

My P.O.W. Diary
And
Ann's story



December 1941
till
March 1946

Jan (John) Berg

April 2003

T o A n k y a n d H a n s j e

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book would not have been in its present shape without the help of a few people.

In the first instance “Ann’s story” was only formed after hours of talking to her now and then over the years, talking about times she would rather not remember.

Then of course I would never have been able to spend the time in front of the computer if I did not have the loving consent and co-operation of my wife Ann for the hours and hours of typing, correcting and retyping again of my diary and her story etc.

Where necessary my sons and family members gave me a push to carry on if I had put the translation off for a while or doubted the use of putting it in print at all.

Then there were a few people who guided me in the setup, combination, proper English and spelling, like Thea Ramsy and Margo and Peter Wagner.

Copyright © Jan Berg, 2003

This book is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced by process without written permission.

CONTENTS

Introduction

Diary Summary

My P.O.W. Memories

The Reunion and Ann’s story

Addenda

I n t r o d u c t i o n

Why a diary?

I am Jan (John) Berg, born 6th August 1916 in The Hague, Holland. In November 1938 I went to the Dutch East Indies for the Dutch Construction Company “Associatie Selle, de Bruin, Reyerse en de Vries”, in short the “Associatie”, on a five-year contract as an engineer.

In 1939 I was able to marry (by proxy) my fiancée, Anna Wilhelmina van Vliet, born 7th July 1917 in Ridderkerk, Holland. She came to Java on the last ship that left Holland destined for Java before the war and joined me in Batavia on the 31st August 1939, where our marriage was blessed in the Kwitang Church. The sermon was about Mathew 28 verse 20: *And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.*

In the first week of September 1939, during our honeymoon, Germany entered Poland and WWII began. On the 14th August 1940 our eldest son Johannis Hendrik Berg was born. With the political situation getting worse towards the end of 1940, I was, as a sergeant with the Genie (Royal Engineers), called up and put on stand-by service, and in December 1941 on actual service.

Whilst we always shared our thoughts and ideas and discussed what happened during the day, this then became impossible. When I became a P.O.W. (Prisoner Of War) I realized that we would be apart for a long time and considered writing down what happened, with the idea of sharing that with Ann when we would be together again.

That is how my diary started, was continued and finally brought home with me.

During the first years after the war we were too busy to ever look at it again although it was always kept in a safe place. We had two more sons, who also grew up, married and gave us grandchildren.

When they heard and understood that Opa (grandfather) had been a POW and even had a diary, they joined in the request to have a look at it and read it. Well looking at it was ok but reading was impossible as it was in Dutch, so then I started trying to translate my experiences and private thoughts into English.

It is very difficult to translate thoughts and short notes written on the spur of the moment, into another language. Also songs and sayings are not what they are meant to be when literally translated. In the Netherlands, men are generally addressed by their surnames and not by their Christian names. All these circumstances are to be taken into account when reading my diary as it now presented.

The actual diary was written on a small note pad (about 9 x 13 cm) which I found during the first days of my imprisonment and which I was able to keep away from inspections and during transport by concealing it on my calf under my leg covers. The writing itself was done mostly in pencil, which again I had to keep safe during inspections. For a short period I used a red biro, which was very unfortunate as it ran when sweat penetrated the paper.

When, after years of writing, the pad was full, I used separate sheets of very thin paper and folded that together. Unfortunately some of that became separated and was lost.

I then wrote down from memory what happened after and till we met again.

Diary summary

6-8-1916 John born Holland

Nov 1938 To NEI to work

1939 Married Ann by proxy. Marriage later blessed in NEI

14-8-1940 Son Johannes born- John later called up on stand-by.

Dec 1941 called up for actual service

3-3-1942 taken POW in Bandoeng (Java)

18-6-1942 taken to Tjilatjap.

07-2-1943 taken to Tjimahi.

31-8-1943 taken to Batavia 10th Bat ("wielrijders kamp").

25-9-1943 taken aboard the Makassar Maru to Singapore.

29-9-1943 arrived in Singapore and put in timber barracks behind the brick Changi barracks.

7 11-1943 boarding freighter, one of an 8 ship convoy, heading North.

11 to 13 Nov. at anchor in Saigon.

21 to 26 Nov. at anchor at Takao (?) Taiwan.

29-11-1943 dropped anchor at mouth of Yellow river.

Were towed to wharf where rice and vegies were loaded, after which we continued with rest of convoy.

3-12-1943 arrived at Modji Japan.

4-12-1943 by train for 2 hours to other place where stayed overnight.

5-12-1943 by train for 1 hour to other station from where a 15 minutes walk to camp.

Worked in Nioroski mine.

26-4-1944 worked in Ibigizachi mine, closer to camp.

