

# Scars and Memories of World War 2

## Personal memories of people in the Netherlands.

During the destructive years 1940 - 1945, people lived with fear, hunger, suppression. Normal institutes such as police, and government, failed to provide protection. Neighbours and sometimes even family could not be trusted. It was dangerous to talk about anything you heard, read, saw, thought, or did. Independent news was forbidden, as well as radio (TV did not exist). Generally, people were kept unaware of what was going on at a global scale. Any suspicious move could be reported to the nazi collaborators. Life of you, or your family could change for the worse instantly, ending up in prison, or worse. . . .

When the war was finally over, many witnesses stayed silent, in an attempt to forget, and to re-build. However, some of them wrote down their own memories or spoke about it.

Persons' stories below;

<i>Name</i>	<i>Located in may 1940</i>
Albert	Jaarsveld
Dirk	Lopik
Dini	Valthermond
Hans	Jaarsveld
Jos	Den Haag
André	Rotterdam
Adriaan	Jaarsveld

## 1937

[Dini]: **Valthermond** "We were at the primary school, not far from the border with Germany. The window panes were vibrating. The school teacher said: "the Germans again. They are exercising with their canons." Many of the contemporary people at that time were not openly saying something about their fears of a possible outbreak of war, but this teacher honestly told us, about what could happen."

## 1940

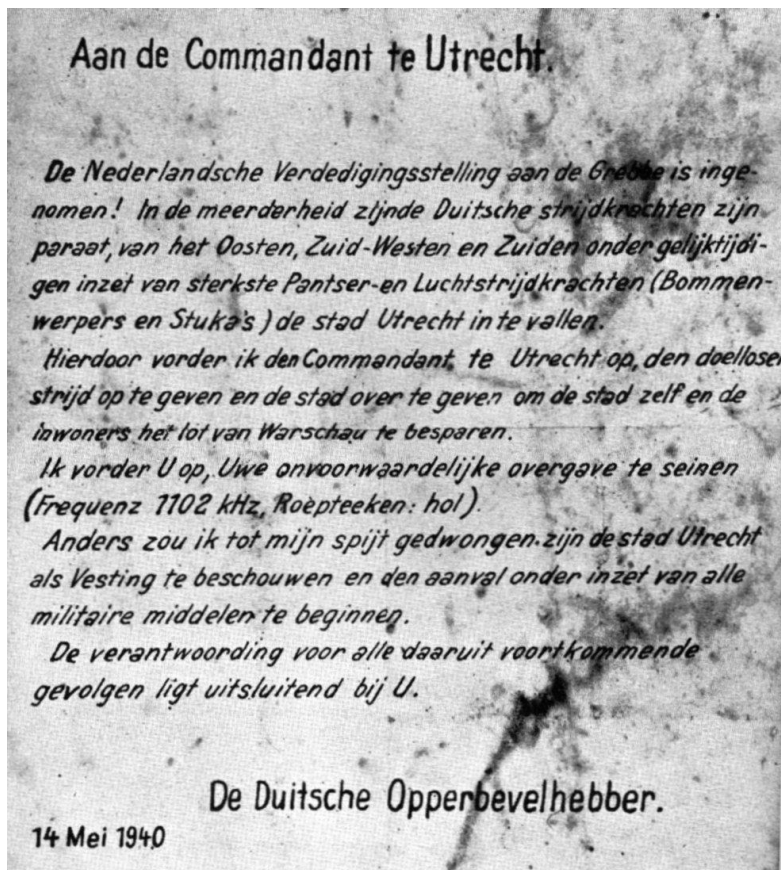
On the 10<sup>th</sup> of may the german army invaded Western Europe, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg.

[Adriaan] **Jaarsveld** "we saw impressive Large numbers of Junker airplanes coming from the east, and flying low over the trees, westward to Rotterdam and the Hague."

[André] **Rotterdam** "We had to face some shootings until the aerial bombings started. The "Maastunnel" was partially completed and we took shelter there. Than our group of soldiers ran to Hook of Holland."

[Dirk] **Utrecht** "In the beginning of may I was in the city of Utrecht. It was a frightening period. The Germans had invaded Holland. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of may, Rotterdam was bombed, and if the Netherlands would not surrender, the next city would be Utrecht to receive the same fate as Rotterdam.

