

RECOLLECTIONS

1929 - 1952

BY

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(Reformatted 2006)**

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Introduction

Memory is highly selective. We remember some things and not always the important ones. Many things we do not remember. Different people will remember events in a different form than others who witnessed the same events.

Writing about my experiences in my early years forced me to test my memories against recorded history. This was helpful in arriving at the right chronological order but it did not change the memories themselves.

The following pages were written for my immediate family and those that come after them so that they will have the opportunity to know something about my life before coming to the United States.

Dan van Alderwerelt
Roseville, CA
February 2000

Note: In 2006, in preparation of publishing this story on my website, many of the pictures were scanned anew and were inserted in the text instead of being on separate pages. Also, spelling and grammatical errors were corrected and the final result was reformatted.

To assist non Dutch speaking readers, here are a few translations:

Vader	=	Father
Moeder	=	Mother
Grootvader	=	Grandfather
Grootmoeder	=	Grandmother
Tante	=	Aunt
Oom	=	Uncle

Chapter 1

Five Days in May

The early morning light was quickly becoming brighter. It was that time shortly before the sun actually rose above the horizon. Airplane sounds were gradually gaining strength but nobody was awake to hear them. Until the bombs started exploding. Then, quickly wide awake, we gathered downstairs. We knew without being told that the Germans had started their long awaited attack on the Netherlands with daybreak bombing raids on the military barracks in The Hague, half a dozen blocks from our house. It was 4.00 am Friday May 10, 1940.

All sorts of thoughts ran through my mind, a boy 10 1/2 years of age, raised in a military family. Bombs meant shrapnel that could hurt or kill people and animals. I ran into the backyard and quickly covered the rabbit cage with a tarp, thinking that this would give my rabbit Pieter some protection.

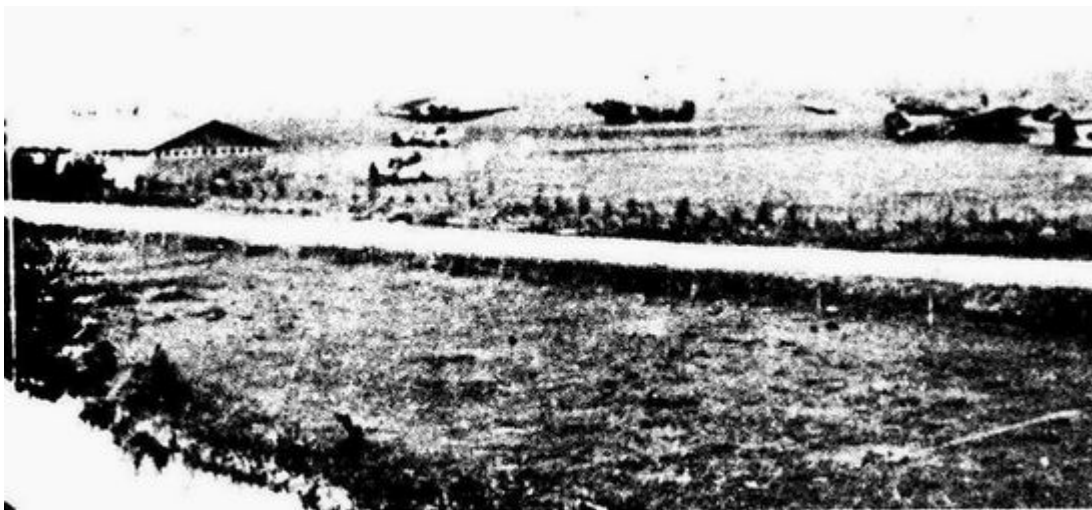
Where was Vader and what was he doing? On August 28, 1939 full army mobilization had been announced and he had left the house early that morning for the General Staff Headquarters in some secret location. I had heard a noise and had gone downstairs to see what was going on when I caught sight of him, in full battle dress, with helmet and pistol, saying good-bye to Moeder. Where was he now that full scale fighting had started?

After the initial excitement, extreme concern, if not fear, started to take over because airplane after airplane came over The Hague dropping German paratroopers on the outskirts of town. Other planes continued to make bombing runs on military targets. We could see several of them being shot down right over the city. Rumors quickly spread through the neighborhood that Germans had disguised themselves as Dutch soldiers but these turned out to be just rumors. We could hear firefights in the distance but by the mid afternoon this faded away. Apparently Dutch soldiers had surrounded the German paratroopers and forced them to surrender. We learned much later that this had been the first ever use of paratroopers and that their mission had been to try and capture the Royal family and as much of the Government as possible. That evening, the radio reported that the Dutch forces were fighting a valiant fight but the locations that were mentioned showed that in one day the Germans had managed to capture a substantial part of the country south of the two branches of the Rhine.



4. Duitse parachutisten dalen bij Ypenburg
German paratroopers landing just outside The Hague

The next several days were full of rumors as the radio reported success in some places but severe losses in others. I ventured out on my bike and went to look at the bombed out army barracks. Dead horses were still in the rubble in one area. That building had obviously been for the horse artillery. Army patrols were all over our part of town and I was stopped a number of times.



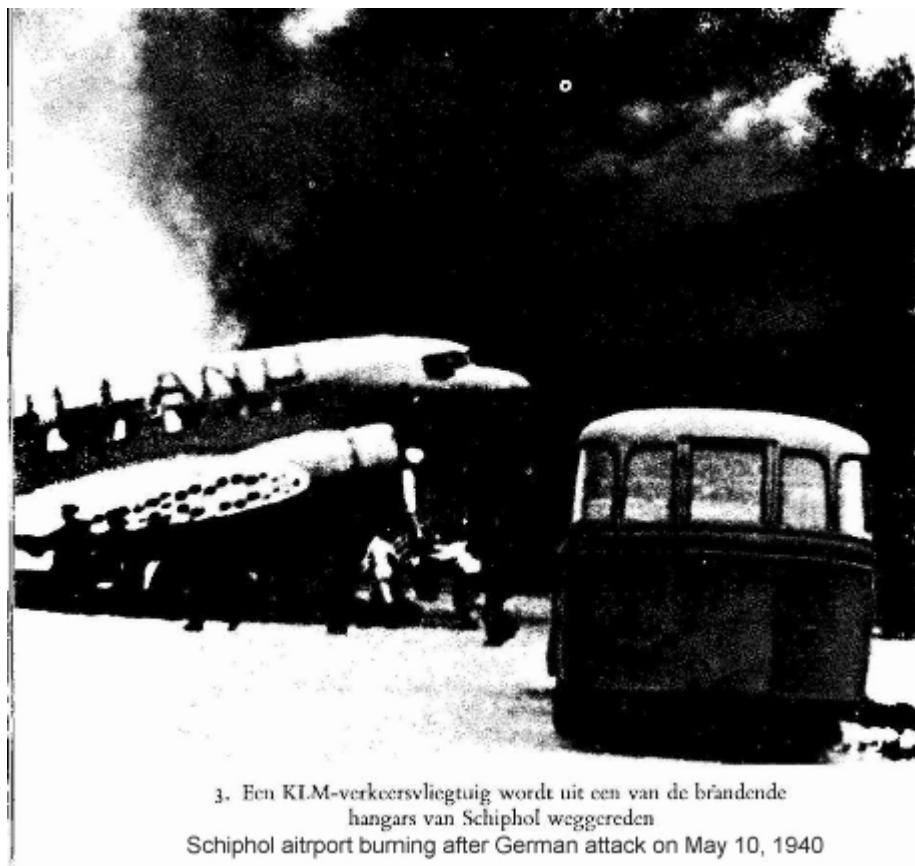
5. Vliegveld Ockenburg met gelande Duitse toestellen
German planes landed just outside The Hague

On the 14th of May we could see heavy black smoke on the horizon. Some people said this was from fires at the oil storage tanks at Pernis, near Rotterdam. That was partially correct but the radio reported that evening that the Germans had also carried out heavy

daylight bombing of Rotterdam with widespread fires, major destruction and many civilian lives lost. Later that night, a special announcement came over the radio. It said that under threat of similar bombing of The Hague, followed by bombing of Amsterdam, the Dutch army command had reluctantly agreed to the German demand for surrender which would take place the next morning, the 15th of May.

I went out on my bike that next morning and watched as German tanks rolled into our part of town followed by many infantry soldiers. The mood of the people who had ventured out was very somber and many of them stood by the side of the road and cried. In five short days we had lost our freedom. What would the future bring? Where and how was Vader?

One positive piece of news was that the Royal family and some of the senior government people had managed to escape to England on board a Dutch destroyer. At least they could continue to direct the fight from there. It was a good thing that we did not have a clue that it would take a full five years before we would be free again.



3. Een KLM-verkeersvliegtuig wordt uit een van de brandende hangars van Schiphol weggereden
Schiphol airport burning after German attack on May 10, 1940

Chapter 2

The Early Days

When my father graduated from the Royal Military Academy in Breda in 1918 he was following in the footsteps of his grandfather, Jan Karel Hendrik de Roo van Alderwerelt, who lived from 1832 to 1878 and who, during his career, was among other things Minister of War or as one would say here, Secretary of Defense. Vader had looked to his grandfather for inspiration rather than to his father who had been a partner in a firm of coffee dealers in Amsterdam. The coffee business had hit hard times and lost a lot of money. The story goes that Grandmother van Alderwerelt, who had quite a bit of money, paid the debts of the coffee business to avoid bankruptcy and told Grandfather in no uncertain terms that he was retired and could never again be active in that business.

After graduating as a second lieutenant in the Artillery, Vader was stationed at the large army base near Ede, a village in the center of the country. Before long, he became an instructor for the courses for reserve officers.

Also residing in Ede was the van Till family. Gerhard Frederik baron van Till, Major General in the Artillery, lived with his wife, two daughters and one son in a large Victorian house on several acres of wooded terrain just outside of the village. The younger daughter, Henriette Cornelia barones van Till, for a time commuted by train to Utrecht to study violin at the Music Academy.

The young lieutenant and the general's daughter must have met quite soon after Vader arrived in Ede because their marriage took place at the van Till house on October 8, 1920, when both of them were just 23 years old. It seems that they rebelled against then established norms as they insisted on writing their own wedding ceremony which did not include wedding rings. Also, as neither family was particularly religious, they did not want to be married in a church so the van Till house was chosen as the site for the ceremony.



Moeder, probably in 1920 shortly
before her wedding

The young couple settled in a small house on Bergstraat in Ede where Rugier was born in 1921 and Frits in 1926. Sometime after Frits' arrival, Grootvader van Till had a larger house built for the young family at Arhemscheweg 88, in the pine trees along the road to Arnhem. It was in this house that I was born on October 16, 1929.

In those days it was quite normal for babies to be born at home rather than in a hospital. The story goes that the doctor had come by to check how Moeder was doing and then left saying it was not time yet. Not long after that labor started and I was born quite quickly. One of the servants was sent out on a bike to look for the doctor in the village where he was calling on other patients.

*De Heer en Mevrouw de Roo
van Alderwerelt Baronesse van
Till geven kennis van de geboorte
van hun Zoon*

Daniel Mari Ocker.

