France	1940-1941	Page	19-23
Narbonne, France	1941-1942	Page	23-27
Perpignan, France	Dec. 1942	Page	27-29
Barcelona, Spain	Dec. 1942	Page	29-31
Madrid, Spain	Dec. 1942 – May 1943	Page	31-33
Lisbon, Portugal	May 1943	Page	33-34
England	June 1, 1943 - Oct. 18, 1944	Page	35-56
Belgium	Oct. 18, 1944 - Mar. 25, 1945	Page	56-64
Eindhoven, Netherlands	Mar. 26, 1945- Dec. 1, 1945	Page	64-72
Blanca's War story	1944 - 1945	Page	73-83
THE POST WAR YEARS	1945 - Present	Page	84-151
APPENDICES		Page	152-158
APPENDIX 1 FAMILY LISTING: GOUDEKETTING			
APPENDIX 2 FAMILY LISTING: WIJNSCHENK			
APPENDIX 3 THE GOUDEKETTING/WIJNSCHENK/BAS/ KLOOTS FAMILY CONNECTION			
APPENDIX 4 IN MEMORIAM			
APPENDIX 5 FAMILY ALBUM (3 Pages)			
EDITOR'S COMMENTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		Page	159-160



FOREWORD

‘Moishe Ben Alexander’ (Moses-son of Alexander) is his Hebrew name. The ‘Moishe’ is the Yiddish form of the biblical name Moses. My father was given the name Maurits in honour of the 17th century Maurice of Nassau, the Prince of Orange who helped establish the Dutch Republic. His surname ‘Goudekettering’, appears to have originated in the early 19th century when Napoleon mandated that his citizens hold surnames to simplify record keeping. The English translation of Goudekettering is ‘Golden necklace’ and may indicate that his ancestor Daniel Eliaser was in the jewellery trade. This use of surnames has certainly made it easier for me to research my family genealogy. I have been unable to establish roots earlier than Daniel Eliaser’s father due to this lack of a family name. Just as my father’s name is rich in the dramas of the past, his personal life journey was filled with a greater degree of danger, courage, love and chance than most of us will ever experience in our own lifetimes. These memoirs are intended to show a deep appreciation to the fighters in the resistance movement, the government of the Netherlands and its diplomatic staff, and to all those individuals involved in the war who had the courage to help the weak through protecting them or fighting for their cause; and to keep alive the memory of those who died in the death camps and elsewhere. The French resistance movement saved the lives of my father’s mother, sister-in-law and niece. The Government of the Netherlands and its embassies saved my father’s life and the lives of untold others through their courageous diplomats. Finally, the governments of all of the allies, and the bravery of all those in uniform who helped to liberate Europe, saved the world from a horror I cannot begin to imagine.

The memoirs are divided into three sections. They begin with a brief background of my father’s life prior to the war, from 1920 to 1940. This is followed by the war years from 1940 to 1945. Finally they cover his post-war years from 1945 to the present day. Some of you may only be interested in the war years, but I suggest that you may enjoy my father’s view of post-industrial Holland and the effects of the great depression upon its citizens. His emigration to Canada and a successful transition to Canadian life are probably very representative of many first generation citizens today. My father is a very humble man and when I ask him how he had the courage to get through some of the worst times, he will only reply, “Sometimes you have no other choice but to go on.” It is with that same humility that he has finally in his ninety-first year decided to share his life experience publicly. I feel honoured to be of some assistance in this venture.

*Alex Aladar Goudekettering, son of Maurice Goudekettering
November 11, 2011*



THE EARLY YEARS

1920-1940

1920-1924 VELSEN

Please let me tell you a little bit about myself. My name is Maurits Goudekettering, although “Morris” or “Maurice” is the more common usage of my first name. I was the youngest of three children. My sister Rebecca (Betty) was born in March, 1912 and my brother Raphael (Felix) in 1916. My father, Alexander Goudekettering¹, married my mother, Kaatje ‘Moses-David’ Wijnschenk², on May 21st, 1913 in Amsterdam. I have attempted to recreate my family tree at the end of these memoirs.



M. Goudekettering
(circa 1924)

I was born in the town of IJmuiden³, Holland on August 6th, 1920 and lived there until 1924. My father made his living selling fish, both directly to stores and to the public, at fish markets in and near Amsterdam.



1924-1929 EINDHOVEN

In 1924 my parents moved to Eindhoven and opened a store which sold seafood named ‘Wijnschenk’s Vischandel’. The business operated from the ground floor and my family lived above the store. I was given one of the bedrooms in the attic to sleep in.

¹ Maurice’s father, Alexander Goudekettering, was born in Amsterdam on August 22nd, 1889 and died on March 6th, 1943 under unknown circumstances.

² Kaatje ‘Moses-David’ Wijnschenk was born in Amsterdam on December 9th, 1882 and passed away in Amsterdam, November 1968.

³ IJmuiden is a port city in the Dutch province of North Holland, and it is the main town of the municipality of Velsen. It is located about 25 Km. North East of Amsterdam. (Wikipedia- July 2011).



Bep, Lea and Emile in front of Eindhoven store circa 1929

While my mother watched over the Eindhoven store, my father would take the train to the Velsen fish market which was about 150 kilometres from Eindhoven and close to the North Sea. During the day he would auction fish at the market and then bring home fish to be sold in our store. Often I would wait at the train station until his train arrived at 4:00 p.m. and would get a ride back home on his shoulders.



Wijnschenk Store in Eindhoven circa 1928

Although they spent most of their time working, my parents would relax on Friday nights by playing games of 'whist' (a card game) with our neighbours, the Goudsmits. As a snack they would nosh on oranges and pears. I also remember that my father would go to the local pub on Sunday mornings where he would smoke, drink a couple of shots of liquor and play some billiards.

At age 5, I was placed into Kindergarten in a Roman Catholic school. I believe that I was the only Jewish boy in the school at the time. A year later I attended

grade 1 and was held back one year before moving on to the second grade. Here I met my first true love. Her name was Miesje Pannekoek and although I was too embarrassed to even look at her at the time, I can still see her face to this day.



Old City Hall Eindhoven 1930's

I spent the next summer in a camp at Etten-Leur (70 Km. east of Eindhoven). It was the first time I had ever taken a shower beside other boys and I felt quite self-conscious, but I soon got over it.



Maurice's mother, Kaatje Goudekettering (Wijnschenk)

While in the second grade, I remember a disturbing experience. One of my classmates had lost a dime (called a 'Dubbeltje' in Dutch). The teacher immediately asked me if I was the one that had stolen it and I had no idea what he was talking about. I believe this was the first time in my life that I experienced anti-Semitism. After school, I told my mother, who was at work in our store, about the incident. A clerk in the store (Frans Goosens) overheard my conversation and accompanied me to the school the next day. He went to the teacher and confronted him. I remember him telling the teacher that if I needed a 'dubbeltje', all I needed to do was go home and ask for one. I did enjoy watching the teacher's face turn quite red.

It was two weeks after this that my father arranged for me to transfer to a ‘nuts school’ (public school) on Akker Straat. I enjoyed this school for two reasons. Firstly, I had a wonderful teacher and secondly, I was able to make use of my hands more often.

Once a week we did some woodworking. I was extremely proud of having made a knife and fork rack for my mother. We were given a little plot of land (probably a square metre) and I remember successfully growing some carrots and radishes. I think this had a strong influence on me since to this day I love planting and watching things grow.

My religious education was limited to going to the local synagogue five times a week where I was taught the Hebrew alphabet and some prayers. Left to my own devices I think I would have skipped this part of my childhood, but my father made sure I attended by walking me to the temple after I finished school at 4:00 p.m.

I remember the Rabbis being quite strict. On one occasion, one of the Rabbis passed a piece of paper to me, with the drawing of a boy on a bike and the word “SHABBAT” across the picture. He had obviously spotted me riding my bicycle on our day of rest which was a Saturday. I still wonder whether he chastised most of the congregation for having their stores open on a Saturday to sell goods to their non-Jewish customers. I couldn’t have been too upset with these men since the one who survived the war (Rabbi Frank) ended up officiating at my wedding 20 years later!

Speaking of weddings, I should now explain that the wonderful woman that I ended up marrying was a girl who I had met while we lived in Eindhoven and who I wouldn’t be seeing again for the next 20 years.

While I was about four or five years old, my brother, Felix, was a Boy Scout and became friends with a lad by the name of Rob Wiener who lived not far from us.



1937 International Scout jamboree Felix Goudekettering (far right) with his mother Kaatje (third from right)

He would often come to the house bringing his little sister Blanca, who was my age, along with him. Apparently her three brothers were obligated to take turns watching her. Rob would play his harmonica, while my sister played the piano and my brother the violin. Blanca and I were quite content to play by ourselves. I remember that she loved to serve me tea from a toy tea set.

I have included a picture of my brother, Felix, and my mother enjoying themselves at the boy-scout jamboree in 1937. It was the 5th world jamboree where the Scouts of the world gathered together in Vogelenzang, the Netherlands.⁴



Den Bosch Store Circa 1928

The fish store in Eindhoven became quite successful, so in 1927 my father decided to open up a second store in the nearby city of s'Hertogenbosch (also known as Den Bosch). He hired a young couple, Jan and Lena Voets, to run this operation. Both stores sold fresh and smoked fish. To keep the fish cold, ice would be delivered each day by horse drawn carts. Most of the customers were Catholic and that made Fridays the busiest day of the week, as most of them ate fish for dinner. In keeping with their neighbours (and not complying with Jewish law), the businesses would close on Sundays but be open on Saturdays, the Sabbath day.

As the business grew, my father was able to buy another truck which was used to buy and transport the fish.

Although my father never had a driver's license of his own, he now owned two trucks for his business. It was very rare for the average person to own a car in those days. To travel between cities, people used the trains and in the cities, we would either walk, use a bicycle or if we wanted to give ourselves a treat, ride the steam operated street cars.

In August 1927, when I had just turned seven, my parents sent me to Den Bosch for my vacation. I stayed with Jan and Lena Voets who were running my father's fish store. Lena's father owned a little farm in a small village named Orthen, only a couple of kilometres away from the city of Den Bosch. I spent about 5 or 6 weeks working and playing there.

Each year, for a few weeks in September, I visited the Wijnschenk family in Amsterdam. My mother's father, Moses Wijnschenk, had nine children, 6 boys and 3 girls. My uncles were named Solomon, David, Kobus, Gerrit, Abraham and Jacob.

⁴ From Wikipedia, December 2011 '5th World Jamboree.... "Already the storm clouds of war were forming. It was to be the last such gathering for ten years". It was also the last jamboree attended by Baden Powell.



Greta Bas (Wijnschenk)

I also had aunt Greta, who married Joshua Bas (uncle Joop) and aunt Lea, who married Jachiel Rimini. Most of them lived on Blasius Straat in Amsterdam. ‘Opa’ (Grandfather) Moses loved all the kids and always seemed to have candy in his pockets for us. I also remember his pocket watch which would ring on the hour. Every summer that I stayed in Amsterdam I would live for about two weeks with my uncle Jacob, then with my uncle Abraham and his son, (my cousin) Simon. He and I would bicycle around the streets of Amsterdam and play football together. I had later learned that Simon had survived the war but died shortly afterwards.



Goudeketting store in Amsterdam circa 1910

I would also spend about two weeks at my sister’s house. In 1935 she married Herman Kloots. Herman’s father was not very happy with his son’s engagement to my sister. Herman had a very good job with a large clothing manufacturer in Amsterdam and he was going to leave it behind to take over my father’s fish store in den Hague with my sister. Herman had a sister named Tsipora and a younger brother named Joop Kloots. Joop and I became good friends.

I remember that we had an agreement, that if anyone in our families got married, we would always give them the same present; a pair of salt and pepper shakers! Incidentally, a few years later, my friend, Joop, married my cousin Bep Bas. As a joke I may have given them a salt and pepper shaker as a wedding gift. As you will see, Joop and Bep were a large part of my story both during the war and afterward. We shared several vacations together in our retirement years.



Esther Goudeketter(Wolff) and
Bep Kloots (Goudeketter)

Bep was the daughter of my aunt Greta (maiden name Wijnschenk) and uncle Joop Bas. From that marriage came two lovely girls named Maggie and Bea Kloots. So my friend, Joop, became my brother-in law (the brother of my sister's husband) and his wife Bep was then both my sister-in-law and my cousin! If this sounds too confusing, I encourage you to forget the whole thing, or take a look at my family tree which is an appendix to these memoirs.



1929-1933 DEN HAGUE

In 1929, my family moved to Den Hague where my father opened up another fish store and handed over his Eindhoven business to his brother and sister-in-law, Lea and Jachiel Rimini. After moving there I attended a Jewish Talmud Torah School⁵ which was a short walk from my father's store. I found it very difficult to keep up with my Jewish studies at the school. While the other students had begun their Jewish learning in their first grade and were able to speak Hebrew quite fluently, I was one year behind everyone else and quickly fell behind.

⁵ Talmud Torah schools were created as a form of primary school for Jewish boys where they were given an elementary education in Hebrew, the Scriptures and the Talmud (and Halakhah) to prepare them for Jewish education at a higher school level (Yeshiva). (Wikipedia-Talmud Torah-July 2011)



Scheveningen 1930

There was a beach called ‘Scheveningen’ which I loved to visit. It was about a fifteen minute bicycle ride from my home. I would go there as often as possible in the summer months. In those days people were dressed from head to toe in their swimsuits and I remember getting severely reprimanded by a policeman for being in my swimming trunks without wearing my shirt. Times have certainly changed since then!

In about 1933 my brother, Felix, had gotten engaged to Esther Wolff. Her father manufactured umbrellas and I had gotten to know Esther’s family quite well. I befriended Esther’s sister and spent many days walking in the city and riding to the beach with her.



Kaatje Goudekettering in front of Den Hague Store circa 1932

When I turned thirteen, I celebrated my Bar Mitzvah, which meant according to Jewish law, I was now a man! In that year I graduated from the Talmud School. My teacher, Mr. Lewyt, asked me about my future plans. I told him that I wanted to go to a technical school and remember seeing him give a sad shake of his head. I now realize that he was hoping that I would pursue further academic studies. The depression however, was now limiting my father’s ability to allow me that luxury.

After the Talmud School I enrolled in a trade school in Den Hague. I ended up with a teacher who was quite anti-Semitic. No matter what job he asked me to perform in the metal shop, I could never do it well enough to his satisfaction. After a few months of this treatment I left the school. Even though my life hasn’t unfolded too badly, I do regret not having furthered my formal education⁶.

Since I was no longer going to school, I helped my father in his Den Hague fish store by cleaning and doing errands.

⁶ Despite what he feels about his formal education, Maurice Goudekettering still managed to train as an air gunner, run a flight operations office, open and operate a thriving business, speak English, Dutch, French and Spanish, learn electronics and book-keeping, and become proficient on the computer.

It was around this time that my brother, Felix, and his wife, Esther, married. They soon moved to Brussels to be closer to Esther's family Bas, and opened up a fish store in the French district of Brussels.

I believe that this was also the year that my sister, Bep, got engaged to Herman Kloots.

The depression in Holland was now deepening and when several businesses began to falter, our family business followed suit. One of our customers was a large casino in the resort community of Scheveningen.



**Maurice's sister,
Bep Goudekettering
Jan 1935**

When it went under, my father was unable to collect a large debt from them. My father passed over the store to my sister, Bep, and her husband, Herman Kloots, not long after they were wed.



1933-1937 AMSTERDAM

My father, mother and I moved back to Amsterdam where my father continued to ply his trade at the fish markets.

Other than helping with the family business, I had never worked independently. At the ripe old age of 15, I began work stocking shelves and making deliveries for a shoe store. I can't remember how I got the job but it must have been someone who hired me as a favour to my father. After about a month of working in the store, the owner asked me to deliver a pair of shoes to a customer and collect the two guilders owing. Since it was a Friday, the end of the work week, after collecting the two guilders I decided to wait until Monday to return the money to the store.

It must have been too much of a temptation to have the money sitting in my pocket while I passed by all the shop windows begging for me to buy something. Needless to say I no longer had the money in my pocket when the following Monday came around. When asked about the two guilders, I said what any 15 year old thief would say, “What two guilders?”

The store owner called up my father, who with great embarrassment, had to reimburse the owner in front of me and the staff. I think that was pretty well the end of my career in the shoe business. After telling my father how much I hated my work, he asked me what I wanted to do. I replied in Dutch “I like to make things”; to which my father replied in an unkind fashion “Yes, you like to make things break.” Little did he or I realise at the time, that I would spend many future years repairing televisions and appliances (and not breaking them!).

My uncle Kobus had a business in Amsterdam called NECO which canned fish products. At the request of my father, I got a job in the factory and remember being paid about seven and a half guilders per week. The factory was situated in my birth town of IJmuiden. I worked from Monday to Friday, 8:00am till 5:00pm and would leave our home on Kinderdijk Straat in Amsterdam at six o'clock each morning and bicycle my way to the train station which was about two miles away. After parking the bike, I had to take a train to Haarlem and then switch to a second train to get to the factory in IJmuiden. The train arrived at 7:45am each day and since it was a short walk, I had no difficulty getting to work on time.



**'Rolmop' herring
around a pickle**

In the plant, I worked alongside eight women of various ages, ranging between fifteen and twenty. My jobs included peeling and chopping onions and preparing the herring to be made into ‘Rolmops’. Once the herring was cleaned and properly sliced, it would be rolled up around a pickle and fastened together with two toothpicks. These would then be jarred in a pickled solution, ready for sale. This process was very time consuming until a new huge machine came into the factory and reduced the time to produce the products in half. It was my job to feed herring into the machine.

Because the herring had to be placed in a precise position, the line went relatively slow at the start, but each day it was set to move more quickly until I adapted to the process.



Grandfather K. Wijnschenk with eldest son Solomon in their backyard of home on Blasius Straat in Amsterdam circa 1930

A few weeks later, I discovered that the plant foreman was conducting a scam. In Holland we had a fish called Saithe⁷ in English (Koolvis in Dutch), that looks like salmon but has a very different taste and colour. One of my uncle's products was canned smoked salmon in oil. I had noticed that when the Koolvis came in for cleaning, one of the girls would bring them to the foreman's area. One day, I was having trouble with my machine and I walked into the foreman's room to see the Koolvis being put in vats with oil that had the colour of salmon. I may have been only fifteen years old at the time, but I soon realized that the foreman was telling my uncle that he had bought salmon, while he really bought the less expensive fish and kept the difference of price in his own pocket. The foreman saw that I was suspicious and warned me to keep my mouth shut. I am pretty certain that my uncle never became aware of this con game.

Several days after this the foreman asked me if I wanted to earn an extra two guilders. The temptation was too great not to accept. Upon meeting him at the central train station in Amsterdam, he asked me to take some guilders to the bank and exchange them for German marks. I suppose that this was his way of 'cleaning' the money he had been stealing from my uncle. Looking back at it, I was pretty naïve and think that I was touched by some greed.

As the recession was taking hold, my uncle Kobus had to close the plant a few months later and I was again without a job. Thanks again to my father's help; I found a job working at a bicycle company owned by my father's youngest brother, Joel Goudeketter⁸. Bicycle manufacturing was a thriving business in Holland. To this day, they are a large part of everyday transportation in the Netherlands. At that time (1935) everyone owning a bicycle was required to buy a licence annually for two and a half Guilders, not a small sum at the time. In addition to the plate, a new law stipulated that all bicycles had to be equipped with a rear red light since with the ever increasing automobile traffic; collisions between cars and bicycles at night were becoming much more frequent. The law had always required a front light, but even those were in great demand now since the latest technology allowed bulbs to be lit through the use of dynamos.

⁷ The Saithe is a ray-finned fish from the family of cod found in the far north Atlantic. (Wikipedia-Koolvis-July 2011)

⁸ Joel Goudeketter was born on October 5, 1907 in Amsterdam and died at Sobibor death camp on November 6, 1943. He was the youngest sibling of six children (2 girls and 4 boys).

When I was eight (1928) and had my first bike, my front light consisted of a candle lit lantern! A few years later, I got a lamp that used carbide⁹. I spent the next four months at my uncle Joel's factory painting the newly produced rear bicycle lights before I was again laid off as a result of slowing business.



**Carbide Lamp on French
Manufactured bicycle**

It was now around June of 1936 and back in Eindhoven, my aunt Lea's husband, Jachiel Rimini, had heard that I was out of work and offered to give me a job helping them in the fish store. They had a son Emil who was about nine years old and my aunt Lea gave birth to twins, Max and Maurice, while I lived there.



1937-1940 BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

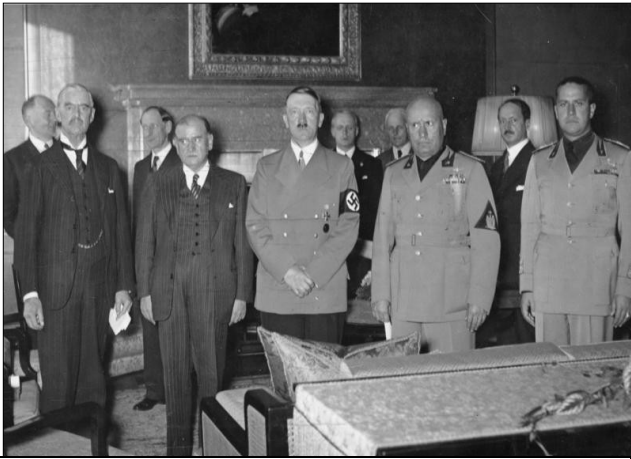
The depression¹⁰ was now in full swing and at the end of 1936 I heard from my father that my uncle Joop in Brussels could use some help. My uncle, Joop Bas, had an extremely profitable fish business in Brussels. He was married to my mother's sister, Greta (Margaretha) who was born a year before my mother in 1881. (Greta would die in Auschwitz before war's end.)

My uncle gave me the job of driving the truck for which I earned the grand sum of 50 francs per week. My father and mother had already moved to Brussels to work in the fish store owned by my brother, Felix, and his wife, Esther, which they opened shortly after their marriage in 1934. The store sold fresh fish and prepared

⁹ Carbide lamps, properly known as acetylene gas lamps are simple lamps that produce and burn acetylene which is created by the reaction of calcium carbide and water. (Wikipedia-Carbide light-July 2011)

¹⁰ The Great Depression was a period of severe economic crisis in the 1930's which affected countries around the world. The Depression in the Netherlands started more gradually, in 1929-1931, while the economy had been in gradual decline for a longer period and was larger than in most countries. The low point of the Netherlands depression was between 1933 and 1936. This depression was partly caused by the after-effects of the Stock Market Crash of 1929 in the U.S., and partly by internal factors in the Netherlands. The depression in Holland eased off somewhat at the end of 1936, when the Government finally dropped the Gold Standard, but real economic stability did not return until after World War II. (Wikipedia-Great depression-July, 2011/ Great Depression in the Netherlands-July, 2011)

fish dishes. They all lived in a house on the Chausse de Wavre 71. Although I lived in my uncle Joop's home in Brussels, I would often visit my family at their home when I wasn't working. I did work pretty long hours in those days and didn't get as much sleep as I should have had. One night I decided to watch a movie by myself and I woke up at two o'clock in the morning in the middle of an empty theatre. Fortunately I managed to get out of the building, but because it was too late for the trams to be running, I had a long walk back home.



Chamberlain, Hitler, Mussolini prepare to sign
Munich Agreement on Sept 29 1939

From 1938 through to 1940, everything in Brussels went relatively smoothly. We knew from the papers however that we were getting closer and closer to war. In March 1938 Germany annexed Austria followed by their invasion of Czechoslovakia one year later.

On September 1st, 1939
Germany invaded Poland and
although France and Britain

declared war two days later, we were
praying that somehow, we could
avoid all-out war.

In addition to helping my brother, Felix, in the Brussels store, my father would still make business trips to Holland to buy fish and deliver it to various stores in Holland (including the Eindhoven store) and to a few stores in Brussels. One of those stores was owned by a woman who had recently lost her husband. She had two daughters, one of about 15 and the older daughter, Kitty, who would have been 18. I would have been Kitty's age. My father encouraged me to go out with Kitty, although my eyes were drawn more to her younger sister.

We began to go to the movies together and I think her mother was beginning to take a liking to me, because every time I took Kitty back home, I was asked to stay for a glass of port. This went on for about two years. I was pretty naïve about relationships at the time. Kitty and I began to do some necking and I became convinced that this required that I become engaged to her! At the time, I wasn't the wealthiest man in Belgium, so rather than going to a jewellery store, I went to a place called 'Sarma' which would be today's equivalent of 'Zellers' to buy Kitty an engagement ring. I remember her mother taking a quick look at the ring and although she didn't say anything to me, she never offered me a glass of port again!

It was now near the end of April 1940. In a few days, a great war would begin. As horrible as future events became, one tiny blessing of the war was the abrupt dissolution of my 'engagement' to Kitty.



MY WAR YEARS 1940 – 1945

Brussels Belgium, May 10th 1940 approx. 1:00 AM

I was woken up at this early hour by a very intense noise. It didn't take me very long to realize that enemy bombs were falling from the sky. I was not dreaming; the war with Germany had actually begun.¹¹ By this date we knew very well that this



German Army enters Brussels May 18 1940

conflict would be coming, but we didn't know how or when.

While the French were confident that their famous Maginot Line¹² would keep them secure, they had not foreseen the “Blitzkrieg” and that Germany had begun their invasion by exploiting the most weakly defended sector of the line,

which was here in Belgium. I couldn't

sleep much more that night and I woke up my uncle Joop (Bas) who was sleeping downstairs. I told him about what was going on and asked him what we should do. I

¹¹ The Invasion of Belgium by Nazi Germany started on May 10th, 1940 under the operational plan *FallGelb* and formed part of the greater Battle of France together with the invasions of the Netherlands and Luxembourg. The Belgians put up a short-lived resistance and it only took 18 days before the country was subdued. The Belgian King surrendered on May 28 contrary to the advice of the Belgian government, having decided the Allied cause was lost. The King remained in Belgium during the war as a German prisoner while the government went into exile and continued military action in the Allied cause. (Reference: Wikipedia-July 2011)

¹² Named after French Minister of War Andre Maginot, the Maginot line was a wall of fortifications, machine gun posts, and other defences which France built along the borders of Germany and Italy from 1930 through 1939. (Reference: Wikipedia-July 2011)

was quite taken aback when he said that we would just go to work as usual the next morning. Although he just went to sleep, I think I was too excited to get back to bed.

Now I'm running a little bit ahead of myself. As I have previously written, the depression in Holland prompted me to travel to Brussels, Belgium where my father asked my uncle, Joop Bas, if he could give me a job. My uncle agreed, so I travelled the short distance to Brussels and moved in with my uncle and his family in 1936 while I was only sixteen years old. My uncle was a merchant in the fish trade and would visit fish markets throughout Belgium to ply his trade. He was a very astute businessman and managed to buy a very large home in Brussels from where he could both live and conduct his business. On a daily basis he would visit a market and this would be the routine six days per week. Although I can't remember all of the details I do recall that on Wednesdays we visited the town of Vilvoorde, on Thursdays we travelled to Ghent and we always did business in Brussels on Sundays. Occasionally we would also conduct business in the evenings.

The market operation consisted of a very large enclosed truck holding all the paraphernalia required to set up our stall and its merchandise in a market. The business included my uncle Joop, his wife (my aunt), Greta, their son, Leo, his daughter, Bep, and myself. We would leave Brussels at five o'clock in the morning in time for the markets to open at nine in the morning. Although the furthest market would be approximately 80 kilometres away, it took a while to get to them since our truck couldn't move too quickly and the roads were built of cobblestones (not quite as comfortable by today's standards). Uncle Joop would be driving with his wife and son sitting beside him while Bep and I would lay in the back, on top of all the truck's contents covered with a couple of old blankets. Once we arrived at the market we would set up the stall and its merchandise which would include canned, bottled, cooked, smoked and fresh fish. We would then find a parking spot for the truck. Even after seventy years, some things never change I guess. That part of my work would be over by two or three in the afternoon, dependent on what time the market closed. Then my uncle would give me a list of things that had to be loaded back up into the truck before I could call it a day somewhere between 6:30 and 7:00 p.m. If there were labour laws in Belgium at the time related to overtime, I don't think my uncle adhered to them all that strictly.

My brother, Felix, and his wife Esther, had already arrived in Brussels in 1934 to open up their own fish store. My father, Alexander, and mother, Rebecca (Kaatje), arrived from Holland to live with Felix and Esther and helped them run the business. Just as a side note since it relates to my extended family, my uncle Joop's daughter, Bep, after a short visit to Amsterdam became engaged to Joop Kloots, where they came back to Brussels to open up another business (possibly related to fabrics). To add to the confusion, Joop Kloots also happened to be the brother of my sister's husband whose name was Herman.

All of this was going on before that fateful night of May 10, 1940 when Hitler decided to start conquering the world.

I now return with my story to when I woke my uncle Joop and told him that the war had started. He wasn't one to give up things easily and said to me "Oh, I have too much merchandise which will spoil if I don't get it to market."



Believe it or not, bombs or no bombs, we went to the market that day and he intended to go the next day as well, but for my father and brother who were finally able to convince him that with the German army no more than a two day march away from Belgium, it would be wiser to leave Brussels right away and make our way to

Paris, which at the time we thought would be safe from the war. Meanwhile we had a slight problem with my cousin, Leo, who was engaged to a girl named Maria. Since he wouldn't leave without her, my uncle Joop saw to it that they went to City Hall, to get married that same day. Talk about fast! We were now bound for Paris.



Paris May 1940

Our little party was able to travel in my uncle's car, which was a fairly new 1939 Ford, followed by his truck which was not so new. My uncle Joop drove the car which held his wife Greta along with his daughter, Bep, and his son, Leo, and Leo's new wife, Maria. Included as a passenger was Bep's pet dog named "Kiki". I drove the truck which held my father, mother, brother Felix, his wife, Esther, and Bep's boyfriend, Joop Kloots.

I think it was my uncle who saw to it that his daughter Bep would drive in a separate vehicle from her boyfriend. Those were different days.

That added up to ten travellers; not a small number. This little caravan of ours left at eight o'clock in the morning, travelling south towards Paris. As you've probably seen in so many documentaries; the roads were extremely crowded with refugees, cars, bicycles, baby prams, horses; you name it and it was exceptionally slow going. We finally arrived in Paris at about eight o'clock in the evening and managed to find a small hotel to spend the night. Sadly, the next day we had to leave Bep's pet dog, Kiki, behind in Paris.



Villeneuve-d'Aveyron

We then decided to travel further south. We became increasingly afraid of becoming stuck in the middle of nowhere as petrol was becoming more and more difficult to find. Eventually we came across a little village by the name of Villeneuve-d'Aveyron where we sought to find a place to stay overnight. Seeing no hotels, we asked some people on the street. Someone suggested that the village mayor might be able to help us find accommodation. Sure enough, a little while later, a man showed up and announced himself as the mayor. He asked us to follow him and so we did, travelling along a dirt road until we arrived at a farm house. We got out and accompanied him to a barn near the farm house. He seemed quite pleased with himself when he offered the barn as a place for us to stay overnight. We explained to him that we really were hoping for a place that we didn't have to share with horses, pigs and an assortment of other animals. After seeming to understand our concern, he then directed us to a smaller building which although devoid of animals, was obviously used not too long before as a pig sty.

This time we explained to him that we were looking for something that not only was without animals, but a place that held real beds. Finally, after looking a little puzzled he asked us to follow him into the actual farmhouse. There, we were introduced to two women who spoke in a French accent which we couldn't comprehend. After the mayor spoke to the women he turned to us and stated that the women had some rooms available upstairs. We walked up and to our amazement we came upon three large bedrooms, each quite tidy with double beds and clean linens. We asked the mayor to let these ladies know that we would be very pleased if we could stay here overnight and could he find out how much they would charge us. Again, an undecipherable conversation ensued followed by a gesture that in all languages said, "We don't want to charge you to stay here". It ended up that this was the place we called home for the next 4 months.

The three bedrooms were divided up so that my parents and my aunt and uncle took one of the rooms, Leo and his wife Maria shared the second room with my cousin, Bep, and I shared the third room with poor Joop who I'm sure would much rather have been in a room alone with Bep (who became his future wife). All in all I must say that we had some fun on this part of our journey.

The next day we spoke with the two women of the house and asked if we could remain there a little while longer until we could obtain enough petrol to continue our journey. This time we insisted on paying for our stay. We were able to speak French quite easily with these women, which surprised us because when we heard them speaking the previous day with the mayor, we could hardly understand a word they spoke. They explained that this was a local patois¹³, spoken by farmers throughout France. We also found out how fortunate we were in finding these rooms. The eldest woman's husband and three sons had been conscripted into the army, leaving much of the house empty. Several of the farm workers had left the farm for the same reason.



Maurice on top of a hay cart in Villeneuve
1940

The farm was sizeable and in addition to raising cows, goats and pigs, the land was cultivated to grow wheat, potatoes, beets and tobacco. (I'll get back later with an interesting story about the tobacco.) The farm house had a plot of land where they grew tomatoes, green beans, carrots and peas for their own use. Milk came from six cows staying in the same barn that we were previously invited to sleep in.

For five days each week a worker would arrive to tend to the barn and the fields and it was obvious to us that the farm did not have enough help to get all the work done. We thought it only fair to share in some of the chores. While my mother,

¹³ Using Wikipedia as a reference, the term patois derives from old French "incomprehensible speech, rude language"

Esther and Bep (or as a farmer would say “the women folk”) helped out in the kitchen, we “men folk” stuck with the older farm worker who explained what we could do on the farm. I was assigned to work in the barn (our Ritz hotel!) where in a short time I learned how to milk cows! (Mind you, I wasn’t very good at it, but I



From left to right, Alexander Goudeketter, Esther Goudeketter (Bas), Kaatje Goudeketter, Felix Goudeketter

improved with time.) I imagined how strange it must have felt for my family who were used to city living, now to be working on a farm. As I was relatively young at the time, I don’t think it affected me the same way.

As the days passed, we kept looking for gasoline without any luck. We began to accept the possibility that we might be here for more than a short stay. Reading the newspapers, we realized that the Germans were quickly gaining more ground. By now

they had occupied all of the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg and about half of France. We counted our blessings that we were about 140 kilometres south of that demarcation line. We were part of the “French Free Zone¹⁴” which as I’ll later explain, did not stay “free” for very long, but for now we felt relatively safe.



The family posing in Villeneuve

It’s now time for me to tell you the “tobacco” story. I and almost all the men in Europe enjoyed smoking cigarettes, cigars or pipes. At that time the French government strictly controlled tobacco products so that they could only be sold through government approved locations not unlike today’s Ontario’s liquor control board. It was illegal to sell it privately but most farmers growing tobacco would keep some of it aside for personal use by placing it in a hiding place for curing. They would then grind it up and use it for their pipes or cigarettes. When my father saw this he told the French worker that he used to work in a cigar factory in his youth. He then asked the man to leave some of the tobacco leaves whole. When these were dry, my father went to work and made a great number of cigars which he shared with the farmer. I, not really a cigar smoker, got my share of the extra tobacco and made plenty of cigarettes for myself.

¹⁴ The free zone was a partition south of the demarcation line, taking effect on June 25, 1940. It was administered by Marshal Phillipe Petain based in Vichy, in a relatively unrestricted fashion. Vichy France, to the north of the line, was allied with the Axis powers from July 1940 to August 1944.

The farmers in the surrounding area had a long standing arrangement to help



The family and other farm hands working on the farm in Villeneuve

each other when it came time to harvest the hay. They brought in a very large steam engine which ran a harvesting machine that bound the wheat into bundles. They were then placed onto horse drawn carriages where they were taken to the barn. On days like this, all the local women would set up tables where we had plenty of food and liquor. I remember feeling quite light hearted and I don't think it was all because of the booze; occasions like this allowed us to forget that there was a war on, if even for just a few hours. We also collected hay to feed the animals,

which we loaded onto wagons.

Meanwhile the news about the war was not good. We heard that London had been bombed and that Hitler had started a war against Russia. Looking back at that, I



From Wikipedia: Map of war-time France

believe that Germany might have won the war had he not attacked Russia when he did. Sometimes what seems like bad news now turns out to have been good news when future historians examine the big picture. I hope that this applies to our news today regarding global warming.

It was about this time (fall of 1940) that the French government began advising its refugees to return to their place of origin and assuring us that there would be no repercussions for having left our home country.

After discussing this amongst us, I recall both my parents and brother being absolutely opposed to returning to Belgium as they didn't trust the French government very much, and didn't trust the Germans at all. As for the Bas family, my uncle Joop was ambivalent about returning, Leo and his wife wanted to go back and Bep and her boyfriend Joop weren't opposed to the idea. The end result of this discussion was

that the Bas family decided to go back to Brussels, my family decided not to, and for some reason I'm not sure of, I decided to go with the Bas family.

It was in early September that the family Bas, which included everyone but my parents and brother, got into the car and truck for the journey. I was in the truck with Bep and Joop and the remaining family got into the car. We just had enough gas to enter the village and were able to obtain more petrol there for our trip north to Belgium. All went smoothly until just before we reached the demarcation line where we came upon a very large barrier. As we waited in line, a German officer was moving down the length of vehicles checking for everyone's identity. I believe that I was ahead of the Bas family in the truck when the officer approached my window. He asked us for our passports and where we came from. He examined my cousin Bep's passport and asked if her name was Rebecca. After Bep said yes he looked straight at her and said "Du bist eine Jude" (You are a Jew). He then told us to turn around and go back to where we came from.

To this day I don't know if that German was doing us a kindness or not, but I do know that he saved our lives. I also don't know how I was able to turn our truck around so quickly on such a tiny road, but I managed it, and the Bas family followed my lead just as quickly. To the best of my recollection we made our way back to the farm at Villeneuve-d'Aveyron where we remained for about another month until January 1941. We probably would have left earlier, but during that time my sister-in-law, Esther, required an operation for her appendix in a town nearby.



Narbonne France 1941-1942

With winter approaching we thought it wise to move further south and wound up in the town of Narbonne, a medium sized town about 60 Kilometres north of Perpignan with a moderate climate not unlike that of Florida. Because we arrived in Narbonne by train, my Uncle must have sold the car and truck before we departed. We rented two apartments in Narbonne. The rent was taken care of by the Dutch embassy in Marseille who we had contacted previously. They also provided us with a small monthly allowance which provided us with enough to live on. Except for the mosquitoes which visited us each evening, our stay in the town was quite pleasant.

Shortly after our arrival we received a letter from my sister, Bep, in Amsterdam that my uncle, Kobus Wijnschenk, who had been living in Ijmuiden¹⁵ Holland, had managed to escape with his entire family, renting a fishing boat and crossing the channel into England. Her letter also mentioned that they were living at 23 Barton Court in London.

