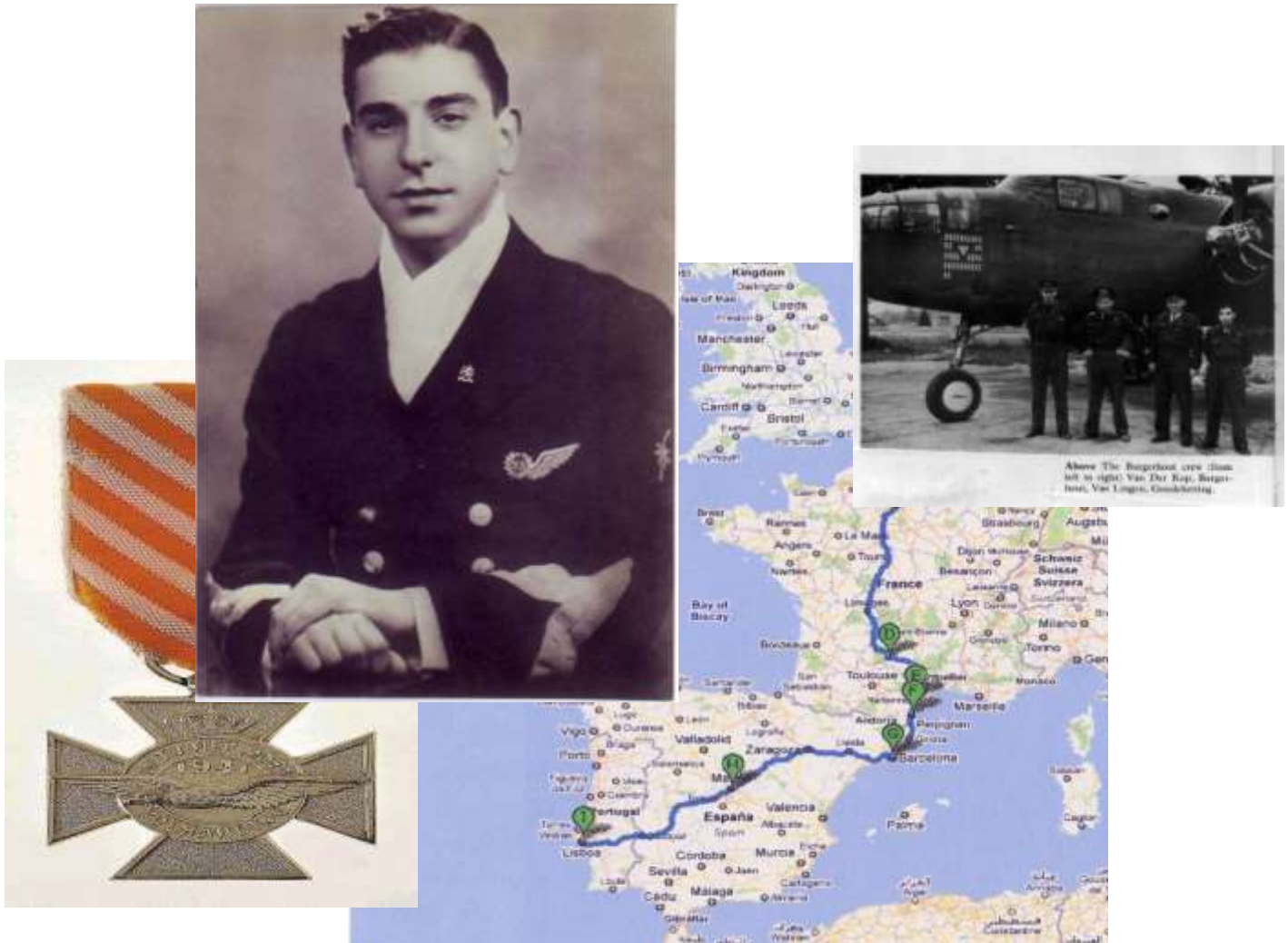


MAURICE GOUDEKETING

MEMOIRS OF MY LIFE
BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER WORLD WAR TWO

Fourth Edition

Written by M. Goudeketing



Above The B-24 crew from left to right: Van Der Rapt, Sergeant, Van Logen, Goudeketing.