19-6-1944 noted that we are in Inatokumati.

15-12-1944 came home from Kamiama station.

"No date" we were taken to Nagasaki where thoroughly cleaned and dressed in US army clothes to board ship for Okinawa. There we were transferred to the "Renville" for transport to Manilla. End December 1945 went to Balik Papan from where in January 1946 to Batavia to be reunited with wife and son.

Note from Lt Col Peter Winstanley- *The ship which John went from Singapore to Japan is thought to have been the **MARU SHICHI** which is recorded as having 500 POWs on board. The duration of the journey was 29 days. "Death in the Hellships Prisoners at sea in the Pacific War" Gregory F Michno.*

My P.O.W. Memories

When Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands declared war on Japan on 2nd December 1941, after Japan attacked Pearl Harbour, I was called up for permanent service i.e. for as long as the war would last!

As I was serving with the "Genie" (Royal Engineers), I was stationed in Meester Cornelis, a suburb of Batavia (now Djakarta), where the Royal Engineers barracks were. When there, I was told to take my section to the local airport "Kemajoran" and destroy all equipment of the airport, like landing lights etc, and all office equipment and data.

Having done that, I returned to the barracks where everybody was busy getting ready for departure to Bandoeng, where we were supposed to be in a better position to withstand the attacking Japanese forces. For that purpose and to take as much useable equipment as possible with us, I was to use a brand new Harley Davidson motorcycle for that trip.

As I had a few other things to do, I was to follow the convoy later on. That convoy of course was not travelling that fast so after some time I succeeded in getting in touch with the tail end of it. In an effort to get to my place at the front, I was overtaking some of the vehicles, or probably was just about going to do that, when I collided head on with some vehicle.

I actually do not remember anything further until the ambulance, in which I had been placed, stopped. The door was opened and the very cold air, which came in, woke me. We were then at the Puntjak, the highest point between Batavia and Bandoeng. Soon the ambulance door closed again. I next came to when in Bandoeng. There I was unloaded and placed in a bed of one of the local hospitals.

Some time later (I can not remember hours or days) we were handed bands that we had to put around our arms. The Japanese had landed and were expected to reach Bandoeng very shortly. The Army had surrendered and we would be taken prisoner!

The chap on the bed next to me and I decided to get out of the hospital, to avoid becoming prisoner. We took some clothes (not our own) and walked (?) out on the street. Very soon we realized that with the wounds we had we would not make it very far. So we called a deleman (horse and cart) to go to a place the other chap knew. We did not get very far, as there was a control point on the road. They stopped us and told us we had to report to the nearest tangsi (barracks). So we did and I soon found a spot where I could rest my very tired limbs.

Only some days later at that camp, did I find out what had happened to me. It would appear that I must have hit some vehicle head on, was thrown from my bike over the hood into the windscreen (there was glass in my scalp!) and then rolled off the hood into the bushes on the side of the road.

The person who found me (and recognized me in that camp) said he had noticed a light on the side of the road. He had stopped to find out what it was, and found me lying there. The light he saw was from the torch I had been wearing on my belt, which had accidentally switched on, presumably through the impact.

In that camp I had nothing but the clothes I had on. No clean clothes, no soap or a towel, no toothbrush, pyjamas, blanket or anything else you could think of.

That is how I became a Prisoner of War.

I now continue with a translation of the notes I made during that period, which were of course in Dutch.

In the Netherlands men are called by their surname and so they are called in my notes. Only when they become closer friends, the Christian names are used.

They are indeed notes only and where some explanation is possible or necessary it will be in Italics.

D I A R Y N O T E S

The comradeship at that stage was fairly good and with the help of various fellow-POWs I was able to secure myself a board to lie on and some straw to soften it. Of course most of the day I was lying down, as, due to the soreness of my leg, I was hardly able to walk. Others often brought even food to me, as at that stage there was still sufficient of it. I was also able to get some paper, a small note pad, and a pencil. I was determined to get in touch with Anky as soon as possible so I started making notes of what happened, and that started my diary.

11 March 1942

We were reorganized to the extent that those from the various Army sections were put together and those who did not belong in that camp were grouped in accordance with their place of origin. Hence those from Batavia, Meester Cornelis, and Bogor, some 45 men, came together in one building. I then collected my board and straw and my new bed (!) was ready. I slept in the clothes I had on and used my coat as a blanket!

12 March

Our camp doctor diagnosed my swollen leg as caused by internal haemorrhage and ordered rest, water compress and leg up.

In the afternoon 1000 more men came into camp and Vreedenburg (*see earlier note*) put his "tampat" (bed) next to me.

The Water-supply system was continually breaking down. Have not had a shower yet as I have no soap, towel or clean clothes. Curtains were handed out for use as blankets.