Narbonne had a canal running through it where I saw a number of people fishing. One day I decided to join them. Although I was not able to catch as many carp as the others, I discovered that if I did my fishing in the evening, I could catch quite a few eels by using flies for my bait. Although this may seem as strange to you as chocolate covered ants seem to me, eel was considered to be a delicacy in Holland. My mother would fry them in oil and we found them to be delicious. At that time almost everything edible had to be purchased using food coupons. Everything was rationed including bread which I believe was limited to 200 grams per person per day. Although we never starved I do remember always being pretty hungry. Then I came up with a brilliant idea. I went to the baker with a load of my eel and asked if he would be willing to swap it for a loaf of bread. That bread was a feast for our entire family. As for meat, which was very hard to get, I recall standing in line at the butcher shop and receiving whatever was left over from carved up carcasses. If I was lucky, I would also come up with some bones which my mother miraculously transformed into delicious soups. I still find it amazing that my mother could put together so much good food with so little to start with. I wasn't so lucky with my vegetables. The town of Narbonne issued permits to grow vegetables on little plots of land of approximately 150 square feet in size. I managed to get a plot and after borrowing a spade, started digging out my garden.

I mimicked what the others were doing since I had no idea what I was doing and asked my fellow gardeners where they got their manure. I then borrowed a cart and took it to a local farm and asked them to give up some of their manure. Never in my life had I thought I'd be begging for that! Upon my return into town, I can still visualize people holding their noses while I passed by them with my cart. I finally managed to plant some seeds for beans, carrots and peas. I returned on about five or six occasions to tend to my little plot and on the last visit noticed some growth spurting up from the ground. Unfortunately I was sent to a work camp before I got to sample the fruits (or rather vegetables!) of my labour. All that work for nought!

I should now mention that a wonderful event occurred on December 1st of 1941. My sister-in-law Esther gave birth to a beautiful baby girl who was given the name of Kitty. All in all, my time in Narbonne is filled with a few fond memories which helped me to forget some of my troubles and worries.

The French government was continually increasing the pressure upon refugees to leave the country by telling us that if we didn't depart France, the remaining males would be forced into work camps. I believe that it was at this point that the Bas family decided that they would take their chances and travel further south. I believe that my mother, father, brother and I decided to stay where we were because my

¹⁵ Ijmuiden is a port city in the Dutch province of North Holland and it is the main town of the municipality of Velsen. (Wikipedia June 2011)

father's health was deteriorating, possibly a result of his many years of heavy smoking.

In February of 1942 my father, Felix and I were told to report to a work camp situated nearby in a little town of Agde¹⁶. We were assigned a barracks to live in and there was very little “work” to be done. We spent most of our time in the gardens planting seeds and tending to the vegetables. The only other work I remember while in that region occurred when on May 16th of 1942 I was singled out, along with some other fellows, to travel to Sete, another port town located further east on the Mediterranean coast. This was another example of too many men for too few jobs; because upon arrival in Sete, I don't think I was assigned to perform any work. I do remember seeing peanuts piled in huge mounds that looked like mountains. Apparently there was a factory nearby that converted the peanuts into peanut oil¹⁷, but I never worked there. In the meantime, my brother Felix who was still in the work camp in Agde had written to our acquaintance, the mayor of Villeneuve where we had previously stayed, to ask him whether he would be able to seek out some employment for us. To our amazement this man actually showed up at the camp and spoke with the camp commander, explaining that he was the owner of a large farm and due to a labour shortage, would be happy to bring us there to work. He also asked the commander if he could excuse me from my assignment in Sete so that the whole family could stay together in Villeneuve. He then made arrangements to provide us with transportation back to Villeneuve in early June of 1942.

We subsequently found out that the mayor was quite a wealthy man who owned several small farms. I believe that his motives may not have been completely noble. As I previously mentioned, in this part of France there was an extreme labour shortage and we were asked by the mayor to actually manage the running of one of his farms. There were lots of chickens, pigs and two cows. We got a short tutorial on how to do our jobs and the rest was up to us! We were instantly promoted to farmers! I can still see my father leading the pigs to their sty. It still brings tears to my eyes when I think about that. It was however a definite improvement from our previous living arrangements in the work camp and more importantly, the family was back together.

At about this time Marshal¹⁸ Pétain had started the new “Pro German movement”. The Nazi government had called upon him to take a tougher stance against foreign refugees still living in France. One of these actions included setting up a French youth movement modelled after the Hitler Youth organization¹⁹. I began to notice changes in the attitude of many of the French people towards the Jews. One day, the mayor's son rode to the farm on his horse to inspect our progress.

¹⁶ Agde is located north west of Narbonne and is a port town sitting on the Mediterranean sea

¹⁷ Due to the allied blockade of imports to Germany and the needs of the army, peanut oil would have been a valuable substitute for petroleum products. Ref: Historical perspectives on vegetable oil-based diesel fuels. Knothe, Gerhard (2001)

¹⁸ His full name was Philippe Petain who was appointed by the French cabinet as the premier of France

¹⁹ The Hitler Youth (German: Hitler Jugend) was a paramilitary organization of the Nazi party and existed from 1922 to 1945.

His questioning was not very polite and I must have made some sort of rude reply to which he stated that I had better watch my mouth. He also offered up his opinion that we Jews were an inferior race; that we should learn to keep our mouths shut and do as we were told. I was standing beside my mother at the time and although she spoke no French, she could see that I was about to attack him and she held me back. It was probably a good thing since he was a fair bit larger than I was. Looking back at this I can remember the rage I felt for the way my family were being treated.

Rumours were by now surfacing that Jewish refugees were being picked up and put onto trains consigned to concentration camps. One of my jobs was to go to the mayor's house every Monday and Tuesday to perform house cleaning and we were able to keep up with the news by way of some of the newspapers, which I smuggled in, from the mayor's home. After reading the news with my brother, we realized that compared to many others, we were comparatively lucky for the moment. This peacefulness did not last very long however. In October 1942 the mayor came to our farm to tell us that we had to leave. He gave us a little money for our work there.

This time my father, brother and I were escorted by French agents to the work camp at Agde. As you might recall, this was where we had originally stayed before going to the farm. My mother, sister-in-law, Esther, and her baby, Kitty, moved back to the town of Narbonne where we had previously stayed. We spent about a month at that camp when we heard that the Germans were preparing to move into "Free France" and were already moving their armaments into the region. The commandant of the camp who was a Frenchman was not thrilled about these events. He realized that in a short while the Germans would occupy the entire country. As a military man, the commandant had three old army trucks that he had hidden and had "neglected" to tell the Germans about.

Determined not to let these trucks fall into German hands, he asked for volunteers to drive the trucks to a place near the town of Clermont-Ferrand, about 330 Km. north of Agde in central France. I volunteered as a driver and we left on October 10th with the three trucks. The trip took about five hours. We then made our way back to Agde.

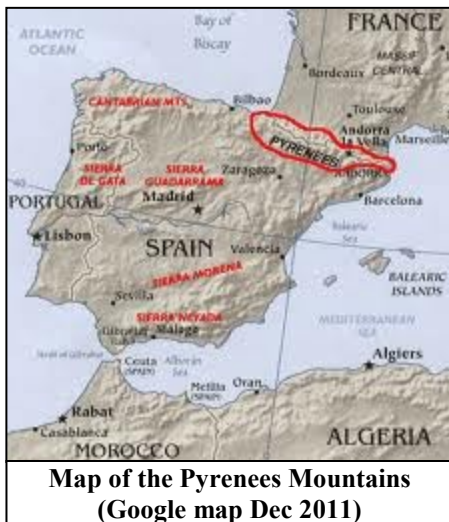
On October 15, 1942, my father, brother and I were relocated to another camp near a town in central France named Châteauneuf-les-bains which to our surprise was run by a Jewish commander! He was very helpful to us and when he found out that my mother, Felix's wife Esther and her baby Kitty were still in Narbonne, he made arrangements to bring them to Chateuneuf where they found a place to stay. Since this brought them within 12 kilometres from our camp, my father and brother were able to visit them whenever possible. The camp held approximately 50 men. My father and brother were assigned to work in the kitchen while I was given clean-up detail. The camp commander spoke to all of us on several occasions explaining that it wouldn't be very long before the Germans would come to deport us to a concentration camp. He encouraged all of us to escape while we had the chance and try to make it over the Spanish border. He knew the geography of the land and suggested that we make our way to Perpignan, a town located at the foot of the Pyrenees.

By now we had stayed at this camp for three months when my father, brother and I discussed what we should do next. Unfortunately my father was in very poor health at the time. He had developed a terrible cough and had lost a lot of weight. We were faced with having to make a very difficult decision. Although we could get our father to the town of Perpignan, we knew that he wouldn't be strong enough to make it over the Pyrenees and into Spain. On December 15th, 1942 the painful decision was finally made. Upon my father's insistence, my brother and I should attempt to reach Spain without him. While I was to catch a bus the following day, my brother, Felix, decided to visit my mother, his wife and his daughter before following me a day later. On December 16th, 1942 I left the camp. The vision of seeing my brother and father looking at me through the large front kitchen window of the camp is as clear to me today as it was 69 years ago. It was to be the last time I would see either of them.



Perpignan France Dec 1942

I arrived safely in Perpignan by bus where I located the Dutch embassy. It was the only embassy still operating in France. While we had been in Villeneuve-d'Aveyron in early 1941, we had contacted the Dutch embassy in Marseille which was still operating at the time. Not only did they provide us with a small monthly pension, but I was also provided with a new Dutch passport to replace the one that had expired.



Upon arrival at the embassy at Perpignan, I was met by the Dutch ambassador, Mr. Kolkman. Through his assistance I was provided with some Spanish pesetas, and an address for the Dutch embassy in Barcelona Spain. I was also issued bogus French identification which I was asked to quickly dispose of once I reached the Pyrenees, so as not to implicate the embassy. I hope that after all these years that I have not given away a state secret. The identification (which included my picture) was to be used if questioned while on the short train ride from Perpignan to a small village at the foot of the mountains. I will undoubtedly repeat it in other parts of this text, but I need to emphasize my gratitude to the Dutch government, its embassies and their staff, especially Mr. Kolkman for their bravery, kindness and diligence. Without them, I would certainly not be here to tell you my story.

We arrived at the small mountainside village in late afternoon and walked about 3 kilometres to a remote area beneath the mountains where we waited for the sun to set. I was one of seven men who were all gathered to make the same journey. Two guides were assigned to join us. When darkness fell we began our climb. I am not sure about how high we had climbed, but after about five hours it became very cold. It started to snow and the wind blew very strongly. It reached a point where our visibility had become less than five feet. Walking became very difficult and we began stumbling over the rocks. We reached a point where we could no longer stay together as one group. I remember one of the guides pointing his finger to tell us which way we should continue and then the guides just disappeared.

Somehow I just kept going ahead until I was close to complete exhaustion. I was about to rest (possibly for the last time) when I looked down and thought I saw a patch of green. Although I must have made my way down by sheer will power, I cannot remember getting down.

I recall waking up in daylight sometime later and finding myself resting on a patch of grass surrounded by some snow. Looking up, I saw the height of the mountain I had just crossed and couldn't believe that I had arrived here safely with barely a scratch. The only injury seemed to be a very sore heel which turned out to be frostbite. I got up and began walking away from the mountain. My instincts told me that I was on the other side of the Pyrenees and inside Spain.

We were instructed at the embassy to move quickly since if we were caught within two kilometres of the border by the Spanish police, we would be deported back to France, so I just kept walking. After some distance I spotted a small hut in the distance. I carefully walked towards it and peeked inside where I found the Frenchman from our group, lying on the ground. He was in bad shape and unable to walk. He attempted to take his boots off and asked for my assistance. After managing to get them off I noticed that both of his feet were completely blue. At that moment I realized how incredibly fortunate I had been. I had been wearing home-made shoes which were very exposed with soles that were made from pieces of a car tire. That kept my blood circulating and explained why only my heel had been affected.

After resting for about half an hour I realized that it wouldn't be possible for the injured man to walk. I told him that I would continue on, and let the authorities know where he was located. He offered to give me some money, but I told him that he would need it for himself and that I had enough. We wished each other luck and I continued on for another five or six hours for approximately 30 kilometres and arrived at a small town that fortunately had a railway station. Inside the station I saw only a few people, most of whom appeared to be farmers. They didn't pay much attention to me, which was just as well since I feel didn't feel very safe. Pinned to the wall were train schedules where I spotted a train to Barcelona which was to arrive in half an hour. With some fear of being questioned as a stranger, I decided to buy a first class ticket for greater privacy on the train. I was hoping that the police would be less likely to disturb a first class passenger. Looking back at it, considering the state of my appearance, I wonder what the ticket agent must have thought when he sold me the ticket.

Upon boarding the train I found a first class cabin which was completely empty and that was fine by me. After the first stop however, I was joined by a well-dressed man in white shirt and suit. My heart stood still! He just looked at me and didn't say a word, and I of course I kept my mouth shut.



Barcelona Spain Dec 1942

The train eventually stopped in Barcelona without any further incident. As I stepped off the train and out of the station, I felt as if I had walked onto another planet. This was a world where the terror of war didn't seem to be on everyone's mind; where street vendors with little carts were selling fried chicken and all sorts of other delicacies which I had all but forgotten about. Since by that time it was about eight o'clock in the evening, I realized that my first priority was finding some accommodation. Being at the heart of a city and surrounded by lots of people, I was again afraid of standing out in the crowd, given my dishevelled appearance.

As you might suspect, I was wearing the same clothing that I had on before climbing over the Pyrenees and I hadn't bathed or shaved for a while even before then. I slipped into a side street and spotted a small hotel. Upon entering, a suspicious clerk asked if he could help me. Showing him some money, offering up my passport and using some very broken Spanish, I convinced him to offer me a room for the night. At this point I was starving and asked the clerk if the hotel served food. I probably used my hands more than my voice to make this request. He seemed to understand because he pointed me to a small cafeteria which was right next door. I went in and ordered a bowl of soup and a sandwich. You never realize how wonderfully food can taste until you've been without it for a while.

After eating, I quickly went back to my room, fell on the bed and not surprisingly, fell asleep instantly. It was some time later that I was woken by a loud banging on my door. I leaped out of bed convinced that it was the Gestapo, and I had been caught. Opening the door in great fear, I was relieved to see only the hotel clerk looking quite frazzled. He told me that I had to leave because he was breaking the law by allowing me to stay at his hotel. I later found out that it was illegal to accommodate foreigners who do not have the proper paperwork issued by the Spanish government.

I quickly dressed, grabbed my passport and walked back out onto the street. I spotted a telephone booth at the corner and dialled the precious number to the Dutch embassy in Barcelona, given to me by Ambassador Kolkman in Perpignan. My heart sunk when there was no answer. I then realized that it was only about five o'clock in the morning and that if I waited a while to call again I might have better luck.

I was once again in my shabby clothes and feared being seen in public. My solution was to hunker down in the phone booth, hoping that it would remain unused for the next few hours. I don't know what I would have said to someone if they happened to see me on my knees at the bottom of a telephone booth. Fortunately this did not occur. After calling the number every half hour or so, at eight o'clock a man finally picked up the line. I asked him whether he spoke Dutch and was relieved to find out that he could, I explained to him who I was and how I got to Barcelona. As soon as I told him that I got the phone number from Ambassador Kolkman, he asked me where I was calling from. I told him that I had no idea where I was. He then asked me to look for the name of the street. When I looked above me, I saw the name (I wish I could remember it) and passed it on to the man. He told me to stay put and promised to meet me within fifteen minutes. Sure enough in a short while a car holding a driver and a passenger appeared. The passenger got out and came to the phone booth asking me to get into the car. He spoke to me in my beloved Dutch language. It was at this moment that I finally felt relief. I was now in safe hands and was able to finally let go of my guard.

They first drove me to a doctor's office. Upon examination of my feet he confirmed what I had suspected; one of my ankles had been frost bitten. The doctor recommended I be immediately taken to a hospital but instead I was then driven directly to the Dutch Embassy. Once there they explained to me that it would be unsafe for me to enter a hospital until they could secure my stay in Spain. One of the staff was asked to buy me some decent clothing and a new pair of shoes.

In the afternoon of that same day, I accompanied the same man who met me at the phone booth, to the Spanish court. He gave me instructions as we rode in the car. When we arrived at the court I was told to stay about twenty metres away from the entrance. Once he came back out, he would wave to me, to let me know if it was alright for me to come inside the building with him. I waited outside the court as instructed. After about fifteen minutes he came back out and looked at me. He then motioned for me to go away! I turned to walk away. He ran after me and asked me what I was doing. I told him that I was following his instructions. He then laughed and explained to me that the way you motion for someone to come in Spain is the exact opposite of what it meant back home in Holland!

We went into the court and with my companion assisting me by translating the Spanish into Dutch, I provided my documents and answered some questions about my name, my birth date and where I came from. The court official then asked my friend for some money and I finally received the papers necessary for my stay in

Spain. Wars might mess up a lot of things, but bureaucracy will never be interrupted! The saying should be “Death, Taxes and Bureaucracy”.

From the court I was driven straight to a hospital where I was treated and kept for two days. The Dutch driver later picked me up and brought me back to the Dutch embassy where I was requested to sign a number of documents. One of these papers declared that I was now considered to be a candidate to enter into the service of the Netherlands armed forces. I had absolutely no problem with this since it was exactly what I had wanted. The following day I was placed on a train to lovely Madrid.



Madrid Spain Dec 1942 – May 1943

The embassy gave me the name of a hotel to stay at when I got to Madrid. It was called the Hotel National and was located at Calle del Arena 19 (translated into English as Sand Street). It was a first class hotel and they had been notified of my arrival later that day. In the hotel I saw more than twenty other Dutch men of medium age. Just like me, they had all managed to cross over the border and were eager to reach England. I found most of them to be highly educated.

The food was excellent and it was at this hotel that I experienced eating my first dish of paella. I have been searching near and far for a better tasting paella ever since, without success. I must admit however that my opinion might have been slightly clouded by the fact that I hadn't had a decent meal in the previous two years. I venture to guess that a hot dog would have tasted divine.

During my stay I met up with a Jewish man by the name of Polak who was about 40 years old. One week after my arrival we both went to the bar. This turned out to be a big mistake. The last time I drank any liquor was before I left Brussels in May 1940. I remember my friend Mr. Polak ordering me another cognac. Suddenly the world started to twirl about me and I got sick all over the floor in front of the bar. I can still hear the words of my friend saying to the bar-keeper “Kids, you can't take them anywhere!” Although I don't remember how, I made it back to the hotel.

There was one exception to my “no liquor” story. I remember the wife of ambassador Kolkman approaching me in Perpignan before my trip to the mountains. I don't know if she had taken a shine to me, but she warned me that it would be a very perilous trip and gave me a very small bottle of cognac containing

no more than 6 ounces of liquor. I do remember taking small sips from that bottle as I made my climb up the mountain. In addition to my old shoes made of tires, Mrs. Kolkman and the cognac may very well have saved my life!

About three days later, as I came down to eat in our hotel I bumped into some people I knew. It was my uncle, his son, Leo, and son-in-law, Joop, who I hadn't seen since our separation in Narbonne, France! Apparently they had travelled in a South Easterly direction towards the border of Andorra²⁰. Compared to other sections, the terrain was quite flat there. They crossed over the border into Spain there with relative little difficulty. Similar to my experience, once in Spain, they boarded a train from a small town attempting to reach Barcelona. They thought that they were exposed to the police by one of the train passengers. This was about half way towards their destination. Apparently Leo tried to bribe the police with some cigarettes he had brought with him from France, but to no avail. They were thrown into a Barcelona jail. They ended up being released shortly afterwards however. Since they were discovered more than a few miles from the border, they were not deported back to France. Instead, the police contacted the Dutch embassy, who paid their fine and made arrangements to help send them to Madrid. They were indeed lucky and again we were blessed by the actions of the Dutch embassy.

While the Dutch government was working to get us safely out of Spain, I had some interesting experiences for the next five months. The first two months in Madrid were the best part of my stay. The embassy provided us with a small weekly allowance which was enough to buy us our coffee, cigarettes and sundry items. I spent a lot of time in a certain small cafeteria and found myself a girlfriend. Although it wasn't much of a romance my Spanish improved quite rapidly.

We received a notice from the Embassy that we were expected to join the Dutch armed forces in the not too distant future. Sometime in May of 1943 I was informed that I was to join up with fourteen others where we were to be sent to the Dutch island of Curacao²¹ by way of a French ship which was leaving from the port of Cadiz²². We boarded a train to Cadiz in the first week of May. Upon arrival we learned that our ship was not due to arrive for another three days which gave us some time to see the sights. I remember the little town with pleasant memories.

On the morning of our fourth day, we were told that our ship had arrived and we were to board on the following morning. Our arranged pick up never took place. Apparently the Spanish government had heard the rumours that we were going to board ship and it would not allow the ship which still held passengers and was in the middle of the harbour, to enter port. The Spanish government acted in this manner

²⁰ Andorra is a small landlocked country in south-western Europe, located in the Eastern Pyrenees mountain range and bordered by Spain and France. (Wikipedia, June 1, 2011)

²¹ A former Dutch colony island in the southern Caribbean Sea off the coast of Venezuela. (Wikipedia, June 2011)

²² Cadiz is a city and port in south-western Spain. It is the oldest continuously inhabited city in the Iberian Peninsula and possibly all of southern Europe. (Wikipedia, June 2011)

as a result of a German threat that they would torpedo the ship if their wishes were not granted.

The passengers still on board apparently heard about the German threat and were very anxious for the Spanish government to comply. The end result was that we made our way back to Madrid the following day.



Lisbon, Portugal May 1943

In early May of 1943 our same merry troop of men received notice that we fifteen were to travel to Lisbon Portugal. This time everything worked according to plan and we arrived safely. We were picked up by a staff member of the Dutch embassy and driven by van to a small town named Sintra. We were lodged in a motel close to the beach where we tanned ourselves and swam in the ocean.

We established a daily routine. As long as we stayed near the motel we were free to go about our day as we wished up to five o'clock in the afternoon. Then each evening at eight p.m. we would be picked up by van and transported to Lisbon Airport. Each night, a DC3 aircraft would depart for an evening flight to England. A similar trip was made by a German flight to Germany each night. This was an open secret and there was an unspoken agreement between the combatants that neither of these flights were to be attacked by either side. The usual passengers aboard these flights were government ministers or diplomatic staff. The British plane carried 24 passengers. If an empty seat became available on any night, then one out of our group would grab it.

In addition to swimming, we also enjoyed playing soccer amongst ourselves. One day some Portuguese boys who also used the beach for soccer asked us if we would like to play against them in a tournament. This came as a very welcome break from our thoughts of the war. We gladly accepted the challenge and agreed to play the "Holland vs. Portugal" match on the following Sunday. This agreement was made on the Thursday, so the following Friday and Saturday we practiced our game. The big day came and we began bragging about how much we had practised. Unfortunately the practise did us more harm than good because we were all too sore to play very well. I forget the final score, but they finished us off completely. With

red faces we tried to explain by using sign language why we had played so poorly. They just laughed good-naturedly and told us not to worry about it. I guess I must hate losing, because I still worry about it sixty-eight years later.



On the twelfth day of our daily trips to the airport, it was finally my turn to board the plane and I got my ride to England.

One of the Lisbon flights during those days wasn't so lucky. A well-known British film star named Leslie Howard took one of these flights which never made it to England²³.

Rumour has it that the Germans shot the plane down after mistakenly believing that Winston Churchill was on board²⁴.



²³ Howard, a very famous film star at the time (He played Ashley in the movie 'Gone with the wind'), died in 1943 when flying to Bristol, UK in a Douglas DC-3 by a Luftwaffe Junkers Ju 88C6 over the Bay of Biscay. (Wikipedia June 2011)

²⁴ Churchill had been in Algiers at about this time. He himself may have been responsible for the rumour; in his autobiography he expresses sorrow that a mistake about his activities had cost Howard his life. (Wikipedia, June, 2011)



Bristol, England June 26, 1943

Finally on June ^{26th}, 1943 I was very pleased to get a seat on the aircraft at Lisbon and I was flown to Bristol England. This was the first time in my life that I had not lived on the European continent. Upon arrival I was escorted under armed guard to a train destined for London. When I arrived I was placed in an enclosed area called the Royal Victoria Patriotic School²⁵. Everybody entering this compound was thoroughly interrogated to make certain that none of us was a foreign agent. The camp was very large, surrounded by barbed wire and held a security gate. One early evening I managed to get out of “School”. Barbed wire is pretty easy to cut. I think my previous escapes from French war camps may have given me some prior training to accomplish this skill.



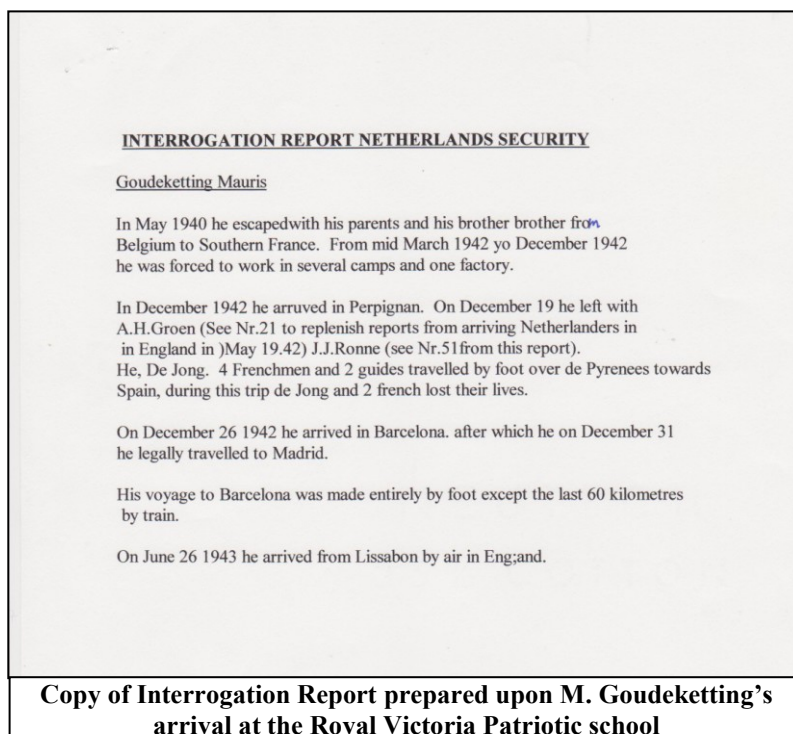
London, England June, 1943

As I walked along the street I found an underground “tube” station and studied the map. To my pleasant surprise I spotted a station named Barton Court. Imagine that; London had built a tube station just for my Uncle Kobus! I hope you won’t tell this to the London transit people, but I slipped past the pay booth and took a free ride on the train. I followed the map to Barton Court station and upon exiting the station, saw a Street called Barton Court. I walked up to number 23 and found an apartment complex. Sure enough, the apartment listing showed a K. Wijnschenk (one of my mother’s brothers). I took the elevator up and knocked on the door (apartment security wasn’t quite as tight then as it is today). The door opened and there stood my uncle Kobus. I will never forget the expression on his face when he saw me.

²⁵ The Royal Victoria Patriotic School is the name of a former girls’ school in London, where, during the Second World War the MI-6 examined the credentials of all persons arriving in the United Kingdom to verify that they posed no risk to the country’s internal security. (Wikipedia June, 2011)

We had a chance to exchange each other's stories. He had escaped from Holland on a rented fishing boat and arrived into England in the company of seven others; his wife, his two sons, his two daughters Bep and Tina, their maid, Clara, who had been with the family for over 20 years and Tina's fiancé. I told him my story of the last three years, much as I'm telling you now. When I told him that I was presently stationed at the Patriotic School and how I had "walked out", my uncle had quite a fit. I remember him saying in Dutch "Do you realize what you've done? You could be shot for this!" He insisted that I return immediately to the camp so he loaded me into his car and drove me back to camp. I thanked him and said that I would just sneak back in through the place where I had originally cut the barbed wire, but he wouldn't hear of it. He led me to the guard house where he explained what I had done. The guard was just as perturbed as my uncle that I had been able to slip out so easily. The guard whispered to my uncle not to worry about it and I was shoved back through the gate. This way my "escape" from the camp was never officially recorded and we were all saved any further embarrassment.

After about two days, the official examination of my credentials was complete. I retained a copy of the Interrogation Report from Netherlands Security. It reads:



Goudekettering Mauris

In May 1940 he escaped with his parents and his brother from Belgium to Southern France. From mid March 1942 to December 1942 he was forced to work in several camps and one factory.

In December 1942 he arrived in Perpignan. On December 19 he left with A.H. Green (see Nr.21 to replenish reports from arriving Netherlands in England in May 1942).

They, J.J. Ronne (see Nr 51 from this report), H. De Jong. 4 Frenchman and two guides travelled by foot over the Pyrenees towards Spain, during the trip De Jong and 2 French[men] lost their lives.

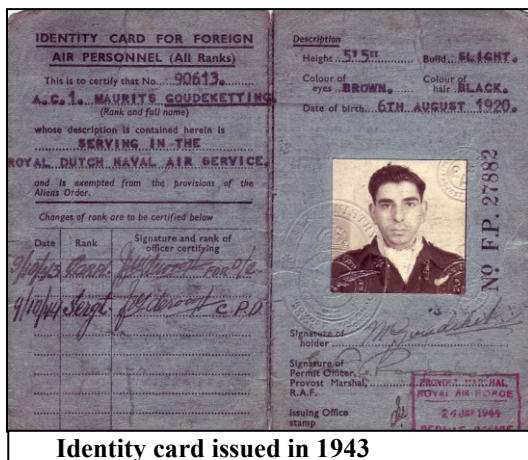
On December 26 1942 he arrived in Barcelona after which on December 31 he legally travelled to Madrid.

On June 26 1943 he arrived from Lisbon by air in England.

The authorities decided that I was no threat to England and I was free to go! A military vehicle belonging to the Netherlands Army then picked me up and I was driven to a very large house in which several others Dutch refugees were lodged. Many of these people had risked their lives crossing the English Channel in small boats and even canoes! They were the lucky ones. Many more either sunk and drowned or were captured by the Germans.

I was interviewed by Dutch officials for another few days. They asked me to choose between joining the Army, Navy or Air Force and I told them that I'd much prefer the Air Force.

The second floor of the house was divided into three sections. I went to the medical section for a physical examination and passed with flying colours. From there, I went to a second area where they studied my file and asked me what position I would like to train for. I immediately replied that I wanted to be a pilot and then asked how long it would take for me to see some action. They told me that I would need to be trained in Canada and it would take between one and a half to two years before I would be ready to fly. I then asked them if they had a position on an aircraft which would take less training time. They informed me that I could train as an air gunner which would take only six weeks. That sounded a lot better to me and I told them that I'd be happy with that. They then told me that I would be joining the Dutch Naval Air Force.



Identity card issued in 1943

Thus began my new career. They took my picture and issued me an identity card indicating my rank as a Corporal. Beside my picture was the number F.P. 27882. It also stated that the person holding the card is exempted from the provisions of the Aliens Order.

I was placed on a train with five other men and taken to the seaport of Holyhead located on the Irish Sea in Wales. Upon arrival we were transported to a large military warehouse. We were outfitted with

a uniform, shoes, socks, hammock, woollen blanket (which I still possess), carry bag and of course a sailor's cap. It was not easy to find clothing which would fit me, since I was the shortest man among the recruits. Most of them had at least seven or eight inches over me. We were then picked up by a military vehicle and taken to the harbour. We boarded a small boat and were taken out to a large ship which was anchored about a mile off shore in the Irish Sea. To reach the deck, we had to climb a ladder while carrying our heavy backpacks. At this point I became quite aware of

the difference between a boat and a ship! Once on board, we were assigned sleeping quarters, holding about 20 hammocks, which turned out to be surprisingly comfortable. So now I was officially an enlisted man with the classification of ‘Able-Seaman’ in the Naval Air Force, sitting aboard a ship!

This is where my training began. At first we learned some pretty basic stuff, like how to tie various knots and how to differentiate north from south and east from west. Here we were also taught Morse code. Every week we were taken onto a small boat. One of the exercises was to stand on the bow and throw out a heavy piece of lead while the boat was moving, calling out the depth of the water. We also were taught the various commands and were permitted to pilot the boat ourselves.

The first few weeks took some getting used to. My chores included peeling potatoes, scrubbing decks and cleaning toilets. We were woken up at 5:30 each morning by reveille, followed by a hearty breakfast at 6:00 AM, usually consisting of bacon and eggs, porridge and coffee. I must say that we were never wanting for food and all the meals were well prepared. In the evenings, while on board, I remember playing card games. The most popular game was called ‘21’. We were dealt two cards each. The person closest to 21 points won the pot. Fortunately I, unlike some others, did not lose my shirt during my stint onboard.

At first we were teased by the seasoned sailors, but we soon felt at ease with one another. Twice a week we were taken ashore and, rifles in hand, we practiced drill on the Boulevard along the beach. Our teacher was a tough Sergeant who also taught us some Dutch swear words that I never knew existed! I had the pleasure of watching several pretty girls who would watch us practice and do a lot of giggling. At the beginning we must have looked like the Keystone Kops,²⁶ but eventually we improved a lot and began to look like real sailors.

After eight weeks of this we were ready for the next stage of our training. Six Dutch sailors and I were shipped to the town of Morpeth²⁷ in the county of Northumberland. We were all promoted to the rank of Able Seaman 2 and from the town we were driven on the back of a military truck to the training ground for air gunners. Here were assembled about 60 to 70 prospective students, mostly newcomers like myself who had arrived from many countries including Poland, France, Holland and Belgium. The training grounds were situated on two runways holding many aircraft. The training areas were separated between fighter pilots, observers and air gunners. My area was equipped with mock ups of machine gun turrets. Outside of the runways stood a large complex with classrooms that fit about seventy-five students.

²⁶ The Keystone Kops are an incompetent group of policemen that featured in silent film comedies in the early 20th century. (Wikipedia June 2011)

²⁷ Located in the county town of Northumberland, Morpeth is situated on the River Wansbeck which flows east through the town. (Wikipedia June 2011)

In the first days of training, we were taught how to recognize various aircraft. We had to learn the names of all American, British and German planes. They presented us with silhouettes shown on screens and we were required to recognize which silhouette was friendly and which belonged to the enemy. The idea of course was to prevent us from shooting down our own people. It was quite a challenge since some of the planes were at first glance very similar in appearance, but I could appreciate the importance of getting it right!

The next step was to learn how to operate my machine gun. We had to assemble and disassemble the weapon within a certain length of time. We also had to memorize the names of each of the parts. The mock-up gun turrets were identical to those we would be using on our own aircraft. They operated through air pressure. Imagine sitting on a motorcycle with your two hands on the steering column. Turning the handle sideways, would turn the gun from left to right. Turning the handles around one way would turn the gun down and vice versa. Fortunately the guns were not loaded when we first began training. If they had been, I'm not sure if I would have been around to tell this story.

In the classroom we received training in the art of shooting while moving in on an enemy target. This is not as simple as one might think. Imagine yourself moving at a speed of 200 M.P.H., while at a height of 10,000 feet, trying to hit a moving target which is over 1000 feet away. If you were just to look through your visor and pull the trigger, your bullets would fly 200 feet or more behind your target and as much as 50 feet beneath him. We therefore needed to take into account our direction, our rate of speed and the effect of gravity in order to hit the other plane with any precision. The gun was 50 calibres and it had a mixture of ammunition including armour piercing²⁸, incendiary²⁹ and tracer³⁰ bullets which came out once for every 10 rounds. These tracer bullets were very helpful since they allowed us to adjust to our target with greater accuracy. The incendiaries were intended to explode and create a fire while the armour piercing rounds could penetrate heavy metal surfaces. We were also taught to warn the pilot of any approaching aircraft and calling out their location if the enemy was approaching from behind our plane we were to call out "corkscrew, corkscrew!" This would tell the pilot to take evasive action by making a fast downward spiral manoeuvre³¹.

²⁸ Armour piercing rounds have jacketed designs where the core material is a very hard density metal. A pointed tip is often used, but a flat tip on the penetrator portion is generally more effective. (Wikipedia June 2011)

²⁹ Incendiary rounds are bullets made with an explosive or flammable mixture in the tip that is designed to ignite on contact with the target. The intent is to ignite fuel or munitions in the area, thereby adding to the destructive power of the bullet itself. (Wikipedia June 2011)

³⁰ Tracer rounds are special bullets with a small pyrotechnic charge in their base. Ignited by the burning powder, the phosphorus tail burns very brightly, making the projectile visible to the naked eye. This enables the shooter to follow the bullet trajectory relative to the target in order to make corrections to his aim. (Wikipedia June 2011)

³¹ The most effective tactic to throw off a German night fighter was found to be the corkscrew which if executed well gave the enemy little chance of matching the bomber, thus losing any good firing position at the end of the manoeuvre. Faced with a bomber which performed a corkscrew, enemy night fighter pilots usually sheared off to look for easier prey. The difficulty for the pilot was in timing the manoeuvre

After two weeks of this type of training we were ready to make our first live flight. Fifteen men were driven to the airport hangar which lay to the side of one of the runways. There we found a Hudson aircraft³² waiting for us.



M. Goudeketter after 'Getting his wings' 1943

Three trainees at a time would be taken up to fly and practice using a machine gun loaded with live ammunition. We were told to pull the trigger for about two to three seconds and that would expend about 100 bullets. I therefore estimate that we each had about 500 rounds to practice with. Each of the three gunners used bullets painted at their tip with a particular colour so that the examiners could tell which of us had hit the target and how often.

This was only the second time in my life that I had been on an aircraft and the lift-off felt sensational! The plane took off towards the sea until we were distanced four or five miles off the coast. Then we saw a Piper J-3 Cub³³ approaching. It was towing behind it, a target which was about twenty feet long and two feet wide, pulled by a long line attached to the Piper.

I was chosen as the first gunner to walk into the turret and man the machine gun.

properly, as it was difficult to spot the enemy fighter against a dark sky background. (Wikipedia/Airwarrior.afkamm June 2011)

³² The Lockheed Hudson was an American-built light bomber and coastal reconnaissance aircraft built initially for the Royal Air Force shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War. (Wikipedia June 2011)

³³ The Piper J-3 Cub is a small, simple, light aircraft that was built between 1937 and 1947 by Piper Aircraft. With tandem (fore and aft) seating, it is intended for flight training but became one of the most popular and best known light aircraft of all time. Some would consider it the Model T Ford of aircraft. (Wikipedia June 2011)

The instructor emphasized that under no conditions were we to aim our guns ahead of the Piper. I still wonder if any Pipers were accidentally hit this way.

I aimed for the target and quickly spent all my bullets. I also practiced calling out messages to the pilot which he responded to as if we were in an actual engagement with the enemy.

After about fifteen minutes I got out of the turret to make way for the second man to have his turn. I had not heard any instruction explaining the importance of securing my seat belt; whereas the other trainees had theirs on. I discovered this the hard way. The second trainee called for the pilot to corkscrew the plane which he did. Depending on the plane's position I ended up on the ceiling, the walls or the floor of the aircraft. That was a good reminder for me to always have my seat belt on. I was awarded my air gunner's wing after I passed six weeks of training and still to this day hold a photo of seven of us up front with four of new air gunners behind us.

The following day we were permitted to take leave. The captain of the gunners' crew arranged to transport us by truck to the City of Newcastle located about sixteen miles south of Morpeth along the river Tyne. This particular day remained anchored in my mind. I was proudly walking through the town with my Navy friends when several girls decided they wanted to join us. We graciously accepted their request and we all went to the fair. Here we went on all sorts of rides including the roller coaster. I last rode a coaster when I was really young and only remember being terrified. Well, here I was supposed to be a fearless "hero" now that I had my new wings on my chest. With great dread I got on the ride and put on a happy face through the entire ride even though I felt like vomiting when I got off. Fortunately I managed to avoid getting ill. Despite this, it turned out to have been a pleasant and memorable day. In the evening we returned to Morpeth.