Ede. 16 October 1929.

Announcement of my birth

Less than a year later, Vader was transferred to The Hague. And so there is another story that involves me. It says that when Moeder traveled by train to The Hague with me in a basket, I was apparently so well behaved that other passengers on the train remarked what a good boy I was ! My parents rented a three story row house at van Diepenburghstraat 17 in the fairly new north east section of The Hague and for the next 7 years that would be our home.

Chapter 3

Growing up in The Hague

My recollections from the early years at the van Diepenburghstraat house are sketchy. For a time we had a nanny who was only there during the day and perhaps took care more of Frits than of me.



Nanny in Grandmother van Till garden



Moeder, Frits and I at the beach.

We always had a live in maid and the ones I remember were German. The 3 boys shared a bathroom and being the youngest I got a bit of the short end of the stick. There was a German family down the street and I played with their son. The funny thing was that they had hardly any furniture in the house.



Rugier, Frits and I – 1931



Moeder and I in 1932

One of the favorite things I liked to do was to help Vader in the garden which had a large cherry tree in it. Also playing with Frits' model trains, something that I recall rather vividly he did not like. Going with the family for long walks along the beach was a favorite Sunday morning activity. It always ended with a bottle of special lemonade from a little stand on the beach.



Boy Scout Frits and I – 1934



Oom Carel, Frits and I – 1934



Vader as first lieutenant in 1934

In September 1934, when I was six weeks short of my 5th birthday I started kindergarten at a private Montessori school, not in a traditional school building but in a large house. I certainly have good memories of that school which had grades K through 6. We did not get report cards; we sat at individual tables and chairs and worked at our own speed. This does not mean that we were all such obedient kids. I recall taking my pen, which had an old fashioned metal tip that you dipped in the ink well, and sticking it in the arm of a girl who had the table next to me. I must have liked her! Of course, I was punished by having to stand in the corner. It seems to me that I had to stand in the corner more than once!



The three boys - 1935

French language instruction was started at a pretty early age, probably 3rd grade. Also, once a week, a foreign language was spoken at dinner. In the early years I could of course

not participate in the conversations around the table but I quickly became accustomed to hearing English, German and French being spoken around me. In addition, my parents frequently listened to news broadcasts from London, Paris and Berlin and again I would hear the languages being spoken. This certainly made it easier when it came to learning these languages at school, even though my grades might not indicate that.

I usually walked to and from school, about a half hour walk, mostly with other kids. The neighborhood policeman always seemed to be around walking his beat. It was always the same policeman and I suspect that he knew exactly where we lived. Perhaps he was there on purpose but I do not remember ever being afraid of strangers along the way.



Just a bunch of school kids – 2nd from left is me

At some point in time I started going to my grandparents van Alderwerelt house on Wednesdays for lunch. I could easily walk there from school. This was a very formal house with servants and I rather vividly recall sitting at the lunch table and having to tell my grandparents how I was doing in school. At the end of lunch my grandfather would give me my weekly allowance, 3 cents. It may not sound like much but at that time, the 1930's, one could buy quite a bit of licorice for 3 cents.



The Hague 1934 – from left to right, sitting: Grootmoeder v.A., Moeder, Frits, Oom Carel. – standing: Grootvader v.A., Oom Chap, Tante Anneke, Vader, Tante Willemine.

Oom Carel, one of Vader's 3 brothers, and his wife Tante Anneke as well as Oom Wim, his youngest brother, lived in the Dutch East Indies (now called Indonesia) at that time. During the summer of 1934, Oom Carel and Tante Anneke came to Holland on vacation. They rented a car which we thought was pretty neat as nobody in our family had a car.

As far as discipline at home is concerned, there are two things I specifically remember. The first is that if we did not finish our dinner plates, we would have to eat the leftovers for breakfast. I soon learned to eat everything from brains to calf tongue to every kind of creature from the sea. Table manners were closely watched and if we had our elbows on the table or our elbows sticking out, my father would fold a newspaper and we had to hold the paper between our body and our arms while we ate. This very quickly cured us of these bad habits.

On Sundays during the summer, the whole family would often walk to the grandparents van Alderwerelt house for afternoon tea on the terrace. This was fun because Grootmoeder always had some old toys we could play with. Grootvader usually smoked his cigar (I can still smell them) and worked on jigsaw puzzles. Sometimes Tante Stan and Tante Willemine, Vader's two sisters, would be there also. As they were not married, they had sort of adopted us. Oom Chap, one of Vader's three brothers, would also infrequently be there.



December 5, 1934 – St. Nicolaas in kindergarten – I am in front row third from right

Every afternoon, when getting home from school, Moeder would be practicing the violin in her bedroom. She played in small group that met periodically in the participants' homes to practice. I heard a lot of music that way. She would also take me to a concert once in a while. The violin was really her escape from the world. In later years she told me

that she always heard music in her head and that she really liked nothing better than to play the violin. She did so until she was in her late 70's.

Also living nearby in The Hague was Tante Ina, Moeder's older sister, and her four children. I sometimes played with the youngest daughter, Elizabeth. The other 3 children were a bit strange so we did not see them often. In spite of the fact that they were close relatives, we were not particularly close to them.

In winter we kids of course hoped not only for snow but also for severe and long lasting frost so that the canals would freeze over and we could go ice skating. Because of the extensive canal system, it was possible to travel pretty long distances on skates and tours were often organized.

All government offices were located in The Hague and so was the Palace, the official residence of the Royal family. Vader's job at the Defense Department meant that he often attended official ceremonies, such as military parades, openings of parliament, celebrations connected with the Royal family, etc. So, we always went along and often had good spots along the parade route or good seats in a balcony. I remember enjoying all this military and ceremonial stuff quite a bit.

In January 1937, Princess Juliana, only daughter of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, married Prince Bernhard, from the German State of Lippe Biesterfeldt. For weeks The Hague was filled with festivities. It was a very important event in the history of the country and also for our family. Vader, now a captain, was appointed military aide to Prince Bernhard. This meant that he now had an office at the Palace and he had to accompany the Prince wherever he went. This turned out to be quite a job as the Prince visited many cities, villages and factories, partially as good will visits but also to become familiar with his new country.



Prince Bernhard, followed by Vader, on the way to a function.
The public was watching in the background

Vader's function of aide to the Prince meant that we became part of the royal court and diplomatic community in The Hague. Many evenings my parents would be out to receptions and dinner parties, Vader in full dress uniform and Moeder in some fancy dress, and we were left in the care of our maid. My parents also started giving receptions and dinners and I remember well hiding at the top of the stairs, sneaking a peak at the comings and goings downstairs. I recall that on more than one occasion several of the guests arrived in a horse drawn carriages and this would always create a traffic jam on our narrow street.

Frits and I were frequently invited to parties for children, either at a foreign embassy or at someone's house. I specifically recall being at a party at the Polish Embassy with a bunch of other little kids. This was a Three Kings party on January 6. The old tradition was that the 12 days of Christmas lasted from Christmas day until January 6 when the three wise men, or Kings, finally reached Bethlehem. Hardly anyone spoke Dutch so I became very unhappy and cried and Moeder had to come and get me!

As a horse artillery officer, Vader had a riding horse that was stabled at the army barracks. His "oppasser" or batman, an enlisted private, would bring the horse to the house early each morning so that Vader could go for a ride in the nearby dunes before going to his office. Sometimes when Vader could not go riding, one of us boys would be allowed to ride the horse around the block, under control of the batman.

We had the same batman for several years and I became very friendly with him. He would come to the house to polish shoes, peel potatoes, etc. and then I would sometimes go back to the barracks with him where he would show me around. His name was Tom Dekker; we will meet him again later.

From a very early age, I went to Christian Science Sunday school as did Frits and Rugier. I have a recollection that Rugier may have been an usher. My parents attended the English church service at the same time. We usually took a taxi to the church and a bus back. Vader really had no interest in church but he went to keep Moeder happy. This routine was followed until the Germans closed the church immediately after the occupation started in May 1940.

As a Christian Scientist, Moeder did not arrange for us kids to have our shots nor did we ever see a doctor. Fortunately the family was pretty healthy but I did pay a hefty price for the lack of shots in 1944 when I came down with diphtheria.

Moeder must have felt that I was always too skinny because she would often give me a dish of cream with sliced bananas before going to bed. Not that we did not eat enough during the day. Frequently at lunch there would be competition among us boys to see who could eat the most sandwiches. I usually lost because I was so much younger!

In the early days, summer vacations were usually spent in Ede at the grandparents van Till house. The house was so large that I had my own room there, even when our whole family was there. I recall us traveling there by train and then walking from the Ede train station to the house, which perhaps took five or ten minutes. Some men, probably hired for the purpose, would follow us carrying all our luggage. I remember that one time we traveled all the way from The Hague to Ede by hired car with a driver. Along the way we stopped at “Rhijnvliet”, a large old house at Oudenrijn, outside Utrecht, where a brother of my grandmother van Alderwerelt lived. In his large garden he had what I felt was a small zoo with peacocks and other interesting animals. The rest of the property consisted of a farm on which there was a tenant farmer.

On one occasion, probably the summer of 1938, my parents had to go to the country palace of the Queen so we left The Hague by train, they got off at Baarn near the palace and I continued on the train until it reached Ede. Staying at the van Till house is still full of good memories. There were several servants and gardeners who were always willing to do things for me and Grootmoeder spoiled me. Towards the back of the property, among the pine trees, there was a large natural sandbox where we built all kinds of sand castles and in the trees we constructed tree forts.

In the evening after dinner we would all gather in Grootvader’s room where he had a radio, the early kind with large vacuum tubes that emitted strange blue lights. He too smoked cigars which I can still smell. A piece of wall behind his desk was covered with some strange looking papers. It was explained to me that these were Russian Bonds issued by the Russian Government prior to the Russian Communist Revolution in 1918. Russia had defaulted on these which had cost my Grandparents van Till a lot of money.

My grandparents van Till also owned a farm called “Tollenburgh”, some 60 miles south of Ede, in the very fertile area between the two branches of the Rhine. A tenant farmer and his family lived there and ran the farm. Attached to the main farm house was a separate section consisting of a living room, two bedrooms and a bathroom for use by the owners.

Our family spent time there during several summers and the farmer’s wife would cook meals for us. What I liked to do was to get up at dawn, at the same time as the farmer and his sons, and accompany them to the fields to milk the cows. They grew wheat and oats and sugar beets, they had an apple and cherry orchard, several work horses and some pigs. Lots of chickens and several geese just walked around everywhere.

In May 1938 my parents decided to move to a better house in The Hague because they felt they needed a more appropriate place for the social activities dictated by Vader’s job. Our new address was Ridderlaan 18 but we kept the same phone number that I still remember, 774620. It was not far away so it did not really change our routine. My room was on the third floor in the back. Down the hall was a narrow staircase to the attic over the front part of the house. There was a flat roof over the rest of the house. A small attic window that opened enabled me to climb out onto the flat roof and I often spent time there target shooting with my BB gun. I have to admit that small birds were sometimes my target.