Edited by A. Goudeketing

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FOREWORD

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

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

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



THE EARLY YEARS

1920-1940

1920-1924 VELSEN

Please let me tell you a little bit about myself. My name is Maurits Goudeketting, although “Morris” or “Maurice” is the more common usage of my first name. I was the youngest of three children. My sister Rebecca (Betty) was born in March, 1912 and my brother Raphael (Felix) in 1916. My father, Alexander Goudeketting¹, married my mother, Kaatje ‘Moses-David’ Wijnschenk², on May 21st, 1913 in Amsterdam. I have attempted to recreate my family tree at the end of these memoirs.



M. Goudeketting
Early Age

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



1924-1929 EINDHOVEN

In 1924 my parents moved to Eindhoven and opened a store which sold seafood named ‘Wijnschenk’s Vischandel’. The business operated from the ground floor

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

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

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

and my family lived above the store. I was given one of the bedrooms in the attic to sleep in.



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

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



Wijnschenk Store in Eindhoven circa 1928

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

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



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

Old City Hall Eindhoven 1930's

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



Maurice's mother, Kaatje Goudekettering (Wijnschenk)

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

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

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

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

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

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

While I was about four or five years old, my brother, Felix, was a Boy Scout and



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

became friends with a lad by the name of Rob Wiener who lived not far from us. He would often come to the house bringing his little sister Blanca, who was my age, along with him. Apparently her three brothers were obligated to take turns watching her. Rob would play his harmonica, while my sister played the piano and my brother the violin. Blanca and I were quite content to play by ourselves. I remember that she loved to serve me tea from a toy tea set.

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



Den Bosch Store Circa 1928

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

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

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

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

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

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



Greta Bas (Wijnschenk)

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



Goudeketting store in Amsterdam circa 1910

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

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



Es ther Goudekettig
(Wolff) and Bep Kloots
(Goudekettig)

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



1929-1933 DEN HAGUE

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

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

Scheveningen 1930



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

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



Kaatje Goudekettering in front of Den Hague Store circa 1932

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

After the Talmud School I enrolled in a trade school in Den Hague. I ended up with a teacher who was quite anti-Semitic. No matter what job he asked me to perform in the metal shop, I could never do it well enough to his satisfaction. After a few months of this treatment I left the school. Even

though my life hasn’t unfolded too badly, I do regret not having furthered my formal education⁶.

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

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

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

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

The depression in Holland was now deepening and when several businesses began to falter, our family business followed suit. One of our customers was a large casino in the resort community of Scheveningen. When it went under, my father was unable to collect a large debt from them. My father passed over the store to my sister, Bep, and her husband, Herman Kloots, not long after they were wed.



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



1933-1937 AMSTERDAM

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

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

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

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

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

**'Rolmop' herring
around a pickle**



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

Grandfather K. Wijnschenk with eldest son Solomon



In backyard of home on Blasius Straat in Amsterdam circa 1930

A few weeks later, I discovered that the plant foreman was conducting a scam. In Holland we had a fish called Saithe⁷ in English (Koolvis in Dutch), that looks like salmon but has a very different taste and colour. One of my uncle's products was canned smoked salmon in oil. I had noticed that when the Koolvis came in for cleaning, one of the girls would bring them to the foreman's area. One day, I was having trouble with my machine and I walked into the foreman's room to see the Koolvis being put in vats with oil that had the colour of salmon. I may have been only fifteen years old at the time, but I soon realized that the foreman was telling my uncle that he had bought salmon, while he really bought the less expensive fish and kept the difference of price in his own pocket. The foreman saw that I was suspicious and warned me to keep

my mouth shut. I am pretty certain that my uncle never became aware of this con game.

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

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

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

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

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



Carbide Lamp on French Manufactured bicycle

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



1937-1940 BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



MY WAR YEARS 1940 – 1945

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

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



German Army enters Brussels May 18 1940

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

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

which was here in Belgium. I couldn't sleep much more that night and I woke up my uncle Joop (Bas) who was sleeping downstairs. I told him about what was going on and asked him what we should do. I was quite taken aback when

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

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

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