Within a couple of days I was shipped with six of my Dutch cohorts to my very first operational airfield. We arrived in Lasham, Hampshire about 340 miles south of Morpeth and about 35 miles north of Portsmouth. It was very early September of 1943. We were told that we were now incorporated into the 320 (Netherlands) Squadron RAF³⁴. Upon reaching the base, we were assigned to live in a Nissen hut³⁵ which turned out to be quite comfortable. We learned that about a week before our arrival, our squadron leader had been shot down and that the new commander went by the name of Burgerhout³⁶. Upon being assigned to the aircrew, I was fortunate

³⁴ This unit of the Royal Air Force was formed from the personnel of the Royal Netherlands Naval Air Service. It relocated to RAF Lasham on 30 August, 1943 and to RAF Dunsfold on 18 February 1944. After the liberation of Belgium, the squadron was moved to Melsbroek, Belgium on October 18th and on 30 April 1945 to Achmer, Germany. (Wikipedia June 2011)

³⁵ A Nissen hut is a prefabricated steel structure made from a half-cylindrical skin of corrugated steel. (Wikipedia June 2011)

³⁶ Hugo Victor Benjamin Burgerhout (1913-1988)

enough to have been chosen as a gunner in his B25 Mitchell II³⁷. Upon hearing about this, one of my fellow new air-gunners said to me “You Jews always get the best positions.” Although I will never forget this man’s name, I will leave the matter to his conscience. I still find it hard to believe that any of these men who were risking their lives against the Germans could be anti-Semitic and yet there were a few. Thankfully they represented only a small portion of our squadron.

I believe that our squadron maintained 24 operational B25 Mitchells. We had two versions of this aircraft. One type had machine guns located in their top turret and their tail. The aircraft I flew on was a version which held its guns in a top turret and one in the belly of the plane. I was assigned to man the belly turret.

The makeup of my fellow crew members was as follows:

Pilot (and Squadron Leader) :	H. Burgerhout
Observer/Bombadier :	Lieutenant H. van der Kop
Top Gunner :	H. van Lingen
Bottom Gunner :	M. Goudekettering



Above The Burgerhout crew (from left to right) Van Der Kop, Burgerhout, Van Lingen, Goudekettering.

My first non-training flight took place on September 4th, 1943. We were on a non-operational flight and remained within British airspace. The flight gave me an opportunity to acquaint myself with this particular belly gun which differed from the one I had trained in. For this type of turret, I needed to be in a lying position rather than a sitting up stance which I was familiar with.

³⁷ In June 1940, No. 320 Squadron of the Royal Air Force had been formed from personnel formerly serving with the Royal Dutch Naval Air Service who had escaped to England after the German occupation of the Netherlands. Equipped with various British aircraft, No. 320 Squadron flew anti-submarine patrols, convoy escort missions, and performed air-sea rescue duties. They acquired the Mitchell II in September 1943, performing bombing operations over Europe against gun emplacements, railway yards, bridges, troops and other tactical targets. They transitioned to the Mitchell III in 1945.

There were several advantages to being the bottom gunner. It had a good view of any aircraft approaching us from below and I had an unrestricted zone from which I could shoot. The top gunner had a safety mechanism attached to his gun which turned the weapon off if it was aimed near either of the rear twin tails. His view was also limited to an area above the plane and only partially around the plane. An experienced German fighter pilot could take advantage of these weaknesses by attacking at specific angles which would be within our blind spot.

My second flight was also non-operational and took place 18 days later on September 22, 1943.

After several further training exercises, we finally flew our first operational mission on January 5th, 1944. We bombed a special construction works in France at 12:13 p.m. with 12 Mitchells and a squadron of Spitfires to escort us. We dropped 500 pound bombs from heights ranging between 4,800 and 6,500 feet. I flew a total of eight missions during the month of January, 1944.

After each operation the pilot and crew were interrogated so that an official report of our activities could be recorded. To this day I have kept my mission log which we were required to complete. We had an easy time of it for the first few months.



Illustration of 'flak'

The targets were easily reached and there was little flack. As the year progressed however, we got more deeply into Germany where the flak became much more intense.

During this time, we lost quite a few of our planes and we ourselves on several occasions

returned with holes in our aircraft. Fortunately on each occasion the damage was not extreme. In addition to danger from the enemy, we were also vulnerable to mid-air collisions from our own planes.

During cloudy days (and we had plenty of those); we would take off in sequence and try to fly above the clouds to get into formation. It was always a risk that a collision could occur while we were in the middle of a cloud. I remember that on one occasion I looked out and spotted a Mitchell no more than fifty feet away from us. I yelled out a warning to our pilot. I believe that if I hadn't seen that plane, I would not have been here today to tell you about it.

I'd like to reveal a little more about our daily routine while I was on active duty. Every morning when we came into the mess hall, we looked at the postings for the

day on the bulletin board. These were called “battle orders”³⁸ and contained the names of 48 men (twelve crews) who would be on call that day and not permitted to leave the base.

At any time we might hear a voice on the loudspeaker saying ‘All crews on deck!’ which meant that we had to assemble immediately in the operations room where we would be briefed on the destination of our target, weather conditions, how much enemy flack we might be expected to encounter and whether we would be escorted by fighters. The pilots received instructions regarding their best flight paths and our bomb loads. We usually carried eight five hundred pounders, which on occasion were set for delayed action, depending on the target. Under some circumstances we did not drop our bombs on the target. This usually occurred when weather conditions prevented us from finding or seeing the target. To the best of my knowledge we were told never to land with delayed action bombs aboard, so we generally dropped them into the English Channel to explode harmlessly. In some instances this was not possible. We would inform the control tower; and since it was too dangerous to drop these delayed action bombs over land, we were instructed to land with these bombs onboard. This was an uncomfortable predicament for us. If the landing was not smooth, the bombs had a chance of exploding. Once we landed, we could still not guarantee that one of the delayed action bombs might explode within a short period of time. Under these conditions, you can understand why we got out of the plane as quickly as possible. I’m sure the ground crew would be looking at their watches as well, before approaching our plane. To the best of my knowledge, no plane in our squadron had ever exploded in this manner. Although many bombers were escorted by fighter planes, we had fewer escorts since most of the enemy aircraft were now defending German air space. The air over France and the Benelux countries was, by this time,

³⁸ The following battle order of 48 men was taken from the book ‘320 R.A.F. Memorial 1940-1945’, by J.P. Kloos. It represents a typical day’s listing (May, 21, 1944) and includes on the first row, ‘Cpl. Goudekettering’, as an air gunner on Cdr. Burgerhout’s aircraft. Each row represents the four member crew. The first column indicates the pilot, the second represents the navigator/bomber and the third and fourth represent the lower and upper air gunners, respectively.

Assigned Letter	KONINKLIJKE MARINE. BATTLE-ORDER 21 Mei 1944			
E.	Cdr. Burgerhout	S/Lt.v.d.Kop	Cpl. Goudekettering	S/Maj.v.Lingen
P.	S/Lt. Verhey	Sgt. Donath	Cpl. Schuyt	Sgt. Coeb.v.d.Braak
J.	Lt. Van Emden	S/Lt. Maas	Sgt. Lieuwen	Cpl. Doorenbos
R.	S/Lt. Ysselstein	S/Lt. Mulder	Sgt. Engels	Sgt. Mensingh
B.	Lt. Dobson	S/Lt. Meester	Sgt. Stoffels	Sgt. Hagen
T.	Lt. Van de Burg	S/Lt. Pieters	Sgt. Wams	Sgt. Hofman
H.	Lt. Stenvert	Lt. Clay	Cpl. Brouwers	Cpl. V.Viegen
A.	S/Lt. Laamens	S/Lt. Quak	Sgt. de Bruyn	Sgt. V.Gelderen
D.	Sgt. K. Vos	Sgt de Groot	Cpl. Fransen	Cpl. Almekinders
G.	Lt. Vijzelaar	Sgt. Anema	Cpl. Koymans	S/Lt. Morpurgo
K.	S/Lt. den Tex B.	S/Lt. Luschen	Cpl. de Hollander	Cpl. Vellemen
C.	Sgt. Otten	Sgt. Kloos	Sgt. de Jong	Sgt. Lub
Res. Navigator: S/Lt. Wallis de Vries Off. V.d. Wacht Lt. v. Leeuwen				

largely controlled by the allies. Once we started the engines, we would line up on the tarmac and take off one at a time every two to three minutes. We would gain height as we circled until all twelve aircraft were aloft. We then got into a formation which usually consisted of two boxes having six planes apiece. This part of the trip could be a little hair-raising in cloudy weather. After we were all in formation, we began to fly towards our target. We would often make a quick directional change just before dropping our bombs in order to confuse the enemy as to our final destination. From experience, my crew pilot, Burgerhout would weave left and right to avoid being hit by anti-aircraft fire and courageously headed into areas of heavy flack since he knew that this would not be anticipated by the enemy below us. His skill paid off since we never received a serious hit although on a few occasions after we landed, we found several large and small holes in the plane from the exploding shrapnel.

I have often been asked how I felt before taking off on a mission and whether I was afraid. Looking back I can honestly say that I felt little fear during most of the missions. I did however try to curl up as much as possible to reduce the area that was exposed to enemy fire. I mentioned earlier that on one night flight, we came upon an unknown aircraft. On that occasion I definitely felt fear. My most fearful moment of the war occurred when I was at the Melsbroek Airport in the middle of an attack which I described more fully later in this writing by fifty or so German fighters. It would have been pretty ironic had my last day on earth taken place one day after I completed my 70 missions and thought that I was now safe! Our squadron was both very lucky and very skilled since after 70 operations, to the best of my recollection, we lost only one plane and its crew in our formation. I did however lose many friends in the squadron who were not part of our formation. The heaviest flack occurred during the last eight to ten flights, just before the liberation of France and Holland in November and December of 1944 which I assume was a sign of German desperation.

In another instance of blind luck; after flying toward our bombing destination, our pilot (Burgerhout) discovered halfway there, that our communication equipment was out of order. Since we were the lead plane, it was essential for that equipment to work in order to keep all the other planes in formation. Burgerhout provided a hand signal to the plane flying beside us to take over the leading formation position. We had to turn around and return to base. The lead plane that took our spot received a direct hit to its bomb bay creating a tremendous explosion destroying that plane and severely damaging the others. Fortunately those other planes were able to limp back to base. I obviously can't say for certain that our radio failure saved our lives, but here was an example of fate at work.

If the weather was decent and two targets were in close proximity to the base, we would fly two missions in one day. The targets would include ammunition depots, airports, factories and various other tactical targets. Missions for the following day would be posted and they usually included all of the 12 crews (48 men) in the squadron. This left us no time to leave the base.

Upon receiving the battle order, we would get dressed in battle gear and assemble in a large Nissen hut for a briefing. We would all be given an emergency package containing a land map of the terrain, and some money in French, German and Dutch currencies. Fortunately I never had to use one of these packages. We were then transported to our awaiting Mitchells. Being part of the Squadron Leader's crew³⁹ allowed me to ride with my crewmates in a car, while the other crews arrived by truck transport. We were often kidded about this and as I mentioned previously, it was not always in fun.

The Mitchell which I flew on had the nick-name "Sugar" and we would refer to it as the letter "S". We would climb aboard by walking underneath the plane and opening a 40 inch square door. Pulling down the ladder, our pilot and observer would go through the front of the plane to their cabin. We two gunners (Top gunner first) would then have to crawl through a space no more than a foot high, pushing our parachutes ahead of us. Hans would go into his top turret and I would go into our belly turret. After we all put on our radio headsets the pilot would power up the plane and we would begin rolling. Before each take-off, the ground crew would stand with their thumbs up, wishing us luck.

If the weather was clear and we had no difficulty to assemble our box formation of six aircraft⁴⁰, we would fly directly toward the continent.

³⁹ I received a request in 1999 from the Netherlands National Archives Office, to tell them about my war experience. I sent them several pages of information and I asked them if they might show me any documents they might have, to authenticate my story. Included in their information were the records of my stay at the gunnery school in Morpeth. I was surprised to learn that I had received the highest score of my class. This may have explained why I was chosen by the squadron leader to become one of his crew.

⁴⁰ A 1943 survey by the U.S. Air Corps found that over half the bombers shot down by the Germans had left the protection of the main formation. To address this problem, the United States developed the staggered *combat box* formation where all the bombers could safely cover any others in their formation with their machine guns, making them a dangerous target to engage by enemy fighters. However, the use of this rigid formation meant that individual aircraft could not engage in evasive manoeuvres: they had to always fly in a straight line, which made them vulnerable to the German flak. Additionally, German fighter aircraft later used the tactic of high speed strafing passes rather than engaging with individual aircraft to inflict damage with minimum risk.

The standard fighting unit, early in World War II, for the British Royal Air Force was the V shaped "vic". This involved one lead plane and two wingmen, with the wingmen flying very close to the sides and slightly behind the lead plane to form the V shape. Typically four vics would fly together one after another to form a squadron. The problem with the vics were the formations were so tight that the wingmen had to constantly be watching the lead plane or risk running into them. This left only the lead plane to search the skies for enemy planes. After many complaints from the British pilots of the vics not being the optimal flying formation, the RAF Fighter Command changed the squadron formation so the fourth vic would weave back and forth theoretically giving them a better field of view. This resulted in the "weavers" as they were called being picked off because the German fighters could attack them and get away before the rest of the squadron could leave formation and be ready for a counterattack. The Germans called these Vics *Idiotenreihen* ("rows of idiots"). Later in the war the RAF Fighter Command abandoned the Vic formations in favour of the Finger-four formation that the German Air Force (Luftwaffe) used. (Wikipedia June 2011)

Our plane would be fully loaded with armament and ready for engagement. Upon reaching the enemy coastline, our job was to keep a lookout for enemy fighters. Sometimes we were accompanied by another bomber squadron and we would at times be escorted by RAF spitfires. Getting close to the target often meant facing enemy flak⁴¹. It wasn't too severe in the first two months of our flights, but worsened afterwards. As an added precaution we wore a Flak jacket⁴². It proved to be too bulky to actually wear it, so we could either sit on it or lay on it. I chose to lay on it since that seemed the best protection for my vital organs!

Most of our flights took one and a half to two hours to complete. We were paid a handsome extra six shillings per hour over and above our regular pay, for the time we were airborne. In February of 1944 I received a promotion to the rank of Corporal and along with it came a slight pay increase. This step up also allowed me to wear a better uniform with black pants and a cap. The one piece of clothing that stayed the same was my shirt which had blue and white horizontal stripes. You'll notice on one of the photos of me that I'm wearing a white scarf. This wasn't meant to make me look more dashing; it was there to hide my old shirt!

Later in the month of February the squadron was transferred to a new airfield located in Dunsfold, Godalming located about 30 miles east of our Lasham base. We no longer had our comfortable Nissen huts, but our barracks consisted of tents, each holding two cots. I guess they wanted to toughen us up a bit!

In May 1944 we received additional training to prepare us for night flying. Although most of the pilots needed the extra training, I was fortunate that Burgerhout (our pilot) had plenty of experience after flying for 15 years under all conditions. During my flight time, several of the other planes were badly damaged or their crew members killed as a result of poorly trained pilots. Although I only flew three night missions, they all stand out in my mind because each time I thought they would be the death of me. Instead of my belly gun, I was assigned to man a 50 calibre tail gun. I was given a special outer suit which should have kept me warm since it was attached to an electric cable. Even with this on, it was horribly cold.

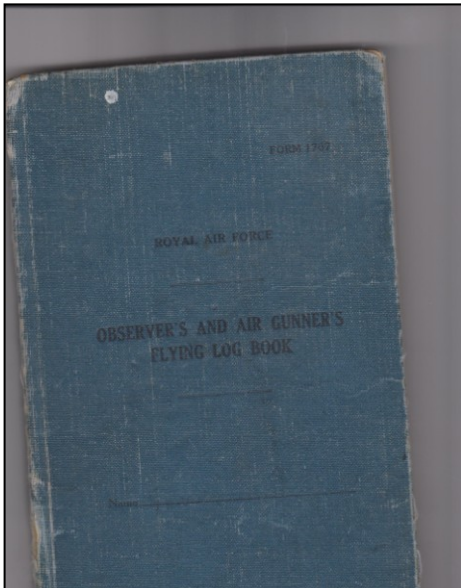
Returning to base on one night flight, I spotted what looked like a plane approaching. It was getting closer and closer. My aircraft recognition course that I attended in Morpeth would now come into play.

This time, however, it wasn't just for practice; this time it was life or death! It was pitch dark and all I could see was its silhouette. It had twin tails just like our

⁴¹ Flak is an abbreviation for the German word for anti-aircraft gun, "Fliegerabwehrkanone".(Wikipedia June, 2011)

⁴² The jacket was developed by the Wilkinson Sword Company during the second world war intended to protect RAF air personnel from flying debris and shrapnel thrown by German anti-aircraft guns' high explosive shells.(Wikipedia June 2011)

Mitchells, but then so did the Dornier Do 17⁴³, a German plane! What to do? Both I and Hans van Lingen (our other gunner) yelled a warning to Burgerhout of an approaching plane, but we also let him know that it was unidentifiable as friend or foe. Burgerhout shouted the order to us in Dutch. “Schiet hem voor zijn raap” which roughly translated into “shoot the bastard”. I was about to pull the trigger when our observer, Hans van der Kop, shot a signal pistol from the plane igniting the air in yellow and green. These were our recognition colours for the day and it was a way to identify ourselves. The plane suddenly veered away. Fortunately I didn’t have to fire a shot but I nearly wet my pants! I’ll never forget that night. To this day I have never discovered what that plane was doing there or who it belonged to. All I know is that I could not have been happier when our plane finally reached base and touched down.



M. Goudeketter's Log Book recording all flights taken during the war

I have added in this fourth edition, a summary of my operational tour of duty, by referring to my “OBSERVER’S AND AIR GUNNER’S FLYING LOG BOOK”⁴⁴.

The log book was issued to each crew member by the Royal Air Force to record for each flight, the date and time that the mission occurred, who piloted the plane, the purpose of the mission, the results, and the total hours flown.

The first page certifies that I, M. Goudeketter, serial No. 90613Z had qualified as Air Gunner on September 10th 1943.

RESULTS OF AB INITIO GUNNERY COURSE			
No. 4 AIR GUNNERS SCHOOL			
Period of Course - 29.9.43 - 9.10.43			
EXERCISE	SCORES	% MARK	TYPE OF MARK
200 yds. Range	100	100	100
Cine-Film	100	100	100
Air to Sea	100	100	100
F.R.B.	100	100	100
F.R.T.D.	100	100	100
F.R.R.S.T.	100	100	100
F.R.R.S.T. (S)	100	100	100
Flying Time	18 hrs 35 mins	Exam 51	
REMARKS -		Pass/Fail	
Theory - Average			
Air-Firing - Average			
General - Good and hardworking			
Will be a very good 1st			
		CHIEF INSTRUCTOR	

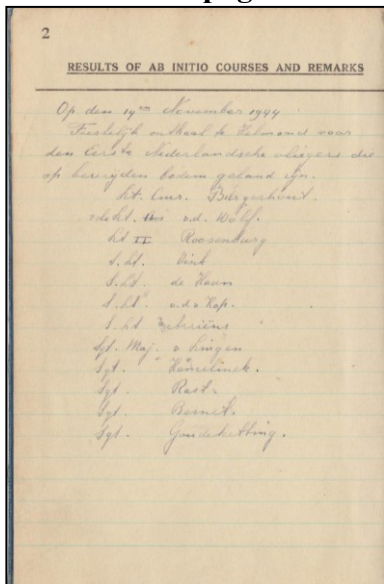
Certificates of Qualification.	
(to be filled in as appropriate)	
1. This is to certify that M. Goudeketter, serial No. 90613Z, has qualified as Air Gunner with effect from 9.10.43. Date 9.10.43. Unit	
2. This is to certify that M. Goudeketter, serial No. 90613Z, has qualified as Air Gunner with effect from 9.10.43. Date 9.10.43. Unit	
3. This is to certify that M. Goudeketter, serial No. 90613Z, has qualified as Air Gunner with effect from 9.10.43. Date 9.10.43. Unit	
4. This is to certify that M. Goudeketter, serial No. 90613Z, has qualified as Air Gunner with effect from 9.10.43. Date 9.10.43. Unit	

First pages of M. Goudeketter's Log Book indicating the results of his Gunnery training

⁴³ The Dornier Do 17 was a World War II German light bomber which was so fast that it could outrun defending fighter aircraft. (Wikipedia June 2011)

⁴⁴ The log book also has printed on its cover, ‘FORM 1767’ and below is printed ‘NAME’, followed by an underline with GOUDEKETTING hand written over the line.

The second page describes my results in the gunnery training course, indicating



Inside M. Goudekett's Log book are the names of the three crews that landed at Helmond

18.5 hours of practise flying time and 81% on my exam. Under 'Remarks', the chief instructor wrote that I was "Kean and hard-working, will be a very good air-gunner".

The next page was written in Dutch by one of the officials in Helmond, who presided over the celebration of three of the first allied planes to land on Dutch soil after the liberation. It also recorded the names of the twelve crew members of the three planes, including myself.

The first entries were 15 training flights dated from September 16th, 1943 until October 6th, 1943 and totalling 18.35 hours. All the flights were taken aboard an Avro Anson or a Hudson aircraft at the Morpeth base. The logs describe the purpose of each flight, including practise with tracers, using a camera to enable instructors to see the accuracy of the hits of the

gun on the target, and of course how to use the machine gun. After this training and receiving my wings, I relocated to the Lasham base.

December 1944					Time carried forward — 180.05 9.25	
Date	Hour	Aircraft Type and No.	Pilot	Duty	Remarks (including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Flying Time Day Night
2	14.22	Morven S. Cms. Brugershead	Lt. J. van der Wal	Op. H.S.	0800 dropped at Dambard. Ultimatum to ferry. If no surrender other bombing	1.55 68
5	08.12	Morven S. Cms. Brugershead	Lt. J. van der Wal	Op. H.S.	0800 dropped at ammo-dump. Aachen (Germany) some fled	1.40 69
15		S. Cms. Brugershead	Lt. J. van der Wal	Op. H.S.	Attack at "Ludphen" Holland. Morline, heavy fled	2.20 70
Total hrs. flown Dec. 1944: 6.00					Total Number of ops. 40 " " " of ops. hrs. 196.00 Total Number of hrs. flown 186.00 9.25	
Goudekett					Certified correct By Cms. Brugershead	
					Total Time — 186.00 9.25	

Sample of Log Book entries from December 1944

The first non-training flight took place on October

13th, 1943 and consisted of an hour and a half of local flying to familiarize each of us with the Mitchel aircraft. This was the type of bomber that I would fly in for the remainder of the war. For three more days, from November 3rd, 1943 until November 6th, 5 more flights

were taken in a non-combat capacity to practice air-firing and camera use.

Four more flights were made in December 1943, beginning on December 4th and ending on December 31st.

The second flight on December 22nd was piloted by Burgerhout who would remain as the pilot on each of my seventy operational flights, which are briefly summarized below:⁴⁵

Operations:

1. *Dec 30, 1943-Target: "Le Pouy Ferme" reached at 11:45 AM
12 Mitchells escorted by two Spitfires- Log-book of M. Goudekettering indicated that their aircraft dropped 8 -500 lb. bombs with good results.
Since weather became misty and cloudy, mission cut short*
2. *Dec 31, 1943-Target: "Bois de Waripel" (Special construction works)
12 Mitchells escorted by two Spitfires-500 lb. bombs dropped from 8000 feet, landing south, south-east and west of target-Log book indicates some flac*
3. *January 4, 1944-Target: "Yvrench/Bois de Waripel" (Special construction works)
12 Mitchells-500 lb. bombs dropped at 15:16 from a height of 5000/6000 ft. Good results, no flac encountered- Log book indicates no flac*
4. *January 5th, 1944-Target: Campneusville (Special construction works)
12 Mitchells escorted by Spitfires
500 lb. bombs dropped at 12:13 from a height of 4800/6500 ft.*
5. *January 6th, 1944-Target: Pommerval
12 Mitchells escorted by Spitfires
Over target at 11:55 a height of 7000 ft.
No bombs dropped due to poor weather conditions with clouds at 5000 ft.*
6. *January 21st, 1944 Target: Marduenneville (Construction works)
11 Mitchells escorted by Spitfires
Over target at 9:52 at a height of 7000 ft.
4 planes (including 'Sugar') were not in a good position for bombing and dropped no bombs
One series of bombs directly hit target*
7. *January 24th, 1944 Flight aborted -Total 1.35 hrs of flight time*
8. *January 25th, 1944 Target: Bois D'enfer (Construction works)
12 Mitchells no escorts due to missed rendezvous
Travelled north along French coast, flew toward Bologne, then returned on account of poor weather*
9. *January 25th, 1944 Target: Lostebarne-Ardres (Construction works)
6 Mitchells escorted by Spitfires
Over target at 16.00 at a height of 10000 ft. Very heavy flac
One series of bombs struck the village of Landretun-les-Ardres. The rest of the bombs fell in front of the target Log book notes very heavy flac*
10. *February 8th, 1944 Target: Bois de Justice (Construction works)
14 Mitchells escorted by Spitfires
Over target at 11:14 at a height of 8000 ft. Medium flac Good results. Log book notes very heavy flac*
11. *February 9th, 1944 Target: Bois de Justice (Construction works)
12 Mitchells escorted by Spitfires Over target at 9:43 at a height of 9000 ft. Very heavy flac
Sugar was damaged along with 4 other Mitchells*
12. *February 15th, 1944 Target: Flottemanville, Hague, near Cherbourg (Construction works)
12 Mitchells escorted by Spitfires
Over target at 12.19 at a height of 12500/13000 ft. Heavy flac*

⁴⁵ All information was derived from the 320 R.A.F. Memorial 1940-1945 by J.P Kloos and the Log book of M. Goudekettering

8 Mitchells damaged and 1 had to dump bombs into to channel before landing

13. *February 25th,1944 Target: Moyenville(Construction works)
12 Mitchells escorted by Typhoons.
Over target at 12.32 at a height of 9000/10000 ft. no flac*
 14. *February 28th,1944 Target: Le Groseillier(Construction works)
12 Mitchells escorted by Typhoons
Over target at 14.07 at a height of 8700/9500 ft. light flac
Excellent results*
 15. *February 29th,1944 Target: Beauvoir(Construction works) 12 Mitchells
escorted by Spitfire. Mission aborted*
 16. *March 3,1944 Target:Lingham
12 Mitchells escorted by Typhoons Mission Aborted*
 17. *March 4,1944 Target:Bois-Rempire Log book notes no flac*
 18. *March 23,1944 Target:Marshall Yards at 'Creil' Near Paris*
 19. *Match 26,1944 12 Mitchells escorted by Spitfires March 4,1944 Target: Ijmuiden E-boat
pens .Over target at 11.01 at a height of 11000 ft. Sugar aborted due to communication
equipment failure, 3 Mitchells hit with flac*
 20. *April 12,1944 Target: Charlerois Log book notes no flac*
 21. *April 18,1944 Target: Fecamp Log book notes light flac*
 22. *April 19,1944 Target: gun positions atVacquerette Log book notes no flac*
 23. *April 21,1944 Target: Army-Air force co-op*
 24. *April 27,1944 Target: gun positions at St. Marie les Bois*
 25. *April 28,1944 Target: Marshall Yards Near Paris*
 26. *April 30,1944 Target: Near Montreuil*
 27. *April 30,1944 Target: Marshall yards*
 28. *May 2,1944 Target: Marshall yards at Cambray Log book notes medium flac*
 29. *May 2,1944 Target: Marshall yards at Namur Log book notes no flac*
 30. *May 19,1944 Target: Coastal gun positions at Sungathe Near Calais*
 31. *May 20,1944 Target: Aerodrome Creil*
 32. *May 20,1944 Target: Coastal gun positions at Cabourg*
 33. *May 25,1944 Target: air-field-Baufee-overshoot*
 34. *May 27,1944 Target: coastal gun positions at Le Messeuil*
 35. *May 28,1944 Target: Attack on Gun positions at 'Rue'*
 36. *May 28,1944 Target: La Hague near Cherbourg*
 37. *May 29,1944 Target: Marshall yards at Girors*
- POST- D-Day (June 6, 1944)*
38. *June 10,1944 Target: Night operation La Hayne du Puits*
 39. *June 10,1944 Target: Attack on Panzer headquarters at La Caine*
 40. *June 12,1944 Target: Attack on Panzer headquarters at Forest de Grimbourg-heavy flac-
aircraft damaged*
 41. *June 13,1944 Target: Attack on Bois de Berville: Panzer headquarters*
 42. *June 14,1944 Target: Attack on Munition and petro dumps at Conde sur Vire-failed*
 43. *June 14,1944 Target: Attack on Munition and petro dumps at Conde sur Vire-night- op*
 44. *June 15,1944 Target: St. Vigas Mareset Panzer headquarters*
 45. *June 16,1944 Target: Panzer divisions and munition dumps near Hanson Log book notes no
flac*
 46. *June 20,1944 Target: aborted-Inter-telephone problems*
 47. *September 8,1944 Target: Heavy gun positions at Boulogne Log book notes intensive flac*
 48. *September 12,1944 Target: Railways at Walcherem near Woensdrecht (Holland) Log book
notes no flac*
 49. *September 13,1944 Target: Boulogne Log book notes light flac*
 50. *September 15,1944 Target: ferry boat flushing, Olissingen Holland*
 51. *September 16,1944 Target: Gun positions at Boulogne Log book notes no flac*
 52. *September 17,1944 Target: Military Barracks at Ede ,Holland*

53. *September 21,1944 Target: Boulogne Log book notes no flac*
54. *September 23,1944 Target: Calais Log book notes no flac*
55. *September 26,1944 Target: Harbour of Breskens near Flushing Log book notes some flac*
56. *September 27,1944 Target: attack on Roch (Germany)*
57. *September 30,1944 Target: Railway yards at Roch Log book notes no flac*
58. *October 3,1944 Target: Wood near Emmerick (Germany)*
59. *October 21,1944 Target: Hedel near S'Hertogenbosch*
60. *October 21,1944 Target: West Kappelle (Holland)*
61. *October 28,1944 Target: Bridge at Venlo Holland Log book notes heavy flac*
62. *October 29,1944 Target: Bridge at Venlo Holland Log book notes heavy flac*
63. *November 4,1944 Target: Bridge at Venlo Holland Log book notes heavy flac*
64. *November 4,1944 Target: Bridge at Venlo Holland -good results Log book notes heavy flac*
65. *November 11,1944 Target: Railway yards Oldensvaal Holland*
66. *November 19,1944 Target: Venlo Log book notes heavy flac*
67. *November 30,1944 Target: Dunkirk Log book notes no flac*
68. *December 2,1944 Target: 8 x 500 lb bombs dropped at Dunkirk with note :If no surrender-more bombing to follow*
69. *December 5,1944 Target: Aachen Germany Log book notes some flac*
70. *December 15,1944 Target: Hutphen Holland Log book notes heavy flac*

Here follows a brief account of the 320 (Dutch) Squadron from its formation to the date it was disbanded.⁴⁶

After the German invasion of Holland in 1940, some Dutchmen who had escaped, made their way to Britain and volunteered their services to the allies, including twenty-seven navy aircraft and naval airmen. The aircraft were Fokker T V111-W's. These were then formed into the 320 Squadron and posted to Pembroke Dock in Wales on June 1,1940.

The squadron moved to Leuchars on October 1st, 1941 and abandoned their Fokkers due to a shortage of spare parts. These planes were replaced on October 15th with their first Hudson aircraft. On January 18, 1941, 321 Squadron, which had Anson aircraft, combined with 320 to form the 'new' 320 squadron. At this time the operations were limited to training, convoy patrols and anti-shipping operations over the North Sea.

On April 21, 1942 the Squadron transferred to Bircham Newton. Then on March 15, 1943 the Squadron joined 2 (Light Bomber) Group at Methwold where it received its first two Mitchells. These planes were bought by the Dutch government in exile which it placed at the disposal of the RAF. Its first bombing mission occurred in July, 1943, as an attack on the Dornier works in Flushing. The unit moved to Lasham on August 30th, 1943; to Dunsfold on February 18th, 1944; Belgium October 18th, 1944, Achmer on April 30th, 1945 and flew its final raid of the war on May 2,1945 with twelve aircraft on Itzehoe. The unit was transferred to Dutch naval control on Aug 2, 1945 and returned to England at Fersfield eight days later. The unit was disbanded in 2005 due to budget cuts.

⁴⁶ Wikipedia (September 2012), No. 320 Squadron RAF

While stationed in Dunsfold, I received some information from my uncle Kobus about my uncle Joop, his son, Leo, and son-in law, Joop. The Spanish embassy assisted them in finding a ship which brought the three of them to Canada from where I had last seen them in Spain. After several months in Canada, my uncle went on to Cuba where he remained for the duration of the war. He practised as a diamond-cutter to earn his living while he was there. This had been his original profession in Belgium before the depression forced him to enter the fish business.

My cousin, Leo, and my cousin Bep's husband, Joop, were sent from Canada to England where they were now enrolled in a Dutch battalion by the name of Princess Irene Brigade stationed in Wolverhampton.

Whenever I had leave to visit London, I would stop in to visit my uncle Kobus. I also met up with his older daughter, Tina, and her husband, Lutz. I remember having worked for Lutz when I was 14 years old in Ymuiden, Holland, close to my birthplace. Then there was my cousin Lea (uncle Kobus' youngest daughter). She served as a driver WAC and when she wasn't working and I happened to be in London, she would often teach me some dance moves. We used a portable



Mark II Sten Gun

gramophone that we wound up by hand to listen to the latest 78 's. (Records turning at a speed of 78 revolutions per minute) I sometimes visited the large dance ballrooms which were popular in London throughout the war. Most of the guys there were military personnel. With my improved moves, I found it a lot easier to find a dancing partner than back at our squadron.

Sometime later that month the paymaster told me to call a phone number that he had been given. It was my uncle Kobus. He told me that there had been an accident in Wolverhampton and that my cousin Leo was in the hospital with a bullet wound to his head. Apparently while standing guard, his Sten gun⁴⁷ fell and accidentally discharged. I was unable to visit him. The doctors were able to save his life, but he lost one eye. He was later discharged from the brigade and I believe he spent the remainder of the war living with my uncle Kobus.

I befriended another Jewish lad by the name of Sal Muller while I was at the base. When we were permitted to leave base, the two of us would visit a small pub located about half a mile away. Although I was never a big drinker, I began to take a liking for cherry brandy.

The base had ten or twelve crew members who owned motorcycles. Unfortunately they often changed hands when their owners were shot down. The orphaned bike would then be sold to another airman. This is how it came about that I picked up a 1933 Harley Davidson. Although I had never driven anything like it, I quickly caught on. There were only a couple of minor problems with the motorcycle; the

⁴⁷ The Sten gun was a family of 9 mm submachine guns used extensively by British and commonwealth forces throughout World war two and The Korean war. (Wikipedia -Sten June 2011)

brakes were useless and the muffler was gone, making it as noisy as all hell. Gas was no problem. We used aviation fuel which, incidentally, holds a much higher octane level. While driving this little beast, one would be taking a chance on their life. I remember one evening taking my buddy, Sal, along on the bike for a drink at the pub. I must have had one cherry brandy too many, because I woke up from my cot the following morning and found the bike parked by the tent post.

Neither I nor Sal could remember how or when we got back to base. I suspect that by now the bike was beginning to like me and carried me back on its own.

My friend, Sal, had a girlfriend in London. One day when we had a two day leave, he asked me to come along and meet her. We travelled there by train. Sal knew London quite well and it didn't take too long to find his girlfriend's house. She lived with her parents and sister. Her sister's name was Joyce and I fell in love in an instant. Fortunately for me, she returned the favour. I saw her for another few months whenever I had a day or two off. It wasn't long after that, when I experienced the grief of another girl who had lost her sweetheart. I was determined for that not to happen to Joyce⁴⁸ so before things got too serious between us, I called her and broke off our relationship.

In the first week of June 1944 I asked my squadron leader for a week off and got it. I filled the beast's tank to the brim and also managed to find a few petrol coupons that I could use at a later date. I decided to go to the Lake District.⁴⁹ Since this took place about 65 years ago, I can't remember exactly where I ended up. I do know that I must have travelled a fair distance since my shoes were completely worn out. I used them as my brake system when I needed to stop the bike!

At about seven in the evening of my first day I stopped at a small village. I asked a man who was nearby whether he knew of a hotel in the area. He noticed my uniform and seeing that I was from another country, asked about me. He explained that there were no hotels in the area but that if I could drive him home, he and his wife would be happy to put me up for the night. When I told him that I wanted to pay him for his offer, he refused to hear of it. They offered me a clean and tidy room in their attic which held a comfortable bed. After washing up, I came downstairs. I was in the midst of again thanking them for their hospitality when a young lady stepped into the house. She was their daughter and she was gorgeous! While having dinner there



Glenridding, Cumbria, England
(Wikipedia Lake District June, 2011)

⁴⁸ Maurice was destined to renew his friendship with Joyce almost 50 years later.

⁴⁹ The Lake District is a large recreational area approximately 100 miles north of Manchester, bordering on Britain's West Coast and is famous for its lakes and its mountains. It is situated approximately 300 miles North-West of the base at Dunsfold. (Seen from Google map June 2011)

that Saturday afternoon, I answered their many questions. I explained to them that I was on a one week leave and wanted to visit the Lake District where they lived since I had been told so many good things about the area. Anna (her true name I shall keep to myself) offered to show me around.

Talk about a dream coming true! It was on or about June 2nd, 1944 when she stepped on my bike, placing her lovely arms around my waist and guided me towards the beautiful landscape surrounded by mountains and lakes. Her mother had prepared a basket of food and drinks for our “picnic”. Anna found us a beautiful resting spot looking down at a quiet lake in the company of only ourselves and the birds. I’m sure you think you know what’s coming next but you’d be wrong. As usual, although I had again fallen head over heels for a girl, I was still extremely shy and to this day I still regret not even attempting to kiss her. I guess this proves that my story is no novel!

The image of our picnic is still grafted into to my memory. I stayed with the family for another two days. I went on a few more outings and after dinner one evening we heard about the Normandy invasion on the radio.



A typical British family shown listening to the radio circa 1943 (From June, 2011 Wikipedia)



Churchill speaking on BBC radio



Large landing craft convoy crosses the English Channel on 6 June 1944 (From June, 2011 Wikipedia)

The allied forces had landed in Normandy! That was June 6th, 1944 and I was scheduled to be back at my base by June the 8th. Early the next morning, I again thanked the family for their kindness. “Anna” had a tear in her eye and I remember giving her a kiss on her cheek before mounting my bike for the return trip. I drove south and made it as far as Leeds before my petrol ran out. Since I had used up the last of my coupons I had no other choice than to sell my motorcycle which I had become most fond of. I found a garage that

was willing to take the beloved bike off my hands. My next flight took place in the early evening of June 10th. It was an incredible sight. On the channel between England and France I saw a multitude of ships and aircraft. We were one of 17 Mitchells who were scheduled to attack a German Panzer division at Lacaine, France.⁵⁰ The flak above our target was incredibly intense.