I also shared rice and soup with Vreedenburg, which a friend of his brought in.

Sent letter to Dicke (*who were friends of ours, who would know where Anky was*) via a brother of Vreedenburg, asking them to let Anky know that I was in the 15th Bat. barracks in Bandoeng.

14 March

I went out to collect my meal myself but almost collapsed into the coffee kettle (a 40-gallon drum!) so back to the doctor, who told me to rest! Stitches removed from my thigh and one bandage from my head. Legs still very painful.

V's brother brought toothbrush and paste, comb, soap, towel, spoon and slippers, making life a bit more comfortable.

15 March

No church today. Had my first shave after 12 days, with borrowed equipment. Also put my name down for a radio announcement to let Anky know where I am.

17 March

Today is Anton's birthday (my younger brother). Bandage of my left hip replaced, still one stitch left. I slept in my uniform.

18 to 28 March

The following days, life went on in much the same fashion: wash yourself and/or your clothes when the water is on and talk with known or newly made contacts. Heard all sorts of rumours and received or shared with others the goodies that came in via friends.

I was visited by Freek Dicke and Jaap Ozinga, who brought news, necessities of clothes and food and introduced me to people they knew, like Jan Zijderveld, Bep van Loon, Geelink etc. They also took a letter to Anky with them on the 25th.

29 March

We had our first church service with Padre Siebesma.

5 April

Padre Wielinga led the service. In general, people were getting restless and many are leaving camp. Control was intensified.

12 April

Three people were bayoneted to death. Two Dutchmen (Hielkema being one) and one Eurasian, Carsen. The latter refused to be blindfolded. I was out of camp on a work party that morning so only heard about it when I came back.

16 April

The "Landstorm" ("*Dad's Army!*") also arrived, and we had to move again to make room for them. We arranged it so that Jan Zijderveld, G. van Tien, Groentje, Vreedenburg and I got together, but I lost the stretcher that I had borrowed from Thijs (via Jaap Ozinga), so back to the hard board again.

19 April

A very good Church service and the hall was packed. I wrote in my diary:

“A consolation that, notwithstanding the distances that separate us, our Father still sees both of us and ensures that not a hair falls from our head without his consent. I trust that as we are helping and supporting each other here, you (Anky) will also find the same from the people around you”.

22 April

The “native” soldiers were allowed to go home.

26 April

Orders were given to hand in all arms, bikes, tools, flags, insignias and portraits of the Royal Dutch family.

27 April

Working at “Kebon Waru”, able to buy sugar and Ketjap (*a tasty sauce*).

3 May

I received a letter from Anky via Jan Klooster. We went to Church in the morning (Padre van Wijck Juriaans). In the afternoon we went to the "Luchtdoel" (*anti aircraft*) barracks where a letter was thrown over the fence for us from Geert Dicke, to which was attached a letter from Anky, which she had written 22nd April in Batavia. Geert also wrote that she received my letter of 22nd, it must have been a real writing day!

22 May

Apart from the letters there were also sweets and cigarettes, which would come in such quantities, that Wim Buys (*a second cousin of Anky*) suggested we set up shop. (That never happened as others had already started).

9 June

Spoken with Anky (*no recollection of place or time*)

13 June

I.E. to Tjimahi (*presumably part of the camp population.*)

18 June

To Tjilatjap (*that part of the camp that included me*)

19 June

We were introduced to: Hirajama, Barendje Donderkop, Bruintje Beer. (*The last two names are nicknames quickly given to the Japanese commanders.*)

23 June

This is our third day in Tjilatjap. Different circumstances than in Bandoeng. Heavy penalties for any misdeeds (i.e. chopping off hands or death, depending on the severity of the action). All rings and valuables to be handed in. I concealed my wedding ring and dress ring in the bottom of my shaving soap stick. Inspection of all our belongings, which we had to unpack and display on our beds. Nothing to do so just read and study. Allowed resting till 4 p.m.

I was able to get hold of another frame for my stretcher-cover. Accommodation in bamboo sheds. Lights out at 8 p.m. and all fires extinguished. The food, although less, is better here than in Bandoeng.

23 June

Had an opportunity to wash myself, will try to wash clothes tomorrow.

A daily routine was as follows:

7.30 reveille

7.32 parade and collect food afterwards

9.30 till 12.00 work inside the compound.

1.00 to 3.00 meal and rest.

3.00 to 4.30 exercises

6.00 mealtime till

7.30 second parade.

8.00 lights out and confined to the barracks.

10.00 supposed to be asleep

For the last three days no lights after 8 p.m. not in kitchen nor at the guardhouse. (Are the Americans getting closer?)

25 June

My weight is 73 kg.

4 July

During the night between 3rd and 4th July we had to get up, on parade and promise obedience to the Japanese Emperor.