Some memories from the Ridderlaan include the house next door being broken into during the night without us hearing a sound, Rugier playing the trombone to the annoyance of our neighbors and us playing in the small park across the street. One time in that park, a playmate of mine had a golf club and swung it. I was standing too close so that I got hit in the head. Fortunately he hit one of the hardest parts of my skull, above my right eye but there was a lot of blood. Moeder was terribly upset and took me by taxi to the military hospital where they put several stitches in my scalp. Frits had his mishaps also. One day he fell from a low brick wall and broke his arm in two places. Again, Moeder had to go by taxi to the military hospital. As Vader was in the army, we received all our medical care at the local military hospital. I was a cub scout, which I generally enjoyed but I remember being pestered by Frits who, as a boy scout, always insisted he was able to do everything better.

St. Nicholas, or Sinterklaas as he is called in Dutch, would come the evening of December 5, and this was always very special. I do not recall actually believing in him, but for several weeks before that date we would put our shoes by the fireplace. We would put hay and carrots in the shoes for Sinterklaas' horse and hope for goodies. The legend was that his helper, black Peter, would come down the chimney and take the offerings for the horse and leave goodies for the kids who had been good. If you had been bad, he would carry you away in his bag. I always found goodies in my shoes so I must have been good! During the evening of December 5 there would be chocolate letters and lots of special baked goodies, such speculaas, taai taai and pepernoten. We would also exchange small, funny, presents. One thing we did was wrap the present up, put a name on it and then wrap it again with a different name on it. Doing this 3 or 4 times meant that the same package would make its way around the family before it finally reached the intended receiver. Each package had to have a rhyme in it and the final recipient had to read it out loud. I recall that there were times that a very large box with goodies and presents would arrive from the van Till grandparents.

Christmas was even more special than Sinterklaas, but totally without presents. First Christmas Day, December 25, we would be home, light the candles on the Christmas tree and those around the room and have a large dinner of goose or rabbit. There were no electric Christmas tree lights and as a precaution, a bucket full of water with a large sponge was always sitting next to the tree.

Then second Christmas Day, December 26, we would go to grandparents van Alderwerelt who usually served a large chicken dinner. In those days, chicken was considered a special dish. Their Christmas tree was not only full of decorations but also had chocolate candies hanging from the branches. After dinner we would be allowed to take some of them. Aunts and Uncles would often also be there. When everyone was in the room, the candles on the tree would be lit.

The age difference between the 3 boys meant that I did not have that much to do with Rugier. After all, he was 8 years older than I so when we moved to Ridderlaan, I was 8 1/2 and he was 16 1/2. He was always busy in his room with his guitar and trombone and also with radios that he built from scratch. I remember that at some point he was in a small group, I think 3 or 4 guys that played jazz. The group had a playing date at a small place in town and Rugier took me along one night. I sat close to the band watching him play the guitar and I recall thinking that he did pretty neat stuff! Frits, being 3 years older than I, had his own friends.

Chapter 4

The Clouds are Gathering

As kids we did not really pay much attention to what was in the newspapers but there were several events that even we youngsters knew about. Most likely things had been explained to us by our parents. Two such events, while we were still at the van Diepenburghstraat house, stand out in my memory. The first one was the takeover by Germany of the Republic of Austria in March 1938. We witnessed the first open aggression by Germany as Austria lost its independence and was made part of Germany. I remember feeling terribly sorry for the Austrians. The second event was Russia's invasion of Finland sometime later. Instinctively we were on the side of the Fins who were able to fight the Russians to a standstill. The Russians after all represented the communists who were equally as bad as, or perhaps even worse than the German Nazis. Not long after this the German family down the street quietly moved out of their house and our German maid, whom had been with us for some eight years, left. It was later whispered that they were all German spies but I am not sure I believed that in the case of our maid.

In August 1938, Russia and Germany signed a non-aggression treaty. I remember well how disturbed Vader was about this. The two worst forces had joined hands and he said we would surely pay a price for this. There were ample stories coming out of Germany concerning concentration camps for political enemies and Jews, as well as reports about Hitler's aggressive speeches and about preparations for war by the German army. Slowly the clouds of the coming war were gathering. The Dutch armed forces, small and badly equipped as they were, started building fortifications everywhere. Believe it or not there were Dutch people who sympathized with Hitler and formed a political party called NSB. We called them traitors. Later in 1938 or early 1939 Vader was needed at the General Staff Headquarters and so he was temporarily relieved from his function of military aide to Prince Bernard. This temporary change of course turned out to be permanent. Our parents had gone to all the trouble and expense of fixing up the new house at Ridderlaan 18 but it was never used for any large social events. This was quite a disappointment for Moeder.

As 1939 progressed, the prospect of war became more and more certain. Vader worked long hours but was discouraged by the lack of support for the army by politicians who did not want to spend any money. Then on August 28, when full army mobilization was implemented, he left early in the morning in full battle dress. The Headquarters had been moved from the Defense Department building in The Hague to some secret location in the center of the country.

Only 3 days later, on September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland without any warning. As France and England had guaranteed Poland's borders, this meant that from that moment on a state of war existed between France, England and Poland on one side, the so-called Allies, and Germany on the other side. World War II had started and would last almost 6 years.

By mid September, Russia invaded Poland from the East and when the Poles had no choice but to surrender, the Germans and Russian divided that country between them. Again, we looked upon the Russians as being just as bad as the Germans. Even though I was just about 10 years old, I was very much aware of what was going on. I imagine that I learned much by listening to my parents talk and listening to the news on the radio when they turned it on.

Vader came home periodically for a few days, sometimes as much as a week. Boy was I always happy to see him! We needed his steady hand as things were changing rapidly. Sugar was the first item to be rationed followed by other products that were imported. We practiced taking shelter under the stairs in case of air attack, glued strips of paper on the windows so that they would not shatter so easily from nearby bomb explosions and night time blackout was instituted. The winter of 1939 was a very bad one. Temperatures were so low for so long that the major rivers froze over. This seriously weakened the army's defensive positions which relied on using the water as part of the defense. I remember well that newspapers carried pictures on their front pages of Dutch army units trying to cut the river ice with large saws and axes.

Soon spring came around and so did the early morning of May 10, 1940, which is where I started Chapter 1.

Chapter 5

The First Years under German Occupation 1940 - 1942

All public schools and some of the private schools reopened fairly soon after the German occupation began. But not mine, as the Germans seemed to have something against the Montessori concept. So, instead of going back to school, my summer vacation started in May. In September 1940, just a month short of being 11, I was put in a 6th grade class at the local public elementary school and this was a real shock to me as the atmosphere was totally different from what I was used to. I remember being very unhappy there.



School picture, probably September 1940 – note pen in right hand which was staged as I am left handed!



Outside school, probably early spring 1941.

Nevertheless, on July 31, 1941 I managed to get a good enough report card so that I would be able to go on to high school. Under the Dutch education system, if your grades were not good enough then you could not move on to the next grade and you simply had to do that entire year over again!

When the fighting came to an end on May 15, 1940, all Dutch military personnel were placed under house arrest. I vividly recall traveling with Moeder to some place near Utrecht to visit Vader who, together with a number of other staff officers, was confined to a large house under German guard. It was not until the end of the month that they were released. Prisoners of war taken during the fighting were released at the same time and I recall the newspaper pictures of them returning.

The Boy Scout organization was banned quite soon so my scouting days came to an end. I suppose the Germans did not like the fact that the Boy Scout movement started in England. I well remember that we all thought that England would come to our rescue and that the war would be over in no time. Little did we know how badly England was prepared for war.

During the rest of 1940, little seemed to change on the surface because the Germans worked very hard at having the routine civil service and police functions continue as before. Of course there was very strict German supervision so that they controlled everything. Vader had been placed in an office that dealt with war injuries and war damage. On this basis he at least had work and brought home a meager paycheck which meant we had to economize greatly. Many more items, not only food but also clothes and shoes, came under the rationing scheme and pretty soon a black market developed in everything. Gradually, all sorts of things became scarce.

We quickly learned to be very careful what we said or did in public. The National Socialistic Party, NSB for short, supported the Germans and so their members acted as informers and spies. Members of this party were soon appointed as mayors of cities, chiefs of police, and similar other public functionaries. Before the war we thought these people were just a nuisance. Now we found out what it was like to have traitors in our midst.

I remember well that my bike needed new tires but none were to be found in the stores. Eventually my parents bought them on the black market as a bike was essential in getting around. We had five bikes in the house, one for each of us, and it became quite a job to keep them in running condition.

We did not have a car then nor did we have one before the war started. Between bikes, busses, streetcars and trains it was quite possible to get to everything.

In June 1941, Germany invaded Russia in spite of the treaty they had signed three years earlier. It seemed to us that Hitler thought he could do better than Napoleon. As far as we were concerned, the best thing that could happen was if the Germans and the Russians would totally demolish each other. Meanwhile Germany, and its ally Italy, had occupied all of Europe with the exception of Sweden, Switzerland, Spain and Portugal.

The next school year began in September 1941 and I started public high school. I had found the 6th grade of elementary school difficult but that was nothing compared to the first year of high school. That school year was a misery and I did so badly that at the end of the school year my grades were too low to move on to the second year so I had to do the first year all over again. I began to hate high school.

During the first few summers of the occupation, I spent time at the “Tollenburgh”, the farm owned by the van Tills. My recollection is that I went on my own, ate at the farmer’s table and worked alongside his sons. I became pretty good at milking cows and pitching hay. I was also invited to visit Vader’s old batman, Dekker, who with his parents operated a small bakery in a small country village named Woudrichem. There I had to get up at 4 in the morning to help fire the ovens in which the bread and other things would be baked. Once the baking was finished, I went with Dekker in his horse drawn carriage to deliver the bread to his customers all over the countryside. These summer ventures, far away from the cities and with virtually no Germans in sight, were some of the most enjoyable things I have ever done.

I am sure that many things relating to the early years of the occupation escaped me. What did not escape me was the fact that the Germans were using some very powerful tools to try and control the population. There were always German patrols on the street, you just could never get away from them. Periodically they would arrest some well known people and execute them as an example. The front pages of the now German controlled newspapers would then describe the people executed as “criminals” and “saboteurs”. I know it scared me but I think that it made many adults more determined to organize and work against the Germans. This is how the underground resistance grew so quickly, which was the opposite of what the Germans had wanted to accomplish. The arrests and executions continued and I started recognizing names of people my parents knew. The mood in our house became worse as time went by.

A little over a month after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the Dutch East Indies were conquered by the Japanese. We would not see Oom Carel and Tante Anneke again until late in 1945 when they returned to Holland after having spent the war years in Japanese prison camps. Oom Carel was in a forced labor camp on the Burma Railroad and the bridge over the river Kwai. Tante Anneke was in one of the many Japanese camps for women. I never did meet Oom Wim. He was in a Japanese prisoner of war camp where he died on August 18, 1945 at age 38, a few days after Japan had agreed to surrender.