We were surrounded by black puffs of exploding 88mm. shells. Eighteen members of the German HQ staff were known to have died, including the chief of staff, General Major Sigismund-Helmut von Dawans; while the group's commander, General Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg, was wounded. I flew a total of 9 missions in June 1944, encountering a great deal of Flak on most of them.



BELGIUM

Oct 18 1944-March 25 1945



Flyer's Cross medal

On October 18th, 1944 we relocated our squadron's base to Melsbroek, Belgium, shortly after the country had been liberated in September. It was only a one hour flight between our base at Dunsfold and this new one in Belgium, but for me, the trip took three years. Upon arrival in Belgium, all flying personnel were issued a revolver which we were expected to carry with us at all times. We were housed a couple of miles from the base in a village named Zaventum. All of the flying personnel were lodged in a former nun's residence. Each room held two of us and the accommodation was quite comfortable. We would be transported back to the airfield each time we were called to duty.

During that month, Queen Wilhelmina paid the squadron a visit. Up to then, I had already flown 58 missions. She pinned upon each crew member the equivalent

⁵⁰ The attack resulted in the wounding of the Panzer Group Commander, the breakdown of German communications and the withdrawal of the Headquarters to Paris. The raid included 40 rocket-armed Typhoons and 61 Mitchells which dropped 500 lb. bombs from 12,000 ft. On June 9th 1944 three days after the Normandy landings, the Headquarters location at Chateau La Caine was revealed to British intelligence by deciphering of German signals traffic. (Wikipedia, June 2011)



of the British Distinguished Flying Cross. In Dutch this was called the “Fliegerskruis” (Flyer’s cross).

Our entire conversation consisted of her Majesty asking me what I did on the aircraft, to which I replied that I was an air gunner. That was my fifteen seconds of fame. Then after nodding, she moved on to the next man.

On one of our later missions, my friend Sal’s aircraft was hit and managed to limp back to base. Sal received a non-critical shrapnel injury, but his bottom gunner wasn’t so lucky and died in Sal’s arms. This

became Sal’s last flight. He was sent to Hospital in London after thirty-five missions and was posted in a non-combat role at the Naval Air service Headquarters.



Allied Paratroopers landing over the Netherlands during operation Market Garden (June 2011, Wikipedia)

Brussels was only a twenty minute tram ride from our little village of Zaventem. I was extremely interested to see what Brussels was like after so many years away. My first stop was to Rue Otlet. I saw a little shop where I used to buy my paper and cigarettes. The same owner was there to greet me and we talked for a bit. I asked him if he knew anything about our previous home and he didn’t, so I next went to Chaussée de Wavre, where my parents lived. I saw the building and looked

through the window of the store front. It looked very messy and uninhabited. I then went to see the family of my sister-in law, Maria. They were extremely pleased to see me since they were hoping for news of their daughter. I told them all that had

happened but that I hadn't seen their daughter since I left France⁵¹. This was of course very disappointing for them since they also had not heard from her. Unfortunately, it was time to return to my base and I had to say good bye.

Although the Allied Forces were gaining in strength on a daily basis, the German flak was becoming more intense in their struggle to prevent defeat. Two of my next flights were intended to blow up a bridge in the town of Venlo, Holland as part of Operation Market Garden. In spite of two attempts we were unable to inflict any damage on the bridge.



People of Eindhoven welcoming allied troops (Wikipedia June 2011)

The town of Eindhoven, where I was brought up as a child was liberated on September 19th 1944. On November 14th 1944, three of our Mitchells commanded by Burgerhout landed in the city of Eindhoven. To the best of my knowledge, our three aircraft were the first to touch down in the liberated portion of Holland. You might imagine how I felt that day; not only had I left Holland and escaped from the Germans, but I had the honour of participating in the liberation of my own country. We were

then driven to the town of Helmond, a few kilometres east of Eindhoven where we were to be greeted in a liberation ceremony.



M. Goudekette (far right) with all 16 crew members after landing of Mitchell planes in Eindhoven

I will now quote from a book written by my crew mate (Observer Lt. Hans van der Kop).⁵²

.....November 14th was a drizzly day.

In the afternoon we flew to Eindhoven in three aircraft to celebrate the return of the Flying Dutchmen to their country at Helmond. Group Captain Davout, RCAF greeted us and was to be our host after the ceremony at

Helmond ended. Soon we were ushered into a bus pulling a gas generator which provided the engine power. On our way we had to stop to keep the fire for the

⁵¹ Maria did survive the war. Both she and Bep Kloots (Bas) were imprisoned in the same concentration camp. Maria and her husband Leo Bas were reunited and set up house in Brussels, Belgium.

⁵² Van der Kop, Hans. The Flying Dutchman: An Exciting True Story of War in the Air. Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens Ltd. 1985 ISBN 0-85059-755-2

generator going. While the driver and the engineer were busy poking, curious onlookers came to talk to us. Many of them were amazed that we spoke Dutch and were their countrymen. We found the streets in Helmond lined with children waving little flags.



Helmond Castle

Nearer the castle, where the celebration was to take place, the number of people increased to a massive crowd. When our accompanying official asked us to get out, I found myself among them and felt a bit silly when they cheered. Next to me was Harry Nienhuis, who said: 'What a crowd; but my God what a smell!' Only then did I become aware that we were surrounded by B.O. Harry looked at me and said he didn't feel too well. Suddenly I recalled that the liberated people hadn't seen any soap in the last year of the war.

I told him this but he couldn't take it and ran away, sick. In the middle of the courtyard we were lined up, then introduced to various officials. The deputy mayor, in a beautiful pre-war uniform, and the bishop were the most striking figures amongst those greeting us. After the introductions a dozen standard bearers appeared and carried out a flag-waving ceremony a traditional honour dating back to mediaeval times.

The man nearest to me swung his flag with such fervour it made me forget I was standing there in the bitter cold, wearing only a battledress. Bill Arriens, who was next to me, said: 'Nice, but bloody cold,' which made me want it to end too.



Helmond welcome by bishop and deputy mayor. M. Goudeketter in second row, right

Finally we were taken to the main hall of the castle and given a glass of champagne which we were told not to drink till after the speeches. An endless oration started, in which we were referred to as great heroes and which the deputy mayor appeared to

enjoy delivering immensely. While the fizz died in our glasses, he continued to read it. Burgerhout, who stood next to him, started to follow his text and from his look I knew when the end was near.

We were offered the freedom of Helmond and presented with city crests, copies of which were to be made. Then after a pause the mayor said: 'And now, let's be silent to remember those who gave their lives for us and... those who will not see the end of the



Champagne inside Helmond Castle
(M. Goudeketter standing third from right)

war.' During the silence, I couldn't resist looking at Bert De Haan, who murmured: 'That could be us.' After a very short, to-the-point speech by Burgerhout we were invited to toast the Queen. Champagne even without bubbles at such a moving moment tasted remarkably well.

After the ceremony an official promised us that replicas of the crests would soon be forwarded to us. In

1980 they finally were!....

Also in his book, Hans writes about our salaries. Again, I quote:

....One day a small party led by Burgerhout went to our Naval Headquarters after we'd been told that as we were now on the continent the British wartime pay allotted to us was being stopped and in future we would only receive half of it, which reduced it to pre-war Dutch naval pay. 'Get a flight plan ready for a special mission to London,' Burgerhout told me rather angrily.

Our paymaster was told to take an empty suitcase with him and a few hours later I found myself with the whole party in the office of the Commander-in-Chief, who at that time happened to be also the Naval Secretary. Just before we went someone said: 'How do they dare, there in London, where they sit on their bottoms collecting so-called danger money, and here we are getting our bottoms shot at.' Tension was high when Burgerhout presented his case. I finally heard him say that he wasn't returning before the matter had been solved to our advantage. There was a lot of talk and sharp words, but in the end we left with a suitcase full of money and a guarantee that our pay wasn't going to be affected. When we got back there were cheers for us. But the incident didn't remove the already strong dislike that had always existed between the 'Londoners' and those who were 'on the job'.

While I was stationed in Belgium, the Allied Air Forces ran a large restaurant/bar in Brussels. I would often visit there on my days off. It was open to all Allied uniformed members, and women were allowed in provided that they were

accompanied by service personnel. The prices for food and drink were very reasonable. I remember being able to buy a bottle of champagne for about five dollars. Although I enjoyed most of my time there, I remember one occasion which wasn't so pleasant.

I spotted two German Officers in full uniform dancing with two girls. I was completely taken aback and for a moment, thought about using the sidearm that was hidden under my jacket. Before anything went too far, I was told by two allied Officers that these Germans were providing us with valuable enemy information and it was in our interest to give them some space. The war sometimes turns normal life upside down. I also remember a few late nights when I would miss the last tram to get back to the nunnery (our barracks). I kept my gun close to me then as well since it was not unheard of, to bump into an escaped German soldier so early after our liberation of Belgium.

Now I'd like to share with you a small miraculous story that happened in the first week of December 1944. While in Belgium, I accidentally bumped into a Jewish family who survived the war through being hidden during the occupation.

When I mentioned the name Goudekettering, the mother of the family told me that she knew of a woman with her daughter-in-law and a small child residing in a town called Châteauneuf Les Bains, France. I immediately realized that this had to be my mother, sister-in-law and her daughter (my niece), Kitty. This was the village where I had escaped the work camp and last saw my father and brother.

Upon my return to the base I went to see Burgerhout in his office asking him for a week's leave so that I could find my family. He kindly gave me his permission. Prior to leaving the base however, I completed my 70th mission that same day (December 15th). We attacked the railway connections in the town of Zwolle, Holland.

The following day I boarded a train to France in search of my family. Even though the war was still going on, France and Belgium were able to restore a degree of order to their railway service and I was able to travel to Paris directly from Brussels. From Paris I took a train heading south toward Clermont Ferrand. So on December 17, 1944 I arrived at a little railway station in Châteauneuf Les Bains situated approximately 390 Km south of Paris. I walked up and down the street a few times and saw a young man in uniform driving a motorbike. I told him that I wanted to locate three people who would have been hiding in the area during the war. After asking me what army I belonged to, I explained to him that I was in the Dutch military Air Service. He told me that he was a member of the French resistance movement. He then told me to hop on to the bike. I told him that I was looking for my mother, a woman of about 50 years of age, my sister-in-law Esther, who would have been about 30 and a child of about 3 years of age. He said that he knew these people and after driving for about half an hour, we came to very small house. With my heart pumping, I asked my companion if he could knock on the door and ask my sister-in-law to come out alone. I was too afraid of what the shock

of seeing me so suddenly would do to my mother. Upon approaching the house I saw Esther appear in the doorway. When she saw me, she put her hand to her mouth. I motioned her to come closer and gave her a kiss. I then asked her to go inside and let my mother know that I was here.

I will never forget the words she spoke when she first saw me,” Ik heb een terug!”, which translated into English means: “I have one back!”. We gave each other a huge hug. My new friend on the bike offered to give me a ride back to the station in three days’ time and drove off. The next few days were both wonderful and sad. It was the first time that I saw my new niece, the baby Kitty and we exchanged our news since we last saw one another. Little baby Kitty began calling me Uncle Maurice de le Avion (Uncle Maurice of the airplane). I learned that they had been kept safely in hiding through the kind help of three Free French resistance fighters. The sad part was hearing of my father and brother. My brother left the work camp to follow my footsteps two days after I had left. Upon his arrival in Perpignan he found that the Dutch embassy had been closed down. I later learned that my saviour, ambassador Kolkman had been arrested. My brother then returned to the camp at Châteauneuf. The camp was raided soon afterwards and my father and brother were taken away to parts unknown along with everyone else in the camp. Although the Red Cross was later able to confirm that my brother Felix had died in a concentration camp, they were unable to confirm the circumstances of my father’s death.

During my brief stay with my family, I heard of the news that the Germans had made a counterattack into Belgium. This would later become known as the Battle of the Bulge. I felt so strange. Here I was for the second time by chance, back in France while the Germans had invaded Belgium! This time however I was confident that the allies would be able to stop the German advance. It was for the moment safer for my family to stay put in Châteauneuf-les-bains until things settled down a bit in Belgium.

I left my family with as much money as I could spare and promised to keep watch over our house and store on Rue Otlet in Brussels. When my friend on the bike arrived to bring me back to the train station, I kissed them all and waved my good-byes.

Heading back north toward my base I made a decision that my main responsibility now, was to look after the family. Upon arrival I asked to meet with my commander (Burgerhout). He asked about my trip and I told him that I had successfully located and met with my family. I then told him of my decision and requested that I retire from any further flying missions and take on a safer role in a non-flying capacity. He told me that he would give me his decision within the next 24 hours. True to his word, the next day I was called in to the paymaster’s office where I was told to present myself to naval headquarters in London. While transport was being arranged for me I had a chance to pack and to say good-bye to my friends.



Rebuilt Fw 190 German Fighter Plane

On the afternoon of December 31st, 1944 I was notified to be at Melsbroek Airport the next morning at 8:00 a.m. where I was to board a British Avro Anson Aircraft for the trip to London. Arriving at the airport, I remember sitting on the grass while waiting for the plane to arrive, with all my belongings stuffed inside my old navy bag. The weather was cool and clear. It seemed like a wonderful day for 1945 to begin. I watched as twelve of

our Mitchells flew off in the direction of Germany for another mission. About a half hour later I could hear the sound of fast approaching, low-flying aircraft. Looking up, I saw dozens of fighter aircraft diving down and unleashing their machine guns on anything and everything around us. I could hear the frightening noise of bullets flying past me.

Within 10 seconds all hell broke loose throughout the entire airport. At one moment I looked up and spotted an F190 fighter⁵³ diving straight in my direction! I swear I could see the pilot's face! The only thing I could do was to lie flat on the grass and pray.

It was all over in about ten minutes. The control tower was destroyed and all the planes on the ground were badly damaged. Again, I was incredibly lucky to be alive and completely unscathed. This was to be the last significant operation of the German Luftwaffe.⁵⁴ I was very frustrated to see all our planes lined up like sitting ducks, almost waiting for this to happen. Also, there wasn't a single shot fired at the Germans during the attack. The only good news was that all of our Mitchells had taken off before the raid began. Needless to say, my trip to London was delayed by a day!

Upon landing at Croyden Airport in London, I was directed to the offices of the Dutch Naval Headquarters. From there I was sent to the operations room to speak with Lt. van de Kadt.

I introduced myself to him and he informed me that I would be part of a new unit of the service known as the Royal Dutch Naval Air Service (RDNAS). In my opinion there could have been no better man than this to bring some order to the Dutch

⁵³This Fw 190 - appears to be a late production aircraft built by Fiesler (Wikipedia :Focke-Wulf June 2011)

⁵⁴ On January 1, 1945 the German Luftwaffe launched *Operation Bodenplatte* in a bid to win back air superiority and help restart the German offensive, which was now in trouble. The Luftwaffe committed over 900 fighters to the operation. It failed, effectively destroying the remaining core of the Luftwaffe. (Wikipedia-Defence of the Reich, June 2011)

administration. Five years of war had left the Netherlands bureaucracy in a rather chaotic state.

Lt. van De Kadt planned to set up an organization in Holland by the name of the Air Transport Office (ATO) and was looking for men to staff it. The ATO's function would be to transport supplies and personnel between England and the Netherlands. A prime objective was to send Dutch dignitaries who hadn't co-operated with the Germans during the war, to England, to participate in the reorganization of the Dutch Government. He had already recruited J. Maasdam, about forty- five years of age, as head of the ATO. Maasdam was selected because he had quite a bit of experience as a senior staff member of the Dutch Airline KLM. He was given the rank of Captain. I was asked to be the second in command of this new unit and was promoted to the rank of Chief Petty Officer (The equivalent of Sergeant). It wasn't so easy to find aircraft for our new unit. We weren't allowed to use military planes. This left us with some very old passenger planes and two which were in reasonably good shape; one Avro Anson and one Dakota⁵⁵.

I couldn't believe my luck. The risk to my life was now greatly reduced, I had a promotion, more pay, and I was to be posted back to my native Holland in an exciting new job! I was told it would be a few weeks for the planes to be assigned and the new Dutch office to be set up. This gave me some extra time to myself. I found my old chum, Sal Muller, who was also working at the Naval Headquarters and he brought me to a tailor in London. With my new rank, I was allowed to get a naval suit made to order. We bought a white shirt, black tie, new cap and the tailor prepared my suit which included two gold stripes and the golden air-gunner's badge. Now I didn't need to wear a scarf to hide my shirt and with a bit of luck might pick up a girl. I heard that women were attracted to well-dressed officers!



EINDHOVEN

March 26 1945-December 1 1945

Finally, we flew to Eindhoven on March 26th, 1945 and were transported from there to the little town of Breda. There we established a small office and were given a large truck with one soldier who would be its driver. It was a very humble beginning and my memories of Breda are limited. I do remember a civilian gentleman who came into our little office one day where I was the only occupant. He looked around and asked where everybody was and why I was sitting on my behind. I told him that the only other person he could speak to was Captain Maasdam, but

⁵⁵ The Douglas C-47 Dakota is a military transport aircraft that was developed from the Douglas DC-3 airliner. (Wikipedia- Douglas C-47 Skytrain-June 2011)

that he was in Eindhoven searching for more suitable office space. I asked him his name to which he replied “Plesman”. Unknown to me at the time, this happened to be the same man who ran KLM Airlines in its first three decades. On another occasion our army driver disappeared along with the money in the office, my gun and our truck!

Two weeks after our arrival in Holland we relocated to a new office in the center of Eindhoven. We now got properly organized. I was placed in charge of three British servicemen. Our transport consisted of three vans and a 1933 four passenger Packard. Operating from London, Lt. van de Kadt would instruct various Dutch officials to present themselves to our office in groups of four to eight men. We would prepare the paperwork and weigh their luggage. I would escort them to the Eindhoven airport and see them off. Although the airport was small, it had a canteen where we could offer our travellers some food and drink. When planes arrived with the returning dignitaries, they would be escorted from the airport to the railway station. We ensured that all our planes were in operational order and were responsible for the baggage handling and refuelling. After a little while I became very friendly with our pilots. It would not be unusual for some of them to come to me and with a wink, ask me to keep a suitcase in a safe place for them to pick up at a later date. Although I never asked, I suspect those suitcases had more than a few English cigarettes inside of them.

I previously made mention of the fact that many of our aircraft were quite old and it was obvious from their faces, that many of our civilian passengers were more than a little nervous about their upcoming flight when they saw their plane. As a joke I once walked to the end of one of the wings (which were quite flexible) and pulled it up and down a few inches, yelling to the captain “You think we’ll be OK for this trip”? Then the pilot would reply “Yeah, I’m pretty sure it’ll hold out for this flight!” We did this with straight faces while the poor passengers’ faces turned white. I would now like to apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

After a few weeks the operation began to operate more smoothly. One day while I was waiting for our planes to come in, I noticed a DC-3 coming in for a landing. It stopped not far from us and I noticed that the plane was filled with injured citizens. Many of them were lying down on stretchers. The medical team was bringing all of them into the hangar. I approached the hangar and as I looked in, I couldn’t believe what I was seeing. All the people looked like living skeletons. I spoke to one of the nurses who told me that they had just arrived from Paris and these passengers were all Dutch citizens who had been found in hospitals throughout France. She also told me that most of them had recently been liberated from concentration camps. I went right into the hangar to take a closer look. There were about 24 people, most hardly able to speak. They were all waiting to be transported by ambulance to the hospital in Eindhoven.

Then something occurred that I will never forget. One of the faces which seemed to have more bones than meat looked familiar to me. I said to him “Robert?” He

looked up puzzled and I then repeated “Robert Wiener?” His eyes looked up at me and he said “Moutje?” This was Dutch for “Little Maurice”, and was what they called me when I was little. As I had written about my early years, Robert was a close friend of my brother, Felix, when we lived in Eindhoven. They were both four years older than I, but I remember that he used to bring his younger sister, Blanca, along to our house when he visited. It definitely was a small world!

Rob was transported to the hospital in Eindhoven where I was able to visit him from time to time to see how he was doing. During those visits I learned that Rob’s mother, Yolanda, and his uncle, Aladar, (last name Wiener) had operated a clothing store in the city. He told me that he had been arrested in early 1942 and sent to a concentration camp in Vught, Holland⁵⁶.

It was around July of 1942 that Rob was transported to another concentration camp. Although he was not a tall man, he was a former boxer and in very good health. I never wanted to ask him what he did to survive his ordeal, but I’m pretty certain that he was used by the Germans as forced labour because of his physical fitness.

Upon my arrival in Eindhoven, I had no place to stay, so I booked into a hotel for the first three days (paid for by my dear government). I spent some time looking for a more permanent residence and found a private home not far from where I used to live when I was young. I lived in a room inside the attic of the house. The Dutch family included two daughters in their early twenties. My life was very comfortable. I ate three meals each day at the hotel; again on the government’s dime! The hotel had better food available than the average household and loved to see both me and my money.

The old Dutch guilder was still in circulation but practically worthless.⁵⁷ I remember a group of young boys showing me thousands of guilders in their pockets with great glee. Soon after this, the old guilder was replaced with a new guilder. The old guilder was declared invalid and each person was allowed to exchange no more than 1000 old guilders for 1000 new guilders.

⁵⁶ Camp Vught was one of three German concentration camps located inside the Netherlands during the Second World War. This was the only camp run by the SS that was located outside of Germany. Over 31,000 prisoners were detained in this camp, including Jews, political prisoners, Roma, Sinti, resisters, Jehovah’s Witnesses, homosexuals, vagrants, criminals and black marketers. It was used until September 1944. It was on July 15, 1942 that the Germans began deporting Dutch Jews from Amersfoort, Mauthausen and Westerbork to concentration camps and death camps such as Auschwitz, Sobibór and Theresienstadt (Wikipedia- Amersfoort concentration camp June 2011)

⁵⁷ Following the German occupation on 10 May, 1940, the guilder was pegged to the Reichsmark at a rate of 1 guilder = 1.5 Reichsmark. This rate was reduced to 1.327 on July 17, 1940. The liberating Allied forces set an exchange rate of 2.652 guilders = 1 U.S. dollar which became the peg for the guilder within the Bretton Woods System. (Wikipedia Dutch Guilder June 2011)

Now I had some time to wander the streets a bit, so I began looking at my old neighbourhood where I had lived when I was 3 to 9 years old. Surprisingly, I was able to remember quite a few people who had been our neighbours. I soon found the Blomhof family who had survived the war. I remembered them because they owned the butcher shop on one of Eindhoven's main streets. They had been in hiding and were only now re-opening the store after reclaiming their ownership. This was now March of 1945 and it had been six months since Eindhoven had been liberated in September of 1944. To my surprise, they remembered who I was and I spent many evenings with them, reminiscing about the many friends and families who had or had not survived the war. At that time, rationing was still in effect and food was still scarce, and even then could only be gotten hold of, with coupons. Fortunately I was able to supply them with small amounts of sugar, butter and other difficult to find items.

One day I had been speaking with Anna, one of the daughters of the family I was staying with. She mentioned that she worked in a book store with Miep Daamen. The Daamen family had hidden three Jewish men in their attic and they had thereby survived the war. I asked her to find out where they lived.

The next day I got the address and met with Mr. Johan and Mrs. Maria Daamen on the following Sunday. I learned that they had hidden three men during the German occupation. One man was Fritz Kohl, and the other two were my friend Rob Wiener's two brothers, Ed and Theo. Thanks to their bravery, they had saved



Blanca Goudeketter (Wiener)
1945 in Dutch Army

the lives of these three men. They knew that Rob's sister, Blanca, had survived and I asked if they knew where she lived. They didn't, but I could easily get in touch with her because she came to visit them about every second week. The next day I gave Anna a letter and asked her to pass it on to her co-worker, Miep Daamen, who would then give it to Blanca.

The first paragraph of the letter said in Dutch "Blanca, I don't know if you can remember a small boy by the name of Moutje who used to play with you when we were both about 9 years old." The letter ended with my asking her if we could meet to talk about the past a bit. Blanca must have liked me because she saved the letter and I still have it with me to this day. Shortly after this, Anna told me that it had

been arranged for Blanca to be at the Daamen family that next Sunday. The day soon arrived and I remember my heart beating quite quickly as I knocked

on the Daamen door. Mr. Daamen opened the door and welcomed me inside. My life changed from that day forward.

The person who appeared before me was unrecognizable. I remembered a little girl, but before me stood a pretty woman dressed in a military uniform.

Standing beside Blanca were her two brothers, Theo and Ed. Although I had met them as a child, I was too young to have befriended them. I asked if they knew of their brother Rob and told them how I had bumped into him. They knew he was back and had also been visiting him in the hospital. He was slowly but surely regaining his health. We exchanged each other's stories. The boys told me of their having been kept in hiding in the attic of the Daamen household. Before leaving I asked if I could take the three of them (Blanca, Ed and Theo) out to dinner some day and they agreed.

The following Sunday I picked them up and drove them to my hotel. I explained to the cook that I was having guests over for dinner and offered him a wink and a large tip so that he could prepare something special. Sure enough, they told me that this had been a wonderful meal. It had been three years since they had even seen some of the food that we had eaten that day!

During the meal I learned that their mother and uncle had been betrayed by one of their neighbours and had been taken away by the Nazis. Both had later died in one of the German camps. Later in our conversation I was disappointed to find out that Blanca was engaged to be married to Fritz, the third man who had been in hiding in the Daamen home.

It was about two weeks later that Blanca appeared in my Eindhoven office to say hello. She casually mentioned that she was thinking of joining the Dutch Army and taking an assignment in the Dutch Indies which is now named Indonesia⁵⁸. I found it somewhat odd that she was thinking of leaving Holland, when she was engaged to this Fritz fellow. Blanca and I began seeing each other more often. She admitted to me that she wasn't really in love with Fritz but didn't know how to tell him or to break the engagement. She was also afraid of disappointing Fritz's very domineering mother who was insistent that Fritz get married. I was amazed that she would take this attitude about a marriage that would affect her for the rest of her life and I told her so. I suggested that she tell Fritz that the engagement was over.

One day soon after this I drove her to Fritz's home. She was very nervous and asked me to come in with her. I declined, telling her that this was something that she should do on her own, but that I would of course wait for her in the car. After what seemed much longer, but was probably no more than a half an hour, Blanca came out of the house and back into the car. On our way she told me that the marriage was off and that she used the excuse that she had signed up to go to Indonesia! I was relieved and told her that she had done the right thing. You may guess at this point, that my relationship with Blanca Wiener was getting more serious.

⁵⁸ Two days after the Surrender of Japan in August 1945, Sukarno, an influential nationalist leader, declared independence and was appointed president. The Netherlands tried to re-establish their rule, and an armed and diplomatic struggle ended in December 1949, when in the face of international pressure, the Dutch formally recognized Indonesian Independence.

On one occasion Blanca told me that she knew where the woman who betrayed her mother and uncle to the Germans was living, and that she was thinking about throwing a grenade into the house. I had to settle Blanca down and explain that now that the war was over, we couldn't take the law into our own hands. A few days later, while we were travelling on a bus, Blanca recognized one of the passengers as that same woman. After Blanca confronted her, the bus driver ordered the woman off the bus and all the passengers applauded.

A little further on I have written more about Blanca's part in the war. She went through many extremely difficult years. She initially went into hiding, as did two of her brothers. She later became part of the Dutch underground, performing several heroic deeds and then joined the Dutch army.

During all of this I became acquainted with another young woman who I considered to be just a friend and a great dance partner. Her father was a Baron and they lived in a house which looked more like a castle. Even had I been interested in a relationship with this young woman (and I was not), I don't believe her parents would have approved.

About two weeks later I learned that my mother, my uncle Joop's wife, Esther, and her baby (my little niece Kitty), had returned to their old home in Brussels on Rue Otlet. I asked my boss, Captain Maasdam, if I would be able to visit with my family. He immediately issued an official order that I was to proceed on "urgent military business". This business included an "urgent" need for me to bring back to Holland at least one case of cognac and any other booze I could get my hands on. God bless Captain Maasdam!

The following day I crossed over the Belgian border which was only 12 Km. from Eindhoven and another 110 Km. to Brussels. When I arrived at the house I was in for a further surprise. My cousin, Bep, who I thought was no longer with us, had arrived at the house the previous day! She had shown up in rags, terribly skinny, and constantly coughing. My mother and sister-in-law made sure to burn all of Bep's clothing, put her in a hot bath and called a doctor. I spoke briefly with her and learned that she and her mother, my aunt Greta, had been taken to the Auschwitz death camp. When they arrived from the train, Greta was sent immediately to the gas chamber, while Bep was considered healthy enough to work and thereby avoided this fate. The labour included sorting through the personal possessions of all the arriving detainees and other tasks that I find too gruesome to mention here. Needless to say, all of the gold, jewellery and other items of value were seized by the Nazis. While in the camp, she met up with a niece from her mother's side of the family (Wijnschenk) and they helped to keep one another alive. Incredibly, after her camp was liberated by the allies, she somehow managed to make it back to Brussels. I told her that as soon as I got back to Eindhoven, I would contact her brother, Leo Bas, and her husband, Joop Kloots, who were still stationed in England, to let them know that she was safe and sound. I was in the enviable position of being able to telephone overseas as a result of my posting,

whereas most civilians did not have that luxury. Before setting off for my return to Eindhoven I stopped by a pub that was owned by Maria's father to see if he had any further news about his daughter. Apparently Maria, the wife of Bep's brother, Leo, had also been sent to Auschwitz and managed to survive. Not being Jewish, she apparently was better treated than Bep.

I also managed to complete my boss's assignment by placing a case of cognac into my car. Since I wasn't certain what the duty requirements were at the Dutch/Belgian border, I decided to wait a couple of kilometres behind the border point. When a military convoy approached, I followed it and fell in right behind.

The convoy proceeded through the barricade and I followed merrily along. As I got through I watched my rear view mirror and saw the guard waving at me to come back. Fortunately, they only had bicycles at the time as their means of transportation. I think I could have talked my way past them anyway since my vehicle had military plates indicating that it belonged to the Dutch Air Force with the letters "LSK".⁵⁹ Needless to say, Captain Maasdam (my boss) was pleased to see that I had completed my mission successfully. Both I and the cognac had returned unscathed!

The following morning I telephoned our headquarters in London, England and asked if they could put me through to someone in charge at the Princess Brigade. The officer in charge answered the line and I asked that he pass on a message to Joop Kloots to inform him that his wife had survived the war and was now safely in Belgium. My next call was to my uncle Kobus in London, asking him to pass on the message to Bep's brother, Leo. My uncle wanted to know much more news than I had time to tell him since the phone was intended for military and not personal use. I therefore had to cut our conversation short.

For the next three weeks I was kept busy supervising three British staff and VIP's to and from the airport. The operation was moving along quite well. We opened up the office at 7:00 a.m. each day and I made several flights to London where I would visit our headquarters and brief Lt. De Kadt on the state of affairs in Eindhoven. By now, Blanca and I were seeing more of each other. One day she mentioned that she was still thinking of travelling to Indonesia. I didn't argue with her but I did let her know that if she left, I wouldn't wait for her to come back. Fortunately she changed her mind and we became engaged. This pleased the members of the Blomhof family, who had been treating me like a son since I had returned to Eindhoven. They knew Blanca and her family because their butcher shop was right beside the Wiener clothing shop.

Each of my trips to London lasted about two days. When I was flying in the Avro Anson plane, I was able to bring back quite a few items that were not available in Holland at the time, including bicycle parts. I was able to sell them very quickly and then used the cash to buy furniture in preparation for my marriage to Blanca. My

⁵⁹ LSK is derived from the Dutch word "Luchtstrijdkrachten" referring to the Dutch Air Combat Forces.

brief “import” business slowly fizzled out when two border officials (Douane) began monitoring activities at the airport. It was during this time that two of Blanca’s three brothers became engaged. Her brother, Eddie, joined with one of the Daamen daughters, Nell; and Theo got engaged to a beautiful woman named Jo.

After Ed and Nell were married, they moved into a very nice house on the edge of Eindhoven which had been formerly owned by a Nazi sympathizer. Meanwhile, back in London, Lt. van de Kadt seemed pleased about how everything was going in our Eindhoven office and he was quite surprised to find out that I had often been running it without Captain Maasdam.

On one occasion I was in London and we didn’t know where Captain Maasdam was. van de Kadt sent me back to Eindhoven and told me to keep the place going. He said that if Maasdam did not get back by week’s end, I would be asked to take over the office. For this to happen, I would have needed a promotion. Soon after, the lieutenant called me back apologetically. I did not have enough of a formal education to obtain the promotion. Fortunately Maasdam showed up a few days later and, to make amends, sent Blanca and I to London for a week on a “Special assignment”. This was in September of 1945. Blanca and I had a wonderful week together. She bought a set of blue plates which are still in use to this date. I also remember that she bought a corset which was considered quite stylish at the time but unavailable in Holland.

You may find this hard to believe, but this was an era before “free love”, and for our sleeping arrangements while in London, Blanca stayed at the YWCA while I stayed at the YMCA! Upon her return to Eindhoven, Blanca left the armed forces and moved into the home owned by her brother, Eddie, and his new wife, Nell. Ed, Nell, Blanca and I were becoming quite close. I would often drive to Ed’s house in the evening and we would play cards together. I think I also drank a bit too much. One evening after leaving Eddie’s home, I drove my car into a ditch. I wrote in my report that the steering wheel had seized up and got away with it! One night while Eddie and Nell were out of the house I had my chance to be alone with Blanca. I thought I had a good excuse for staying over. I was worried about drinking and driving. Blanca, modest as always (we still weren’t married at this point), insisted that I sleep in the car until I sobered up enough to get home.

Since war activities were almost over, our Eindhoven Air Transport Office would soon be closing down. My last flight was taken from Eindhoven to Croydon⁶⁰ Airport on November 29th, 1945 with a return trip on December 1st. It was shortly after this, that I was demobilized and returned to civilian life.

⁶⁰ When war was declared in September 1939, Croydon Airport was closed to civil aviation. It played a vital role as a fighter station during the Battle of Britain and was attacked in the first major raid over the London area. In 1944 Croydon became the base of RAF-Transport Command. In February 1946, the airport returned to civilian control. (Wikipedia- Croydon Airport-June, 2011)

I believe that I moved into Eddie and Nell's home in Eindhoven at about this time. Blanca slept in her own room and I had the couch in the living room. Blanca's brother, Rob, had by now fully recovered from his ordeal in the camps. Before the war he was operating a small radio business in Eindhoven. Upon his release from the hospital in Eindhoven, he wanted to continue this work.

Due to the fire bombings of the war, much of downtown Eindhoven had been destroyed, including his radio store. The city decided to completely rebuild the main street and opened up temporary locations for those downtown businesses to operate from. Rob was given one such location.

Rob asked his two brothers, Theo and Eddie, to join him in the business and it reopened under the name Radio Wiener. Eddie had worked at Philips⁶¹, the world renowned electronics company which has its headquarters in Eindhoven. This gave Eddie the technical expertise to repair the electrical goods. Theo kept track of the books and some of the sales while Rob handled most of the sales and all of the buying. Eddie would often bring the defective appliances home with him and I watched his repairs with great interest.

I always had a fascination for how things worked, and as a child I loved putting together anything electrical like motors or doorbells, using a battery or two. By helping out my soon to be brother-in law, I learned how to repair electrical goods which as you will read later, formed the basis of a long and successful partnership.



⁶¹ Frits Philips who in 1961 became the President of the Philips Company, was considered to be a hero in the war. He is credited with having saved 382 Jews by convincing the Nazis that they were needed in the war effort. Like Rob Wiener, Frits was interned in the Vught concentration camp from May 30th to September 20th, 1943. According to Maurice's wife, Blanca (Wiener), Frits was greatly respected by members of the Dutch resistance movement.(Wikipedia-Frits Philips-June, 2011)



Blanca's War story

I have now updated these memoirs to include a few activities carried out by my wife, Blanca, during the war. Unfortunately, my dear Blanca rarely spoke to me about that part of her life. I did know that she was a member of Dutch resistance movement and that she kept in touch with Kees de Koning, who was a fellow participant. In fact, Blanca maintained correspondence with the de Koning family throughout the following years and we actually visited the de Koning family who were still residing in Papendrecht, in the summer of 1991. In that brief visit, we took a ride in a row boat with Kees, in a section of the Biesbosch on which they travelled in 1945, during Blanca's trip to the liberated part of Holland.

Blanca (A.K.A. Sister Olzinga) Wiener's Delivery route From Papendrecht to Lage Zwaluwe 1944/1945



Blanca (Wiener) Goudeketting
November 25, 1920- February 6, 1994

In May, 2012 my daughter, Yolanda, noticed an enquiry from historian/writer, Frau H.W.G van Blokland-Visser, who was searching for more information about my wife, Blanca⁶², and her war time experiences.

Frau van Blokland-Visser edited a story which was written by Kees de Koning, a part of which included Blanca's involvement.

I now present, with the permission of Frau van Blokland-Visser, a translation from Chapter Seven of her book, *PAPENDRECHT IN DE 2e WERELDOORLOG 1944-'45* (door H.W.G. van Blokland-Visser) [*Papendrecht, Holland in the second world war 1944/45* (By H.W.G. van Blokland-Visser)] For the complete writing, please refer to the web-site: http://d.compu.dyndns.org/blokland/home_6.htm .

Chapter 7

A stirring tale about a Jewish courier, Blanca Wiener, AKA Nurse Olzinga, as she carried out a mission by travelling from the de Koning home in Papendrecht, through the Biesbosch marsh, to the village of Lage Zwaluwe in the winter of 1944/45.

As told by the young resistance fighter Kees de Koning Pz from Papendrecht (Edited by van Blokland HWG-Visser)

Blanca Wiener (1920-1994), was born on November 25th, 1920 in Gestel, Eindhoven⁶³, Holland. Her father and mother were Nissen Mendel (Max) Wiener, and Jolan (Grunfeldt). After the war, in 1946, she married Maurice Goudekettering who was also born in 1920 in Velson, Holland. They immigrated to Toronto, Canada in 1953 with their two children, Yolanda (b.1947) and Alex (b.1950).

After her family was arrested, Blanca fled to Amsterdam where she went into hiding. She then joined the Dutch resistance movement and carried out various tasks, including that of courier. Anyone caught doing this, would automatically be tortured and shot. On one such mission she was asked to travel to Eindhoven to deliver an urgent message to the local resistance there. The resistance had already attempted to make the trip by way of Zaltbommel, through the Bommelwart via the Meuse River without success. Blanca was to travel using a false identity with the name of "Zr Olzinga" (Nurse or Sister Olzinga) where it was arranged for her to report for hospital

⁶² Blanca was the youngest of four children. Her three brothers were named Robert, Theo and Edward. Blanca's father Max died in Blanca's early youth and the children were brought up by their mother Jolan and their uncle Aladar. Shortly after the German occupation of Holland, Blanca's mother and her uncle were both arrested by the Gestapo at their home. Blanca narrowly missed being arrested since she was by chance out of the house at the time. Blanca later discovered that a neighbour had betrayed the family to the Germans. Her oldest brother Robert was arrested in early 1942 and sent to the Vught concentration camp in Holland and then a second camp in Poland. He miraculously survived the war and brought up a family in Eindhoven. Their mother and uncle were eventually killed in the Sobibor concentration camp in 1943. Blanca's two other brothers, Edward and Theo, survived the war. The Daamen family kept them hidden in their home in Eindhoven, Holland.