[Dirk] **Utrecht** "At a certain moment all streets in Utrecht were empty. People were hiding for the bombs which could fall at any moment, we all expected that to happen to our city."



reference; dr. L. de Jong

the above letter (in dutch) was sent by a german commander to the (dutch) army headquarters in Utrecht, to demand immediate surrender, otherwise Utrecht would receive the same fate as Rotterdam.

[Dirk] **Utrecht** “(on the 15<sup>th</sup> of may) several hours after the dutch surrendered to the german invaders, german troops were marching through the Biltstraat in Utrecht. During that night I became fully determined to do whatever I could, to sabotage the nazi occupation.

[Dirk] **Utrecht** “Dutch soldiers, totally worn out, some of them crying. On the 'Wittevrouwensingel' they threw their rifles in the canal. There was no way out, this was the result of 5 days of bitter fighting.”

“The most dangerous man in Lopik, was secretary v.d. Weerd. In the morning he behaved like a normal loyal Dutchman, but immediately after the dutch army surrendered on the 15<sup>th</sup> of may, he suddenly changed into a fully devoted collaborator with the nazi's.

“In the beginning we lived in a sort of vacuum (of power), the nazi's behaved seemingly polite, radio and newspapers were allowed, but censored, and showed nazi propaganda, some people didn't realize they were cheated, and choose the wrong side.”

## 1941

[André] **Surabaya** “I learned to fly in the VVC in Soerabaja in 1941. In December the Japanese invaded the Dutch Indies. I didn’t anticipate this to happen, didn’t know that the situation had become so bad for us.”

## 1942

[Dirk] **Lopik** “life became more difficult and restrictions even more severe. All foodstuff was rationed, and distributed in limited quantities. Jews had to wear a star on their chest. In some places Jews were prohibited to enter. Listening to, or even the possession of a radio was considered an offence. “

[André] **Surabaya** – february – “19<sup>th</sup> of February: My wife and I had had to split up. She went on another ship than me, from Cilacap, and we both sailed to Australia, away from the Dutch Indies, where I was born.”

“After the indo-dutch army surrendered, in march, all (white) people, with their children, were detained in Japanese camps, where they all were treated badly. I lost several of my family there, a.o.my grandparents. And my father died of the consequences of malnutrition in the camp.”



meanwhile in **Holland**: “Systematic search for radio equipment. Because of not handing over radio’s, the German police authorities and technical special forces, have executed special searches, which have led to numerous arrests, and confiscation of the equipment. Most offenders were kept in prison awaiting the final sentence by the “Deutsche Landesgericht”, as it was a violation of the rule issued by the “hoeheren SS- und Polizei fuehrer on the 13th of may 1943.”. There are numerous cases of most elderly people who received the radio equipment from their family relatives. These people often were unaware what was in the packages or bags they had been keeping. As even the possession of the equipment is punishable, the owners, as well as the keepers are imprisoned.” (weekly newspaper, Het Nieuwsblad, 25 sept 1943)



[Dirk] **Lopik** Later, illegal "newspapers" were distributed, mainly "Trouw", dealt with by mr. Piet Schenkel. Stacks were delivered at different persons, who took care for further distribution.