In 1942 the screws were turned more tightly. What had taken place in Germany with the Jews now started in Holland. All Jews were required to wear a large yellow star, the Star of David, and all of a sudden I saw some friends of mine wearing the star. I had never thought of them as any different from me. Of course, the wearing of the star was simply a ploy by the Germans to make it easier to arrest them on the street and deport them to what were then described as farming camps in Poland. It did not take long for us to find out that these were extermination camps. Soon, these friends were no longer around. I never did learn if they had been caught by the Germans or if they had managed to go underground and hide somewhere.

Moeder continued to play her violin every day. I am positive that this was a very important escape hatch for her and enabled her to put up with all the pressures.

When the Dutch army officers were released from house arrest at the end of May 1940, they had been instructed to report once a month to the old military academy in Breda, where Vader had graduated in 1918. As time went by, considerable concern arose because the Germans were trying to force the officers to take an oath that they would not do anything to the detriment of the Germans. Of course, they all refused. On the reporting day in May 1942, the Germans took their revenge and when the officers reported as usual, they were all taken prisoner.

I very vividly recall coming home from school to find Vader sick in bed. As Vader was never sick, I knew immediately that it was something serious. Moeder carefully explained to me that he had suffered a nervous breakdown that was so bad that it temporarily made him blind. The next day was the regular officer reporting day but of course he could not go and so he avoided being taken prisoner.

When Vader had recovered somewhat he was ordered to appear at the German hospital in The Hague for an examination to determine if he had sufficiently recovered to be transported to one of the prisoner of war camps in Germany. The German doctor who examined him was apparently not a Nazi at all and got into quite a conversation with him. The outcome was that he certified that Vader was not fit to be transported to Germany and so he could return home. This doctor continued to certify in this manner for a long time, and perhaps even "lost" Vader's file. The net result of this was that Vader was never arrested and taken to the prisoner of war camps.

The Germans realized that the Universities would be a considerable source of trouble for them and so in early 1942 they were closed. All University students were required to report to designated places to be taken to Germany to work in factories as forced labor.

It goes without saying that virtually none reported but that meant that from that point on all these students were subject to immediate arrest if found. Rugier had been studying for an electrical engineering degree at the University in Delft and so he immediately left home for some unknown place in the country where he hid out until the end of the war. It was important that we did not know where he was so that if we were questioned or threatened by the Germans we could not give him away.

By the time 1942 came to an end, we had come to the realization that conditions would get much worse and that the war would last for a long time.

Chapter 6

The Occupation Continues

1942 - 1943

It is not easy to put a specific date on many of my recollections of things that occurred during the middle years of the German occupation, i.e., from mid 1942 to the winter of 1943 so I will relate some of these things without a date reference.

Most households in Holland had a radio, not just to listen to the two Dutch radio stations but also to London, Brussels, Paris and so forth. The radio was therefore a strong weapon, not only for the Germans to spread their propaganda but also for the Dutch Government in exile in London to provide news and information and at times coded instructions to the Dutch underground. The BBC, the British radio service, was also an excellent source of information as to what was going on. Early during the occupation, the Germans issued an edict that it was forbidden to listen to any radio station except Dutch or German stations. This could of course not be enforced so soon instructions came out that every radio had to be turned in at central collection points and records were kept as to who had turned in a radio. Fortunately we had two radios so my parents turned one in and kept the other one hidden so that from time to time, usually late at night, in the dark and with the volume very low, we would listen to London for the latest war news.

Virtually everything, not just food, was rationed and this included clothing, shoes, coal for heating, gas for cooking or heating and electricity. Many other items, such as pots and pans for cooking were simply not to be found. This meant that everything that wore out had to be repaired. Moeder had always been good with needle and thread but now her imagination was really being stretched to the limit. When I wore a hole in my pants, she would sew on any material she had available. Rugier was always pretty handy and before he left home he had shown us how to fix all sorts of things. As the occupation years progressed, rations were cut and if we thought that they could not go any lower, they would cut them again. In many ways, summers were easier. No heat was needed and it was light until quite late in the evening.

Near our house on Ridderlaan, there was an area where homes had been planned but building had not started when war broke out. This area was divided into small plots on which people grew whatever they could. I have no idea how this was arranged but we had such a vegetable plot there, perhaps 50 x 100 feet, on which we grew many different vegetables including cabbage and potatoes that could be stored for the winter. I very well recall helping Vader during the summers of 1942 and 1943 turn the soil over, plant, water, pull weeds and harvest. I was 12 and 13 years old during these summers.

Winters were more difficult because rationing meant we had to be careful using heat and electric light. Produce was in even shorter supply. So, the answer was to wear more sweaters and to go to bed early. Somehow, my parents managed to stockpile some food supplies during the summers, and perhaps buy on the black market, so that the winters of 1942 and 1943 were manageable.

From an early date, the Germans instituted curfews. At first this only involved the late night and very early morning hours, such as from midnight to 5 AM but they gradually tightened up on this so that eventually curfew was from 8 PM to 6 AM. These curfew hours were partially meant to combat the underground which was mostly active under the cover of darkness. Anybody who was caught out in the open during curfew hours was quickly arrested by the German patrols and shipped off to a prison or forced labor camp in Germany. Needless to say, the blackout was in full force so we were very careful in not having any light visible from the outside of the house.

The Germans themselves started running short of supplies, partially because of heavy bombing of Germany by the Allies, so that they started hauling large quantities of agricultural produce and other products from Holland to Germany. To help the German war production, instructions came out that homeowners had to turn in all copper, brass and similar items at collection points. My parents refused to do this and I recall burying the stuff in the back yard. We now have a number of these items here in our house. Large metal items such as church clocks were taken away to be melted down.

A term I want to explain is the Dutch word “razzia” which loosely translates to raid or round up. A razzia involved German secret police, and sometimes German troops, suddenly blocking off streets or surrounding street cars, buildings or houses for whatever evil purpose they had in mind. Sometimes it would just be to confiscate bikes which they needed themselves or random searches of houses for individuals or radios or other prohibited things. More often than not it was to arrest whatever category of people they were after at the time. This could be Jews, students, ex military people who had not reported in and later on any males between the ages of 18 and 35. In May 1943 this latter category had been instructed to report for deportation to Germany as forced labor for the war factories. Very few reported. Frits turned 17 in July 1943 so he was quickly approaching the critical age.

We came to fear these razzias very much. It was always a relief when Vader came home from work as commute time was the German's favorite time to do this. A number of family friends were captured during these razzias and taken to Germany. The Germans generally left women alone so Moeder was quite free to move about or travel. Rugier was already in hiding. Frits could move around like I did but the closer he came to being 18 the more careful he had to be.

There were many times that Vader went away unannounced. I would wake up in the morning and he would be gone. Some of the time he apparently stayed with his brother Chap near Utrecht. These absences were never explained to me but in retrospect I can only assume that he had received some kind of warning, perhaps through the underground or perhaps from his German doctor, that the Germans might be coming for him and that it was best to disappear for a while.

Earlier, in April 1943, all Dutch ex enlisted army personnel and non commissioned officers were required to report to be transported to prison camps in Germany. Most did not do so and this further increased the number of people in hiding and therefore increased the razzias by the Germans. Until the very end of the occupation, the Germans would carry on these razzias and many, many people were taken to Germany where a large number of them died, be it in prison camps or as a result of heavy Allied bombing of factories where they were forced to work.

In some ways, the orderly nature of the Dutch created some real problems. Long before the war, a population registration system had been created. This acted as a permanent register of voters and if you moved from one town to another you had to go to City Hall in the town you left to tell them you were leaving so that they could delete you from their register and then they would give you a card with all your particulars on it that you then turned in at the City Hall of your new place of residence. All very orderly and very precise. What created the problem was that the Germans used this system to track people down when they wanted to arrest them. The central register for the whole country was kept in a large building in The Hague. When it became clear that this was contributing to many arrests by the Germans, the RAF (British Royal Air Force) executed a most beautiful daylight low level bombing raid on that building and totally destroyed it with hardly any damage to neighboring houses. However, as there were local registers in each population center, the Germans were still able to track people down.

Early during the occupation, a system of identify cards was introduced. These had a picture and fingerprints on them and without this I.D. card you could not get your ration coupons. People who were living underground and in hiding from the Germans could ill afford to appear at the rationing office to pick up their ration coupons.

So, the underground developed means to forge ration coupons and when that became too difficult, to burglarize ration offices. This often developed into gun battles with German guards. As a further measure of control, the Germans instituted a reporting system whereby everybody who appeared at the ration office would get a stamp placed on their I.D. In this manner they figured that anybody who did not have this stamp on their card was an "illegal."

The fear of what the Germans were capable of doing was pervasive. While still at Ridderlaan, we were woken up in the middle of one night by gunfire just down the street. It went on for some time and I vividly remember how scared I was thinking that the Germans were going from house to house and breaking down front doors by shooting out the locks. The shooting finally stopped, but I can tell you we did not sleep anymore that night. The next morning we learned that German soldiers, a bit drunk, had been shooting at a window on the third floor of a small apartment building at the end of the block because there was a light showing which was of course prohibited.

On April 20, 1943 my grandparents van Till celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Moeder and I traveled to Ede for a family celebration. To commemorate the occasion, my grandparents gave me a book about Dutch explorers with the anniversary date and a brief inscription on the front page. I still have this book in my bookcase.

Not long after that, during the summer of 1943, Grootmoeder van Till came to visit us. I have this recollection of Grootmoeder sitting at our dinner table trying to eat soup but the soup spoon could not always find her mouth and so quite a bit of soup spilled. It turned out that this was sort of a farewell visit because she had a brain tumor, which caused the difficulty with eating, and she died in Ede on December 28 of that year at the age of 75. It was not possible to travel to Ede at that time so nobody from our family could attend the funeral.

Early 1942, the Allies started bombing raids on Germany, and on some targets in the countries that they had occupied. Gradually the frequency of these raids increased. Generally the US Air Force would do the daylight raids from high altitudes with so called carpet bombing while the British RAF did the night time raids with lower level precision bombing. As Holland was directly in the path from England to Germany, we saw and heard heavy bombers coming over almost every day and every night. The sirens would go off but we generally did not seek shelter. We did not feel we were the target so we were not particularly afraid. Antiaircraft guns and German fighters took their toll and we saw many planes being shot down. If they were on the way to Germany then the bombs that these planes carried would explode when the plane crashed and cause heavy damage.

Many Allied pilots who parachuted from their planes were rescued by the underground and either hidden for the duration of the war or smuggled through German occupied Belgium and France to Spain which was neutral and from where they could return to England. It did not take long for me to recognize the sound of different airplanes so that without searching the sky I knew what was happening.

The Germans were fearful that eventually there would be an attempt by the Allies to land on the Continent and the Dutch beaches were thought to be a potential area for this. So, in 1942 they started to build fortifications along the immediate coast, including Scheveningen, a seaside resort and fishing town adjacent to The Hague. This was soon followed by similar activity in the western part of The Hague and in 1943 several large concrete bunkers were built near our house. Several homes were torn down to make room for these bunkers. As a curious youngster, 13 going on 14 at the time, I watched with interest how concrete forms were constructed and large quantities of concrete were poured.