⁶³ Gestel is a district located in south-western Eindhoven.

duty in Zaltbommel. On her way to Zaltbommel, she approached a lock, spanned by a bridge. She came upon two German soldiers who were guarding the bridge and with the few German words which she knew, convinced them of her need to reach the city. They obligingly took her over the bridge with their vehicle. Arriving at the hospital, only one doctor was aware of Blanca's deception. She wore a white hat, uniform and apron, so that everyone assumed that she was a real nurse. Despite her complete lack of training, Blanca was able to carry out most of the tasks given to her by the other nurses.

Shortly after this, Blanca attempted to travel from Zaltbommel and cross the Maas River from there. Unfortunately she came across a German soldier who was in her path. He was sleeping under a tree and Blanca smashed him over the head with a rock, killing him. Sensing that other Germans were ahead, Blanca decided not to continue moving forward, and quickly returned to the hospital in Zaltbommel. She knew that it was too dangerous for her to stay in Zaltbommel since the Germans would now be on her trail after this incident. Back in the hospital, she was hidden inside a hamper, holding dirty laundry, and then smuggled to the village of Brakel where she was to meet up with my father, Pieter de Koning. My family owned a barge, docked in the village, about 30 kilometres east of Papendrecht. As a cover, the boat's purpose was to deliver food to hospital patients in the town of Dordrecht. This allowed the resistance movement to transport allied pilots and resistance fighters to the liberated portion of Holland. A message came through from the resistance that a German pilot named Heinrich, who had deserted, was to be one of these passengers. We later received a second request from the underground to await the arrival of Blanca (A.K.A. Zoester Olzinga) who had been on the run from the hospital in Zaltbommel. That was truly a rare combination of passengers; a German pilot sitting beside a Jewish courier. All we could do was hope for the best. Before taking on the two passengers, we needed to wait for two farmers who were to bring some food which was to be taken aboard.

Things did not go as planned however. A German officer came by to take a look at the boat. He wanted to know what we had in the boat and then asked to see our papers. Our papers did not satisfy the officer and we had to get out of the boat. Thank goodness, Blanca and the German had not yet arrived. That would have meant the end of us all. The officer left to find some soldiers to pick us up for further questioning.

A few German sailors were kind enough to warn us that we would be better off to get aboard the boat and leave at once. Heinrich was waiting a little further up the river and was able to come on board by jumping over the side of the boat. Blanca, however, had not yet arrived and we really couldn't wait any longer after the episode with the German officer. In the boat, we drifted with the tide towards the middle of the river, where it was deep enough for us to start the engine.

We told Heinrich of our narrow escape a few minutes earlier and he gave us a suggestion which we followed. He was still in his German uniform and had his firearm with him. Anyone looking at us would simply think that we were travelling under the supervision of a German officer. Heinrich would be able to answer any questions in his

native German tongue. It was in this manner that we were able to get past the Germans guarding the entrance to the town of Gorkum and we went on to our destination of Papendrecht.

Although Blanca missed the boat upon arriving in Brakel, she was given the address of our family's house in Papendrecht. Borrowing a bicycle and, still dressed in her hospital uniform, she rode for 35 Kilometres over the dyke, along the river Waal, through the municipalities of Gorkum, Haardinxveld-Giessendam and Sliedrecht, all the way to Papendrecht.

We had just arrived from Brakel to our home at Oosteind 25 in Papendrecht, finally relaxing over a cup of coffee when the door bell rang. There stood Blanca and her bike. After Blanca came in she saw Heinrich in his German uniform and turned white as a sheet, needing to lean on the table lest she faint. She obviously thought that she had been tricked and that this had been a trap to capture her. But another member of the resistance, Jan Levisson quickly put Blanca at ease by explaining to her that he himself was Jewish and that Heinrich was now on our side; and that his German uniform saved us upon our return by boat to Papendrecht.

Blanca then ate and drank with us, explaining the story of her failed attempt to get to Eindhoven and how she got to Papendrecht. She was anxious to get to Eindhoven as quickly as possible to deliver her message. Unfortunately, we could not provide her with immediate assistance, since on this same day, my father, Pieter de Koning, had already departed with five American and three British pilots, to bring them to safety to Brabant which was in the liberated zone through the Biesbosch marsh.

Later, we received news from a resistance member, Dove Jan, that the trip had gone well and that all the pilots had safely arrived in Lage Zwaluwe and that my father (Peter) was hoping to return in a few days. The few days however turned into one and a half weeks .

We then made a plan to make the next crossing from Papendrecht to Lage Zwaluwe. There were two more people who needed help to escape from here. They were advised of the trip and one brought a friend along and the other came with his brother. Again, another man needed to leave urgently since the Germans were on his trail. When the time came to leave, our house was filled to the brim with people who wanted to leave with us, but there were hardly enough boats to carry all of us. There was one extra boat available, but we felt that it was much too large for this type of task. We knew of another suitable boat which was sitting in the town of Sliedrecht. So it was decided that we would use the large barge to transport us to the Donkerpolder in the Biesbosch where we could let out some of the passengers onto a smaller boat and then we would continue on to the boat that was being delivered from Sliedrecht by way of the Helsluis and unload the remaining passengers onto it.

The weather and the moon were favourable for the journey and my brother, Wim deKoning, along with Jan Levisson, were now ready to proceed. They filled up the

barge with the passengers and cargo and they departed toward the Biesbosch. I, (Kees de Koning), was not permitted to come along with them since only two men were required, and this was the usual compliment of men used. Suddenly things began to go awry once the boat reached the railway bridge in Sliedrecht. Due to the strength of the current, the back of the barge slammed against one of the pillars which supported the bridge, making enough noise that it might easily have been heard by sentries on the bridge. Fortunately for them, they weren't noticed by the German guards and they surmised that the sentries may have fallen asleep while on duty. The boat quickly moved on to the village of Kraaiestein, in the Biesbosch, where the barge was to be lifted by hand over the dam. This wasn't an easy task with such a heavy iron boat. Since all of this work had to be done before sunrise, they decided to wait until the following evening and to sleep for the remainder of the night. Some slept on board and the others slept on the ground where the boat was docked. The next morning, they realized that because of their unexpected delay, their first task was to get some food. It was decided by my brother, Wim DeKoning, that getting a woman to go would appear less suspicious, so they sent Blanca (Wiener) to go to our home at Oosteind 25 in Papendrecht to bring back some food. Blanca made it to the house safely and my mother prepared sandwiches. The plan was for me (Kees DeKoning) to assist Blanca to get back to the barge. On the way we stopped by a house owned by the parents of two boys, who were passengers on the barge, to pick up some belongings. We went to a friend in Sliedrecht by the name of Jacob Bakker, who not only lent us a rowboat, but offered to go with us in the boat as far as the Helpolder. From there we made our way to the Ronduitpolder, Josinapolder and over the Moldiep. At that point we could wade through the water while we were in low tideland finally made it back to the barge. This was all done with the help of Blanca, a spunky young woman who had never been near a swamp or a marsh in her life. While we were gone, Wim had agreed to take on two more passengers the following night who were to arrive on a boat from Sliedrecht by way of Helsius in the Biesbosch.

Back on the barge, everyone truly appreciated both the sandwiches which my mother prepared, and the effort that was made to bring them here. We then got some needed sleep since we knew that there would be little of it to come that next night.

When that night came, we quietly pushed the boat into the current and travelled through the Donkere Sloot, the Moldiep, the Wantij, and Zoetemelksgat, by the Huiswaardam just above the Ottersluis

We were still at high tide and had to wait until the ebb tide began so that we could travel with the tide to Lage Zwaluwe. As we waited, we were joined by the boat from Sliedrecht. Soon after, several row boats also came to join us. Many of these Dutch rowers would later be recognized for their valour after the war and be referred to, as the "line-crossers". We were now a convoy of 11 boats with about 90 people aboard.

Unknown to us, waiting up ahead at Kop van T'Land, were a large number of German troops who were in the process of being ferried across the river. Throughout the day, the troop movement continued and we began to wonder if it would ever end. As

darkness fell, the wind and tide were now in our favour and after waiting for another half hour, we decided to risk moving ahead without being noticed by the enemy. Meanwhile, we wrapped woollen rags around the oars of the row boats so that they would make as little noise as possible. The boats were lifted over the dam by land with little difficulty since we had so much manpower. We could still hear the noise from the Germans which told us that the ferrying operation was not going to stop anytime soon. We could not wait any longer, since we had to reach the Lage Zwaluwe before daylight. We took note of the amount of time it took the ferry to make one crossing and decided to time our departure so that we would pass the ferry while it was docked by the shoreline. This would hopefully be far enough away for the flotilla to remain unnoticed.

Before departing, it was decided that my brother Wim de Koning and Jan Levisson would make their way back to our home in Papendrecht and it was agreed that I, Kees DeKoning who was 17 years old at the time would go as far as Lage Zwaluwe. The boats began their journey, one after the other, about 15 metres apart so that in the dark one could barely see more than two boats ahead. We had three and a half hours of rowing ahead of us. Taking advantage of the current, we were able to reach the middle of the Nieuw Merwede quite quickly. When we reached the Kop van T'Land we were aware of hundreds of Germans who were situated on both sides of the river bank. Now was the beginning of the hardest part of the journey. The trip to freedom and a whole new world was now in the direction of Hollansch Diep. The ferry was now near the shore and the changing sound of the engines told us it was going into reverse. This would be our best chance to pass the ferry. Not only would the ferry be furthest away at that point, but the passengers would more likely be watching the shore and have their backs to us. As we moved, we held our breath. We could hear the sounds of the Germans on the ferry talking at a distance which seemed closer than we could ever want them to be. We felt that a pin dropping in one of our boats would give us away. Suddenly we heard a bang and the whistling sound of a bullet. I whispered for everyone to lie down as far as possible on the floor of the boat. More shots were heard flying past our ears. I was almost certain that we had been discovered. Then I noticed that some of the shots were aimed in the other direction from us and realized that the Germans were just shooting randomly.

Shortly after passing the ferry, the shooting died down and we could breath normally again. Everyone got up and sat back down in their seats. The sound of the German activity remained but was becoming fainter, as we proceeded along our route. Although we had gotten past the most dangerous part of the trip, there still remained the risk of being spotted by a German patrol boat.

We had now arrived at the Spieringsluis near Brabant. We used the oars to bring us to the Brabant side of the river where we could use the reeds for cover. On the Dutch side, there stood a place called De Rietheuvel van Polak. This area was still occupied by the Germans.

Everything was now quiet but on occasion we would see flares coming into the air from the south. Each time this happened, we stopped rowing, placed our oars back in the boat and kept our heads down.

Daylight was now approaching. All that could be heard was the sound of the ferry's motor and the distant buzz of the German soldiers onboard. We now needed to row back toward the middle of the Nieuwe Merwede River since on the Brabant side stood the Hoge Strekdam, a point at which the Germans could walk across from the occupied zone. We could not use the Dutch occupied side because even though there were high reeds for cover, there was a German bunker built on a hill by the riverside, where an old salmon canning factory once stood. As we proceeded further along we heard the sound of gunfire and suspected that some poor souls were being shot at.

We now reached the Zuidplaatje and stayed on the Dutch side since on the other side stood the Polerkade, very close to the water, where the Germans could walk along the river edge as far as the Deneplaat to the Huis van De Deen, which the Germans had taken over as a watch post.

We continued further along and I thought I saw a boat in the distance, but then it disappeared. It could have been only an optical illusion, which was known to happen. (I later discovered that I had not been imagining things and that I had actually seen my father, Pieter de Koning riding in a canoe!)

We proceeded along the Dutch side until we came to the Tongplaat and the Kooihouse van De Tongplaat. We stayed on the side, again using the reeds for cover and stayed clear of the middle of the river to avoid becoming stranded on one of several sandbanks which were situated there. The tide was by now going down substantially, so that the sandbanks were now showing themselves above the water.

At this point our passengers were beginning to feel more at ease and were asking me how much further we had to travel. Although I assured them that we were almost there, I had to ask them more than once, to keep completely quiet since the Germans still occupied watching posts along the river bank. I imagine that each passenger was anticipating the taste of freedom which was just around the corner from them, and emerge out of the dark shadow of their past.

We had now arrived at the Jacomineplaat which was the most westerly point of the Brabantse Biesbos. Although there was probably one more German Guard post along the way, we would be safe once we reached the point where the water split between the Hollansch Diep and the Amer, where one could barely see the Moerdijkbrug (a bridge) in the distance to the west. I could no longer keep the passengers calm. They were now excitedly talking to each other and calling out from one boat to another. We rowed quickly over to the riverbank and someone began to sing the Dutch National Anthem.

We jumped ashore and began walking toward the port of Lage Zwaluwe. Unfortunately there were too many mines lying in the area and we were forced to

return to the place where we had left the boats. Fortunately at this point the passengers were a little less excitable. We took the boats back onto the Amer River. In the high tide we had to row hard against the strong current until the port of Haven van Lage Zwaluwe came into view. The passengers were by now completely beyond my control and everyone jumped out of the boats onto the shallow muddy bank of the river which reached up to their knees, before we could dock the boats properly.

On the bank we saw a sentry. He was a Dutchman who greeted us and treated us with cigarettes. He said to us, "You folks have been quite lucky to have made it here safely. Last night the Germans were still here, but they finally left, taking their sentries along with them."

We were asked to report to a building nearby, where we were met by Captain Andre, of the secret service, and a British Officer. The officer began speaking with Blanca Wiener (Zr. Olzinga), who could speak English and translate for us. She introduced me to Captain Andre, as Kees deKoning, son of the famous Pieter de Koning. (He was described as "Ouwe Piet" or "old Peter"). The Captain replied, "Oh, he left us just last night in a canoe to return to Papendrecht." I now realized that the "ghost" that I had seen in the water last night was actually my very own father!

After this we were brought to a nearby school where we were given a heavenly meal of wonderfully fresh bread with fish and corned beef. "Sister Olzinga" had now returned to her proper name; Blanca Wiener. After the meal we were transported by English vehicles to Breda and from there we went on to Tilberg where we were debriefed to determine whether we were who we said we were and not German spies or Dutch collaborators. We were continually gotten out of bed for more questioning. This was especially true for Blanca who was called back so often for questioning that she became quite despondent. The secret service believed that she might have been a spy. Fortunately this was cleared up when they discovered that the person concerned was not Blanca, but someone who had a similar name. She was then freed and provided with her necessary documents. From there, she moved on to Eindhoven where she was to meet up with her family. I remained in Brabant until it became liberated and joined up



Blanca Wiener dressed in nurse's uniform, second row from bottom, second from left Circa 1945

with the army. Afterwards, I made a brief trip to Eindhoven to look Blanca up. I didn't have to look too far since as I was walking, behind me I heard the words "Keesje! Keesje!" I turned around and there was Blanca, standing in an army uniform with the words "Stoottroepen" stitched to her shoulder. The Stoottroepen were a division of the Dutch army consisting of members of the

rg.



On behalf of my wife and myself, I would like to express our deep gratitude to the de Koning family for their brave actions throughout the war. Not only was she brought from occupied Holland to the liberated city of Lage Zwaluwe on the boat, commanded by the young Kees de Koning, but they graciously provided her with accommodation in their Papendrecht home for approximately 10 days prior to her trip. Both my wife and many others owe their lives to these wonderful people. I was fortunate enough to receive some old photographs of the de Koning family from Kees de Koning's daughter, Wilma. I have included below, several of these photos.

The first is a picture of the extended de Koning family taken in 1945. To the right of this print is shown a picture of Pieter de Koning, which I believe was taken in 1945. He was the father of Kees de Koning in Blanca's story, and was one of the resistance leaders during the war. For his bravery, he was given 'The medal of freedom'.

You will today find a street in Papendrecht which was named 'The Pieter de Koning Hof, resistance fighter'



The extended de Koning family- Circa 1945



Pieter de Koning 1945

The next picture is of Kees de Koning and right of it, is a picture of Kees standing in a field beside his brother Wim.



**Kees de Koning
Circa 1945**



**Wim (left) and
Peter de Koning
1945**

The next two photos show Kees de Koning sitting alongside his younger brother, Wout on their bikes. The bicycles, along with furniture, clothing and food came out of a fund set up by General Eisenhower after the war. To the right of this picture, I have a photo of Kees's sister, 'Jans' standing beside her betrothed upon their wedding at Papendrecht in July of 1945. This fellow's name was Meier Levisson, the same chap described in my wife's story, who had to reassure Blanca that Heinrich, who was dressed in the German uniform at the de Koning house, was on the allied side and not that of the enemy.



**Wout de Koning (left)
and older brother
Cees
Circa 1945**



**Jans (de Koning) with
husband Meier Levisson
July, 1945**

Below is a photograph taken May 1945, in Papendrecht. It shows Pieter de Koning with his wife Wilhelmina (Front) and their 9 children, (left to right) Wout, Kees, Thijs, Annie, Jans, Jo, Gerrit, Flip and Wim.



The final photo is of Pieter de Koning (far left) beside his wife Wilhelmina) receiving medal of freedom on January 18th, 1947.



THE POST WAR YEARS

1945-Present

Blanca and I set April 10th, 1946 as our wedding date. We began to buy our

Stratumseind is a street in Downtown Eindhoven shown after Luftwaffe bombing



furniture, pots and pans and other household items, using the money that we

had earned in the military and some money that I had earned selling my British goods. It's been sixty-five years and I'm still using one of the soup pots!

Although neither Blanca nor I had strong religious convictions, we still wanted to have a Jewish wedding. We needed a Rabbi to officiate and asked Rabbi Frank, who had survived the war, if he could do this for us. I knew the Rabbi from my childhood in Eindhoven; where he and Rabbi Wolz taught us some religion at the Eindhoven synagogue.



Stratumseind in its present form, note Catherine's Church at end of the street

Since many of the buildings were destroyed or in disrepair, we arranged for the civil ceremony to take place in Eindhoven's van Abbemuseum.⁶⁴ It was one of several buildings that the city used as a temporary facility.

The Blomhof family helped Blanca find the wedding dress and helped with arranging the wedding, including a horse drawn carriage to bring Blanca to the wedding. We had two lovely little

bridesmaids, my niece Kitty and one of the Blomhof grand-daughters named Lineke.

⁶⁴ The museum was established in 1936 and named after its founder, Henri van Abbe, a local cigar manufacturer. (Wikipedia-Van Abbe museum-June, 2011)



Blanca and Maurice wed on April 10, 1946

My mother and sister-in law (Esther) came in from Brussels to attend and my mother signed as a witness. We then travelled with the carriage to the Jewish ceremony where Rabbi Frank administered the blessings. We all went to a restaurant afterwards to commemorate the occasion.

We had a separate celebration afterwards at Ed Wiener's house with the three brothers, the Blomhofs, Eddie's wife, Nell, and Theo's girlfriend, Jo.



The wedding party, April 10, 1946

Blanca's brother, Rob, had by now fully recovered from his ordeal in the camps and would marry his girlfriend, Josephine (Fina), about six months later. To this day I have to apologize to Fina for not having invited her to our wedding. My only excuse was that I didn't realize how serious the relationship with her and Rob had been at the

time. After sixty-five years I hope she can forgive me!

Not long after the wedding my new wife and I moved to Brussels. My mother, Esther and Kitty had already moved into uncle Joop's large home on Rue Otlet after they left their hiding spot in Châteauneuf Les Bains, France. Blanca and I moved into the house with them. The property was quite large and was three stories in height. The lower floor consisted of a living room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom where, my mother, Esther and Kitty lived and Blanca and I lived on the second floor. We ate most of our dinners together.

I will now recount a relatively difficult time in my life. While I lived in Brussels for the next three years, I tried several means to earn a living. My mother and

Esther were skilled at fabricating men's and ladies undergarments. They began manufacturing these items, working from our house on Rue Otlet. I began selling these garments in various stores in Brussels. Unfortunately, my family had no equipment; not even a sewing machine! All the goods were hand-made and we couldn't make enough of them to succeed in this venture.

I then tried to import some goods. I remember using a brand of razor blades while I lived in England. These weren't available in Belgium at the time so I wrote to the company to see if I could represent them, but I never received a reply. I also remember seeing the first plastic products (mostly kitchen items such as tableware) in England. Somehow, I was able to get the addresses of several manufacturers in England and the United States. They provided me with catalogues, prices and even a few samples. This is where I could have used a business degree instead of a few years of schooling in my youth. Although I was able to get orders from several department stores, I didn't know how to deal with banks and brokerage firms to import the goods. I don't think this newfangled stuff called "plastic" had much chance of success anyway!

Another embarrassing situation occurred as a result of my decision to enter the fish business on my own. I began to produce jars of herring in mayonnaise and sell them to local food outlets. I remember feeling quite proud of the fact that I had been able to sell about 48 of these jars to small stores all around the city in a relatively short period of time. At last I thought I had found my niche in the business world. I returned to one of the stores about a week later to see if I could get a repeat order. I came upon one of my products on the shelf and saw that the mayonnaise had turned green! I was too embarrassed to go back to any of the other stores. My lack of expertise had again gotten me into trouble since I had no idea how to apply preservatives.

In May or June of 1946, my cousin Leo who had been living with our uncle Kobus in London and had lost an eye from his gun injury, returned to Brussels to stay with us in Rue Otlet. A little later my cousin Bep's husband, Joe Kloots, returned to the house after he had been decommissioned from the Princess Brigade in England; and finally, my uncle Joop Bas, returned from Cuba. As you might recall, after his escape from Portugal, he went temporarily to Canada and then made his way to Cuba. While in Cuba he took up his original trade as a diamond polisher and did quite well for himself. Upon his return to Rue Otlet, he reopened his wholesale fish business with his son Leo. They bought a truck and set up their stall in the same markets that they had worked in before the war.

Seeing how easily my uncle got back into the markets, I felt that I could duplicate his success. To do so however, I needed a license. This meant that I had to provide the Belgian bureaucracy with an enormous amount of paperwork.

I needed a truck to run my operation. I asked my uncle if he would lend me enough money to buy a used truck (about 30,000 francs). Perhaps wisely seeing the difficulties I would encounter to get my license, he wouldn't lend me the cash. Not one to give up easily, I then swallowed my pride and approached the nephew of the Blomhof family who I knew quite well and who was now living in Brussels. Without blinking an eye, he reached into a drawer and gave me 30,000 francs telling me to repay it to me whenever I was able to!



Sketch of Belgian fish market
(Google Image June 2011)

To this day I can't thank the Blomhof family enough for all the kindness they had given me for all those years. I used the money to buy a used truck which turned out to be a huge lemon! In one week I had to replace four tires and I was lucky if I could get the motor started in the morning.

Along with my wife, Blanca, we went to several markets to sell smoked fish which I had bought from my Uncle's business.

After a couple of months of this, we finally gave up and sold the used truck for 10,000 francs. I finally came to the realization that my uncle would always be much better in the fish business than I, so I returned to work for him. Today I suspect that he may have bribed some officials at the markets which allowed him to be in some of the prime selling spots that I could never manage to have.

On July 25th, 1947 while I was working in the market, my aunt Esther came to me to announce that my wife, Blanca, had given birth to a beautiful baby girl. We named her Yolanda; in honour of Blanca's mother⁶⁵ who had died in the Sobibór extermination camp four years before.

⁶⁵ According to a letter sent by the Red Cross to the Wiener family, witnesses attested to the fact that Blanca's mother, (Yolanda Wiener), had been taken from a transit camp on April 13th, 1943 and transported to the Sobibór concentration camp where she died by having been gassed on April 16th, 1943.



Sobibór was a German extermination camp located on the outskirts of the town of Sobibór, Lublin Voivodeship, within occupied Poland. Jews from many European countries including Holland were transported here by rail and suffocated in gas chambers that were fed with the exhaust of a petrol engine.

According to the Hagen court proceedings against former Sobibór Nazis, Professor Wolfgang Scheffler, who served as an expert, estimated that a minimum of 250,000 Jews had been murdered there.

The camp had been operational from May 16, 1942 to October 17, 1943. After a successful revolt on October 14th, 1943,

about half of the 600 prisoners escaped⁶⁶.

One day as I was taking a walk in downtown Brussels, I passed by a radio store. I walked in and spotted an item that I found particularly interesting. It was a “do it yourself” radio kit. As I mentioned previously, when I was quite young I was always interested in electrical (and mechanical) devices. I discovered that I had a knack for making and repairing small electrical items. I also found that I could make money by selling these items for less than it would cost someone in a store. I had finally discovered a field of interest that was also profitable! Between the moneys I had earned helping my uncle at the markets and the radio sales, I was finally able to pay back my 30,000 franc loan to Mr. Blomhof.



Blanca, baby Yolanda and Maurice
1949
in Brussels, Belgium

By this time, the house we lived in, which belonged to my uncle Joop, was bursting out at the seams. Whereas the house immediately after the war held only myself, Blanca, my mother, my aunt and my niece; it was now also occupied by my baby daughter, Yolanda, my uncle Joop Bas,

⁶⁶ The camp was closed and planted with pine trees days after the escape. (Wikipedia-Sobibór extermination camp-June 2011)

his son Leo and daughter in law, Maria, his daughter, Bep, and son-in-law, Joop Kloots. Blanca and I decided it was time for our little family to move. It was agreed that my mother would stay on at 59 Rue Otlet.

Rather than living in the heart of Brussels which was very costly, we found an apartment a little further away on Avenue de Woluwe-Saint-Lambert which was in a suburb located approximately 8 kilometres away from Rue Otlet. It sounds far, but it was only a twenty minute tram ride from our previous home. We found an apartment on the second floor and I recall that the entire house stood at a slant. Since the house beside us was only a foot away, we weren't too concerned about the building falling on its side! Although we had our own kitchen, we had to share the bathroom with our neighbours upstairs. They were a nice Polish couple, with a baby.

Brussels was and remains to be, a wonderful city. Streetcars were everywhere and allowed us to move around any part of the city. We were lucky to have a lovely park close by. I suspect that as a proud father I may be a little biased, but I maintain that my baby Yolanda, with her beautiful head of hair, was one of the prettiest babies in Belgium. Other people loved watching, as we walked through the park pushing her pram.

With the onset of colder weather, we discovered that we had no heating in the living room. Looking through the newspaper, I found someone who was selling their stove at a reasonable price. Having no vehicle of my own, I rented a cart which was pulled by a bicycle. The owner of the stove lived about two miles away. He helped me get the heavy stove out of his apartment and onto the cart. On my way home I was pretty thirsty and decided to stop by a pub to have a quick glass of beer. Half



Blanca, Yolanda, Maurice and Kaatje,
(Mother of Maurice Goudekettering)

way through my drink I looked around and saw that most of the patrons were men, and many of them were in women's attire. This was a world that was completely new to me and I felt more than a little out of place. I finished my drink in a rush and peddled back home. My friendly Polish neighbour was kind enough to help me lift the stove into the living room where I finally got it installed. In those days we had to do most things for ourselves.

I believe it was about in November, 1947 when we heard our doorbell ring. I went down the stairs to open the door. There stood Blanca's brother, Theo, with a beautiful blond woman by his side. Her name was Jo and she had married Theo one day earlier in Eindhoven. They decided to spend a brief honeymoon in Brussels. Like most young people in those days, they had no money for a fancy hotel and asked if they could stay with us! Looking back, I find it hard to believe that with only one bed in the place, we accepted their request. This can only happen when

you're young I guess. After eating and sharing stories, the time came for us to retire. The four of us crawled into our one double bed. This was part of the furniture I had purchased a few months earlier. I guess the quality was not all that great since in the middle of the night we heard the bed groan. It suddenly collapsed, sending all of us to the floor! We all laughed our heads off and managed to repair the bed. After another two days the newlyweds returned to Eindhoven.

Although I was blessed with my family, I wasn't very happy with my work environment. I didn't enjoy the fish business and my wife, Blanca, knew this. I had never asked her about this, but I was fairly certain that she had convinced her three brothers, Rob, Theo and Eddie, to invite me into their electronics business. They already had a successful radio and appliance store in a temporary location in Eindhoven which they later relocated to the Kruis Straat.

An electronics store named Wiener Elektronika, still occupies the building to this



Wiener Elektronika-July 2011

day. In 1949 the brothers decided to open up a second store in the city of s'Hertogenbosch (Den Bosch) and asked me if I would be interested in running it. I didn't need to think twice before accepting their offer. I gave my uncle Joop the news that I was leaving Brussels and that I could no longer work for him. He was genuinely pleased for me and gave me his blessing. I felt like I had won the lottery. I could now take

my family with me to start a new life with an exciting business career.

We didn't have a lot of possessions and my uncle lent us his truck, but leaving Brussels behind was no simple task. The city and country required permits to get permits! I needed one to be able to take my furniture across the Belgian border into Holland without being charged a customs tax. Then the income tax people told me that I owed them taxes for the last three years I had worked in Belgium. Although I tried to explain to them that I had earned very little money during my stay, I still had to pay a considerable sum.

Finally, on a Sunday morning in 1949, Blanca and I loaded the truck with our possessions and crossed the border without too much difficulty. We drove the short distance to Eindhoven where we were met by Blanca's three brothers. With Theo, Blanca and I in the front and Rob and Ed in the back, we made our way to our new home (and business) in s'Hertogenbosch.



s'HERTOGENBOSCH

I was no stranger to this city. In August 1927, when I had just turned seven, my parents sent me to Den Bosch for my vacation. At that time my father had opened up a second fish store there. The business was being run by a young couple named Lena Reuser and Jan Voets who had previously been hired by my father. Lena's father owned a little farm in a small village named Orthen, only a couple of kilometres away from the city of Den Bosch. I spent about 5 or 6 weeks working and playing here. This is where I learned how to milk a cow. I remember making friends with one of their daughters who would have been about 12 or 13 years old at the time. When we weren't working we would go to a nearby small lake to fish and swim. I would sometimes sit in a cart which held four large cans of milk. Believe it or not, the cart was pulled by a dog while deliveries were made to the same clients each week. The milk was poured out of a one litre measuring cup. After returning from the farm, I stayed with Lena and Jan for a week or two and spent time wander through the streets of Den Bosch.

This knowledge of the city was why I became concerned about the location of the Den Bosch radio store. It was situated on the edge of town and had very little foot traffic running past it. The good news was that the location was quite large with a sizeable storage area, plenty of living space, and a kitchen with running water and a cooking stove. These are features which in those days were not taken for granted.

It took us about two weeks to get the store ready for opening. We cleaned, painted and installed shelving and a counter. From Philips, we received our first delivery of several radios and radio parts, including radio valves, resistors and capacitors. We also brought in a few appliances from various manufacturers. An advertisement for the store opening on the following Friday was placed in the local newspaper.

We had a store window which I happily dressed up with a display of our merchandise. One man walked into the store two days before the official opening day. I was very proud of myself, because I had sold my first radio. I soon learned however, that carrying out business in Holland was quite different from how business had been conducted in Belgium. When I eagerly told my brother-in-law Theo of my first sale, he got quite upset. Dutch regulations were very severe. Stores on weekdays could only be open from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Saturday hours were from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Bakers could not sell their wares until 10:00a.m.

Stores carrying similar goods for sale had to be spaced at least one block away from each other. We had to be members of a radio and appliance union, whether we liked it or not. Apparently my first sale had been illegal since I had made a sale before our official opening date. What a start!

Our opening day resulted in no radio sales, although we did manage to sell a few parts and small items. After a few weeks of operating, we began to sell a few radios. Twice a week my brother-in-law Rob would come by with a truck that the company owned. He or I would then travel out to the surrounding farms, where we would offer to repair any of their broken radios or to sell them one of ours. At the time, we were able to sell quite a few battery powered radios since many rural areas still had no electricity.

A few months later, on April 2nd, 1950 I was blessed with the birth of another member of my family. After I had missed being present at the birth of my darling daughter, I was glad that I was at least in attendance for my son's birth and his circumcision a few days later. We named him Alexander Aladar in honour of my father, Alexander and Blanca's uncle, Aladar.

When August came around, we went for a holiday at a beach community named Katwijk which was located about 130 kilometres north-west along the Dutch coast. Rob, with his wife, Fina, and their young infant, Max, would pick our little family



Rob, Blanca, Yolanda, Max
Circa 1953

up with the company truck. We were able to rent the first floor of a house near the beach that was owned by a fisherman and his wife. During the summer months, they would move upstairs in order to earn some extra money renting out a part of their house. Rob and I would stay for the weekend and then go back to work, leaving our wives and the kids at the beach house. On one memorable day, Blanca and her brother, Rob, decided to take a boat trip together. The vessel was supposed to return by about 7:00 p.m., so Fina came to the pier with me to await their arrival. We looked at our watches and waited. At 7:30, no boat, at 8:00 p.m. no boat, then Fina turned to me and said (I think it was in jest) "Oh God, if they don't come back I'll have to marry you!" Fortunately, the boat finally returned a short while later. I took many photos of those very enjoyable days at the beach which I have kept to this day.



Blanca and Fina with their children,
Max, Yolanda, Alex and Leo
Circa 1953

During one holiday, we decided to stage a play along with some of our Jewish friends, called “Een partij poker” (A game of poker). We had about 50 people come to watch it. If it had not been for Blanca’s great acting (playing the part of a servant), the event would have been a total disaster.

When it came to our Jewish religion, neither Blanca nor I were very strict. Prior to the war, Den Bosch had a large Jewish community which had now dwindled to only a few⁶⁷. We did get to know some of them and on

several Friday evenings, I was asked to come with them to the synagogue so that they could make a ‘minyan’. This is a custom whereby a quorum of ten Jewish males is required for certain religious obligations, including public worship, the priestly blessings and reading of the Torah.

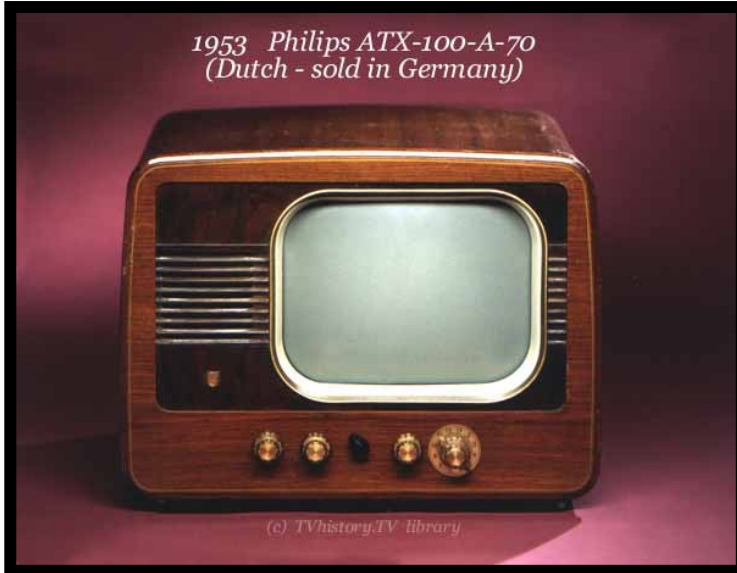
We became quite close with Eddy van De Sluis and his wife Esther who now also live in Canada. On occasion, they would babysit our daughter Yolanda. During the war, many of the buildings in Den Bosch had been destroyed and it was extremely difficult to find proper housing.

One day I learned of a new apartment on Pieter Breugelstraat that was being built and (you guessed it!), I had to make an application with the city to live there. In 1951 we received notice that we could have one of the apartments. We were so happy. The apartment had three bedrooms and its own bathroom.

In February 1952 I encountered another bureaucratic nightmare. I thought we might improve our business by putting up a sign on the store which read “Philips Radio”. This (of course!) required a permit from the city of Den Bosch. About three weeks after filling out the permit application, I was asked to show the permit department a picture of the sign. I contacted Philips and they were kind enough to provide me with a picture. About a month after sending in the drawing, I received another request from the permit department asking how high up the sign would be placed. I figured that this would be the last problem and I gave them this information. Of course I couldn’t just walk in and speak with them; this had to be done through correspondence! About a month went by and I finally received a letter back from the city. I was sure that this letter would have the permit inside, but instead it had another request. Could I let them know how far the sign would be sticking out onto the street? You may have had more patience than I, but at that point I gave up on the sign.

⁶⁷In 1939 there were some 140,000 Dutch Jews living in the Netherlands. The 1947 census put the number of Jews at 14,346. (Wikipedia-History of the Jews in the Netherlands)

In 1952, television was in its very early stages in Holland. Philips Electronics was just sending out experimental transmissions. Blanca's brother, Ed, was able to put together a prototype television set by using several radio parts and a green 6 inch radar screen! We placed an advertisement in the local paper stating that we would show a one hour program on the television on a particular date. We timed it so that



Early Philips Television set

we would receive one of Philips' transmissions which would include a short film and some people speaking. Although our store was only about 14 feet wide and not very deep, we had about a hundred people in the building. I doubt if even the few people in front of that very small screen could have seen very much, but we still got a big write-up in the newspaper. Shortly after that Philips

delivered a 12 inch television, which was the first set that

we ever had for sale in our store. To help promote the store, I asked a local pub if they would like to borrow the 12 inch set for a night when Philips was transmitting a one hour soccer match. The television set was placed in the middle of the bar and the pub quickly filled with customers. Again there were mixed reviews because the screen was so small and it was hard to see the ball. Philips soon came up with a model that had a larger screen, but it was really just a projection from a smaller



Aftermath of the flood in Oude-Tonge

screen inside the television set and this reduced the sharpness of the picture. During all this time in business I was never able to sell a television set since too few people could afford to buy one⁶⁸.

On January 31, 1953, a storm tide caused severe flooding in England, Holland and Belgium. In Holland, 2551 people were killed. 9% of Dutch farmland became flooded,

causing damage to over 47,000 buildings⁶⁹. As a result of a radio appeal for assistance,

Blanca and I spent two days as volunteers preparing sand bags. Again Eddie van

⁶⁸ In 1953 an annual salary was \$ 4700 per year (U.S.) and a table top television would cost about \$300. (Wikipedia- July 2011)

⁶⁹ (Wikipedia)-1953 North Sea Flood- July 2011

der Sluis and his wife came to the rescue, taking care of our two children while we were away.

As time went on, I was beginning to realize that I could not earn very much money by leaving things as they were. At the time, the store in Den Bosch was just doing enough business so that I could take home a salary of about 30 guilders. I needed almost the entire amount to buy food and other necessities of life. Blanca and I felt that we might be better off if we emigrated. Our decision was not based solely on our financial position. I was getting frustrated by all of the rules and regulations and red tape in Holland. In addition to all of this, I was butting heads quite a bit with Blanca's brother, Rob. We each had a different opinion as to how to run a store and as time went by, our relationship was becoming increasingly strained.

We were thinking of going to the United States, Canada or Australia and decided to mail out applications to all three countries. Blanca had some relatives living in America and they were willing to sponsor us there if necessary. My brother-in-law Eddie agreed with my belief that the business could not support all four of us and he was also interested in emigrating with us. We did not have long to wait. In June of 1953, I received a reply from the Canadian Embassy accepting our application for landed immigrant status.