Aardappelen	Aardappelen	Aardappelen	Aardappelen	Aardappelen	VLEESCH	VLEESCH	VLEESCH	VLEESCH	VLEESCH	VLEESCH	VLEESCH	VLEESCH
44 <sup>A</sup>	45 <sup>A</sup>	46 <sup>A</sup>	47 <sup>A</sup>	48 <sup>A</sup>	48 <sup>A</sup>	47 <sup>A</sup>	46 <sup>A</sup>	45 <sup>A</sup>	44 <sup>A</sup>	43 <sup>A</sup>	42 <sup>A</sup>	
Aardappelen	Aardappelen	Aardappelen	Aardappelen	Aardappelen								
44 <sup>B</sup>	45 <sup>B</sup>	46 <sup>B</sup>	47 <sup>B</sup>	48 <sup>B</sup>	48 <sup>B</sup>	47 <sup>B</sup>	46 <sup>B</sup>	45 <sup>B</sup>	44 <sup>B</sup>	43 <sup>B</sup>	42 <sup>B</sup>	
Aardappelen	Aardappelen	Aardappelen	Aardappelen	Aardappelen	VLEESCH	VLEESCH	VLEESCH	VLEESCH	VLEESCH	VLEESCH	VLEESCH	VLEESCH
44 <sup>C</sup>	45 <sup>C</sup>	46 <sup>C</sup>	47 <sup>C</sup>	48 <sup>C</sup>								
					<b>VOEDINGSMIDDELEN</b> VOOR BOUDERS VAN INLEGVILLEN GB 401							<b>BONKAART</b>
					11e EN 12e PERIODE 1944 (1 OCTOBER - 25 NOVEMBER)							<b>KB 411-412</b>
ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	RESERVE	RESERVE	RESERVE	RESERVE	RESERVE	RESERVE	RESERVE	RESERVE
256	261	266	271	276	B95	B95	B97	B89	B87	B85	B83	
ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	RESERVE	RESERVE	RESERVE	RESERVE	RESERVE	RESERVE	RESERVE	RESERVE
257	262	267	272	277	B96	B94	B92	B90	B88	B86	B84	
ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD
258	263	268	273	278	48 <sup>A(3)</sup>	47 <sup>A(3)</sup>	46 <sup>A(3)</sup>	45 <sup>A(3)</sup>	44 <sup>A(3)</sup>	43 <sup>A(3)</sup>	42 <sup>A(3)</sup>	
ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD
259	264	269	274	279	48 <sup>A(4)</sup>	47 <sup>A(4)</sup>	46 <sup>A(4)</sup>	45 <sup>A(4)</sup>	44 <sup>A(4)</sup>	43 <sup>A(4)</sup>	42 <sup>A(4)</sup>	
ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	ALGEMEEN	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD
260	265	270	275	280	48 <sup>A(5)</sup>	47 <sup>A(5)</sup>	46 <sup>A(5)</sup>	45 <sup>A(5)</sup>	44 <sup>A(5)</sup>	43 <sup>A(5)</sup>	42 <sup>A(5)</sup>	
BOTER	BOTER	BOTER	BOTER	BOTER	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD
44 <sup>A</sup>	45 <sup>A</sup>	46 <sup>A</sup>	47 <sup>A</sup>	48 <sup>A</sup>	48 <sup>A(2)</sup>	47 <sup>A(2)</sup>	46 <sup>A(2)</sup>	45 <sup>A(2)</sup>	44 <sup>A(2)</sup>	43 <sup>A(2)</sup>	42 <sup>A(2)</sup>	
					BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD
					48 <sup>A(1)</sup>	47 <sup>A(1)</sup>	46 <sup>A(1)</sup>	45 <sup>A(1)</sup>	44 <sup>A(1)</sup>	43 <sup>A(1)</sup>	42 <sup>A(1)</sup>	
					BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD
					48 <sup>B</sup>	47 <sup>B</sup>	46 <sup>B</sup>	45 <sup>B</sup>	44 <sup>B</sup>	43 <sup>B</sup>	42 <sup>B</sup>	
RESERVE	RESERVE	RESERVE	RESERVE	RESERVE	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD
B100	B101	B102	B103	B104								
TAPTEMELK	TAPTEMELK	TAPTEMELK	TAPTEMELK	TAPTEMELK	48 <sup>B</sup>	47 <sup>B</sup>	46 <sup>B</sup>	45 <sup>B</sup>	44 <sup>B</sup>	43 <sup>B</sup>	42 <sup>B</sup>	
44	45	46	47	48	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD	BROOD

Food could only be obtained by these stamps. Potatoes, bread, milk, butter, meat. Depending on availability, a small amount of rationed food was given to each person, for the period of 1 October till 25 November. The letters A, B or C indicated a person's age, or need. Little children were allowed more.