In November 1943, I was 14 now, all residents of the western part of The Hague were notified that they had to evacuate the area so that the Germans could complete their fortifications. Chaos ensued. However, Vader again managed to do the impossible and was able to rent a house in Wassenaar, a nice residential suburb north of The Hague. We moved in December but I really have no recollection of that move. Once the people had moved out, the Germans tore down large sections of town to create more fortifications. As an example, what is now the Sportlaan with the surrounding areas of parks and water, was a nice residential neighborhood which was completely torn down and turned into a wide canal to act as a tank defense barrier. What you see there now was all built after the war.

Chapter 7

A Most Difficult Year 1944

Looking back, it seems that we settled in pretty quickly in Wassenaar. It was again a three story house with my room first on the top floor and then later on the second floor. We had a small front yard, a back yard and there were fields and some woods behind us. The local high school, the Rijnlands Lyceum, was within walking distance and I joined the second year class after the Christmas 1943 vacation.

My grandparents van Alderwerelt had also been forced to leave The Hague and they moved to Oudenrijn near Utrecht to live in a cottage on the grounds of “Rhijnvliet” where Oom Chap lived. In March 1944 we received word that Grootvader van Alderwerelt had died after falling down a flight of stairs. He was 80 years old. Somehow, and I do not remember how, we all traveled to Oudenrijn and much to my consternation, Grootvader was laid out in an open casket in one of the rooms at “Rhijnvliet” and I had to go and see him. I did not like that at all.

During the 1944 Easter vacation, Frits and I decided to pay a visit to Grootmoeder van Alderwerelt who now lived alone. We really liked her a lot and to us she seemed to be a very wise person. After spending part of the day with her we returned home which took a very long time on very crowded trains and streetcars. Traveling had become more and more difficult because public transportation was breaking down due to lack of parts.

The pressure from the German occupation continued to mount. Razzias became even more frequent as did raids by the Germans on places suspected of harboring underground activity of one kind or another. They took many prisoners who were either executed, sometimes in public, or shipped to German concentration camps. While in the early days they would publish lists of names of suspected underground people and stage trials to convict them, by early 1944 they had done away with that formality completely. Nevertheless, illegal activity continued to increase and so did the circulation of illegal newsletters and similar publications. Frequently, after dark, Frits and I would climb over back yard fences to pass these things on to people in the neighborhood.

Some time after the end of that Easter vacation, I started feeling pretty sick one day at school. Someone took my temperature and then quickly called Moeder. I was running a very high fever which turned out to be the beginning of my long ordeal with diphtheria.

I have a vague recollection of doctors and nurses coming to see me at home but for quite a while things were just a blur. I received daily injections of some antidote but almost complete paralysis soon set in anyway. As a result I could hardly swallow, so all I could eat for quite a while was jello and other such soft stuff. I had been thin to start with but now I became even thinner. The paralysis was very serious and it would be September before I would be able to start using my legs again. This was a high price to pay for not having had my shots.

The Allied landings on the French beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944 were no doubt the greatest news for us. Maybe the end of the war was finally in sight. I remember Vader coming into my bedroom, now on the second floor, to tell me about it. I was still confined to bed and still mostly paralyzed but I had learned to use a pencil again so he gave me a map on which I could mark the progress of the invasion and the fighting further inland into France. He would tell me every day what war news he had heard so I could update my map.

Shortly before Frits turned 18 in July 1944 he too went into hiding somewhere. Much later I learned that he stayed with friends in The Hague and that he kept periodic contact with our parents. It is a good thing he had left home because later that month the German secret police came to our house looking for him. From up in my room I could hear them at the front door. Moeder simply told them in fluent German that he had run away from home and that she had no idea where he was and, believe it or not, they left without searching the house. So now the family was down to just the 3 of us, my parents and I.

The war news was most encouraging. The Normandy invasion had succeeded; the Allies had broken through the initial defenses and soon started fighting their way into the main part of France. The Allies had gained air superiority over the occupied countries and so they started a campaign that consisted of attacking from the air anything that moved on the ground, be it trains, trucks or cars. The trains were now mostly transporting German troops and supplies and so were all trucks and cars on the road as no private individual could operate a vehicle. Daily, there were Allied fighter planes in the sky and repeatedly we could hear them going into a diving attack on traffic in the area followed by gun fire and exploding bombs. And so it happened one day that some German trucks were passing through our neighborhood just as they were spotted from the air and within no time at all they were attacked by a fighter plane. Fortunately for us, no bombs were used in this attack but it was all close enough so that some heavy machine gun bullets came in through one of our front windows and went out of the house through a back window. I was scared stiff as I was still unable to walk. Vader came rushing into my room, picked me up and carried me downstairs to a place under the stairway which was the safest spot in the house. As the days and weeks went by there were many more such air attacks in our area but none were as close as that one.

By late August 1944 Allied troops had broken through the German lines in France and were making rapid advances north into Belgium. Rumors of all kind were spreading fast.

The gist of all of them was that Allied troops had already crossed the Belgium/Dutch border and were already in the town of Breda, south of the river Rhine. We were all overjoyed as the end seemed to be near. Even the German troops in Holland panicked and started leaving for Germany in droves. The peak of all this was “crazy Tuesday”, September 5, 1944. I had by then regained some use of my legs and remember well standing in our back yard, with the help of a cane, and watching German troops coming across the field carrying all their gear. We had often seen them there before, on the way to the coastal defenses, but this time they were going away from the coast and fleeing East in the direction of Germany.

While it was true that Allied troops had reached the Dutch/Belgium border, it was not true that they had advanced as far as the rumors said. They simply could not continue to advance at the previous rate as they had to wait for supplies, particularly gasoline and ammunition, to catch up with them. This gave the Germans the opportunity to regain some control and composure and fresh German troops were brought into all parts of Holland. You can not imagine how distraught we were over what we felt was a missed opportunity to evict the Germans from Holland. Of course we did not know about the logistical problems faced by the Allies as a result of their unexpected rapid advances.

Events continued to unfold quickly. On September 14, 1944, Vader’s birthday, we heard a most tremendous noise and it turned out that the Germans had just launched one of their first V-2 bombs towards London. The V-2 was a very early ballistic missile, unreliable and inaccurate but the ones that did reach England caused very extensive damage. Launch sites had been located in the trees between The Hague and Wassenaar so we had a grandstand seat so to speak. Some missiles would misfire and explode on the mobile launch pads, or take a wrong turn once launched and come back to earth with an enormous explosion. Pretty quickly rumors circulated that the Germans were using Russian prisoners of war to man the launch pads because they did not want to risk killing their own people. I have no way of knowing if this was true but it was certainly not beyond the Germans to do something like that.

The day of the first launch, barricades were erected and armed German guards took up their posts two blocks from our house. All the people behind the barricades had to leave their homes immediately as the Germans wanted a large area surrounding the launch sites to be vacant. Good friends of ours, a couple with several children, were all of a sudden without a roof so they moved in with us. It made for a very full house but all of us had long ago learned to make the best of whatever circumstances prevailed.

Sometime later, these friends found a place to live in the eastern part of the country and moved out of our house. I know that they were always very grateful to my parents for their help. I only learned in the early 1980’s that when Vader retired in 1957 or 1958, they gave him an interest free loan to buy the apartment on the Sportlaan and repayment was not asked for until the late 1970’s.

As you can imagine, all this launching activity and related traffic bringing in supplies and missiles attracted a lot of attention from Allied fighters and bombers so that from that

point on air attacks in the area were a daily occurrence. After a while we slept through the noise of night-time launches but we continued to seek shelter under the stairs most of the time when air attacks took place because it was all very nearby.

Some of you may remember a book, subsequently made into a movie, called “A Bridge too Far”. That was the story of an ambitious effort code-named “Market Garden” to secure the bridges over the Rhine at Arnhem, located in the eastern part of Holland. On September 17, 1944, only 3 days after the first launch of the V-2’s, we saw a large number of British planes fly over in an easterly direction. Each plane was towing a glider full of specially trained British troops. They landed in German occupied territory between Ede and Arnhem and tried to secure the bridges at Arnhem. At the same time, American and British tanks and armored personnel carriers made a strong push north from the Belgium border, hoping to be able to reach the bridges. Had this succeeded, the war would have ended a lot sooner for Holland north of the rivers. As it was, an unexpected strong German force had just arrived at Arnhem so that the British glider troops could only reach the bridges for a brief moment after which they were pushed back and virtually surrounded. In the meantime the tank force coming up from the south ran into endless mud and soft soil, got stuck and never reached the rivers. Casualties, particularly among the British glider troops were extremely high. I remember very clearly how sad we all were when we learned what had happened. This disaster sealed our fate. It was not possible to try a repeat operation because everything had now been saturated by the heavy fall rains. There would be no liberation of the rest of Holland before the following spring at the earliest. The Allied advances all along the long battle line from Holland to the Swiss border slowly ground to a halt because of the very bad weather.

In October 1944 I turned 15, the age at which one was required to carry an ID card. I recall going to the registration office where I turned in a picture, gave my fingerprints and was issued my ID card on 24 October 1944.



ID Card

I must have recovered enough from the diphtheria paralysis to do this because I also went back to school at that time. That was very difficult. I had missed the last part of the prior school year and the beginning of the current year. It was not long after that, that the Germans ordered all schools to be closed. For a period of time we met at teachers' homes so that we could continue to study mostly by means of extensive homework. Soon, because of the inability of teachers to provide heating, even these informal classes had to come to an end.

That winter of 1944 turned out to be a very bad one. The cold and snow came early and there was an extreme shortage of food and fuel. It did not even matter if one had ration coupons. The stuff was simply not available because the Germans had carted everything away. After the debacle of "A Bridge too Far", the Germans had started a very determined drive to rob Holland of all its resources, factory equipment, fuel and food supplies. Electricity, gas and water were severely rationed and eventually were only available a couple of hours a day. As time went by there was virtually no foot traffic outside; we all needed to conserve our energy and try not to get too cold. People did not go out unless absolutely necessary. Some did go out to cut down trees and anything else that could burn. There are stories of abandoned brick houses being stripped of all their wooden support beams so that they eventually collapsed right on the people who were taking out the lumber.

My parents had done a marvelous job of saving up some food and fuel. During the summer they had bought and stored anything they could purchase. Just before the snows started, Moeder went out, I believe twice, on her bicycle far into the country side to try and find some farmers who would be willing to trade food for anything of value. They did not want money because that had really become useless but they were receptive to trading food for gold, silver, jewelry, beautiful linens and so forth. I never did learn what Moeder gave up in these transactions in order to bring home some food. Many people from the cities went out on these food trips into the countryside. Some never came back. Some were shot by the Germans, some were attacked from the air and some were simply robbed and died from exhaustion on the way home. Looking back, I marvel that Moeder had the courage to do this. Much later Vader told me how frustrated he had been that he could not do this. The Germans would have instantly arrested him on the street because he was an able bodied male. At the time, my parents did not discuss these foraging trips with me nor did they ask me to go. I feel they did not want to expose me to the danger.