It was indeed pure luck that we are now Canadian citizens since, had we received a reply from America or Australia first, my story would be quite different. The Canadian embassy asked that I obtain medical certificates of health for the whole family which were to be signed by our doctor. Since there were many Dutch citizens who were also going through the emigration process, our doctor knew precisely what procedures were necessary. We received inoculations and certificates showing that we were all in good health. I took advantage of special discounted fares which were available for emigrants and booked passage on a ship which was scheduled to depart from Rotterdam on August 10th, 1953, arriving at Halifax's well known Pier

21 in Nova Scotia Canada on August 22nd.



Groote Beer in New Zealand c. 1955

The ship was named The Groote Beer, (The big bear) holding about 800 passengers in a single class. Due to the number of immigrants leaving Holland after the war, we chose one of several moving companies who would pack all of our belongings in a huge packing crate and ensure that it came safely on board ship. The crate became quickly filled

with our furniture, kitchenware, and as they say, everything but the kitchen sink! Blanca also packed two huge suitcases with the belongings we would need while travelling.

On August 10th, 1953 we said good bye to our neighbours on Pieter Breugel Straat. They were especially sad to see my young children leaving. They adored them and would sit for them when Blanca and I stepped out of the house.



Joop, Esther, Kitty Bas with the Goudekettings, on board ship Aug 10, 1953 prior to departure

We arrived at the dock in Rotterdam to the sight of many of our relatives who had come to see us off. They were my uncle Joop, his wife, Esther, their daughter (my niece), Kitty, my mother, and Blanca's brother, Eddy, and Mr. and Mrs. Daamen. After an emotional farewell, we proceeded toward the boat with our two heavy suitcases. We had to walk through a powdery disinfectant before boarding the ship, which I later discovered was a precaution against mad cow disease. We found our cabin which consisted of two single beds and two cots for the children and then somehow found some space to store our suitcases.

Going back outside the ship we stood against the railing so that we could say good bye to both our family and country. I remember feeling great emotion as we waved our arms, hearing the boat's deep

whistle as the ship slowly drifted away from the dock⁷⁰.



Mr. & Mrs. Daamen, Eddie Wiener, Kitty Bas and the Goudekettings Aug 10, 1953

⁷⁰ Dutch emigration to Canada peaked between 1951 and 1953, when an average of 20,000 people per year made the crossing. One of the reasons many Dutch chose Canada as their new home was because of the excellent relations between the two countries, which specially blossomed because it was mainly Canadian troops who liberated the Netherlands in 1944-1945. Today almost 400,000 people of Dutch ancestry are registered as permanently living in Canada, of which about 130,000 claimed to be born in the Netherlands. (Wikipedia-Dutch Diaspora-July, 2011)



Groote Boat Captain with Yolanda and Alex, Aug 1953

The crossing took eleven days over some pretty rough weather. The food was excellent and we even had a cabin boy to help us through the journey. The ship was not a luxury liner, but it served its purpose well; to get us safely over the ocean in relative comfort. As a navy man, I recognized this as a former “Victory” ship which had been refitted to hold passengers. Its original purpose was to transport weapons, ammunition and tanks over the ocean during the war⁷¹. The food was excellent and the Captain of the ship took a great liking to the children (Alex and Yolanda).

On August 22nd, 1953 we landed in Halifax at Pier 21 which is today well remembered as the major port of arrival for post-war immigrants. We quickly and easily went through customs and immediately boarded a train to Montreal. We didn’t stay overnight in Montreal. My memories of the bad days in France were still fresh at the time and although it sounds crazy today, spending time in the French atmosphere of Montreal made me feel uneasy, so we just waited at the station until boarding the next train to Toronto. Our meal consisted of snack food at the train station in Montreal. I remember buying soft drinks for the children, coffees for Blanca and myself, and butter tarts for a total cost of two dollars.



TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

We arrived in Toronto at about 10:00 p.m. on the evening of August 23rd. It was pitch black outside. We were exhausted after travelling with our two young children and. Carrying two very heavy suitcases made things even more difficult. We were

⁷¹ Groote Beer, originally named the SS Costa Rica Victory was laid down on 22 March 1944 at the Permanente No. 1 yard at Richmond, California and launched on 17 June, 1944. Used as a Dutch emigrant ship after World War II the ship was rebuilt in 1952 to accommodate 800 passengers. It made regular stops at Halifax’s Pier 21 in Halifax, Nova Scotia Canada between 1948 and 1961. It averaged 13 voyages per year to North America. (Wikipedia, July 2011 – Groote Beer)

very fortunate to have been approached by a volunteer who was part of a group that helped immigrants. He brought us to a rooming house in the area of High Park run by a woman named Ida. We were glad to be given a large room with a double bed and two cots. I remember being woken up in the middle of the night. Someone was in our room! It turned out that it was another boarder and the only way through to the bathroom was by way of our bedroom!

The next day, I began looking for a place for the family to rent and had no success. After one more night of visitors walking through our bedroom, we both decided that we needed to move immediately, so the following morning we started knocking on the doors of houses having 'Apartment for rent' signs. We must have been a strange sight. I was holding a heavy suitcase in each of my hands and Blanca was walking behind me, with my children, Alex and Yolanda, holding on to her hands. Just as today, there were plenty of people that were willing to take in boarders to earn some extra income. We must have tried ten different places, but the moment they saw the two kids, they shook their heads. At this point I was feeling a great deal of fear in the pit of my stomach. My dear wife, Blanca, bravely and without complaint, carried on as if she didn't have a care in the world. In reality I'm sure she was just as worried as I was.

We finally found someone who was willing to give us an apartment for the grand sum of \$65 per month on the first floor of her house. The owner also suggested a store where we could purchase the furniture that we needed. It was a second hand store named Van's Furniture and Moving Company and was located on Eglinton



St. Clair 512 Street Car approaching Avenue Road

Avenue which at the time was the northern boundary of Toronto (Today it is considered "mid-town"). She gave us directions to get there and that included riding a trolley on St. Clair Avenue.

To give you an idea of how much I paid for streetcar tickets; at that time the adult cash fare was fifteen cents, or you could buy five tokens for fifty cents⁷². This was the first street car ride I had ever taken in Toronto.

The owner of the store was by chance a Dutchman who had immigrated to Canada a year earlier. He sold us a couch, two

cots, a table, four chairs and some kitchen supplies. It was a relief for us to converse in Dutch as my English wasn't terrific and Blanca's was even less so. He also

⁷² Per Wikipedia-Toronto Transit- July 2011

recommended a store not too far away where we could buy our pillows, sheets and blankets. He was willing to deliver all of our purchases to our new apartment at 5:00 p.m. Before going home, we went to the Loblaws grocery store and filled our shopping cart with food which cost us about \$20.00. The furniture and bedding cost us another \$125.00 and true to his word, at precisely 5:00 p.m. the goods were delivered to our new home. We spent the next night in Canada feeling a little more secure and a lot less anxious.

We woke up the next morning feeling quite refreshed. I knew that Toronto had a Philips factory and that I had a good chance of finding work there. Their headquarters were situated in Blanca's hometown of Eindhoven, Holland. I had experience in electronics and I knew many of their products. I found out that the plant was located in a suburb of Toronto named Leaside and to get there from our home, I would need to take two streetcars and a bus. As I mentioned earlier, you could buy five tickets for fifty cents. I've heard that the price has risen slightly since then! They had a transfer system whereby I could get to the plant with one ticket. At least that system is still in place today.

On August 26th I was more than a little nervous when I presented myself to the personnel department at Philips. I explained to them that I had just arrived from Holland and was looking for a job in electronics, with which I already had some experience. To my amazement and great delight, they hired me on the spot, offering me a wage of \$1.29 per hour and asking me to show up for work the following Monday, August 31, 1953.

As I stepped off the streetcar, on my way back to the house I passed by a little flower shop. I knew that my wife loved flowers and I asked the shop keeper how much it would cost to buy half a dozen roses. When she told me the price, I thought they were far too expensive and I walked out of the store. To this day I regret not having brought back the flowers and I pray that my dear departed Blanca can forgive me. Despite this, we felt great joy in our home that evening.

I had a few days to look around the city before having to start my job at Philips. While looking at the various stores along St. Clair Avenue, I noticed a small store with some radios on display in its window. Entering the store, I introduced myself to the owner. I told him that I was a radio repair technician and I was interested in doing some part-time work. I told him that I would be working days at Philips, but would be available on evenings or weekends. He immediately offered me a wage of \$1.25 per hour and asked me to come in Monday evening at half past seven. After returning home, I told Blanca about my good fortune. Although she was pleased, she was worried that I would burn myself out and told me so. I didn't tell her that I thought she might be right.

On Monday morning, I got up bright and early. I caught the St. Clair street car to Mount Pleasant Boulevard, a Mount Pleasant street car to Eglinton Avenue and finally a short bus ride to the Philips plant on 116 Vanderhoof Avenue. I made it in

plenty of time for my 8:00 a.m. starting time. I was taken to the radio assembly line and introduced to the foreman. The foreman's first words were, "I hope you understand English". After I told him that I did, he looked slightly relieved and told me that I could call him John.

I was required to tune each radio coming along the line to their proper short, medium and long range frequencies. If a radio was faulty, I was to pass it off to a fellow behind me. Otherwise I was to put a chalk mark on the radios which would continue along the line to the packing department. 'John' warned me that it might take me a couple of days to get used to the pace and he was right. Although a radio would come along every five minutes, at first it took me about twelve minutes to complete my task. Fortunately I got the hang of it by day's end. At ten o'clock a whistle blew to indicate a work break.

Following the other workers, I was dumfounded to see a vehicle with a side door that when opened, had coffee, tea, sandwiches and cakes for sale. It was the first time in my life that I had encountered a canteen truck. During the twenty minute break I had a ten cent cup of coffee and a twenty cent sandwich. Since I was now a big shot earning \$1.25 per hour, I felt that I could afford this. At 12 noon we had an hour's lunch break. Again I was impressed with the large cafeteria and the number of choices available for each meal. My favourite became the Shepherd's pie which I couldn't get enough of. We returned to work for 1:00 p.m. and after a second twenty minute noon break, finished off at 5:00 p.m. Not only did I survive the experience, I quite enjoyed it.

Getting back to my home about an hour later, I had little more time than to kiss Blanca and the kids and wolf down my dinner so that I could go to the little electronics store on St. Clair Avenue where I was able to repair about five or six radios in a couple of hours.

After the first week, we were becoming more accustomed to our new life. Blanca was becoming familiar with the neighbourhood and began shopping for food each day in one of the many shops on St. Clair Avenue. We had been told that Toronto had some beaches, so on our first Sunday off; we made a picnic and travelled to Sunnyside which was the beach nearest to us, just below Lakeshore Boulevard. We were fortunate with the weather that year since September was unusually hot. We were in for a surprise however. When we stepped into the water of Lake Ontario we almost froze to death. That's when we understood why so many people were using the Sunnyside pool, just a short walk away from the sand. Even though it cost us a little money, I felt that I could afford it since I was now earning close to \$60.00 per week. At the time, this felt like a small fortune.

Both Blanca and I kept in touch with our families back in Europe through a great deal of letter writing. They were all quite pleased to hear that we were doing well in Canada. My days at Philips went quickly. One unusual event occurred when I

introduced myself to a man working behind me in the plant. During one of our breaks we found out a little bit about each other. He was German and told me that he was a fighter pilot for the Luftwaffe. I explained to him that I was Dutch and that I had been an air-gunner on a Mitchel bomber.

We both agreed that had we met each other during the war there was a good chance that one or both of us wouldn't have been in Canada right now! (Or even have been alive!)

A few weeks later I discovered that the workers in the television department were earning 20 cents per hour more than we were in the radio area and Philips was still hiring more technicians. This made me think of my brother-in-law, Ed, back in Eindhoven. I wrote a long letter suggesting that he may want to come and join us in Canada. He would have no problem finding work right away in the television department at Philips and I was more than happy to help him find a place to live. Ed wrote back to say that he and his wife Nell had decided to emigrate and would probably arrive toward the end of October.

After talking it over with Blanca, we agreed that we would look for a larger place to live; one that would fit both of our families. The following Sunday we began looking around the city and came upon a House for rent at 290 Margueretta Street. It was located not far from where we had been living and was available for \$110.00 per month. Although the amount seemed high⁷³, it was perfect for our two families. It was two stories in height with two bedrooms on each floor. It also had a large kitchen and a bathroom. Brock Junior Public School was a five minute walk from the house which would be perfect for our daughter, Yolanda, who had just turned six.

We gave our notice that we would be moving out of our apartment at the end of September, 1953 and made arrangements to move into Margueretta Street on that same day. Our move went smoothly. Although school had started a few weeks earlier, they allowed my daughter to begin her classes a few weeks after the other children.

Blanca was enjoying the shopping on nearby Bloor Street and would buy our groceries from a Loblaws grocery store and the little fruit and vegetable stores which were on the block.

Meanwhile, our original moving crate from Holland had been waiting at the Toronto customs department in Union Station⁷⁴. I made arrangements for the crate to be delivered to Margueretta Street. The crate was too large to be delivered to the front of the house, so the delivery men drove it to the back of the house through the

⁷³By today's standards, the rent was quite low since it represented about a quarter of Maurice's earnings of \$ 65.00 per week (Including utilities).

⁷⁴After being unloaded from the Groote Beer, the packing crate had been transported to Toronto from Montreal customs.

laneway behind us. They then had to remove a portion of the fence to let it lie on our back lawn. They were good enough to make sure that the fence was repaired before leaving. This was all accomplished under my wife's supervision since I was at work at the time. I was quite surprised to see the massive crate sitting on the back lawn when I got home. Since the crate seemed quite watertight, we decided to wait until my day off (the following Sunday) to begin the unloading. It took about 2 days to fully unpack, but my Blanca was in seventh heaven. She was pleased that all of our books, furniture, linens, and above all, her precious kitchenware, were back in our possession. We could sleep in our old familiar beds and truly feel that this was home.



Old Malton Airport

In about the third week of October, 1953 our little family went to Malton Airport⁷⁵ to greet our extended family. In those days there were no jets and the passengers would step down the plane's ladder onto the tarmac. We could watch them come out of the plane from an outdoor landing on

the airport's second floor. The KLM plane came to a stop and soon we saw Blanca's brother, Ed,

his wife, Nell, and their two children, Hans and Yolanda and my mother come off the plane. To this day I cannot remember how we got to the airport or how we returned to Toronto with the whole family but I suspect we used quite a few taxis on the way back.



Mother Goudeketter, Blanca, Nell, Maurice, Wiener children Yolanda and Hans, my Yolanda and Alex on Margueretta Street 1953

The new arrivals were pleasantly surprised to see what their new home looked like. Blanca and I, remembering how tiring our eleven day journey had been, were both glad to see that they would not have to suffer the same difficulty and anxiety. They didn't even have to worry about someone walking through their bedroom to get to the bathroom! We were able to fit everyone in quite nicely. Ed and his family lived on the second floor. He and his wife, Nell, slept on our recently purchased second hand bed and the kids slept on cots. We slept on the first floor while my mother slept on the fold-out couch.

⁷⁵To the present day, the airport has had three different names. Malton Airport (1937-1960), Toronto International Airport (1960-1984) and Toronto Pearson International Airport (1984-present) (Wikipedia-Toronto Pearson International Airport-July 2011)

After he took a few days to settle in, on a Monday morning Ed went with me to the Phillips plant. On the way I reminded him to try to get the television technician job. Sure enough, that morning he was hired on the spot and the son of a gun was already earning 20 cents per hour more than I was! I say this in jest however. I believe our friendship and eventual partnership worked out as well as it did because from the first day, we never questioned or worried about who was earning how much. I still have a cookie box which I now use for keeping mementos. This was the same box we used as our first bank. All the money we earned went into it and all our expenses came out from it.

Eddie and Nell enrolled Yolanda and Hans into the Brock Junior public School and Blanca introduced Nell and my mother to the neighbourhood. A few weeks later, our back yard fence had to be partially taken down again as the crate holding the Wieners' belongings arrived. I'm very glad now that we chose to rent a large house since we were beginning to fill up much of its space with people and furniture.

About a month following my extended family's arrival, my night time job ended as abruptly as it had started. The owner received a call from one of his customers that their electric power had gone out. He asked me to use his truck and go to the



Ed and Maurice's first Radio and Television sign attached to their Toronto home on Margueretta Street

address he had written down on a piece of paper. I told him that I was not a professional electrician, but he replied that it was most probably just a blown fuse which I would easily be able to replace. The day was getting darker and I must have spent more than an hour looking for the customer's house. I finally got too tired to go on. I returned the truck to the store and went home. When I told the owner that I couldn't find the customer's house, he became irate and told me that my job there was finished. To be honest, I was a bit relieved because the hours were wearing me down and our financial position had much improved so that I didn't need to work there anymore.

Each week Ed and I were adding about \$96.00 to the cookie box. The children seemed to be happy at their new school and were adapting quite well to the English language. My mother, who would be turning 72 years old in December of 1953, seemed to be happy helping with the cooking and house chores.

I think my Blanca and Ed's wife, Nell, wanted to get out of the house a little more, so they both took on jobs while my mother took care of the house and the children. Blanca found a job at Philips working on a line which produced small radio valves for the military, while Nell got a job working in the 'Smarties' candy factory⁷⁶. You can imagine our children's glee when she came home each evening with a pocket full of smarties. These two extra jobs helped fill the cookie box quite a bit more.



Ed standing beside our first Volkswagen 1954

Shortly after arriving in Canada, we got in touch with the Constam family. Anne Constam, whose maiden name was Speers, was a war bride who married a Canadian soldier named Ralph Constam. Anne was one of several sisters living in den Bosch whom we knew. She married Ralph and moved to Toronto in about 1945. They had two children, Jacqueline and Simon, who were almost the same age as our own children. Our families got to know one another very well over the next number of years.

A few months after Ed and his family arrived in Canada, he and I spoke of setting up a radio and television repair business on

the side. We decided to take the first two letters of each of our last names to come up with the name 'WIGO TV and Appliances'.

To get customers, we placed our first advertisement in the classified section of the now defunct Toronto Telegram newspaper⁷⁷. We had a telephone installed in the house and bought a second hand Volkswagen van.

I will never forget the day we received our first service call. A customer wanted us to fix his broken television. Ed and I rushed over to the man's address equipped with a service box so that we could look as professional as possible. We did have most of the tools we needed but absolutely no repair parts. After knocking on the door, our customer walked us into the living room where his 17 inch television sat. Ed knelt down and opened up the back, immediately spotting the problem while the customer anxiously looked on. With a straight face Eddie turned to me and asked, "Maurice, could you hand me a 25 L6"; this was the model number of the vacuum tube⁷⁸ that was broken. It took all my will power not to laugh as I looked through our empty kit and said "I think we must have used up the last one. Shall I go back to the shop and pick one up?" Ed then replied "OK, but you'd better hurry so we can move on to the other jobs." Knowing that we had no other jobs that day I still

⁷⁶ This could have been either a Nestlé or a Rowntree Company.

⁷⁷ Now the Toronto Sun

⁷⁸ Vacuum tubes were slowly replaced by transistors during the 1960's and 1970's.

rushed out the door and found a television shop around the block where I quickly purchased the tube we needed.

I got back about fifteen minutes later and Ed quickly put in the new tube and tested the TV. The customer was delighted to see his set working again. I quietly



Vacuum tubes (Wikipedia June 2011)

showed Ed the receipt for the tube and he added that to the three dollars we charged the customer for our service call. After gladly paying his bill, we had our first satisfied customer. Within a few weeks we were averaging about five calls per week with an average bill of about \$10.00 per visit. We took home some of the sets that needed more serious

repairs. We were able to buy our parts wholesale by opening up an account with Electro Sonic, Inc.⁷⁹. Each month for many years, one of us would travel to their location at Yonge and Wellesley Street in Toronto to pick up our parts.

You may be wondering, since we were in the television business, whether we owned one for ourselves. The answer is that we did not buy one, but we did build one from parts that we were allowed to buy at a discount from the Philips plant. I bought a chassis, a 21" picture tube and all the other tubes, resistors and capacitors required. I soldered all the parts together and Eddie did the tuning. The set lasted at least for the next six years.

It was around March of 1954 on a Saturday when I began visiting various small television and radio stores around the city and spoke with them about our desire to begin a store of our own. Most of them kindly and most probably wisely suggested that setting up shop in Toronto would be very difficult because of all the competition. I think one of them referred to the industry as a cut-throat business. They felt that we would be better off to open a store in one of the many small towns close to Toronto. Taking their advice, I took the truck one morning and began to drive westward along Lakeshore Boulevard. When I reached Port Credit I turned northward onto Highway 10. After half an hour, I stopped to get some gas at a White Rose gas station and looking around, saw little more than trees and farmland⁸⁰. After driving another ten minutes north I came onto the main street of a little town named Brampton⁸¹, Ontario. It was morning, so I decided to explore a little further. I continued my trip north for another few minutes and reached Highway 7. A small directional sign pointed west with the name 'Georgetown' on it.

⁷⁹Opened in 1952, the Distributor is still in business and located in Scarborough, Ontario.

⁸⁰ The gas station was located on the northwest corner of Derry Road and Highway 10. It is now a major intersection as part of Brampton and is surrounded by industrial and residential buildings.

⁸¹ The Brampton census for 1951 indicated a population of 8,389 which grew to 510,000 by 2010 (Wikipedia-Brampton-July 2011)

Following Highway 7, I passed through a pretty little village named Norval and reached the town of Georgetown⁸².

To get to its Main Street I had to turn left on Mill Street, passing by a beautiful old building with a clock tower. I would have been quite shocked if someone had told me then, that Eddie and I would be buying that same building many years later.

I reached Main Street and turned right. Noticing a coffee shop, I parked in front and went in to order a cup of coffee and chat with the owner. I explained that I was an expert at repairing radios and televisions and that I was looking around for a building where I could open up a store. He told me that he knew of only one radio repairman in the vicinity and was pretty sure that no one in town fixed or sold television sets. He pointed, indicating a building across the street. It had some apartments above and two stores below. One held a barbershop and the spot beside it was vacant.

20th century Georgetown Main Street (above) 1951 Main Street (below)



Main Street circa 2001 (above)

The cafe owner suggested that I speak with the owner of the building, a chap named Cordaro, who happened to live in one of the apartments. I thanked him for his help and went across the street. Finding the name Cordaro on the apartment I knocked on the door. An elderly gentleman answered. I asked whether he had a vacant retail location and he told me that I was too late. He had recently rented the store out to a man with a young wife and child who were going to open up a sewing machine shop. I thanked him for his time and left. Just before getting back into my car however, I decided to take a look at the store through the front window.

The store itself was completely empty, but I noticed some movement in the back. Out of curiosity, I knocked on the door and a young man answered. I told him that I had just found out that the store had been rented, but asked if I could take a quick look anyway.

⁸² The Georgetown census for 1951 recorded 3,152 residents and 37,000 residents in 2006. On January 1, 1974 the town was amalgamated with other towns and villages within the region, including the towns of Acton and Milton. Georgetown was thereafter officially referred to as the Regional Municipality of Halton Hills although the locals and the Canadian post office remain using the name 'Georgetown'.

His name was Mr. Smith. He told me that he was planning to sell and repair Singer sewing machines and that he would be opening up within the week. I suddenly had a thought and asked him how much he would be paying for rent. He told me the rent would be \$60.00 per month. I took a bold step. I let him know that I was in the television and radio repair business and asked if he would be interested in sharing his store with me if I paid him \$30.00 a month. I would want to share half of the display window and share the use of a store telephone.

He seemed interested but wanted to confer with his wife first. Inviting me to come to the back, he introduced me to his wife and six month old child. The living area consisted of a small kitchen, a bedroom and a bathroom. Mr. Smith's wife was hesitant at first, but after he told her that the rent would be reduced by \$30.00, she agreed to the idea. I had about \$10.00 in my pocket and gave it to him as a deposit. I explained that I would be back in two days (on a Monday) to pay him the rest and that we would be moving in sometime during the following week.

Back in Toronto, the family was quite excited, but I'm sure they were as secretly as nervous as I was. To open up a store in Georgetown meant that at least one of us would have to quit Philips, and we had no idea whether the business could make enough money.

On Monday morning, I drove Blanca and Eddie to the Philips plant. While they went to work, I went to the office with my fingers crossed for good luck and handed in my resignation. Before leaving, I made a detour to say good-bye to my co-workers and to John, the line foreman. I'm sure he had good intentions, but he didn't make me feel very optimistic. He shook his head; decreed that I was making a big mistake and that there was no way I could successfully open up a new business in a small town.

Wigo Television New Business Here

Newest businessman on Main St. is Maurice Goudekettling, who came from Holland eight months ago. He has opened a radio and television store in the Cordaro Building in premises which he will share with Neighbourhood Sewing Machine.

Native of Eindhoven, where the Philips Company factories are located, he has been working as a TV trouble shooter at the Philips branch in Toronto since coming to Canada. His family operates several radio and TV stores in Holland.

Mr. Goudekettling lived in England for several years during the war. An air gunner with the Netherlands Air Force which was based in England, he flew on 71 bombing missions. His wife and children Yolande and Alex are living in Toronto at present.

May 12, 1954 Georgetown Herald
announces town's newest
businessman; M. Goudekettling

I immediately drove back to Georgetown so that I could pay the rest of my rent and get a chance to look around the town. Directly beside our store was a clothing store called Silver's Clothing Store. Next to it was a tuck shop, a restaurant, a fruit and vegetable market and a tailor shop named Henry's⁸³. There were two banks on the corner (the Royal and the Commerce), Goodlets Furniture, McCormick Pharmacy, the town Municipal building, Richardson Hardware, a White Rose garage and the town paper, the Georgetown Herald. These were the stores I first noticed, but there were several businesses that I eventually became well acquainted with. One, was the old

⁸³ The store owner's name was Henry Helfant (recently deceased at the time of this writing). Our sons became friends with one another and I had a good business acquaintance to share local gossip with.

McGibbon Hotel which I'm sure had seen better days. Until I found a home in Georgetown, I would be spending a few nights there in the lap of luxury.



I walked into the Georgetown Herald and spoke with the publisher Walter Biehn⁸⁴. I told him that I was opening a store the following week named WIGO TV and asked if we could place an advertisement in the next edition of his paper for the store's opening day. I told him a little bit about my background and he said that for no additional charge he would write a small story about my history.

My next task was to choose a bank in town to deal with. I had no particular preference, so I just walked into the nearest one which happened to be the Bank of Commerce. I was able to meet with the bank manager, Mr. Alcom. I explained to him that I was opening up a store the following week and that I would be interested in borrowing a small sum of money to start my business. He asked how much I thought I would need. Pretending to know, but actually taking a wild guess, I suggested five hundred dollars. He immediately approved the loan for \$ 500.00 and welcomed me to the business community. This was definitely not Den Bosch Holland anymore!

I put \$400.00 into a new business account with the bank and kept \$100.00 for my expenses. Returning to the new store, I paid Mr. Smith the balance of my \$30.00 rent, letting them know that I would be open for business on the following Monday. I then had a duplicate key made for the premises at the hardware store.

After returning to Toronto I met with the owner of Electro Sonic. He had already done some business with us and offered to supply us with electronic parts and small products which would not have to be paid for until the end of each month. I loaded up my truck with the items I thought I would need for our business. On Sunday I took Eddie to Georgetown and let him see the store. Up to this point I wasn't sure whether he wanted to make this move, but to my relief he said, "OK, let's give it a go." Eddie never was one for many words.

Before the Monday store opening I began dressing my half of the store display window. I placed into it, a few radios, small appliances and a 17" Admiral television set. It was considered to be one of the more reliable and inexpensive brands and sold for about \$250.00. The other half of the window displayed my friend's Singer sewing machines.

⁸⁴ Walter Biehn passed away on September 30th 2005 in his 90th year. One of his obituary notices was placed in the newspaper that replaced the Herald, The Independent and Free Press on Friday October 7th 2005. On that day the Free Press consisted of 48 Pages and had a distribution of 21,220 copies. In 1954 the Herald consisted of 10 Pages and had a much smaller distribution.

Throughout the week I had returned to Toronto each night, but on the Sunday before our opening I stayed over in a clean third floor room of the Old McGibbon Hotel⁸⁵.



The McGibbon Hotel at the corner of Mill and Main Street, Georgetown

The ‘fire escape’ consisted of a rope hanging near the third floor window. I guess I was supposed to open the window and slide down the rope in the event of a fire!

I went in to the store at 9:00 a.m. praying that someone would come into the store. Then the telephone rang. Mr. Smith answered the phone and told me that someone wanted to speak with me. For the first time in my life I said, “WIGO Television, may I help you?” They asked me how much I would charge to come and fix their broken television set. Trying not to sound too excited, I explained that we charged \$3.00 for the service call and added a charge for any parts which might be required. He then asked me when I could come and I replied that I would be right there. I gathered my tool kit which thanks to Electro Sonics now contained all the tools and spare parts I needed for an average call. In



the last few months while working with Eddie, I learned quite a bit about television repair. In this case, a vertical output valve needed replacement which was a simple job and I billed the customer about \$8.00 for the call.

I returned to the store and received two more calls before the end of the day. The number of calls steadily increased each day. Some television sets were too difficult to repair in the customers’ homes. I would tell them that if we were to bring the set back to our shop, we would charge a minimum fee of six dollars whether we made the repair or not. Before we proceeded with the repair we would give them a call and ask for their permission.

I was still working alone in Georgetown at the time and there were times when a heavy console would need to be taken out of the owner’s house for repair. To get it into the truck I would just take the TV out of its chassis and carry it onto the truck. I had no problem lifting sets that had 17” screens or less.

I remained in the hotel for a few days, but then decided to move into a rooming house on Guelph Street. It was owned by an elderly lady who served me breakfast

⁸⁵ Built in about 1850, the hotel was ravaged by a fire in the 1880’s. The McGibbon family, who lived in the hotel at the time, rebuilt and added a new 3rd floor. (Wikipedia-Georgetown-July 2011)

each morning. I would go to the store, eat my lunch at Wades Restaurant beside the store and end the day with dinner at the McGibbon Hotel.

After closing the store on Saturday I drove back to our house in Toronto with the non-repaired television sets in the back of the truck. The basement of our house on



Numerous bridges needed to be fixed or rebuilt after Hurricane Hazel

Margueretta Street was fortunately quite large. We created a little repair shop in which Eddie was able to fix the broken televisions that I had brought back from Georgetown.

One weekend I had to stay over in Georgetown. Hurricane Hazel hit us on October 15th on a Friday night. She was apparently the worst hurricane Toronto had experienced in recorded history, created massive flooding and damaged or destroyed over 50 bridges in Toronto.

For the next two months we continued with our routine. I was continually travelling between

Georgetown and Toronto. Our cookie box was filling up quite nicely with the extra money that was steadily coming in. We were all very pleased and quite proud of the fact that we were doing so well in Canada in such a short space of time. My mother was a God send. She looked after the four children and ran the house while we worked during the day. We had two Scottish neighbours on Margueretta Street who loved to spoil our children. My wife, Blanca, did have some difficulty changing her Dutch cleaning habits. The neighbours advised her that most Canadians do not take a pail of soap and water to scrub the sidewalk in front of their house.

Back in Georgetown, my relationship with Mr. Smith in our store was beginning to sour. During all this time I don't think that he sold one sewing machine and he wasn't doing much in the way of repair business. Most of the phone calls coming in on 'our' phone were customers wanting to speak with me and he was becoming increasingly (and understandably) more frustrated with the situation. Unfortunately there was very little I could do to make him feel any better.

Every other week I visited the barbershop next door to get myself a haircut. The owner seemed to have a bit of a drinking problem and I was advised by the locals that the best way to avoid getting my ears cut instead of my hair was to visit him in the morning while he was still relatively sober.

About two months later I was having a coffee across the street at the Horseshoe Grill when Bill Hazelwood (the owner) mentioned that he was quitting his business. I asked him who his landlord was. He replied “He’s the mayor of this town and he lives in the apartment upstairs.” That same day, after my store closed, I crossed the street and knocked on Mayor Gibbons’ apartment door. He appeared a little older than I had expected. I asked him whether we could discuss renting his downstairs store and he invited me inside. I explained that the store I had on the other side of the street was becoming too small for my needs. After a short while, we agreed on a rent of \$75.00 per month and shook hands to finalize the agreement. It was very obvious to me that things could get done much more quickly in Canada than anything I had experienced in Europe. I went downstairs to tell the owner of the coffee shop that I had rented the store and asked him when he was planning to move out. He said that he would be leaving at month’s end which would have been November of 1954. When I arrived back in Toronto I told everyone in the family about the new store. They were all quite excited about it. The following weekend Eddie and I agreed that it was time for him to leave Philips and spend all of his time back in the store in Georgetown.

We were extremely fortunate to have started a television business when we did. At the time, prices were coming down so that the average person could afford to buy their first set. Also, before transistors, televisions and radios needed to have their vacuum tubes replaced quite often as a result of overheating and wear and tear which was good for our repair business. As this was an era preceding cable television, we had the extra business of setting up antennas attached to metal towers for each customer who wanted better reception from the airwaves than just a set of rabbit ears. Depending on a home’s location, to get proper reception of the television signal, we would set up either a twenty foot tower for \$20 or a forty foot tower for \$40. We made a good profit from this, but I think you’ll see from what I tell you next, that we earned every cent of it!



Illustration of 20 foot aerial
(Google image July 2011)

Installing a TV antenna required the work of two people. My brother-in-law, Eddie, would come into Georgetown every Saturday and we would do the aerial jobs together. To put up a twenty foot aerial, we would first climb up the roof and attach the antenna to the end of twenty feet of tubing before actually raising it.

We installed four guide wires, one at each corner of the roof. The other side of the guide wires were then secured to the top of the mast and the whole structure would be lifted into place using the wires. Thank goodness that most of the houses we visited were newly built and had strong roofs. The greatest risk for me occurred when a customer needed a forty foot aerial installed. To

accomplish this, a twenty foot, two inch pipe was pre-fit inside of a second twenty foot pipe which had two and a half inch diameter. The first twenty foot piece of pipe was installed, as I previously discussed, using four guide wires. The tricky part involved putting up the second twenty foot section. We had to attach four more guide wires to the roof corners and the other end of the wires was secured to the top of the second section of two inch pipe. I then had to place my tall ladder with its feet on the roof, against the twenty foot mast which was only two and a half inches thick and climb my ladder to the top of the twenty foot section of it. I then slowly pulled up the smaller pipe with the antenna already attached, until the full height was reached. I still can't believe that I was brave enough (or foolish enough) to stand twenty feet high on a ladder which was standing on a roof against a small pipe being held up by four little wires. Needless to say, I rarely looked down. Finally, from the top of the ladder, I would bolt together the two twenty foot sections of pipe which had holes already pre-drilled. To this day I have a fear of heights!

The coffee shop closed a few weeks before the end of the month. All of the fixtures had been removed, which gave Eddie and I a chance to get the store set up more quickly. The store had about five times more area as the previous one across the street. We did some painting, floor repair, set up a sales counter and a repair area, and put peg board on many of the walls since it was inexpensive and allowed us to hang up anything we wanted through the use of metal hooks that would fit into the holes. Then we contacted Bell Canada and got our own phone under the number⁸⁶ 'TRIANGLE' 7- 3376 (877-3376). In those days we had no long distance area codes and all long distance calls were made through one of 'Ma' Bell's operators.



Page from the Georgetown Herald,
Nov 10 1954

An advertisement was placed in the Georgetown Herald for their November 10th 1954 issue.

We now had been in business long enough to obtain a credit account with Canadian General Electric, Phillips and Panasonic.

Our Commerce bank loan had quickly been paid off and we were in good standing with our parts supplier, Electro Sonics.

Since we had so much extra space, we decided to stock the store with larger appliances like refrigerators, stoves and washing machines. From the first day of our new store's opening, business grew steadily. We were getting more calls each day; our sales were continually increasing and we could now afford to place advertisements in the Georgetown Herald each

⁸⁶As of July 2011, this phone number remains to be used by a business that repairs appliances and goes under the name WIGO.

week.

We could now proudly call ourselves ‘Georgetown’s largest television and appliance store’.



WIGO Store front 1956



WIGO store circa 1955 before renovation



M. Goudeketter (Left) and Ed Wiener in WIGO store circa 1955



Partner Ed Wiener circa 1956





GEORGETOWN, ONTARIO

Up to now, we were travelling back and forth between Georgetown and Toronto daily to be with our families. At the time, a mini building boom was beginning to happen in Georgetown. A gentleman by the name of Rex Heslop had bought quite a lot of undeveloped land and under the company name of Delrex Developments, began to build a subdivision consisting of affordable bungalows on the south side of Highway 7 (known as Guelph Street).

On a Sunday, we asked my mother to look after the kids in Toronto and took our wives, Blanca and Nell to take a look at the model homes. With a down payment of \$ 1500.00, we could purchase a new 3 bedroom home costing \$11,860.00. They offered a mortgage which was at about 3% payable for \$ 67.00 per month over 25 years.



After consulting with our wives, we immediately agreed to buy two homes next to each other on addresses designated as 32 and 34 Byron Street. The homes were available for occupancy three weeks after our purchase date, so we made arrangements to move out of our Toronto Margueretta Street home to coincide with that date.

We were able to enrol our daughter, Yolanda, and Eddie and Nell's kids, Hans and Yolanda (Wiener),⁸⁷ into Howard Wrigglesworth Public school which was located on Guelph Street, a short walking distance from the house. All three children were now 7 years old and Alex, my youngest was 4 years old at the time. In the following month Eddie and I decided that it was time to get another truck which could pick up and deliver larger appliances like refrigerators and stoves.

⁸⁷ Hans and Yolanda Wiener were born in March of 1947 in Eindhoven, Holland to Blanca's brother Eddie and wife Nell.

We knew, being from Europe, that Volkswagen vehicles had a good record for durability and low maintenance issues. The closest Volkswagen dealer was located on Highway #7, a few miles east of Georgetown. At the time the Volkswagen Dealership was surrounded by farmland. Today, (2011) in the middle of that land, sits a shopping centre named ‘ the Bramalea City Centre’. It is a strange twist of fate that I now live in a condominium building where I can look directly down on that same mall!



1954 WIGO Volkswagen van

After buying a 1954 Volkswagen van, we had it painted a soft blue colour with a large logo which I had proudly designed in red and white colours, showing the name WIGO Television on both sides.

About a month after we had moved into our Byron Street homes (January or February 1955), Eddie befriended a foreman who was overseeing the construction of the new homes in our neighbourhood. He told Ed that the homes that were being built one street north of us (Prince Charles Drive) would cost only an extra \$600 above what we paid and were one hundred square feet larger. He suggested that we take one of those houses instead.

Although we had no difficulty changing our original purchase agreement, the new homes were not scheduled to be completed for another eight weeks. We found a large home one block below us called Shelly Street. The entire extended family stayed there for seven weeks after which my family, including my mother moved into number eight and Eddie’s family took number ten Prince Charles Drive. These would be our new homes for quite a few years to come.



8 Prince Charles Dr. Georgetown

The whole Street seemed to have neighbours who were all the same age and almost all of us had children of the same age who became friends and could play with one another and attend the same schools. We became friendly with

all of our neighbours and would throughout the following years,

have barbeques, drink beer and coffee, and play cards together.

