

Assen, 10 Januari 1946

Dear Jeannette,

It was such a great surprise from me to here from you again after three years. Forgive it me that I didn't write sooner, but I was busy last month, especially when I received your letter four weeks ago. As you see at the top of this letter I have removed. It was on December 1 1945 that I got a new job, just on the same time when your letter came to me.

At present I have a job at his Governments enlightened named "Eyes and Ears" of the Government. It is a very interesting job, but we must work very hard and we have little spare time. But now I have time to write.

At first, although it is a little late, my best wishes for you for this year, 1946. You asked me or I could send you details from the last three years. That is not easy. For I do not know where to end. People would say begin with the begin and end with the end, but than I must say I have no paper enough to write it all for it would be no letter, but a book. But I shall try to give you a short synopsis.

In 1940 when the war broke out I was a soldier in the Dutch army. After the capttulation of the Netherlands, Hitler ordered that we could go to home and should not be lead away as prisoners of war. In the beginning of the occupation we did not understand the situation. The Germans surprised us with all their declarations and we were to much divided. The Germans declared they came as friends and they would protect us. Against what, we didn't know, and we shrug our shoulders and did nothing. But slowly it came. The Germans were wolves in the clothes of a sheep.

In 1942 the Jews were obliged to wear the Davids star on their clothes, before that in 1941 we got a identity card and the Jews got a J on it. A few months later the first Jews were deported to Germany and the Dutch reacted with a strike.

A twenty persons were shot down a some hundreds of men deported to concentration camps in Germany. And then the underground began to work and I joined it. All the Jews should be deported but very much became diver; they disappeared and it was our task to find a landlord for them, to get distribution cards for them. This Jews didn't see day light before the liberation in 1945. Very often the neighborhood did not know it.

A year later the workmen were obliged to work in the German war in dutie, but most of them refused. The number of divers was growing by day. We worked very hard to get money for them and distribution cards. There for we attached distribution-officers in the night, with a pistol in the hand, which were dropped by planes from the allied.

In 1943 the Germans ordered that we had to deliver our wireless sets, so that we could not listen to the allied radio stations, but very much refused and some of them were caught with a wireless and shut down or deported to Germany, but it was almost the same. German it means dead.

In the same year the Dutch soldiers should be lead away to German prisoner of war camps. I escaped and became a diver and I left my parents house, got falsificated identity cards on a other name. I did not see my family

back before ? 1945 and I worked through. We disturbed the German railways, sunk the ships in the canals, we had our own telephone conducts through the whole country. We helped and hid allied pilots which were shut down above the Netherlands. A friend of me saved more than two hundred of this soldiers.

When you was caught it means dead. Life was very hard, but it was good that we could do much for others.

In 1944 the allied planes dropped guns before the ? Neterlands interior military forces and we organized the soldiers that had escaped, and then in 1945 the allied stormed forwards we attacked the Germans in the back. We had good success and the commander of the allied said to us, "It is marvellous what you have done for us."

Many of my friends died in this battle or where shot down before that. I had a good luck and came through unhurted.

This is in short what we did in this years you understand it is not all, it is only a little of all.

At present it is going here a little better. The food is really good, although last winter thousands of men, women and children died of hungry for the Germans took away all what we had. We cannot buy at present no shoes, no clothes nothing of it all. We are plundered through the Germans. A great part of our country was set on water by the Germans. More than two hundred thousand men, women and children are dead.

You see we are a poor people at present. And we must work hard, but we know we can and we will.

Agnes was so kinds as to sent me a carton with cigarettes. Would you do me a great pleasure. My mother and my sister asked me or you could buy them silk lady-stockings.

Her size is 9 ½ and 10.

Can you! I hope so!

Now Jeannette I will end this letter for it is midnight and I promise you the following letter I will not wait so long.

You may ask me what you want to know and I shall try to answer.

I would very likely to come to the United States but at present I can not. But I hope once I shall be able to shake hands with you.

Please sent me a picture from you and tell me something about the life in American at present. And please write soon.

Many greetings from Holland

Your Dutch friend Herman

Here is my new address:

H. Roelof

Anreeperstraat 135

Assen