In spite of what food and fuel my parents had accumulated, we had to put ourselves on very meager rations because we knew we would not be able to get anything additional until the Germans had been defeated and Allied troops brought in supplies. That would be late spring at the earliest. So, for heat we burned small pieces of wood and coal in a large coffee can with holes in the bottom much like the type of can you now see sometimes used to start a barbecue. Cooking or heating of small quantities of food would be done in a small saucepan on top of the can.

Pretty soon we did the same thing as many other people and that was to eat tulip bulbs to fill our stomachs a bit. When it got dark we would simply go to bed and put on a couple of extra sweaters before crawling under the covers. By morning, the water in the pipes, if there was even water that day, would be frozen. When the water was on we would fill up a few pails which of course also froze. We never felt clean anymore, we were always cold and I was always hungry.

Christmas 1944 went by without any celebration. We did not light any candles; we needed to keep the few we had for when light at night was absolutely needed. I was relatively thin when I started back in school in October so by the end of the year I must have been a skeleton. My parents were terribly concerned about my ability to survive the long winter on such a meager diet. Much to my amazement, one day in early January my parents told me that they had made arrangements for me to leave Wassenaar and stay with a family in the eastern part of Holland where conditions were better. When many years after the war I asked Vader who had come up with these arrangements, he told me that the people in whose house Frits was hiding had been instrumental.

So one very cold January evening, just before curfew time, Moeder took me to a back street somewhere in The Hague. I do not remember the date or how we got there, but I probably rode on the back of her bicycle which by now was running on wooden “tires” as rubber tires had long since disappeared. And there was this tank truck waiting for us and there were some other people around. The tank truck was the type used to transport milk or similar products for the German troops. After quick good-byes and instructions from the driver, another boy about my age and I climbed into the tank compartment and the hatch was closed from the outside. It was pitch black inside and freezing cold. The driver had told us to be absolutely quiet and hide in the furthest corner away from the hatch. I had my suitcase to sit on. The vehicle left The Hague and traveled for what seemed forever. We were stopped many times by German patrols but it turned out that the truck and the driver, who was Dutch, had the right papers so at only one stop did they actually open the hatch to look in but they did not see us. Obviously the driver worked for the Germans, probably carrying milk from the eastern part of the country to the German officer’s quarters in The Hague. That explained why he had fuel for the truck and could drive around the country. He did this at night to avoid being attacked from the air. By working for the Germans he was obviously a traitor but in exchange for what must have been a substantial sum of money he had agreed to smuggle me and the other boy. Even in much later years Vader would never answer my question as to how much he had paid for this. And so, after a long time and while it was still dark, I was dropped off at some totally unknown place which turned out to be the village of Kuinre.

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Chapter 8

Kuinre and Liberation

1945

The small village of Kuinre is located on what used to be the shore of the Zuiderzee (literally South Sea). A section of this inland sea, now a lake, had been surrounded by a dike and pumped dry so that from Kuinre you could no longer see any water. Just outside the village, on the now dry lake bottom, was a group of barracks where engineers and others who worked on this huge project lived with their families.

After getting out of the tank truck, I was approached by a woman who addressed me by name so she was obviously expecting me. She and her husband, an engineer, would be my hosts for the next five months. As I recall it, they had a small child, perhaps about three years old. It seems incredible, but at this stage I do not remember their names. These people were extremely kind to me and treated me like a son. At this point I was 15 years old.

Although the baker in the village was still operating, the shelves in the local grocery store were pretty empty. So, I was amazed at the meals my hosts were able to put in front of me. I ate and ate and ate. Behind the barracks was a shed where they kept an illegal pig. If the Germans had known this they would have confiscated the animal immediately. It became my job to feed that pig every day with whatever we had, like potato peels, cabbage leaves, food scraps, etc. One day he was fat enough and late one evening, after curfew, with the help of some neighbors, he was slaughtered. What a mess that was and we had to work hard all night to dispose of the evidence so that in the morning there would be no sign of this illegal slaughter. The meat was cooked and put in sealed jars and this fed us, and the neighbors who had helped us, for a very long time.

I generally helped out with indoor and outdoor chores and ran errands into the village but beyond that there was little for me to do. So, I think I gained some weight back pretty quickly. When the weather improved a bit I spent more time in the village and met some kids my age, including a girl I thought was pretty cute, but all the other boys thought so too and she paid no attention to me at all. They referred to me as that city boy but that did not bother me at all. I was just glad to have some people my own age to be with.

As all motor vehicles had been confiscated by the Germans, my host had the use of a horse

to survey and generally get around the reclaimed area. Sometimes he would take me along by putting me on the horse right behind his saddle. At least that was something different to do. I think I was getting pretty restless for something to happen.

Slowly spring approached and the weather improved. We did not have a radio but there was one hidden in the village. Early in April 1945 we finally heard the first reports of Allied troops getting across the Rhine at Arnhem at the same place where the "A Bridge too Far" operation had failed in September the previous year. Not long after that Allied fighter planes made their appearance. The first time they came over low we were all outside. I dove into a ditch because of my experience with air attacks in Wassenaar. All the others ran to the top of the dike and waved at the planes. I felt pretty stupid.

It was bright sunshine the morning of April 17, 1945. There was an unusual amount of air activity which told us something was going on. Sure enough, in late morning, we saw three vehicles approaching in the distance along the dike. The entire village turned out to welcome these armored vehicles, called Bren gun carriers, manned by members of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division. They threw candy and chewing gum by the handful to the crowd. I caught my share and enjoyed chewing some very strange tasting chewing gum.

Everyone who had a flag put it out and the church bells rang after having been silent for 5 years. Everyone was overjoyed! Finally the end of the occupation had come without fighting in the village and hence no casualties or damage. The Canadians drove through the village and continued north on the dike road. After a while we heard heavy gun fire in the distance and not long after that the Canadians came back along the road, passed through the village, and went back to where they had come from in the morning. It turned out they had run into a fairly strong German road block and as they were only meant to be scouts, they returned to the main battle line which was still some distance away.

That afternoon German troops came into the village and built several barricades to block the road and the atmosphere became quite tense. We had not been to the village for a few days to try to get bread so my hosts told me to go to the bakery and buy several loaves of bread, if there were still any available. I took the usual shopping bag which hung from the back of an upright chair that was partially broken. A fairly large piece of wood from the chair happened to be in the bottom of the bag. So I walked into the village and was, of course, promptly stopped by what I first thought were German soldiers but then I quickly realized that the situation was a lot worse. These were members of a special brigade consisting of Dutchmen who had volunteered to serve in a special German SS unit, in other words, traitors. They had me up against the wall in no time and searched me. Of course they found the piece of wood in the shopping bag and insisted that I was carrying it as a weapon. Then they carefully examined my ID card which still showed my address in Wassenaar instead of Kuinre and that took a lot of explaining. Finally they asked me if I had participated in the celebrations that morning when the first Canadian troops had come into the village. I told them that I had not because I knew that the Germans would come back. Finally they let me go. I was really shook up but got some bread at the bakery and ran home. I think my hosts felt bad about having exposed me to what had been a very dangerous situation.

Everybody remained indoors for the rest of the day and after dark heavy artillery fire started up. We could hear the big guns firing from the Allied lines some miles away, then

the whistling of the shells coming over followed by explosions in the directions were the Germans still were. This went on most of the night. We learned later that a very large amount of German equipment was destroyed that night.

Early in the morning of April 18 we heard some commotion outside and boy were we happy to see the Canadian infantry. This time they came in full force, long lines of infantrymen on foot carrying all their gear and with weapons at the ready marching down the dike road and through the fields on both sides of the road. Fortunately the German troops had left the village during the night so there was no fighting and the liberation celebrations started all over again and this time there were no unpleasant interruptions.

One of the radios that had been kept in hiding was hooked up to some large speakers in the village square and was tuned to the BBC every day so that we could follow the war news. It was in this manner that we heard on May 5, 1945 that all remaining German troops in the western part of Holland had agreed to surrender. This meant that there would be no heavy fighting in the densely populated areas of Holland. Of course, those areas had already suffered tremendously that last winter with virtually no food or heat. Thousands had died from exposure and starvation, particularly in the poorer districts. The 1944/45 winter would for a long time afterwards be referred to simply as "the hunger winter".

Of course I was eager to go home to Wassenaar but initially no travel of any kind was permitted. Large areas had to be clearer of landmines and such while temporary bridges had to be built to replace all those that had been blown up or been bombed from the air. An additional factor was that there was a big hunt on for German deserters and Dutch individuals who had helped the Germans or even worse had served in German army units. Once travel was permitted again, one had to have a document stating that you were "politically reliable". I finally obtained this piece of paper, dated May 26 1945, from the local commander of the newly formed Dutch Interior Forces who for the time being controlled everything in the country. These Interior Forces initially consisted mostly of volunteers who had no uniforms but who wore an armband and carried a weapon. As time went by they became more organized.

BESCHRIJVING VERBODEN.
VERBODEN TOEGANG.

KLINKE, 26 Mei 1945

De Plaatselijk Commandant der N.B.C. te KLINKE

verklaart dat:

Naam : de Boer van Alderwereldt

Voornaam : Daniel, alias, C.


Geb. : 16 Oct. 1929 . te . Bielefeld

Woonplaats : Apeldoorn . . . adres : Oudekerkplein 10

No. persoonskaart : 19. / 18064.

bekend staat als : Politiek Betrouwbare

De Plaatselijk Commandant,
I.B. Jansen.



Certificate of Political Reliability

Finally the day arrived in early June that I could leave Kuinre and travel by bus, with many stops and changes of vehicles, to the vicinity of Wassenaar. These buses were provided mostly by the Canadian, British, and American forces who had occupied Holland. And so I was let off by the side of the road somewhere near Wassenaar. My suitcase was too heavy to be carried for any great distance so I went to the nearest house, rang the door bell and asked if I could leave my suitcase there until I could pick it up later. From there I walked home, about a half hour. When I came into the house the first thing I saw was Moeder washing dishes and Rugier drying them. Boy, was that a welcome sight!

Our immediate family, Vader, Moeder, Rugier, Frits and I had survived the occupation and hunger. However, it was then that I learned that Grootvader van Till had died on May 2, 1945 at age 76, just a few days before the German surrender. And much later that year we learned that Oom Wim, Vader's youngest brother, had died on August 18, 1945 in a Japanese prisoner of war camp in the Dutch East Indies, just a few days after Japan had agreed to surrender.



Grave marker for Oom Wim at Bandung, Indonesia

With the Japanese invasion of the Dutch East Indies imminent, Oom Wim had married Tante Henny in Serang, on the island of Java, on January 9, 1942. She survived the war years in a Japanese prison camp for women.