A year after we opened the WIGO store, my wife, Blanca, decided to go back to the work force and joined a plastics company called Smith and Stone. My mother was at home to look after the kids and it brought in some extra money. After nine months Blanca became ill and had to leave her job. This was unfortunately only the beginning of several years of health issues affecting my wife.

A little while after settling into our new homes, Eddie and Nell decided to ask Nell's family to come and live with them. Nell's mother and father saved Blanca's two brothers, Eddie and Theo, from the Germans by keeping them hidden inside their home. Looking back in time, I think it must have been a tight fit inside Eddie's house. In addition to the four members in Nell and Ed's household, they shared their home with four others: Nell's parents, Maria and Johan Daamen,, her sister Miep, and Miep's daughter, Marja.

Our neighbours at number six Prince Charles Drive were Vivian and Ian Presgrave. They had three children, Jimmy, Billy and (I believe) Vicki. One of them had relatives who owned a beautiful cottage on Caledon Lake, located about twenty miles north of Georgetown near a small town named Orangeville. Through this family, we were told that a family by the name of Smith had a cottage available during that summer. The building itself was at least seventy five years old. Other than a water pump outside, there was no plumbing and the facilities consisted of an outhouse at the side which for some reason always had a hornet's nest right next to it. After seeing it, we understood why they may have had difficulty getting it rented, but it was more than large enough to accommodate our two extended families and it



Caledon Lake, Ontario

was a wonderful place for our kids to play and for the rest of us to relax. Eddie and I rediscovered the joys of fishing here as well. Over the years, the kids spent lots of time in the water, swimming and water-skiing. The 'larger' lake was about three quarters of a mile across. One side of it was surrounded by privately owned cottages. We felt quite secure since we entered our cottage by way of a private road with an informal gate and a gatehouse (Although I don't remember ever seeing a guard!).

Meanwhile back in Georgetown, I had previously become acquainted with Fred Maveal, the owner of the White Rose garage, a small distance up the street from the WIGO store. He let me see a used car in good condition which he thought I might be interested in buying.

It was a 1947 De Soto which was produced by Chrysler⁸⁸ and featured a hybrid manual transmission given the name 'Tip-Toe Shift'⁸⁹. He sold it to me for \$350.00 and I was now the proud owner of my first car.



1947 De Soto Coupé

Now that we had gotten a car, my wife, Blanca, obtained her first driver's license. In addition to the cottage, we now could begin to explore this wonderful country.

One of our first trips was a day journey to Niagara Falls. In those days we rarely ate in a restaurant and picnics were the norm.

That first summer, I loaded the family into our De Soto and drove them to the cottage on a Friday night. I stayed overnight and got up early the next morning to return to the store in Georgetown. It probably gave the cottagers a bit of a shock to see a large number of recently arrived 'foreigners' suddenly arriving over the summer, to occupy a large old cottage (which was very needy of a good paint job).

During the second summer, the cottage we had rented from the Smiths had come up for sale. To buy any cottage, offers to purchase had to be approved by a committee elected by the cottage owners. Our Georgetown neighbours, the Presgraves who had attended the meeting, told us that several committee members were concerned that we were too different. This may have been referring to our nationality, our religion or both. Fortunately Ian and Vivian were able to convince them that we would prove to be good owners. The purchase price for the property was approximately \$ 5,000.00. This was quite a bit of money at the time and we finally decided against it. The Wiener family later bought a nearby lot and built a new cottage on it that would be used for many years.

In April of 1957, we felt that our store was becoming overcrowded with the growing number of television and appliance models we wanted to display. We didn't want to spend money for a renovation on someone else's property.

⁸⁸The De Soto was a brand of automobile, manufactured and marketed by the Chrysler Corporation from 1928 to 1961. The De Soto marquee was officially dropped 30 November 1960 with slightly over two million built since 1928.(Wikipedia Chrysler- July 2011)

⁸⁹ This was known as an M6 Presto-Matic transmission produced from 1946-1953 (Its predecessor was the M4 Vacamatic Transmission). The driver would use the clutch pedal any time when selecting low, high or reverse gear. Once underway, the accelerator could be eased and the car would engage the overdrive. (Wikipedia-Presto-Matic-July 2011)

Up to now, the building was owned by Georgetown's former Mayor Gibbons who still lived in the apartment above our store along with his wife. We approached Mr. Gibbons and he agreed to sell us the property for approximately \$17,000. The purchase agreement was drawn up by the mayor's lawyer, Frederick Henson (who later became my lawyer). The agreement included an odd clause however; both Mr. Gibbons and his wife would be allowed to live rent free in their apartment above the store for the rest of their lives. I believe that they agreed to pay for their own heating and electric bills.

At the time, we were very pleased with the negotiations, but many years later, I am sure that the late Mr. Gibbons would be smiling down on us about his deal. I will explain the details behind all of that a little later in my story.

WIGO EXPANSION GIVES LARGER STORE QUARTERS

For the third time in their four years of business locally Morris Gaudetkett and Ed Wiener, proprietors of Wigo TV, have been forced to expand. Originally located in part of the Cordaro Building, Wigo moved across the street to larger quarters in October of 1954, after just six months of successful TV sales and service. Their present store, formerly the Horseshoe Grill has been undergoing a great change for the past month and when officially re-opened on Saturday offered to the customer a wider selection of electric ranges, Hi-Fi sets, tape recorders, and numerous smaller household appliances as well as five name lines of television sets in every style and model, effectively displayed on 1500 feet of floor space about 50 per cent more room than before the expansion.

A clean, dry basement under the new section has provided an additional 600 feet for storage. The most striking features of the new store are the large modern sound

Chatting . . .
M. H. B.

- **SEEMS I'VE BEEN** anything but methodical in telling about our trip out west. To tell the truth, originally I hadn't intended going into such detail, but with nobody to politely change the subject as might happen in the course of a conversation — the pleasure of telling all on the type-writer proved irresistible. And I still have a few impressions tucked away for our chat this week.
- **AFTER HAVING TOLD** you about the highlights of our stay in Banff, I'd like to backtrack and tell you a little about the train trip out there. We left Toronto around midnight and woke the next morning to find ourselves a few miles north of

Figure Georgetown Herald WIGO article

The building had a well sized back lot with a small garage on it for the ex-mayor's car. After consulting with the contractor, we decided to extend our current basement outward and build above the new basement so that our store would have an additional 5500 square feet. We provided Mr. Gibbons with a new garage and had some room to load and unload our 'fleet' of two trucks. We now owned both a van and a pick-up truck.

The construction was complete by mid-October of 1957 and the Georgetown Herald was kind enough to publish a little story about our business history.

The expansion improved our business

considerably. With the extra space, we were able to sell more used televisions and

appliances on our new basement level. We also took on another repairman. His name was Dick DeBoer. He was also from Holland and quickly proved his worth by helping us with deliveries and small appliance repairs.



1958 TRIP TO EUROPE

By 1958 I felt quite proud of how well we had established ourselves in Canada. Blanca and I were now in a position to take a trip back to Europe with the kids. Since leaving Holland, almost all of our interaction with the family back home had been by letters. Overseas phone calls at the time were considered a great luxury because of their expense. There was also a possibility that the person in Europe didn't have a phone. Blanca was the principal letter writer. She would write at least once or twice a month. After doing her writing on the airmail envelope, she would

Milk Cart circa 1950



pass the letter on to me to finish it off. If you know me over the phone, you'll know how little I have to say. I am no different with my letter writing skills. I found it more than difficult to fill four inches of blank space on those envelopes. When I put lots of XXX's for kisses, it was more often than not, my sneaky way of filling up the blank spot on the page. It was a blessing as the kids got older since we could entice them to write hello and use up even more space! I'm just kidding (a little).

Just as a side note for those of you who are too young to know it, but in those days we had postal delivery six days per week. I believe Saturday delivery was cancelled in 1969. We also had milk delivered to our house and placed in our milk box beside the side door. Would you believe that the truck was pulled by a horse until about 1954?

We decided to make the trip in April and needed permission from the school that the children were attending, to let them leave before the school year was out. Fortunately they were both doing well enough in their studies that the school principal, Mr. Kinrade, felt that seeing Europe would be beneficial for their education.



**De Keukenhof, Netherlands
(famous for their flowers)**

One reason that we left at this time of the year was to see the flowers (especially the roses) in full bloom. I have always been an avid photo taker and on this trip I began taking lots of ‘moving pictures’ (now known as video) on 8mm. film. I still have all the film and my projector is in good working order, but I worry what I will do if the light bulb burns out!

We also wanted to see relatives that we hadn’t seen since our emigration from Holland in 1953. These included Blanca’s two other brothers who were still running

the Wiener Radio store which was now located on Kruis Straat in Eindhoven; Blanca’s brother, Theo, who had married Jo, with two boys named Aladar (b. 1947) and Rudy (b. 1951), and her other brother, Rob with his wife, Fina and their two sons, Max (b.1947) and Leo (b.1950).

From my side of the family, we wanted to see my cousin, Gerry Goudekettering, and his family who were living in Amsterdam and my mother, who had returned to Europe shortly after we moved to Georgetown, in addition to all of the Kloots and Bas families who were still living in Brussels, Europe. These included uncle Joop Bas, his wife, Esther, and my niece, Kitty, uncle Joop’s son, Leo (who as you might remember had the gun injury to his right eye while in England), with his wife Maria, uncle Joop’s daughter, Bep, and husband, Joop Kloots, with their two daughters Maggie (b. 1946) and Bea (b. 1952). In Eindhoven we had a chance to visit with the Daamen family.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ As previously mentioned, Johan Daamen, his wife Maria with their daughters Nell and Miep, hid two of the Wiener brothers in their home during the war. Nell Daamen later married Ed, one of the brothers.



Lockheed Constellation

I booked the return airline tickets through KLM, the Dutch national air carrier⁹¹. This was before jet aviation and the trip took about 14 hours. We were on a four propeller Lockheed Constellation which had an average cruising speed of about 350 miles per hour.

The flight route would have been: Toronto-Montreal-Gander, Newfoundland-Iceland-Shannon, Ireland-

London, England and finally Amsterdam. We flew out from Malton Airport on May 2nd, 1958. The onboard meals weren't too exciting. In those days the best we could hope for was a cold sandwich. The plane also had an ample supply of air sickness bags, which our children had to use more than once.



Atomium Spheres at Expo 1958 in Brussels

While in Europe we also wanted to go to 'Expo 1958', the world exhibition which was being held in Belgium Brussels that year. It is probably best remembered for its famous 'Atomium Spheres'. I think I was showing off a bit when I arranged for the family to travel to Brussels from Eindhoven by helicopter, when we could just as easily have taken the train.

In addition to seeing all the family again, Blanca and I took a week's holiday with her brother, Rob, and my sister-in-law, Fina, to the Riviera. We travelled in Rob's car with a tent trailer attached. The trip itself went quite well except that my Blanca and her brother, Rob, had one thing in common. God bless them both, but they were both terrible drivers.

Please forgive me for saying so but Blanca constantly bumped into things when she drove our car in Canada and Rob drove like a demon while he was negotiating the narrow mountain roads along the Alps. At one point I had to insist that I take over the driving or Blanca and I would hitch-hike our way back to Holland if necessary!

While the four of us were away, Blanca's brother, Theo, looked after their Radio store and the kids stayed at his



⁹¹ KLM was founded on 7 October 1919 making it the oldest carrier in the world still operating under its original name. On 30 September 2003, Air France and KLM announced that they would in future be known as Air France-KLM. (Wikipedia-KLM-August, 2011) (Most passengers still appear to refer to the airline as KLM)

home with his wife and two children. This was a great opportunity for all the youngsters to get to know one another and it probably helped my children to improve their ability to speak Dutch.

Throughout the trip, our families were kind enough to let us stay over in their homes. In Brussels we stayed with the Bas family, in Eindhoven we stayed at my brother-in-law Rob's home and with my cousin Gerry while in Amsterdam.

Like many other visitors, we never really get to know the sites that were in our own backyard while we lived in Holland. I know lots of people born in Toronto who have never bothered to try out their own beaches. This time as Canadian "tourists" the family visited the Dutch town of Volendam which attracts lots of visitors because it looks like what everybody supposes Holland is supposed to look like. We even had our kids dressed in 'traditional' Dutch outfits with wooden shoes and had their pictures taken.

Typical Dutch
Costume



Madurodam, Holland

Before returning to Canada, we visited the town of Scheveningen, where I worked at my uncle Kobus' factory as a teenager. In addition to visiting the city again, we travelled to a well-known tourist site named Madurodam which is a beautiful Dutch miniature city. This was definitely a memorable visit, especially for the kids.



1959

On April 29, 1959 Nell and Ed Wiener were given a little gift in the way of a new son whom they named Eddie. I'm certain that his sister, Yolanda, and brother, Hans, who had just turned thirteen, were very pleasantly surprised.

For our summer vacation in 1959 Blanca and I tried to rent our own cottage on Caledon Lake, but found nothing available. I then decided to buy a cottage on Puslinch Lake, not far from Kitchener, Ontario. I don't want to give offence to anyone vacationing there now, but we would not want to repeat the experience. It wasn't until we got there that we discovered that cat-fish were the only fish I ever caught there and to go swimming one had to share the lake with lots and lots of seaweed. Fortunately, at the end of the summer, I was able to sell it at the same price I paid for it. Hopefully things have improved since then.

During 1959, after having seen several doctors for her ill health over the previous four years, Blanca was sent to a hospital in Toronto for some exploratory surgery. This was a traumatic experience for myself and especially for Blanca. After the operation, we were told by the surgeons that they had conducted a hysterectomy⁹². This was done without Blanca's or my own consent and proved to devastate my wife's mental well being. In my opinion, this was the root cause of several bouts of ill health and depression for Blanca which lasted for another twenty years resulting in more operations and more hospital stays. On more than one occasion I was blessed to have the Constam family as our friends. They were kind enough to have our two children stay with them in Toronto while Blanca was in the Toronto General hospital and I was finding it quite difficult to watch over them while I was working.



THE 1960's

⁹²A hysterectomy is the surgical removal of the uterus. The operation renders the patient unable to bear children.

Since we came to Georgetown in 1954, the population had more than doubled over the next seven years. The Delrex subdivision on the East side of town was now serviced by a strip mall which took away some of the downtown Main Street business, but despite the increased competition, we continued to do well. By this time WIGO Television and Appliances had become well known in the community and we had a very loyal clientele who would usually return to our store when it came time to replace their electronics or white goods.

Each year Blanca and I would take the kids on a summer vacation. Now that we had extra help in the store it became easier for either Eddie or I to take some time off work. On one summer outing, we took a trip to 'Bangor Lodge' near Bracebridge, Ontario. My daughter, Yolanda, was a young teenager and enjoyed being on stage whenever possible. This could be for public speaking or in Little Theatre. Once a week, the Lodge held a talent show and we arranged for Yolanda to perform a singing act. Halfway through her act a drunk came lumbering out of the audience and began to heckle her act. The audience was shocked until they saw that Yolanda and I had staged the whole thing. I played 'The Drunk'. We ended the act with a duet singing and dancing to the song 'Me and My Shadow'.

Both my children were doing quite well in their schooling. They were both speaking English without an accent. I on the other hand, even though I had spent a fair amount of time speaking English, could not get rid of my accent then and even retain one now.

Yolanda Goudekettling Wins Public Speaking Competition

The annual Public Speaking Competition of the Georgetown Public Schools was held last night at the auditorium of the Howard Wigglesworth School, with an excellent crowd in attendance.

The finalists and semi finalists from each school took part making a total of ten contestants.

The chairman of the evening was Edwin Wilson, head of the

During a musical recess, after the last speaker, the judges, local barrister Douglas V. Lall, Mr. Anderson, minister Rev. Kenneth Richardson, and high school teacher Paul Lezer, adjourned to the principal's office to make their decision.

During the judges' absence, the chairman called on Legion vice president James Wright, to present the cup to winners, in each school. Mr. Wright with some warm words of commenda-

then presented silver dollars to the winners up from the school board: Yolanda Haacs, Grade VIII, Chapel Street School; Ian Bowers, Grade VII, Harrison School; Debiel Stein, Grade VIII, George Kennedy School; Richard Lenz, Grade 6, Park School; Mary Hall, Grade VI, Howard Wigglesworth School.

Rev. Kenneth Richardson then came to the platform and reported that Yolanda Goudekettling was again the winner this year and was commended.

Georgetown Herald article

My daughter, Yolanda, entered speaking competitions in each of her last three years of public school and won a first prize trophy in each of those years. In one competition which was sponsored by the Hydro-Electric Company, I helped her write a winning speech which

began "with the flick of a switch". She also won a speech in which she spoke of her pride to be

Canadian; well I was very proud of her!



1963 EUROPE TRIP



1962 Mercury Comet

We took our second family trip to Europe in the summer of 1963. Since the children were now old enough to appreciate the journey, we decided to have a pleasant ocean voyage on a ship owned by the Cunard Line named the Franconia. My daughter, Yolanda, was now sixteen years old and my son was thirteen. To be perfectly honest, I also wanted to show off a bit to the relatives by taking my new 1962 Mercury Comet with me on the ship which in Europe

at the time would be looked upon as a 'luxury car' even though in North America it was a two door compact automobile.

The 10 day voyage aboard the ship was a wonderful experience. The food was excellent and abundant. There was a movie theatre and a swimming pool, both of which the kids loved and our cabin, although small, was very comfortable. This was a definite step up from the Groote Beer which brought us to Canada in 1953. We were travelling to Europe by a cruise ship as tourists almost exactly ten years after leaving Holland as emigrants on a ship with only three hundred dollars in my



Cunard Line's cruise ship: Franconia

pocket and no idea of where I was going to work or live.

Upon arrival in Holland, it was a pleasure to see some of our relatives waiting for us at the dock. We spent a little time visiting family and then took about ten days for a car trip through France, Switzerland and Italy.

Looking back at the trip, I now realize how strong our dollar was, since we were able to travel at a relatively low cost.



Blasiusstraat, Amsterdam (Google Image Dec 2011)
Circa early 20th century

Blanca and I went to Amsterdam where we stayed with my uncle Joop's son, Leo, and his wife, Marianne. While visiting my cousin, Gerry Goudeketter, in Amsterdam, we drove through some places which brought back a lot of childhood memories. When we were

both ten or eleven years old we would go to his father's fish store in Weesperstraat and meet with his sister, Bep, (both our sisters were named Bep). Near this was another fish store owned by Gerrit Wijnschenk. Then on to Blasiusstraat where most of the Wijnschenk brothers lived in the 1930's. Finally we went to Jodenbreestraat where my family lived for one year in 1935. We were of course also able to spend time with my mother who was living in a retirement home in Amsterdam.

I recall an interesting event that occurred after the kids got hungry in a little



French Riviera

Swiss town. As we were driving we noticed a nice looking restaurant, so we parked the car and walked in. It was quite posh, with table cloths on the tables and several waiters dressed in well fitted suits. We sat down and they asked us for our order. Blanca and I weren't hungry, so we just ordered coffees and the kids asked for french fries and some pop. After fifteen minutes, nothing had arrived at the table and I was becoming nervous. I was beginning to think that we weren't going to be served. Suddenly the kitchen door flew open and six waiters rushed to our table. Two waiters brought us serviettes and cutlery, two served the coffee and

soft drinks, one seemed to just be in charge and the sixth came proudly towards us holding up in one hand a huge tray with an equally large silver dome cover. He placed it in the middle of the beautiful table and with great satisfaction lifted the lid. There lay the largest mound of French fries that I'd ever seen in my life, fresh out of the fryer! I don't know if I mentioned that the restaurant must have had twenty-five tables of which ours was the only one being currently occupied.

Looking back, I now think I know why we got such good service. Our licence plates showed us to be Canadian and the staff may have thought that we were from the "Diplomatic Corp.", Corp Diplomatique or CD in French! The children had a field day with the fries while Blanca and I were wondering whether, once the bill was presented, we'd have to wash the dishes due to insufficient funds. By the way, we hadn't heard of credit cards in those days either. I don't think that half of the food was eaten by the time we got the bill. It didn't turn out to be that bad, but I still have no idea today what the right tip should have been. It's one of those stories that make vacations so much fun. I wonder if that restaurant is still around?

We stayed for a few days in a couple of hotels on the Riviera. I particularly liked one called Sans Souci (Without Worry). My daughter, Yolanda, was becoming quite proficient in French and decided to give her brother, Alex, a quick lesson, so she taught him how to say, "Could I have a fork please?" in French. Alex quite proudly called upon the waiter, saying "Je suis fou", meaning "I am crazy", in

French. Needless to say, my son was not too pleased at the time, but we still laugh about it today.



I wrote earlier in my memoir that on the first day of visiting Georgetown, I passed by the town's old post office building on Mill Street. Ed and I ended up buying that beautiful building in 1964 in a most unexpected and unusual fashion.



Old Georgetown Post office

The Federal government built a new post office on Guelph Street a few years after we arrived in Georgetown. In the summer of 1962, they offered to sell their old Mill Street post office building to the town at a bargain price of \$15,000. The building was about 30

years old, was very well built with beautiful ornamental oak paneling throughout the building and a had a magnificent clock tower. It is still there as of the date of this writing (July, 2011) and has been designated as an Ontario Heritage Building.

In February of 1963, we read in the Georgetown Herald that the town of



Maurice and Ed shown on front page of Georgetown Herald- Jan 23, 1964

Georgetown was interested in selling their municipal office building on 34 Main Street, which was situated right next to our WIGO store on 32 Main Street, so that they could have more space for their own use and for other town functions.⁹³ We approached the town council and offered to buy their building if they decided to move.

We had enough money at that point to feel comfortable about putting in an offer and thought that we could either expand our store, or convert it into a rental property. On October 31, 1963 the council agreed to sell their Main Street property to Ed and myself for \$32,500.

For the next two months, several members of

town council began lobbying against the deal. They were concerned that the cost of renovating the old post office to suit the town's needs would

be too high. The mayor approached Ed and myself to explain their problem and asked if we might be willing to sell back the municipal building to the town, and be given the right to purchase the old post office building for \$16,000⁹⁴. Although we were slightly concerned, Ed and I felt that we could renovate the Mill Street building into apartment units and end up with an investment of equal if not better value.

On January 23, 1964, by a narrow margin of five to four, the town council voted to sell the Post Office to us. The Town continued to use the Main Street Building as its offices right up until a new building was put up on Guelph Street as the office for the newly formed Halton region.

We attempted to retain as much of the original oak interior as possible. We then created several apartments and offices within the building⁹⁵. We also placed several coin operated washers and dryers on the basement level. Fortunately, since we were in the business of selling and repairing appliances we had no difficulties with this part of the operation. All of this was happening while our 'tenant', Mayor Joseph Gibbons, was still living with his wife in the apartment above the WIGO store. In

⁹³ Georgetown Herald, February 14, 1963 issue.

⁹⁴ This \$16,000 was \$1,000 over the town's purchase price of \$15,000 to cover legal fees and other expenses incurred by the town. The vote that night was five to four in favor of the sale to Maurice and Ed.

⁹⁵ Within a few years the post office was fully rented with three apartments on the top (second) floor, one apartment on the first floor, a dentist's office (Dr. Wolburg) and a chiropractor's office (Dr. Corbett) on the first floor and an artist studio in the basement.

1968, Mayor Gibbons passed away, but his wife remained our ‘lifetime tenant’, in accordance with the original purchase agreement.



**Christmas with the Wieners 1964
Hans Wiener, Yolanda, Maurice and Blanca
Goudeketter, Yolanda and Nell Wiener (from
right to left)**

Since we had come to Canada, we had a close family relationship with the Wiener family. Not only was Ed my partner and brother-in-law, but for eleven years we were next door neighbours and shared numerous vacations together.

Every Christmas, our families would buy lots of presents and we would all go early in the day to the Wiener home next door to celebrate the day and cap it off with a

traditional Christmas dinner with some Dutch tradition mixed together with some Canadian tradition. The turkey was a Canadian part of the feast that we could never do without. Then Nell and Blanca would cook ‘Oliebollen’⁹⁶ and we’d all have a little schnapps.



Oliebollen

Since Blanca and I were Jewish, we had a small Hanakah celebration at our house at eight Prince Charles Drive and then we would feel less guilty to celebrate Christmas day at the Wiener house at ten Prince Charles! Eddie’s wife, Nell, wasn’t Jewish and that gave us all an excuse to have a wonderful day. Throughout the day we would both visit

and be visited by all our neighbours on the street. This included at least ten houses and all the kids called any of the adults, ‘Aunty’ or ‘Uncle’. On new year’s eve, all the neighbours would gather at one of our homes and we would celebrate the beginning of another year.

⁹⁶ Oliebollen are a traditional Dutch treat made by frying pre-sugared dough and is said to be the precursor of the donut.



I believe it was in 1965 that I began to think about expanding our business. We had already expanded our current store twice and weren't able to expand sideways since the deal to buy the municipal building next door to us fell through. That is why I believed it was time to open up a second store at another location.



Downtown Acton, Ontario

Also, I was noticing that business in downtown Georgetown was not growing as quickly as the other parts of the town and that people were doing more and more of their shopping in either the newer plaza in town, or now that the

roads were improving; were travelling to Toronto more often to buy their TV's and appliances from places like Eatons. People were also buying items through catalogues. Sears had set up its own catalogue store in the town. Although my partner Eddie was against the idea of opening another store, I persuaded him to take a chance.

I believed that the areas east and south of Georgetown were already well served by other stores. I then looked westward and decided that the town of Acton ⁹⁷would be a good location since we would have little competition. The other big advantage was the location since it was only eleven miles west of Georgetown along Highway 7.

I knew a business owned by Engel Huisman at 71 Mill Street in Acton. He ran a shop which imported and sold Dutch food and gift items. He had emigrated from Holland at about the same time as we had and, in addition to running the store, would make deliveries to families like our own. Each week he would come to Georgetown with his delivery truck and sell us such items as Edam cheese and other Dutch items that were difficult to find anywhere else.

When I went to Acton to look for a store location, I noticed an empty store a few doors away from Mr. Huisman's business and discovered that it was available at a very reasonable rent.

To this day, I regret having made the decision to open up that second store. After about six months, we realized that the store could not sustain itself. We sold very few TV's or appliances and any repairs that were made, could have been done from

⁹⁷ As at this writing, Acton's population was under 10,000 people. It has had significantly less population or development growth in comparison to that of Georgetown.

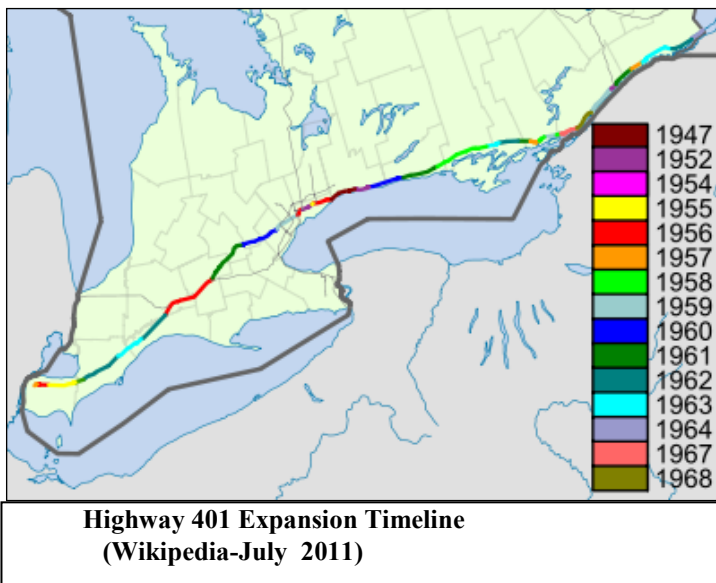
our Georgetown location. After that, I became much more cautious when it came to my ambitions and more respectful of my partner's advice.



TRANSPORTATION

While I wrote about people travelling outside of Georgetown more often to do their shopping, I would like to briefly touch upon the changes in road conditions since arriving to Georgetown in 1963.

Up until 1960 and before Highway 401, the fastest route from Georgetown into Toronto took about one and a half hours.



We would take Highway 7 East to Mississauga Road, then southward to the Queen Elizabeth Way and finally eastbound along the Lakeshore (No Gardiner Expressway yet), into Toronto.

Mississauga Road was just a two lane gravel road at the time. Once the 401 section between Highway 10 and Highway 27 in Toronto was completed in 1960, our trip into the city was reduced by

at least half an hour.



It was now 1964 and we had been living on Prince Charles Drive for eight years. I was told that a very nice secluded house with a large lot, located near downtown had recently come onto the market. We quickly decided to buy the house. Rather than moving in right away I rented the house out to Dr. Bebenek and his wife and child. On December 23rd of 1965 the doctor died after colliding with another car on his way home. After his family moved out, I decided it was time for my family to move from Prince Charles Drive. Before moving in however, we put new hardwood flooring in the living room and put in a new kitchen. This was to become our new home for the next 26 years.

While working downtown, Ed and I became very friendly with most of the surrounding businessmen. These included Syd Silver (Silver's Department Store), Henry Helfant, owner of Henry's (Tailor Shop), and Stewart Young, who owned Young's Pharmacy. It was through 'Stu' that Ed and I became acquainted with the wonderful game of golf. We began playing a few games at a local golf club called North Halton Golf club and were enticed to become members. We each bought two shares in the event that we could one day talk our wives into joining us. Since



Maurice and Blanca shown in the Georgetown Herald, golfing

Blanca was getting a little bit annoyed with the time I was spending on the course and working, I was hoping that I could get her to enjoy the sport as well.

The plan seemed to have worked since before long, not only were Blanca and I golfing, but Blanca was making lots of new friends and began playing more often with the other women. During the winters, the club had quite a nice curling rink and both Blanca and I found another sport which would have been quite foreign to us in good old Holland. As a result of our new activities, our circle of friends was becoming ever larger. Eventually I became a member of the Board of Directors and took on the position of running the club's social events for the next five or six years.

About a year after our family moved out of Prince Charles Drive, Ed and Nell felt it was time for them to move into something more spacious. Rather than buying a house, they found a good sized property on Maple Avenue, not more than a ten minute walk from our house on Main Street South,

and had a house built on the lot. It went up quite quickly and was designed in the style of a Swiss chalet.

I believe it was in the summer of 1967 when Ed and I were fishing from his motor boat near the Caledon Lake cottage. The motor stopped and Ed kept pulling on the rope to restart the motor. He suddenly placed his hands on his chest and told me that he was in great pain. We quickly came ashore and I drove him to the nearest hospital which was in Orangeville, Ontario, where he was told by the medical staff that he had suffered a heart attack. After a stay of about two weeks in the hospital, Ed returned home and was told by his doctor to cease performing strenuous activities. He was informed that he could obtain bypass heart surgery to reduce the chances of a heart attack. Although these operations are quite normal today with relatively low risk, in 1967 the risk was about 50% and Ed absolutely refused to go under the knife. I remember his words “....over my dead body!” Tragically, these words would prove to be prophetic a few years later.



Our business at WIGO was continually growing, so we decided to add one more employee. I'm not sure why I didn't just look for someone in Canada, but for some reason I thought that by hiring somebody from Holland we would have a better worker. I therefore travelled to Eindhoven, Holland in early 1967 and placed an ad in the local paper, thus meeting Mr. Leo Sluik. After interviewing him, he accepted my offer of employment. We then made arrangements to bring his wife and daughter with him to live in Georgetown.



It was now 1967, and the family decided to celebrate Canada's centennial year by travelling to Montreal's world fair "EXPO 67".



DeGaulle visits Expo July 25, 1967

I truly felt such a great appreciation for this country and I was so proud to now be a Canadian citizen. I was a little bit surprised to see De Gaulle visiting the exposition. He reminded me that my war experiences in France were not that long ago. I was also ashamed of him when the day before his visit, he made a speech exclaiming “Vive le Quebec Libre” (Long live ‘Free’ Quebec). How could he snub his nose at the country that helped to free France?

The following year my wife Blanca and the Wiener family travelled back to Holland to celebrate the fiftieth wedding anniversary of Nell Wiener’s parents, the Daamens. Had it not been for their bravery and kindness, Blanca’s brothers Theo and Ed would probably not have survived the war.

In 1968 Ed and I made some renovations to our basement so that we could offer a larger record collection and set up more of our console stereos for sale which were a good match for an assortment of ’33 LP’s’ (Long Playing vinyl records that ran at 33 revolutions per minute on a turntable.)



Georgetown Herald ad

The best business period was the Christmas season when customers would buy stereos, televisions and lots of small appliances like vacuum cleaners and steam irons. Summers were also a good season. That’s when we sold many of our air conditioners and fans. Often we had trouble keeping up with the demand when a heatwave hit. Television and appliance repairs filled in the slower times and our used TV and Appliance business was also steady throughout the year. Customers would bring in all kinds of small appliances such as toasters, radios and irons. We had a machine placed in the store that allowed customers to come in and at no charge, see if their test tubes were in working order.

Our employee, Dick DeBoer, became quite handy at repairing refrigerators, washers or dryers right in our customers’ homes. By watching him, I slowly learned how to do many of these repairs myself. One advantage of doing these repairs was that during our home visit, we could offer the customer a new appliance with a reduction in price for trading in their old appliance. This lead us into the very

profitable business of buying and selling used televisions and appliances. As an example, we might get a refrigerator which only needed more coolant or a new thermostat to get it running again. Once the problem was fixed and the refrigerator was cleaned up, it would be sold at a handsome profit. We offered a 90 day warranty for all of our used appliances, which again improved our reputation. We sold a fair number of used televisions to customers who wanted one for their cottage. Our profit on these was sometimes greater than on the sale of a new television set!

Beatles appearing on Ed Sullivan 1964



The '45' records brought in the younger crowd on Friday and Saturday evenings who always wanted to buy the latest record from groups such as The Beatles, Herb Albert, or Dianna Ross. This was not a profitable part of our business.

Every week I would travel into Toronto to a firm called Chevy records to return records that weren't selling. We were only

allowed to return up to 20% of the records we sold, thereby accumulating a large inventory of out of date records. We sold the records for less than a dollar each, so that with a low profit margin and quite a bit of thievery, it really wasn't worth all the bother. If we had stopped selling them however, a lot of the kids in town would have created a storm. These would have included my daughter, Yolanda, and Eddie's daughter, also named Yolanda, since they were in love with their 45 record collections.



Beatles with Ed Sullivan

To avoid theft, we put together a metal contraption in the repair shop, hung it on the wall and called it 'DYNASCAN'. We placed two large signs in the store stating, "BEWARE---THIS STORE IS PROTECTED BY DYNASCAN".

Even though it was a metal piece of junk, the level of theft went down dramatically!

On November 1st, 1968 my beloved mother, Kaatje (Wijnschenk) Goudekettering, passed away in her birth city of Amsterdam just a month shy of her eighty-seventh birthday which was December 9th, 1882. Although she had returned to Belgium in 1955 to live with my sister-in-law, Esther, she had moved into a retirement home in Amsterdam not too long afterwards.



For the most part, 1969 was a normal and quiet year. It was now a bit quieter in my household, since after my daughter, Yolanda, had moved to Toronto two years earlier, to be closer to her schooling at the University of Toronto. She then got married on September 25th, 1969. My son, Alex, followed Yolanda to attend residence at the University of Toronto while he was getting his degree.

Neil Armstrong landed on the moon in July of that year. As we all sat in the living room watching, it struck me how much technological change I had experienced since my birth. I know that my father would never have believed it possible that a man would be walking on the moon during my lifetime.

Tragedy suddenly struck our family on December 20th, 1969 when Blanca's beloved brother and my friend and business partner, Ed Wiener, succumbed to a fatal heart attack. I remember being in the store that morning. While I was repairing a television set, I heard a customer come in. Normally Ed would greet the customer if I was busy, but this time I noticed five minutes had gone by and the customer was still waiting at the counter to be served. I went into our office to look for Ed and found him slumped over the desk with his hand against his chest. He saw me, lifted his head and said to me "I think this is the big one!" I wanted to call an ambulance, but he insisted that we should drive him to his home.

Wigo Partner Served on Parking Authority, C of C

Georgetown lost a prominent businessman on Saturday, when Edmond Wiener died in Georgetown hospital. He was 50.

He entered hospital on Friday after suffering a heart attack at the Main Street store that morning.

Mr. Wiener came to Georgetown fifteen years ago, joining his brother-in-law Morris Goudekett in Wigo Television & Appliances. From its original location, a small store in the old Cordoro building, the business soon expanded and they purchased and remodelled a building beside the Municipal office.

He was born in Eindhoven, Holland, where he learned the radio and television business as a lab technician at the Philips plant. He came to Canada in December 1953 and moved to Georgetown after a short stay in Toronto.

He leaves his wife, Nellie Daamen, three children, Mrs. Paul LeBlanc (Yolanda) of Brampton, Hans and Eddie at home; one grandchild, Chris LeBlanc; a sister Blanche, Mrs. Morris Goudekett of town.

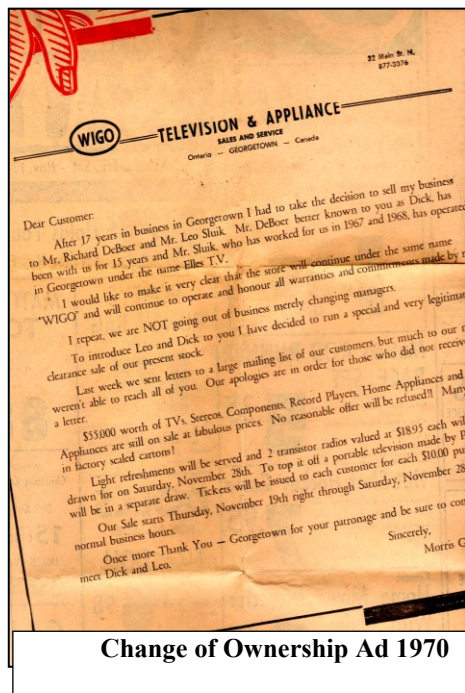
News of Ed Wiener's death in the Georgetown Herald
December 1969

After calling his wife, Nell, and explaining what had happened, Dick DeBoer and I drove Eddie home. Apparently Nell called the ambulance a little later and they drove Eddie to the hospital. About two hours later I got a call from Nell. She said to me, "Oh Mau, he's gone!" It was one of the darkest days in my life. I believe that I was never quite the same person after that. I loved him like a brother and still think to this day that he might have lived had he gotten the by-pass

surgery suggested to him a few years earlier, or if we had taken him directly to the hospital that day. He was only 50 years old at the time and left behind his wife, Nell, and his three children, Hans, Yolanda and Eddie.

I was completely distraught and confused and didn't realize how much I depended on him to help keep WIGO operating. For the first time in our store's history, the business was closed several days before and after Christmas.

Although I had enough help in the store with my friend Dick DeBoer, my heart was no longer into running the business. About nine months after Ed's passing I decided that it was time to retire. Dick DeBoer had been working for us for the past fifteen years. I approached him as to whether he might be interested in buying WIGO TV. He was interested, but felt it might be too much of a burden to run by himself, so we asked Leo Sluik who had been with us previously in 1967 and 1968, if he would be interested in joining Dick as a partner. The two men agreed to buy the store's inventory and take over the ownership of the WIGO business.