### 1943

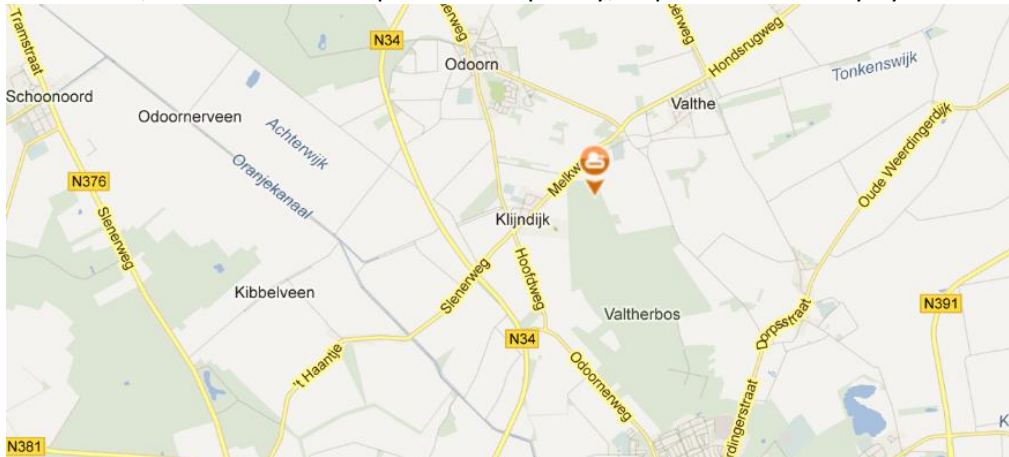
[Albert] **Jaarsveld** "In this year it was my turn. The Germans called for all men older than 16 years to work for them. If you didn't present yourself, your family could be punished. If they found you after all, you were transported to camp Amersfoort, and then to a camp in Poland or Germany."

[Dirk] **Lopik** "We made a hiding place on the attic of the church. To provide a temporary shelter for those who had done something against the enemy." "When English airplanes crossed the sky above us, people became alert. If one of the planes was shot down, we had to find a hiding place for the crew, if they survived."

[Dini]: **Valthe** "I was asked by Bertus Zefat to deliver a package with my bike. But while nearing a crossing I noticed German guards who were confiscating bikes. I was warned just in time by a policeman. I took another route, but noticed that somebody was following behind me. It was that policeman, what were his plans, nobody could be trusted. What was in the package, nobody ever told me what it was. The delivery was successful. I never told this story to my parents." (Albertus Zefat: executed 27<sup>th</sup> July 1944)

Note: During the occupation in the Netherlands, the Jewish people were severely haunted in all parts. In 1943 the situation became worse, and obligated to wear the yellow star, it became too dangerous for them to walk on the streets. If noticed by a collaborator, they could be picked up without trial and transported to a camp. Most of them did not survive. Not far from Valthe, a way to avoid arrest was a place to hide. In a small forest, where a large hole was dug in the ground, covered with wooden poles, branches and leaves, and this provided a temporary safe shelter for at least 16 people.

[Dini]: **Valthe** “I was there several times, to deliver packages (such as food). But it was very important not to leave any traces behind, these had to be wiped out completely, to prevent discovery by someone. ”



Map of the location, where this shelter was dug into the soil of the forest “Valtherbos”.

Below: This is just a mock-up, but not the way it was originally built. (with wood, soil, and branches to cover)



[Dini]: **Valthermond** “at night, it happened often that windows were vibrating. Squadrons of airplanes with their loads were flying over, on their way to Germany. We listened intensely with fear. Until the moment that it became really dangerous when the sound of other planes could be heard also. German fighters, attempting to shoot down allied airplanes. And crashes did happen. Neighbor-boys ran to the burning wreckage and brought home pieces of instruments.”

[Albert] **Berlin** - 24th of august - Heavy bombardments. Many airplanes were shot down. I have watched 2 of them coming down. One of them crashed in the Kirdorfstrasse, partly on the tram-line. Later in the evening Charlottenburg was hit. And Lichterfelde-Ost, Steglitz, and Tempelhof were bombed. The next day pieces of burned paper came down. The sun had a red color, because of the smoke, and all the fires.

[Dini]: **Valthermond** “My father had a grocery shop and offered delivery service. That was, by bike. So one day I (than 16 yrs old) had to deliver a package with foodstuff on my bike. I was stopped by guards at one of the many checkpoints. “Open the package!”, the guard demanded. So that’s what I did. Than I continued my ride. Second checkpoint. “Show what’s in the package, open it.” So I did. After the check, I had to pack it all in the carton box again, which took me time and energy. Another checkpoint. Again: “Open the box immediately! ”

Than I became fed up with it, and opened it slowly. The nsb (Dutch Nazi) became very angry and hit me in the face with his rifle. I came home with a blue swollen face, teeth broken. My mother looked worried “what happened ?” she asked, but I refrained from telling the truth, because it was safer to keep silent, to avoid retaliations. No talking was best for everyone. ”

[Albert] **Berlin**, Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1943 - Köpenick bombed. Bomb on the railway in Wuhlheide. We had to change trams there. Lots of damage in Köpenick. Next morning, locally fires were still burning.