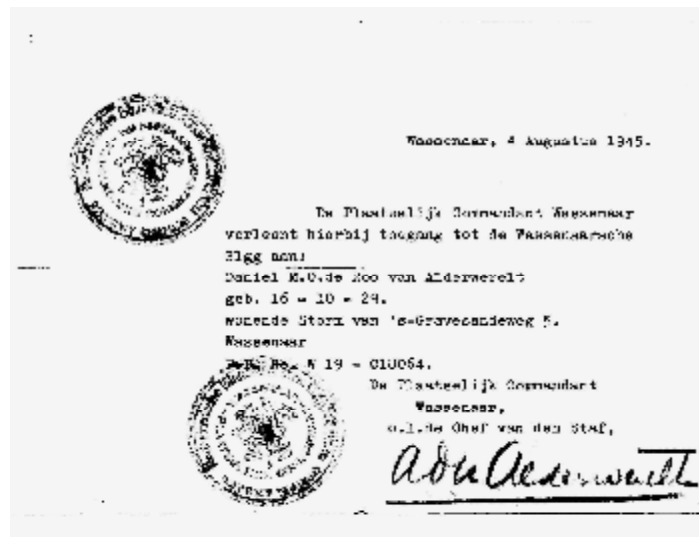
Chapter 9

A New Beginning 1945 - 1947

Everything was of course still in very short supply and rationed. The destruction all over the country was enormous. The Germans had carted away everything they could lay their hands on including whole factories. Shortages and rationing would continue for a number of years. Nevertheless, everybody was happy and smiling. We had our freedom back and that was the most important thing.

Vader was extremely busy as he was the local head of the Interior Forces who initially were also responsible for law enforcement. Frits had volunteered for the new Dutch Army which would help fight the Japanese in the Far East and so he was receiving his basic training in England. Rugier did not go back to the University at Delft to complete his electrical engineering degree and instead looked for a job and a place to live on his own. In late October 1947 he married Iet in Rotterdam.

Large areas around The Hague and Wassenaar were still closed off because of war damage or German built fortifications. One such area was the beach at Wassenaar. Somehow I prevailed on Vader to issue me a pass to the beaches which he could do as local commander of the Interior Forces. So, the first summer of new found freedom went by quickly.



Pass to the beach at Wassenaar, issued by my father in his capacity as Local Commander of the Dutch Interior Forces in Wassenaar

Extensive hearings were held everywhere to try and determine who had collaborated with the Germans and would therefore be subject to trial. In The Hague the Defense

School resumed in September 1945 when I was just short of 16. Schedules and classes were accelerated a great deal so that we would be able to graduate in July 1947 just as if the war had never taken place. This meant loads of homework but somehow I made it and passed the final exit exam in early July 1947. My final test scores were not the greatest but they were fortunately good enough. It was important to pass this test at the end of high school because it counted as entrance exam to the Universities.

Report card of final high school exit exam
using a scale of 1 to 10 for 17 subjects.

good time but when I came home it turned out that the English student had arrived the day

after I had left home so my parents had to deal with him without me being there. A real snafu!!



En route to England on exchange trip

I did not know what I wanted to do in terms of a career. So, it was decided that I should take a psychological test to see in what direction I should go. Tante Stan had promised to help financially if it was decided that I should go to any of the Universities. Well, the test result was so vague and inconclusive that the idea of sending me to University was totally dropped.

In The Hague there was the privately owned banking firm of Landry & van Till. One of the partners was J.C.C. baron van Till, otherwise known as Oom Jaap, a cousin of Moeder's. I use the phrase cousin loosely because the relationship consisted of his grandfather and Moeder's grandfather being brothers. Relatively late in life Oom Jaap married Tante Adrienne, twenty years his junior. My parents approached Oom Jaap about me coming to work at the bank as a trainee and he agreed so in the fall of 1947, just about when I turned 18, I started there and commuted from Wassenaar to The Hague by streetcar. This was my first exposure to an office and I had to learn everything from typing to filing, etc.

Early in 1948 Vader brought home the exiting news that he had been designated to become the Military Attaché at the Dutch Embassy in London and that along with that function came the promotion to full Colonel. My parents prepared for their move to London, which took place around March 1948, while I looked around for a room to rent in The Hague which I found with a family on the Harstenhoek Street.

It did not take me very long to figure out that living in a boardinghouse and working at the bank as a trainee was not the way I wanted to spend my time. I don't know how I did it, but I convinced my parents that it was okay for me to join them in London which I did in June, 1948.

Chapter 10

A Look Back

The move to London would turn out to be a very major change in my life so I think it might be well to look back for a minute before we go on to London and eventually the departure for New York.

The war years from May 1940 to May 1945 were difficult, frightening and full of stress, but as a youngster I was shielded from some of it, particularly in the beginning. After all, I was 5 months short of my 11th birthday when the Germans invaded and 5 months short of my 16th birthday when I was liberated by Canadian troops. The major burden fell on my parents, particularly Moeder. Yes, we all survived but it left a major imprint on all our lives. We had learned to do without almost everything and to make the most of the little we had. But we did not learn to do without the most important thing, our freedom and the many who had given their lives for it.

The war years also meant an end to the pre-war way of life. In those earlier days Dutch society had been very structured with many layers and most people knew exactly where they did fit in. Our family was in a privileged position with good connections and servants. The milk man, green grocer and baker would come by the house every day and twice a week fish wives from Scheveningen would come by to sell us fresh fish. In contrast, there was still considerable unemployment resulting from the great depression.

The war years worked in some ways as the great equalizer. In the post war years new ideas and new political parties would take over. The previously very structured society would become much more democratic and open. On the other hand, Government would become more intrusive. The great destruction all over the country and resulting severe housing shortage meant that rationing, not just of food but also of building materials, had to be maintained for a number of years. Permits would be needed to do just about anything be it to build something or to open a business. This kept the economy, and therefore also employment, at a pretty slow pace for quite a time.

It had been decided that I would not go to college but I had no idea what I wanted to do. I was completely at loose ends. I had accepted the trainee job at Landry & van Till as it would at least be a beginning but I did not feel it would lead anywhere. It is against this background that I eagerly grasped the opportunity to go to London, a step that would change my life for ever.

Chapter 11

The London Years

1948 - 1951

I looked forward with great anticipation to living in London. After all that was and still is one of the largest cities in the world with lots of exciting things to offer. I was 18.

The ferry took me across from Hoek of Holland to Harwich from where I took the train to London. My parents met me at the station and we were driven home. Yes, my father now had a car and driver in military uniform! The apartment they had rented, in St. John's Wood, one of the better neighborhoods north of Regent Park, was very large. Apart from a hallway, living room and dining room and kitchen, there was a master bedroom with dressing room and bathroom, a bedroom and bathroom for me and a bedroom and bathroom for the Dutch live in maid. My mother had hired her in Holland and brought her to London.

Vader's job required that my parents attend lots of social functions and give cocktail parties themselves. Because of our diplomatic status, we could purchase cigarettes and alcohol duty free and we were exempt from most remaining rationing restrictions. I quickly met a large number of people from other Embassies, French, American, Spanish, etc.



Mrs. de Roo van Alderwerelt was with Mrs. Delolienne, Lt.-Col. E. Delolienne and Col. J. K. H. de Roo van Alderwerelt



I also met and became good friends with the son of the Dutch Consul General in London. He introduced me to a lot of non diplomatic people and saw to it that I was invited to many parties. It seemed there was something going on almost every day and as I was not working I could stay out as late as I wanted. Only lack of money curtailed my activities.

It was obvious that after a period of time, the subject of my future had to be dealt with. The hotel business had always been of interest to me so I talked to a number of the large hotels in London. As I carried a diplomatic passport I was not allowed to be employed in England so we had to look elsewhere. Out of this came the recommendation that I go to hotel school in Switzerland. I don't know that we really seriously considered this; it was far away and expensive.

Then one evening, my parents met Lionel Fraser at a reception. Apart from being a Christian Scientist like my mother, he was a director of a privately owned bank in the City of London. Moeder must have spoken up about me because a few days later I received a telephone call asking me to come to Fraser's office. I told him about my short time at the banking firm of Landry & van Till in The Hague and that I was very interested in receiving further on the job training. Not long after that I received a call from his secretary that I should report for work the next Monday, on the understanding that I was to be strictly a trainee without any compensation. I gladly accepted this great opportunity and this turned out to be another most important turning point in my life as it ultimately led to me coming to America.

Office hours started at 9.45 am so I found I could still go out at night and be at work on time and relatively awake. Vader's driver would come by the house every morning to

pick him up but Vader developed the habit of walking to work, about a half hour, so I would catch a ride in the car to a subway station on the subway line that ran straight into the City as the banking and Stock Exchange area is known. This saved me considerable time!

The name of the firm where I went to work was Helbert Wagg & Co., Ltd., a very old and privately owned banking firm. One day I was called into Mr. Wagg's office as he was curious about who I was and we had a long chat. I gradually worked my way from the Accounting Department to the Cashiers Department to the Trust Department and so on. Eventually I settled in the investment section where I learned a great deal about different investments, the workings of the Bank of England, and the Stock Exchange.

Gradually I must have started doing useful work because one day the Corporate Secretary whispered in my ear that they did not feel right about using my service without any compensation but that they realized that they could not pay me officially. English labor laws were very strict at that time about employing foreigners and of course the diplomatic status completely prohibited any payment. So instead, he started giving me an envelope with some cash in it every week. I gladly accepted this as it enabled me to be much more socially active.

What I did not know was that he subsequently wrote a letter to the Ministry of Labor asking for formal permission to pay me a salary. This created uproar. Vader was called into the Dutch Ambassador's office and was told that he had received a letter from the Ministry of Labor saying that it lately had come to their attention that I was gainfully employed and that this was totally in conflict with my diplomatic status and must be stopped immediately. Vader was pretty unhappy about this because he certainly did not like being called on the carpet by the Ambassador. Eventually, a compromise was worked out whereby I could continue at Helbert Wagg & Co., Ltd. until the end of the year, i.e. the end of 1950, provided an understanding was given that I did not receive any compensation and that I did not take the place of a paid employee.

Even before this uproar, the directors at Helbert Wagg had talked to me about my plans for the future. They felt that with my experience in The Hague and London I should go to New York, work there for a time and then go back to Amsterdam where I would be able to command a very good position as at that time there were very few people around with overseas experience. I recall saying to them that the thought appealed to me but that I could not just go to the U.S. without a job. Well, they said, we have some contacts there that may be able to help you. It turned out that one of the directors of Helbert Wagg was also a director of Rubber Corporation of America in Brooklyn, N.Y. Soon I received a letter from William Merton, President of that company, saying that if I made my way to New York at my own expense, he would give me a job in his company at \$50 a week. Of course I had no idea whether or not one could live on this but at that point I did not worry about that.

I do not recall that we had a great deal of discussion about this plan at home. It seemed to

be a foregone conclusion that I would go to the United States, if it was at all possible. I soon learned that immigration visas to the U.S. were very hard to come by and that the waiting list for Dutch nationals was terribly long. Well, I applied for a visa at the American Embassy in London and Vader tried to use his friendship with Colonel Draper, the American Military Attaché, as a way to speed up the procedure. This was to no avail and so my name was put on the long waiting list. One positive development out of this was that Colonel Draper agreed to be my sponsor. Part of the visa requirements was that you needed to have a U.S. sponsor who was financially responsible for you once you were in the country so this was one very important hurdle we had overcome relatively easily.