We placed an announcement in the Georgetown Herald in their November 19th, 1970 edition explaining that Richard DeBoer and Leo Sluik, former employees of WIGO were now taking it over as the new owners. I ensured our customers that the business would continue to honour any former commitments made. A massive sale was advertised from the 19th of November through to Saturday November 28th, 1970.





I now look back at the 1960's for the most part as a decade of personal satisfaction and optimism. This was of course tempered by the passing of my mother in 1968 and my partner Eddie in 1969.

From a world perspective however, I can see how isolated I had been from the events around me. The decade had seen the cuban missile crisis and the growing nuclear arms race, the assassinations of the two Kennedys and Martin Luther King, the civil rights movement, the escalation of war in Vietnam and man's landing on the moon.

I believe that most of my friends and myself saw these events as secondary to our making a living, and enjoying the fruits of our labour. From a broader perspective, I can now see why our children saw their world differently.

I can remember seeing the town raise new towers with warning alarms attached to them and hearing their sirens blaring each time they tested them in case of a nuclear attack. I remember my children begging me to build a nuclear fall out shelter in the back yard. I now realize how frightened they must have been. They had never experienced the direct effect of war and were taught in school how to "Duck and Cover" under their desks in the event of a nuclear attack. Also, for the first time we were all able to see world events, good and bad, in our own living rooms on those things I sold from my store which many now called "Idiot Boxes".





THE 1970's



The Seabreeze (Formerly:
The Frederico C.)

Even though I was now only fifty, I considered myself 'retired' and now had the opportunity to take more vacations with my wife Blanca.

In March of 1971, Blanca and I decided to try out our retirement by going on a fourteen day Caribbean cruise aboard the Frederico C, later to be named 'The SeaBreeze'.

Over the next year we spent some time vacationing in Portugal and visiting our European relatives in Holland and Belgium.



March 1971: Blanca and Maurice
having fun on the cruise ship

In the late fall of 1972 we decided to drive down to Florida in our new Oldsmobile 'Cutless' convertible. We wanted to see what this talk about 'Snowbirds'⁹⁸ was all about and travelled to Miami Florida (by way of Washington D.C.) and rented an apartment for a month .We explored western Florida's tourist sights and sat on the beautiful beaches taking in some sun. One trip took us to Sea World in Kissimmee, Florida.

On another day we watched a live taping of the Jackie Gleason Show. At the time the Gleason show was a landmark to the people of Miami not unlike the Ed Sullivan Show would have been to the people of New York City.

Although Blanca and I were enjoying our travelling and golfing, I was only in my early fifty's and felt too young to retire. I may also have had a subconscious regret for not pursuing my earlier endeavour of importing "plastics" into Europe. I had already been relatively successful in my last career and was interested in possibly starting another one.

My son, Alex, had graduated from the University of Toronto with a bachelor's degree in 1971 and had not yet settled upon a career. I asked him in the fall of 1971 if he would be interested in forming a partnership in an import/export company. To

⁹⁸ The term Snowbirds according to Wikipedia refers to Canadian and American residents who have a home in the colder states or provinces and decide to set up a winter home in a warmer climate further south.

this day, I'm not sure why I decided to go ahead with this idea. Perhaps it was due to my earlier dream of importing merchandise from abroad shortly after the war not having been fulfilled. I think my son agreed to it because I painted a pretty glamorous picture of overseas buying trips and an opportunity to be part of a successful business. In any case, I'm sure that my success with WIGO TV gave me the confidence to believe that I could be successful at this as well.

I offered my son an initial draw of fifty dollars per week in salary and use of a company car. Since he was currently paying 30 dollars per month for his rent, that was acceptable to him. We decided upon the name 'GOUDEx TRADING COMPANY LIMITED', the GOUD for Goudekettering and the EX for Alex. With neither of us having any import or export experience, I proceeded to book a trip to Europe for Alex and myself. Before leaving, we visited a Canadian Government Export Assistance Agency, hoping to pick up some business tips and leads.

I can't be certain, but I believe that we decided to keep our eyes open for Canadian companies which sold products that were unique to North America and might be saleable in Europe. Two such companies were Shully's Industries Ltd. which sold outdoor metal garden sheds, and a frozen food company called Sara Lee. Sara Lee had opened its Canadian operation in Bramalea in 1963 and looking back at it, had we known what we were doing, we could have done well as their representatives in Europe. From Shully's, we received their brochures and their blessing to go ahead and try to sell their products in Europe, but we never heard back from the people at Sara Lee. It was probably pretty obvious to them that we had no export experience and I suspect that they may have sped up their process of seeking contacts overseas as a result of seeing our interest in their products.

As we left for Europe, we were still confident that the business could succeed. We looked at the Canadian export market as a supplement to our 'import' business. If we made some sales on that end, all the better. We were more confident that we could import European goods and sell them to Canadian wholesalers or retailers.

Upon arriving in Holland, we made a quick visit to the relatives and began our work. The only product that we had on hand to sell was the metal garden shed from Shully's. We knew that in Canada, they were sold in places like Eatons, Simpsons and Canadian Tire. The one Dutch department store chain that stuck out in my mind was called "De Bijenkorf"⁹⁹. The company had several large stores throughout the country. I also new of a French company that had its headquarters in Lyon France.

⁹⁹ De Bijenkorf (literally; "the beehive") is a chain of upscale department stores in the Netherlands with its flagship store on Dam Square in Amsterdam, Holland (Wikipedia-De Bijenkorf-Aug 2011)



De Bijenkorf Head Office in Amsterdam

My plan was to offer them ‘exclusive’ representation within each of their countries. We made an appointment with a buyer for De Bijenkorf at their head office in Amsterdam.

With some trepidation, on the appointed hour we entered the beautiful office building into a room where three businessmen sat. I explained to them a little about my background and spoke in my best Dutch, hoping that this might

impress them a bit. At the end of my presentation which felt like an hour but probably took less than five minutes, they all looked at the brochures and began talking amongst themselves. They finally looked at us and I was already expecting them to say thanks but no thanks; when one of them asked if it would be possible for them to receive a sample garden shed from Canada. My heart almost leapt out of my chest with surprise and glee, but I tried to remain calm. I told them that I was sure that this could be arranged, that I would contact the Toronto firm and have a sample sent over. I then travelled to Lyon and made a similar presentation as the one we gave to DeBijenkorf where I offered to send them a sample garden shed as well (at my own expense!).

Thinking back on those days, I can now see that I had made two major mistakes. I should have billed these two companies for the samples, to ‘stake my claim’ so to speak, and thereby confirm my representation for Shully’s. Instead, I felt too embarrassed to charge them for the samples. I also didn’t want us to appear overly greedy. My second and probably largest error, was not asking Shully’s to sign a legal document to establish our relationship as their sales agents. As it was, Shully sent off their sample to these firms and probably got their European connection without having any further need for our services. Everytime I have gone to Europe since then, I seem to notice garden sheds in people’s back yards and wonder if they were one of mine!

While I spent some more time in Holland, my son, Alex, went off to visit a few Italian companies that we had contacted while back in Canada. One company in Milan made appliances. Another firm produced sets of steel pots and pans with an enamel finish. Because of the strength of the Canadian dollar at the time, we calculated that even after paying freight, and custom and duty fees, we could sell them at very reasonable prices.

My son told me two interesting stories. The first one was about him hailing a taxi cab from the station so that he could reach the Italian factory that made the appliances. After noticing that they were passing the same landmarks several times, he motioned to the driver to stop going in circles and to get him to the right destination. He was of course charged a small fortune and only later discovered that Milan had a subway system that he could have used for one tenth of the price!

In the second story, Alex was greeted by the president of the company who was also the owner's son. After seeing the plant's showroom, Alex quickly realized that all these products were readily available in Canada at similar or better prices, but didn't want to be rude to his host. He politely let the gentleman proudly show off his plant, intending to say thank you and leave as quickly as he had come. For some reason the company seemed to have believed that we were a huge outfit, ready to import a large portion of their production line. My son thought this, because before he could say goodbye, the young company President insisted that he take Alex to a nearby restaurant for lunch in a very sporty red convertible. The restaurant may have been owned by the same company that ran the place in Switzerland on the family vacation those many years ago, that served us the french fries. There were just as many tables dressed in starched table cloths and linen napkins with several finely dressed waiters and no customers other than Alex and the Company president. Alex kept looking at his watch, explaining that he did want to catch a three o'clock train from the Milan station. His host told him that he would drive him there with plenty of time to spare. In typical Italian fashion, the lunch began with the salad. Not realizing this, Alex was ready to thank the host, but along came the ham. Again wanting to thank the host, along came the next course, and then the next, each of which was to be washed down with some Italian wine. True to his word, the president got my son back to the station with two minutes to spare. It wasn't easy for us to write the company one month later, thanking them for their hospitality, but letting them know that we weren't going to do any business with them.

After Alex's return to Holland, we both travelled to Denmark to speak with a company that produced metal television stands. At last, here was a product that I felt a bit comfortable with. I knew that a lot of people in Canada were now buying more portable televisions than the old heavy console sets and that there was a good demand for the stands. Again, because of the strength of the Canadian dollar¹⁰⁰, the price for a container load of these stands was extremely reasonable.

¹⁰⁰ Between 1952 and 1960 the Canadian dollar traded at a slight premium over the US dollar, reaching a high of \$1.0614 in 1957. In 1962 the dollar returned to a fixed exchange rate of US\$0.925. Due to inflation, the dollar was allowed to float in 1970 and reached a high point on April 25, 1974 when it reached US\$1.0443. Shortly thereafter, the dollar began a long continuous decline for the next two decades.

Returning to Canada, we decided to order a few of the items that we found of interest in Europe. We would then try selling them to stores in southern Ontario. We also decided to set up a little office where we could work from and display our showroom. A neighbour of ours, Ted Worrall, told us of some office space that was available at a reasonable price in what was then called the town of Streetsville¹⁰¹.

Our orders quickly arrived, including cookware from Italy, giftware from several companies, kitchenware and a few television stands. The stands required us to include a wooden top, some screws and a box carton to enclose the package which

Anonymous exhibitor: Toronto Gift Show



required some assembly. We rented a booth at the Toronto gift show to see if we could get the retailers to come to us. Although we got a few nibbles, we realized that we would have to travel store to store, so that we could obtain enough orders for our business. Eventually we found that the television stands became the best part of our business and we moved to a larger facility in Brampton that gave us a larger office area and an area to assemble, receive and ship our merchandise.

As a sideline, Blanca and I had made another trip to Holland and returned with

Be Sure To Visit
"The Grass Shack Gallery"
NOW OPEN
 at 24 Main St. S., Georgetown NEXT TO HERALD OFFICE
 FEATURING FINE, ORIGINAL OIL PAINTINGS
 AT REASONABLE PRICES
 Works by such renowned artists as
 RIEUWERS — VOS — CALDINI — VAN DER HOOP
 — LEO etc.
 ALSO A SELECTION OF ALL TYPES OF FRAMES
 Do drop in and look around
 Return **ENGAGEMENT — RAE GOLDMAN**

'Grass Shack' ad- June 1972 – Georgetown Herald

some very inexpensive original oil paintings. In June of 1972 we opened up a little store on 24 Main Street South, right beside the Georgetown Herald newspaper office which we named 'The Grass Shack Gallery' and began selling the paintings and doing some picture framing business. We closed that after about six months due to slow sales. Had we been more successful in any of these ventures, I would provide greater detail, but alas, we were not. The net result was that after two and a half years, a lot of work and anxiety, and quite a bit of money, we ended our operation.

Alex joined up with an accounting firm and Blanca and I spent several more years selling the last of a container load of television stands and oil paintings which were kept in storage in the basement of the post office building. In addition to our lack of experience in the business, we had the misfortune of beginning the firm

¹⁰¹ The office was in a strip mall near the corner of Highway 10 and Dundas Street. This is now considered the heart of Downtown Mississauga which currently has a population above 700,000. In 1972, the town had a population of approximately 10,000. It amalgamated in 1974 with surrounding communities to become the city of Mississauga.

shortly before a continued fall in the value of our dollar which took away any advantage we had in our pricing since we now had to spend more money overseas.

It was now 1976 and I was truly willing to experience retirement. Goudex Trading was a most humbling experience, but I was fortunate that although it cost me quite a bit of money, it wasn't enough to hurt my retirement plans. Two years earlier, in late 1974 we again travelled to Florida, but this time to its western coast, referred to as the Gulf Coast. Our Golfing friends Stu and Dorothy Young were staying near the city of St. Petersburg and introduced us to the area. That season, Blanca and I rented a place close to the beach and began looking for a condominium that we could later buy.

Seminole condominium
(Front and rear)



We soon found a condominium complex located in the town of Seminole, Florida. All the surrounding towns in the area were basically suburbs of the city of St. Petersburg. We found a unit that was located on the top floor of a two floor building. It came with

two large bedrooms, living room, dining room, a nice kitchen and a large 'Florida Room' in the back which overlooked a beautiful garden that was more like a private park. The complex also had a community centre and a large, well maintained swimming pool. We purchased all of this for \$12,000 Canadian dollars. This was still at a time when the Canadian dollar was above that of the U.S. dollar.

We would end up owning that unit for another 25 years. When we weren't staying there, we were able to rent it out to other vacationers so that it really wasn't very costly to maintain.

While we were in Florida, we ended up with many visitors and neighbours. After visiting us from Brussels, my cousin, Bep, and her husband, Joop Kloots, both of whom I had shared so many of my war years with, liked the condominium so much that they soon bought their own unit a couple of blocks away. My sister-in-law, Nell (my partner Eddie's wife), came to visit us in March of 1976 with her children, Hans, Yolanda, 'little' Eddie and her grandchild Chris. Unfortunately Nell was in a wheel chair and quite ill at the time.

In addition to living in Seminole, Florida for several months in most of the years that we owned the condominium, Blanca and I did quite a bit of travelling, both in North America and Europe; including Cuba, the Caribbean and Central America, California, New York, London, Paris, Portugal, Spain and the Canary Islands. We also visited Israel with my sister-in-law, Esther Bas.



On June 3rd, 1976, Ed Wiener's wife, Nell, passed away in Georgetown leaving behind her daughter, Yolanda (LeBlanc), and her husband, Paul LeBlanc, her grandson, Chris LeBlanc, who had been born on July 8th, 1969, and her sons, Hans and Eddie Wiener.



It was later in 1976 that I spoke to the Wiener children about selling the old post-office building. They had ownership of 50% of this building, in addition to the Main Street building out of which we had operated WIGO TV. Now that I was travelling more often, it was becoming too difficult to look after the building and its tenants. The Wiener children agreed and the building was sold. We also decided to retain the Main Street building for the time being since it required little maintenance and brought in a steady source of income¹⁰². The widow Mrs. Gibbons still had use of the apartment above the store since the original purchase agreement with the now deceased Mayor Gibbons allowed free rent for the lifetimes of either himself and/or his wife (Hattie Gibbons). I believe Mrs. Gibbons lived to the ripe old age of one hundred and five years of age and that old Mayor Gibbons would be looking down from heaven being quite pleased with himself for including that free rental clause in our purchase agreement.

In addition to travelling, both Blanca and I kept ourselves busy. Blanca was a co-ordinator for the "Candy-Strippers". These were young teenagers who volunteered their time to assist the nursing staff in our local hospital. (Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital). Blanca had the help of our employee, Dick De Boer's wife Lucy in this. Later Blanca became heavily involved in volunteer work with the local Red Cross. We were active with the North Halton Golf and Country Club and in addition to golfing, Blanca and I both enjoyed curling in the winter. The club also had a patio overlooking the ninth hole and a dining room where we had many wonderful dinners with both family and friends.

¹⁰² The building was eventually sold in 1989 by Maurice and the three Wiener children, but since Mrs. Gibbons was still alive, an agreement was reached for which she would be given a monthly allowance in return for giving up any claim to the apartment.

After we ceased operating our import business my son, Alex, began working for a chartered accounting firm. Since I had lots of time on my hands, in 1976 I asked him to give me a few book-keeping lessons. It wasn't long before I managed to have five clients who hired me to look after their books. I guess I could now add 'book-keeper' to my resume.

Ever since I was a young boy, I loved working with my hands. In our basement on Prince Charles Drive, I installed a recreation room. I got more ambitious with our Main Street house. In addition to a recreation room, I installed a guest bedroom, a bathroom, two storage rooms and new flooring. Through all of this I became quite proficient at both electrical and plumbing work. My children still tell me that one of their clearest memories was to see me on a ladder with a hammer and my wife Blanca below holding a cup of coffee for me in one hand and a nail in the other. It was not unusual for me to get a phone call from one of the kids that began with "Hi Dad, how are you?" and ending with "Would you be able to come over to help us put something together?" These projects included helping my son Alex and his friend Terry build a basement apartment in their first and then their second home and building some furniture for my daughter's home. My last job was a few months ago when I replaced both a bathroom and kitchen sink. I have always hated paying for a plumber!



Main Street Swimming Pool
(Left to right) Alan, Blanca, Yolanda and Alex

One of my most popular building projects according to my family was installing a very large wooden deck around a swimming pool in our back yard. This became a splendid gathering spot for many years, to be shared with family and friends.

Our Main Street house was on a high piece of land and had lots of room for fruit trees, rose bushes, a rock garden, and rows of strawberries, raspberries, and an assortment of vegetables. At last I

was able to see if I had a green thumb and for the most part I succeeded. Unfortunately for me but happily for the birds, they often got more benefit from my efforts than I did. To this day however, I still love seeing flowers and plants grow and I keep several in my current home. While I attended to chasing away the birds and chipmunks and mowing the lawn, Blanca would be forever clearing the rock garden of unwanted weeds. Another hobby that both Blanca and I took up was that of oil and water colour painting. I continued this hobby for years and have only put the brush away recently due to my reduced vision, although this may be my opportunity to experiment with modern art!



In 1990, Blanca and I travelled to Holland for a reunion with the 320 Squadron.

Blanca and Maurice (far right, at the 45th reunion of the 320 Squadron)



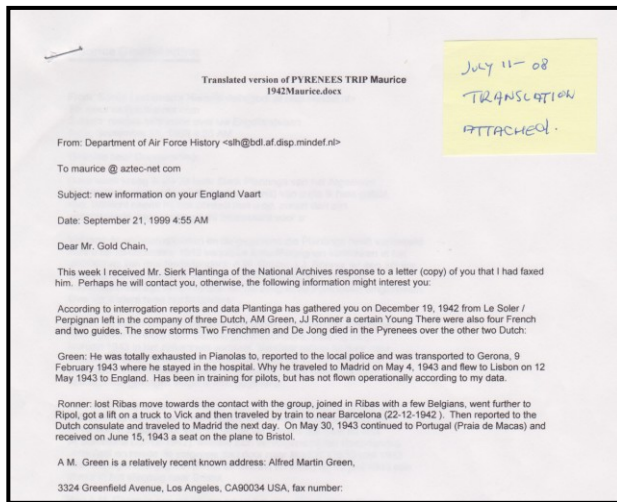
On February 6th, 1994 my dear wife, Blanca, passed away in our home in Georgetown. We had known for the previous six months that her time was near, which gave the family some time to prepare for this very sad day.

In October 1994, the Red Cross donated a painting to the Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital, in memory of my wonderful wife Blanca.



In June of 1994 I travelled to England to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings, where I met up with my old airforce friend, Sal. He informed me that he had kept in touch with the same girl who I had dated in England in 1944

by the name of Joyce. It had been over fifty years since I had last seen her. I contacted her and discovered that she had been married but her husband had recently passed away. It did not take long before Joyce and I rekindled our friendship. For the next six years, Joyce would travel to Canada with me for part of the year and I would travel back to London and stay with her for another few months. We also spent some time in Florida together.



In July of 2008 I received a reply from the Department of Air Force History after having asked them if they could supply me with any more information about my trip over the Pyrenees into Spain during the war. A portion of the English translation reads as follows:

Translation of the reply from the Dutch Department of Airport History.

....According to interrogation reports...

A.H. Green:...was totally exhausted..in Pianolas reported to the local police and was transported to Gerona 9 February 1943 where he stayed in the hospital.....he travelled to Madrid on May 4, 1943 and flew to Lisbon on 12 May 1943 to England....has been training for pilot but has not flown operationally according to my data

J.J.Ronner: ...(after losing contact, he was able to join another group of Belgians, reached Barcelona on December 22, 1942)... where he reported to the Dutch consulate and travelled to Madrid the next day... continued to Portugal, arriving in Lisbon. On May 30 1943 continued to Portugal(Praia de Macas) and received on June 15, 1943 a seat on the plane to Bristol.

I received an address for Alfred Martin Green who now lived in Los Angeles and made an attempt to correspond with him. Unfortunately he was not in good health and we could not communicate very well. It was a relief however to discover after all this time that the man I had to leave injured in Spain, had survived the war.

In 1996, I decided that the house on Main Street had become too large for me. I asked as many friends and family as possible to come by the house and help with the sale. We put price tickets on almost everything including buckets of nails, screws and bolts which I had collected over the years. Almost everything I planned to sell was sold. There were several items that I wanted to hang on to, but many of those

items were also sold because I couldn't resist the offers. Quite a few people came up to me and recognized me as "Mr. WIGO", but in most cases I was too embarrassed to let them know I had no idea who they were. I have always been weak at remembering people's faces. I can however remember telephone numbers or addresses from my childhood days right up to this day.

I spent some time looking for a place to live and decided to buy my current condominium in Brampton, Ontario. The nicest part of living in a condominium is the ability to leave your home at any time and not have to worry about leaving it unattended.

In the year 2000, my friend, Joyce, became quite ill and could no longer travel with me to Canada. Although I tried spending more time with her in London, I had obligations in Canada which I couldn't ignore. Our relationship ended shortly after this.

Although I was having no difficulty keeping the Florida condominium rented, I realized that I would not be using it for myself anymore. The kids weren't all that interested in taking it over, so I decided to sell it in 2002.

My last trip out of the country took place in 2003. I travelled to Belgium and Holland. In Brussels, I visited with Bep and Joop Kloots and my niece, Kitty, and her family. In Holland I met up with the Wiener family and my cousin, Gerry Goudeketter, his wife, Kitty, and son, Simeon. Every few years, we have the pleasure of seeing my nephew Ruud Wiener, the son of Blanca's brother Theo. Although he lives with his family in Switzerland, he has become a very well known musician in his field and travels around the world to various functions. I also see my niece, Yolanda LeBlanc (Wiener), quite often. I think she believes that I am starving myself since she always brings wonderful food along with her when she visits. She, her family and her brothers, Hans and Eddy, and their families, continue to live in or near Georgetown, Ontario.

Several years ago, I was taking my daily swim, when I met a wonderful woman named Kathy. Since then, we have become very close friends and her family treats me as one of the family.



Kathy Holmes

Fortunately as of the day of this writing I am still living independently. My daily routine includes having a walk and a swim. My children were surprised to find that I had replaced two sinks in my home just a few months ago. I take about ten pills per day which may or may not be helping me, but I'm certain, keeps the pharmaceutical industry

with a smile on their face. (I believe a good sense of humour to be the best medicine of them all). My son and daughter visit me often and remain very close.

In August 2010 I celebrated my 90th birthday by inviting many friends and relatives over to celebrate. I warn anybody who has the same idea to be careful before making this move. The experience itself got me so exhausted that it finally convinced me that I truly was 90 years old!

For many years my friend, Kathy, and I would play cards on a daily basis, but since a recent fall, she has not been able to travel as frequently; we do however continue to swim together several times a week. I recently celebrated my 91st birthday and was invited with Kathy to attend a party in Brampton in which the Mayor was present to congratulate all of us who were 90 or over. There were lots of folks there that were nearing their 100th year on this planet. In fact I was considered to be one of the junior guests there! The highlight of the event was that we got to take a picture of us with the Mayor and a box of chocolates home with us. (At my age you begin to better appreciate the little things in life).

I mentioned earlier that I spent some of my time painting water colours. Even though I don't feel them to be of much worth when compared to what I consider to be great art, I have been told by others that they find my work to be impressive. Be that as it may, I doubt if they will ever appear on an auction block and since it's not specified in my will, I donate all my works of art to my off-springs, Alex and Yolanda.

Over the last few years, my eye sight has diminished considerably, but thanks to the Canadian Institute for the Blind, I am still able to get a lot accomplished. As an example, I have a zoom feature on the computer that allows me to view the screen. I have a program called 'Dragon' that allows me to speak into the computer and have it write down what I say. (Sometimes with some amusing results!) I have another program that can read to me any script that is written on my computer screen. Much of what you have read on these pages is a result of these wonderful technological tools.

I must admit that one of my greatest challenges was to overcome the frustration of no longer being able to drive a car, a habit that I had become accustomed to over the last seventy years. I am convinced that one of the tricks to aging gracefully is to learn the art of acceptance. Acceptance of the challenges that present themselves and acceptance of other peoples' help.



I recall from my early childhood the thought that I would probably never be alive to see the magical year 2000. To my amazement, not only did I manage to reach that year, I have now surpassed the second decade of the twenty-first century, not however without a little wear and tear.

In writing this memoir I have attempted to produce a record of my lifetime which I hope will prove to be helpful, informative, amusing and loving.

Although I have taken great efforts to include those parts of my life which I felt were significant; I am certain that there are several people and places which several readers will recognize as being absent or inaccurate. Some of these errors and omissions were the result of a lapse of memory; in other cases, I chose to leave out certain events due to concerns about my privacy or the privacy of others; or the events were not included for purposes of maintaining brevity to this document.

Despite all of this, I have done my best to present the facts included in this document in a manner which was as honest and direct as possible.

Whether my stay on this planet lasts another month, year or decade I do not know, I no longer worry about my mortality. I do know however that I have gotten through the bad times with faith that they would eventually pass, and that I am greatly blessed for the many good years I have had in my life. Although I'm not a very religious man, I continue to pray before falling asleep each night that the world will become a better place for everyone to live in, regardless of their race, the colour of their skin or their nationality. I also pray for the well-being of my children, family and friends and to all beings. My most fervent wish is to see peace on earth.



APPENDIX 1

IMMEDIATE FAMILY LISTING FOR MAURICE GOUDEKETTING ON FATHERS SIDE: NAME GOUDEKETTING

Relation	Surname	Family Name	Birth Place	Birth Date	Death Date	Spouse
Gr. Gr. Gr. Gr. father	Daniel	ELIASER	Amsterdam	est. 1770	Est. 1840	LEVI, Reintje
Gr. Gr. Grandfather		GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	est. 1800	Est. 1870	
Gr. Grandfather		GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	est. 1820	Est. 1890	
Grandfather		GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	est. 1850	Est. 1920	
Aunt	Maria	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	15 Aug 1887	28 May 1943	van KLEEF
Father	Alexander	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	22 Aug 1889	06 Mar 1943	WIJNSCHENK, Kaatje
Sister	Rebecca	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	Mar 9 1912	14 Sep 1942	KLOOT(S), Hartog
Brother	Felix	GOUDEKETTING	unknown	1916	EST. 1943	WOLFF, Esther
Wife	Blanca	WIENER	Budapest	Aug 6 1920	04 Feb 1992	GOUDEKETTING , Maurice
Daughter	Yolanda	GOUDEKETTING	Brussels	July 25 1947		FRASER, Alan
Son	Alexander	GOUDEKETTING	s'Hertogenbosch	Apr 2 1950		
Uncle	Simon	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	Dec 1 1892	03 Mar 1944	
Cousin	Bep	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	Post 1950		
Cousin	Gerry	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	Post 1950		
Son of Cousin	Simeon	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	Post 1950		
Daughter of Cousin	Fem.	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	Post 1950		
Aunt	Mietje	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	Mar 13 1893	17 Sep 1943	van de KAR
Uncle	Willem	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	Jun 30 1904	23 Jul 1943	
Uncle	Joel	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	Oct 5 1907	06 Nov 1943	



APPENDIX 2

IMMEDIATE FAMILY LISTING FOR MAURICE GOUDEKETTING ON MOTHER'S SIDE: MAIDEN NAME WIJNSCHENK

Relation	Surname	Family Name	Birth Place	Birth Date	Death Date	Spouse
GrGrGrGrFather	Jacob	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	1736	26 Jun 1799	Rachel 'Rechla'
GrGrGrGrFather	Abraham	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	1767	28 Mar 1814	Rebecca' Joseph'
GrGrGrFather	Gerrit	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	3 Aug 1789	1850	KORPER, Heintje
GrGrFather	David	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	19 Apr 1817	1890	WIEK, Leah
Gr Father	Moses	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	07 Mar 1855	1932	SCHAAP, Rebecca
Mother	Kaatje	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	09 Dec 1882	01 Nov 1968	GOUDEKETTING, Alexander
Uncle	Solomon	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	05 May 1881	01 Oct 1942	PARSSER, Carolina
Uncle	David	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	04/01/1885	26 Jan 1943	LAKMAKER, Eva
Cousin	Koki	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	est. 1925		
Cousin	Tina	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	est. 1927		
Uncle	Kobus	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	15 Jan 1887	27 Apr 1954	KROMME, Betje
Cousin	Rebecca	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	30 Aug 1918		ISAACSON
Cousin	Bernard	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	14 May 1920	25 Dec 1922	
Cousin	Tine	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	23 Aug 1922	04 Sep 1985	
Cousin	Lea	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	est. 1925		STORK
Cousin	Maurits	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	est. 1927		
Cousin	Solomon	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	est. 1929		
Uncle	Gerrit	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	9 Mar 1889	31 Dec 1943	KUIJT, Keetje
Aunt	Greta	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	20 Jun 1881	Est. 1943	BAS , Joshua
Uncle	Abraham	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	Apr 4, 1894	31 Mar 1943	REISS, Marianne
Cousin	Simon	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	est. 1925		
Uncle	Jacob	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	10 Nov 1896	31 Mar 1944	BEESEMER, Sarah
Aunt	Leah	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	27 Apr 1899	23 Nov 1942	RIMINI, Jechiel
Cousin	Twin	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	est. 1925		
Cousin	Twin	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	est. 1925		



APPENDIX 3

The Wijnschenk/Goudekettering/Bas/Kloots Family Connection

Maurice Goudekettering's mother, had a sister, Greta Wijnschenk

**Greta Wijnschenk married Joop Bas
From this marriage came two children, Bep and Leo Bas**

**Bep Bas married Joop Kloots
From this marriage came two children, Maggy and Bea Kloots
Maggy was born Sep 27 1946 and married on June 4 1980
Bea was born Mar 3 1952 and married on Feb 15 1986**

**Maurice Goudekettering's sister Rebecca married Herman Kloots
From this marriage came a daughter Bep
Rebecca, Herman and daughter, Bep, all died in the holocaust**

Joop Kloots and Herman Kloots were brothers

**Maurice Goudekettering's brother Felix married Esther Wolff
From this marriage came one child, Kitty Goudekettering**

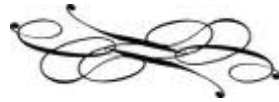
Both Greta Wijnschenk and Felix Goudekettering died in the Holocaust

The widower Joop Bas married the widow Esther

As a result of the above relationships:

**Bep Kloots is Maurice's cousin (Bep is the daughter of Maurice's aunt Greta)
and
Bep Kloots is Maurice's sister-in-law (Bep married the brother of Maurice's sister's
husband)**

As of this writing (July, 2011) Bep Kloots who was born on Nov. 11, 1920 is currently residing in Brussels and Maurice Goudekettering, who resides in Brampton, Ontario and was born on Aug. 6, 1920, are still corresponding with one another; as are their respective families.



APPENDIX 4 IN MEMORIAM

This memoir has been written in loving memory of all of the people who have been so quickly taken away from us during the Second World War. Although there were many more, I have listed the names of those relatives that have been mentioned in the memoir. I apologize for any errors or omissions which may exist in both the list below and my memoirs in general.

Relation	Surname	Family Name	Birth Place	Birth Date	Death Date	Spouse
Aunt	Maria	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	15 Aug 1887	28-May-43	van KLEEF
Father	Alexander	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	22 Aug 1889	6-Mar-43	WIJNSCHENK, Kaatje
Sister	Rebecca	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	9 Mar 1912	14-Sep-42	KLOOT(S), Hartog
Brother	Felix	GOUDEKETTING	unknown	1916	EST. 1943	WOLFF, Esther
Uncle	Simon	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	1 Dec 1892	3-Mar-44	
Aunt	Mietje	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	13 Mar 1893	17-Sep-43	van de KAR
Uncle	Willem	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	30 Jun 1904	23-Jul-43	
Uncle	Joel	GOUDEKETTING	Amsterdam	5 Oct 1907	6-Nov-43	
Uncle	Solomon	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	05 May 1881	1-Oct-42	PARSSER, Carolina
Uncle	David	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	04/01/1885	26-Jan-43	LAKMAKER, Eva
Uncle	Gerrit	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	9 Mar 1889	31-Dec-43	KUIJT, Keetje
Aunt	Greta	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	20 Jun 1881	Est. 1943	BAS , Joshua
Uncle	Abraham	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	Apr 4, 1894	31-Mar-43	REISS, Marianne
Uncle	Jacob	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	10 Nov 1896	31-Mar-44	BEESEMER, Sarah
Aunt	Leah	WIJNSCHENK	Amsterdam	27 Apr 1899	23-Nov-42	RIMINI, Jechiel
Mother-in-Law	Yolanda	GRUNFELD	Hungary	Est.1890	Est.1943	WIENER, Max
Brother-in-Law	Aladar	GRUNFELD	Hungary	Est.1886 1943	Est.	



A lit Yom HaShoah Yellow Candle¹⁰³

¹⁰³Yom HaShoah is known in English as Holocaust Remembrance Day



APPENDIX 5
Family Album (1)



Alexander Goudekettering 1941



**Bep Goudekettering
(Kloots) 1935**



Felix Goudekettering circa. 1936

Maurice and Blanca Goudekettering Wedding
April 10, 1946





APPENDIX 5 Family Album (2)



Blanca, Yolanda and Maurice 1948



**Katwijk 1953
Max, Yolanda, Alex, Leo,
Blanca, Fina**



**Toronto, Margueretta Street 1954
Kaatje, Blanca, Nell, Maurice,
Yolanda W., YolandaG., Alex, Hans**



Blanca and Maurice 1958



APPENDIX 5

Family Album (3)



**Jackie Constam, Yolanda
Goudeketter
Circa 1963**



**1969 engagement party for Yolanda Goudeketter (Fraser)
(Around the table-clockwise from left side) Leo and Fina
Wiener, Anne Constam, Rob Wiener, Allen Fraser's Aunt
Judith Maimon with her three children, Max Wiener, Eddie
and Nell Wiener, Jackie Constam
(Standing in back from left to right) Ed Wiener, Mr. and
Mrs. Fraser, Blanca and Alex Goudeketter**



**(Left to right) Maurice
Goudeketter, Terry Bonasheski,
Alex Goudeketter
Circa 1973**



**Maurice's family (Left to right) Yolanda, Alex
Blanca, Maurice on his 45th wedding
anniversary in April 1991**



EDITOR'S COMMENTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank my friend Julie Jean Marie for patiently and diligently correcting my innumerable typographical errors. My involvement in the creation of this memoir enabled me to better understand my father, not from the viewpoint of the man who brought me up as a child, but rather as someone whom I could learn to know on a more intimate level. I wanted to place myself in his shoes so that I might experience for myself what it might have been like to have watched, heard and felt the changing world, beginning from the early twentieth century. In 2008 I began to interview my father and quickly realized that most of the answers to my questions were able to provide the reader with only an historical perspective. For example, I asked him what the transportation or communication systems were like when he was a boy. He replied that very few people owned either automobiles or telephones. This answer may have been historically accurate, but it was hardly the personal information that I was looking for. After several further attempts, I simply left him with my recorder, asking him if he could describe his thoughts at his convenience.

Throughout his life, my father has been fascinated with technology, and computers were no exception. His first computer held a grand total of five kilobytes of RAM (Random Access Memory). He continued to upgrade as the years went by; a 64 Kilobyte 'Commodore', then to 36 gigabytes, and currently a 'Dell' computer holding half of a terabyte of memory. This turned out to be a blessing since his current computer is providing him with the ability to read and write despite his visual impairment. One day I received an E-mail from him. It had attached to it, a 'word' document which was entitled 'My War Years'. He had used a computer program named 'Dragon' which was able to write my father's speech onto the computer. Although the program was good, it was far from perfect and I felt that some editing would be helpful to improve its content. It wasn't long before my father and I got into a routine. He would send me his E-mails with the original text. I would go over them and send him a revised version. Again, the computer provided my father with assistance. Another software program would read out to him, whatever I sent to him on my 'word' document. Prior to these exchanges, I would visit my father and we had very little to say to one another. We would discuss the usual politics, religion and finance, but I would often be left with a feeling that we had never really communicated with each other in a meaningful fashion. By discussing these writings, our relationship was changing. I was able to see him more as the man he truly was and less as 'my father'. Through this system, my father would correct my interpretations and often in doing so, he would remember more that could be included. As I was editing, I became quite fascinated with many details of my father's story. He would mention various places in Europe or events during the war which led me to look at them in further detail. Since this was not a formal historical document, I did not feel the need to perform a detailed search and most often used 'Google' or 'Wikipedia' to quench my curiosity. In wanting to share

these details to anyone else who might in future read Dad's writings I began to produce numerous footnotes on various people, places or events.

The document began to grow from a few pages to ten pages, then twenty, then fifty. When my father mentioned his relatives, I began to research some family genealogy, thus leading me to produce an appendix after the writing, to document this information about his family and ancestors.

Fortunately, my father loves collecting letters, documents, newspaper clippings and pictures. Remarkably, the pictures included several taken during the war, while the family was on the run from the invading forces. I could not resist including some of these images with his story. I then began finding pictures on the internet which related to his war story and I began to include them as well. After several months we ended up with a document exceeding forty pages and were prepared to end it there. I'm not sure who initiated the idea, but it seemed to be an opportune moment to add the story of my father's early years which I had previously put on hold. Using the same process, we E-mailed one another and I was greatly satisfied to see that I was finally seeing before me the document that I had previously envisioned, but was unable to produce.

Having completed his early years and the war years, it was impossible for me to resist requesting that my father continue on with his post-war years. He was by this time more than willing to proceed. Where one would think that someone who was ninety plus years of age would slow down a bit, this project seemed to elicit even more enthusiastic energy out of him. I myself became even more excited about this phase of the book. Not only did it give us both more time to spend with one another, but we were now covering an era that I was more familiar with since it coincided with my own life. Much of this period concerns the beginning and growth of my father's business and the events surrounding our immediate family. I soon discovered that the internet held another treasure of information relating to my father's story; every single copy of the local newspaper, 'The Georgetown Herald'. I discovered that much had been recorded about my father and uncle's families and WIGO TV, their television and appliance business. This allowed me to confirm many of the dates and events during the years we lived in Georgetown from 1954 through to the 1970's.

Throughout the editing of this book, I have tried to remain true to my father's style and intent. I am fortunate that he was able to review the results of our efforts prior to publication. The third edition included a short history of some of my mother's brave acts during the war and I am grateful that both stories can be told in this one publication. This fourth edition includes more information about my father's operational flights and additional photographs.

Alex Goudekettering
July, 2012