[Dini]: **Valthe** "We were surprised that the railway from Assen along Buinen to Emmen was re-opened during the war. This had been closed for several years since 1935. These were not normal passenger trains, but cattle wagons, with people. The occasional trains were passing through Odoorn and Exloo. One day, close to Valthe, I heard the train coming, and waited. I noticed people, and young children. A little girl waved at me, and I waved back. But guards shot at me, and signaled to stop waving. I have seen these trains several times. My uncle told about a train in the railway station of Assen, with Jews, my mom and uncle cried."

[Dirk] **Lopik** "once, in the middle of the night, we could hear that airplanes were shot down. When I was walking outside in an attempt to help the crew if they had survived, I ran into my father. "naughty boy, what are you doing here?" he asked. "I believe the same as you", I responded. Later, we never talked about this occurrence again. "

[Albert] **Berlin** 24 december 1943 - heavy bombardments, e.g. on Schöneweide. Continuous firing by Flak. While hiding in underground shelters, we noticed fire nearby. This appeared later, to be "Blumengarten", a fancy pub, opposite to our barracks.

## 1944

[Albert] **Berlin** This year starts well for Berlin! Heavy bomb raids on the 2nd and 3rd of January. On the 4th and 5th "Luftwarnung", on the 6th alarm without a raid. This time, the target was Stettin.

[Dini]: **Valthe** "I was in the forest at night, in complete darkness, to deliver a parcel. Suddenly I saw something moving, and jumped into a trench alongside the path. Waited for a while until I thought it was safe. Than continued to the refuge place in the (Valtherbos)."

[Hans] **Jaarsveld** "During the War, I was told to hide. The other option was to give myself up as a worker for the enemy, which I tried to avoid. But I had to fulfill a duty; during the night I had to watch the cows, for a farmer. Everything was scarce, so the chance of people stealing cows was evident."

[Dirk] **Lopik** "in October I was caught by Dutch collaborators with the enemy. I worked for the underground resistance and intended to deliver a letter to a person 8 miles away. The man hit me and I became unconscious. During interrogations I was tortured. Later I was transported (with other underground workers) to a prison in Utrecht, and then to Amsterdam."

[Dini]: **Valthermond** "It was dark at night. But I had to go to the 'outhouse', a bathroom outside. Suddenly I heard something, like a person was hiding in our backyard, and calling for help. He spoke English language. I went up silently and asked my brother, to assist. He told me it was a pilot, survived from a crash nearby, and he helped him to a safe place."

[Dirk] **Amsterdam** "in prison I was questioned by one of the worst, SD mr Oelschlagel. Oom Daan mentioned him as the most dangerous person.

[Dirk] **Amsterdam** 24<sup>th</sup> of October, I was alone in my cell (Weteringschans), the only one left, out of 9, still alive. The others executed.

[Jos] November, **Melsbroek**, Belgium: "Food is scarce and it is still a very big problem and things as soap, butter, meat are not to be found in any Belgium home. Still they don't grumble, and are very happy to live without the Hun around. The things we are told about Holland are so bad that I don't want to write about this, and even don't want to think about."

[Dirk] **Amersfoort** 5 december - Polizeiliches [Durchgangslager Amersfoort](#). Here we stood in pairs. Before me 2 brothers, of which one was suffering of epilepsy. After an hour waiting, he got such a severe attack, that he fell on the ground, foam on his mouth, legs shaking. Then, a S.D. soldier came and kicked him, until he raised himself up. Despite his brother had tried to explain that his brother suffered from epilepsy.

## 1945

[Dirk] **Amersfoort** "it was on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January. Five hundred people were called to be transported from the camp Amersfoort to a yet unknown camp in Germany." "We were pressed with forty people in a freight carriage, the final destination was Berlin."