When the end of 1950 came and I had to leave Helbert Wagg I was given a very nice farewell present, a large envelope full of 5 Pound notes. This was therefore again unofficial pay that the tax man never heard about. This nice sum became my play money for the rest of my stay in London which came to an end in November 1951.

A few words about some of the things my parents and I did. In 1948 the first postwar Olympic Summer Games were held in London and we went to a number of the events. I remember that some of the Dutch women swimmers won some medals as did some of the Dutch runners. We were very proud of them. Also, we went to many horse shows, horse races and similar meets in the country as well as various major sports events for which we often received complimentary tickets. The diplomatic license plates on the car usually gave us at least a good parking place.

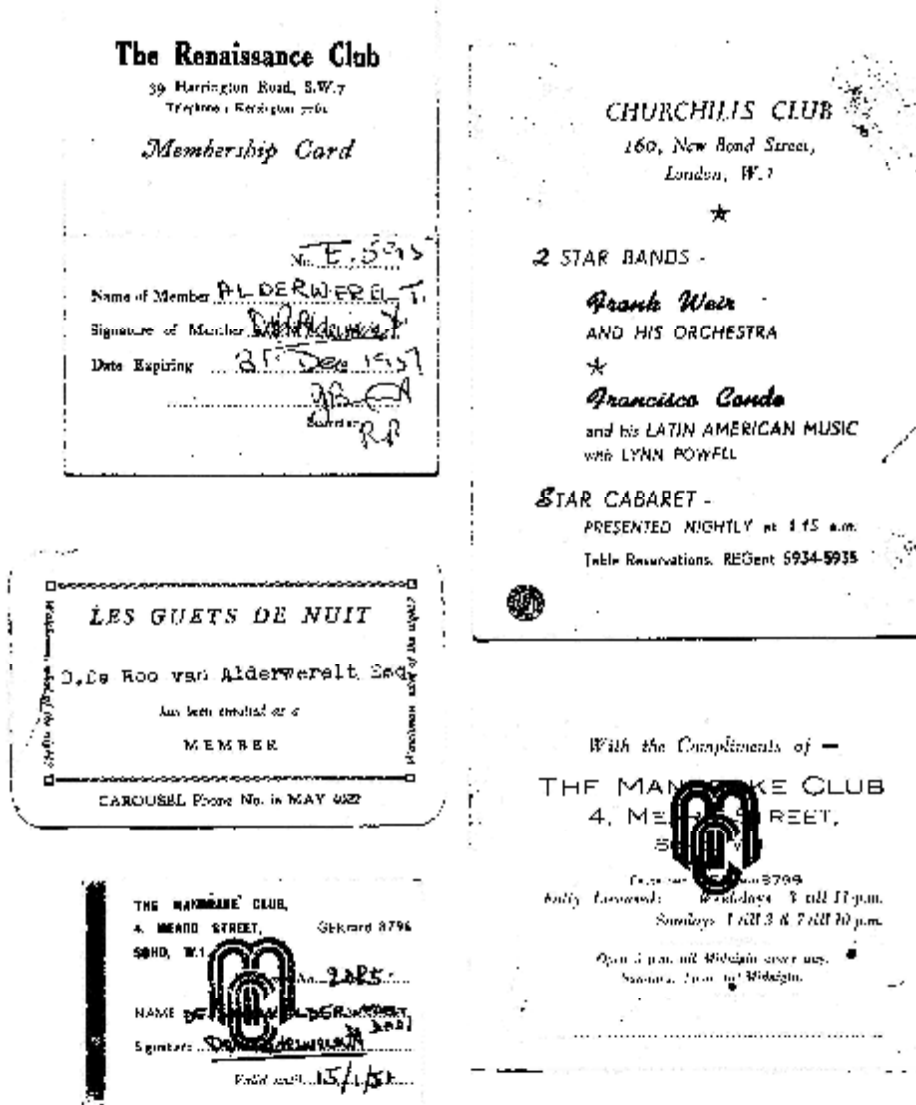


We made several vacation trips to Devon and Cornwall, a delightful and somewhat remote

part of the country. Also trips up to the Lake District in the Midlands as well as a train trip to Edinburgh for the Edinburgh Music festival. So we saw a large part of the country.

While in the early stage of my stay in London, I had mostly friends who were not at all connected with the diplomatic service, but this gradually changed. It seemed that there were now quite a few children of Military Attaches and other diplomats in town so a list was made up. My name was on this list and this resulted in a steady stream of invitations to events and parties. Earlier I had already invested in a tuxedo and particularly the last year, when I was no longer working, I wore it constantly.

I had joined and enjoyed going to a number of London clubs. Some of these served food and had music for dancing while others focused more on drinks and conversation or were true night clubs that remained open until all hours.



Some London night spots

Through all this I met a delightful mix of English and other nationalities. While many of the parties were in town, some would be at the country homes of English people. A highlight of the 1951 season was the annual Cotillion Ball for the debutantes that were presented at court that season. As I was a pretty good dancer, I was in considerable demand. There were several debutantes who asked that I be their escort to this ball. Obviously I had to make a choice but fortunately that did not create any hard feelings.

At this point my command of English was very good but I had a most definite English accent. If you could hear that now you would surely laugh. I now had such a circle of friends that my parents agreed to give a cocktail party for just my friends towards the end of May 1951. Some 30 of them came.

Unfortunately all this had to come to an end. Vader was notified that his term in London was up and that he needed to move to Amsterdam by November 1951 where he was being appointed to the function of Garrison and Territorial Commander. As Amsterdam is the capital of the country, this was another important job.



Mrs. Hobbs, Mrs. Paley Johnson, Col. J. K. H. de Roo van Aldersvoort, C.F.O., who has now returned to Holland to take up a new appointment, Major Paley Johnson and Col. G. P. Hobbs



Major-Gen. D. C. Hawthorn, Mme. Harald Fagt, wife of the Counsellor at the Norwegian Embassy, and Mme. Roo van Aldersvoort at her St. John's Wood flat



Baron Gevers, C.F.O., Counsellor at the Netherlands Embassy, Miss Marie-Liliane Waller, Mme. Schoch and Dr. H. C. Schoch, C.F.O., First Secretary at the Netherlands Embassy, enjoyed a drink and a chat

Dones

Netherlands Military Attaché Said Farewell After Three and a Half Years Here

Chapter 12

Preparing for the New World

1952

I resigned myself to living in Amsterdam, again with only a small allowance from Vader, and wait for my immigration visa to come through. I was 22 now and to pass the time I worked my way through a number of books on economics and accounting as well as American history. I also copied the family genealogy from Vader's files.

Then in July 1952 things really started moving. First I had to appear at the American Consulate in Rotterdam for a medical exam and to get a small pox vaccination. Then lots of forms to fill out. In August I received the formal permission to leave the country and a few days later I received the call to come to the American Consulate to get my visa to the U.S. stamped in my passport. There was still foreign exchange control so I also had to obtain a permit to buy dollars. All I was allowed to buy was the equivalent of 760 Dutch Guilders in US. Dollars which would now be about \$350 but at that time it was less than \$200. That was all I could take with me to cover expenses on board ship and while getting settled in New York. Not much!!

STICHTING LANDOVERHUZING NEDERLAND
AMSTERDAM

DUPLICAAT
bestemd voor den vergoedingsmeder

VERKLARING EMIGRATIE TEVEN'S DEVIZENVERGUNNING A N° 18364
(vervolgde uitgaaf van De Nederlandsche Staat R.V.)

De Stichting Landoverhuizing Nederland verklaart: dat haar af een oopje van de devizencontrole van binnen
toegen het uitreiken van een betrouwbare/quantum/its verblijfplaats was

Inzake: De Heer D.M.O. de Roo Alderwerelt,
wonderde te (volledig) 181,
Nationaliteit: Nederlandse
Houder van paspoort N° 1. 76194
Houdsp: sonder

naar land van bestemming: Brooklyn N.Y. U.S.A. in te gebruiken.
Houdsp: sonder met de devizenvergunning verband tot het aankopen bij een devizenbank, schied
tot het uitvoeren van een bedrag ad: De begaafte van f. 760.— (geveerdend en
veertig gulden.) in Amerikaanse dollars.

In contantpapier ad: f. 20.—
waars in cheque Met restant in travelcheques.

Van deze vergoeding tenaam devizenvergunning kan, behouden verlooping, slechts tot 1 October 1952
gebruik worden gemaakt.

1749, 05
Groningen, 21 Augustus 1952
STICHTING LANDOVERHUZING NEDERLAND

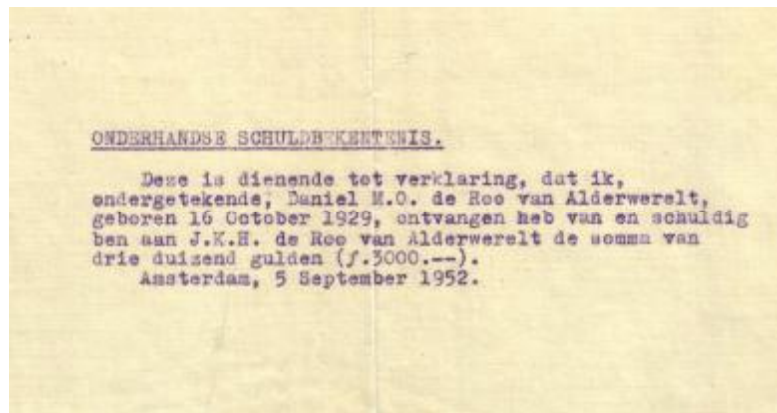
De Houder dient, bij ingang van deze vergoeding, tenaam devizenvergunning, het bedrag van het R.k. in Europe aan de
aankomst van de emigranten aan de grens te bewaren voor te leggen.

Indien de Houder, op deze vergoeding tenaam devizenvergunning, op den dag van de geldigheids van deze vergoeding nog niet
verloft het bedrag van deze vergoeding, dient het bedrag aldaar, aldaar te leggen te worden teruggekeerd.

BB.

Permit to buy US dollars and leave the country.

I also had to go on a bit of a shopping spree to outfit myself for New York. Finally a reservation was secured for a berth in a cabin on "Rijndam" of Holland America Line sailing from Rotterdam on September 6. All of this cost a considerable amount of money which Vader provided and I signed a promissory note for 3,000 Dutch Guilders which was put "on the books".



IOU for 3,000 Dutch Guilders

On September 6, 1952, early in the morning, we took the train to Rotterdam. Vader and Moeder came with me and Rugier and Iet as well as Frits and Eve also came to the pier. Saying good-bye was very difficult, particularly for Moeder but also for me. What would

the future in America hold for me? When would I see everybody again? Little did I know that within a few months I would meet Beverly and marry her a year later.

And so the “Rijndam” sailed on its 9 day trip to New York.