[Jos] **Melsbroek** 15th of January "Aerodromes with planes on them, airmen with a deadly look in their eyes, hard beds without white sheets, many other things which all go together with an operational Squadron, they are all back, and they make one realize that 14 days leave have gone by very quickly."

[Albert] **Berlin** "bomb alarm. 3 February 1945 10:40hrs. Heaviest air raid so far. As we were told later, 1800 Allied aircraft were involved in this attack. The main targets seemed the center and east part of the city. Tremendous fires, many casualties."

[Albert] **Berlin** "we tried to escape from Berlin by train, on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> of April. Arrived Sunday afternoon, the 8<sup>th</sup> in Nordhausen. We saw many deaths along the roads. These were evacuated prisoners from camp Dora, also named as "Mittelbau Dora, underground factories where V1 and V2 rockets were assembled. The prisoners had been released at the very last moment, because the Germans anticipated that the Allied forces would liberate the camp on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April. Prisoners who were too weak or too ill to walk, were executed and left behind along the roads."

[Dini]: **Gasselte** "around the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, I was stopped. It was not clear by who. These soldiers were talking French. On that day, I was asked to help and guide a family of a mother with 2 daughters, from Exloo to Eext, which is a distance of approx. 15 miles. This family, named Ponjeé, needed a new shelter, as the farmer, where they had been hiding, said that he could not keep them anymore. The mother had a child carriage, but I walked next to them with my bike. One of the daughters name was Yvonne, the other Emily. We arrived at the new shelter, there was plenty of food on the table, I was exhausted and hungry, but I was told to return home quickly (15 miles back). Despite the curfew. Someone even fired at me, but missed. My mother was very worried, and waited outside till 23:00hrs and she was so glad to see me back, arrived safe."

Note: French troops were dropped behind enemy lines, near Gasselte on that day, in preparation of the liberation of the north.

[Dini]: **Valthermond** "it happened towards the end of the war. An old german soldier, strumbling eastward, accompanied by a young pittyful chap of approx. 13 years old, sat down, in front of our shop. They looked starving. My mother actually didn't want to offer them food, but my father asked me to arrange some porridge and selfmade sirop. After consuming this thankfully, they continued their long walk homewards."



[Dini]: **Valthermond** “on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April we heard rumbling noise coming from the distance. Occasional blasts from canons, or bombs. Rolling tanks, in large numbers. We were all so relieved. The allied forces were coming to liberate us. Finally we could see them. People were screaming. Giving notes to the solders like :”family xxx in village yyy we are all healthy and okay.” These were than given to people in the other village, and words were delivered quickly to the addressed relatives. Suddenly, near a crossing all the tanks stopped. Soldiers and crew jumped into the canal, refreshed themselves. It was a day I’ll never forget.”

[Dirk] **Lopik** “On the 28<sup>th</sup> of June I finally arrived at my parents house. I stepped out of the car, my sister was the first whom I met, they were all so happy, relieved, no words can describe how we felt. People in the village were excited. The Dutch banner out in the wind. My father welcomed me by saying “I recognize your voice, but for the rest you changed completely.” My physical condition was not good, it took months to recover.

## 1953

[Dini]: **Rotterdam** – Bergweg ziekenhuis “Elly Monnickendam had been in the camp of Birkenau, but she survived. Actually she didn’t want to talk about that dark period of her life. When I noted her mark with the number on her arm, I suddenly became very saddened, realizing her life had been completely destroyed.” “Anna Belaks lost all of her family in the camps. Occasionally, she suddenly turned into crying while looking outside when it was snowing.”

“Leima Zemite lost her three kids and husband. I met with her, and after a while she trusted me, and told me her story reluctantly. It happened during the war, they were all killed by the nazi’s and the Russians, for no reason. She had lost everything she lived for.”

## 1983

[Dini]: **Austria** “We were on vacation in Austria. The owner of the hotel was a kind woman, and she registered us. An old man, apparently her father, was working in the garden, he watched our car with dutch ID-plate. From the garden he shouted loud: “I told you; **keine** holländer”. It frightened us. “It seems we are not really welcome here”, my husband said. As became apparent, the owner’s own father refused to receive guests from Holland, as he disliked them since the war.” His daughter calmed us down, and we stayed.

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