We had to sign a "Surat Sumpah" (*sworn statement*), which read:

"Dibawah tanda tangan ini hamba Mempersembahkan bahwa akan bersetia dan berbakti kepada 8a2a Tentara Dai Nippon-Showa 17-men 6-Gatsoe 24 - Ken Ned Gun- Moera-Bangsa-Nama-Demoer-di providence Poerwokerto"

(I, the undersigned herewith pledge obedience to the Japanese Army on this day (17-6-24?). Signed Jan Berg at Poerwokerto, or something like that).

To make sure that we all would do this, our Camp commander Lt. Col. Hamming was held responsible for this and he was put in a cell that night with a knife to commit "Hara Kiri" if we did not sign!

However he had more sense than to do that and he was let out the next morning and given some extra rations. (May be they were glad he did not do it).

5 July

Not allowed sitting, so difficult to write or work. An increasing number of men are getting diarrhoea and the fear of a dysentery epidemic is great. I got some Eldoform (patent medicine) from Wim and some charcoal from the camp doctor. The Japanese seem to have removed or destroyed all medicine so the doctors are limited in what they can do.

7 July

Anky's birthday. Had to hand in all our books. Kept the Bible and psalm book and read psalm 90, as your father used to do.

9 July

I was taken into the emergency hospital with 56 others to keep us isolated. Doors and windows of all buildings had to be left open to allow a maximum of ventilation and whatever could possibly be put outside should go outside in the sun to get disinfected. The situation in the Hospital was bad. Many could not control themselves and there was insufficient help to attend to them. I was released 3 days later and, weak as I was, I offered to help and so was made assistant nurse.

10 to 18 July

Lots of rumours like: Hong Kong recaptured, Navy battle in Java sea, Bombs on Andir, Balik Papan attacked, and Bali & Lombok freed! Various places on Java bombed. Too silly to believe but it kept the spirit up. I was released from hospital on the 11th and given 5 days sick leave! However I kept working in the hospital and was appointed permanent nurse.

19 July

To make things worse, the Japanese gave us "gabbah" (*unpeeled rice*) for all meals today. For those who did eat it, that caused a very severe and dangerous blockage and brought more patients into the hospital.

If it was due to the sad situation in camp I do not know but over the last two weeks there was a steady stream of rumours that it was going "well" outside, possibly to keep the spirits up? Rumours that Radio Singapore was working again. Balik Papan was attacked; Bali and Lombok had been recaptured, fighting around Surabaya, bombs on Madioen. 7

Americans shot down over Batavia with 57 victims, etc. Too good to be true or believed but some lived by it.

20 July

The Japanese caught someone at the fence with money and goods. All on parade till the guilty party came forward. He was beaten and kicked and locked up.

21 July

Went to the hospital today. 17 patients left but more came in as well. More rumours about bombing of Java etc.

23 July

More and more diarrhoea patients. All had to pick up leaves in a hurry.

26 July

This is our wedding date and from the Bible I had been able to save, I read our wedding text, "and know that I am with you always, yes, to the end of time". It was a tremendous support for me and I often came back to it when I felt down.

27 July

"Idjo Arimasen" (*everything o.k.*). More rumours, more patients, more rain.

1 Aug.

Two Officers houses were allocated as a hospital and I moved in with the other staff members Leenheer and Koster.

5 Aug.

We were woken by a special reveille horn signal on the occasion of Princess Irene's birthday. At morning parade a special mention was made of this. At night there was a lot of singing, until the Japanese got sick of it, called us on parade at 11.30 p.m. and let us stand at attention till 5.00 a.m. next morning.

During that "parade" the Japanese got the idea to punish us by making us eat pure "Sambal" (*ground chilli pepper*). So they ordered the kitchen staff to bring big containers with that stuff, thinking we would refuse and give them the opportunity for further punishment. However the kitchen staff knew that the strength of the Sambal would be reduced by mixing it with sugar so before bringing it out they did mix it. Our officers were not aware of this so when the first one was to put a spoonful in his mouth he did it with some hesitation but getting the taste of it he chewed and swallowed it. The second one, being surprised by the first one's action took a mouthful and also swallowed it. It then became clear to the Japanese that the joke fell flat and they sent it back to the kitchen. The patients, of course, were excluded from this parade but still needed attention and at 7.00 a.m. we were at work again. However I was able to get a few hours sleep in the afternoon

6 Aug.

Leenheer and Koster gave me a packet of cigarettes for my birthday.

14 Aug.

Today is Hansje's birthday (2 years now). Over the last week some 3 and 4 men were let out of camp. Schoorel was with the first group and Schepel with the second. It was not known what the meaning of this was. Guesses were that they were needed for the economy, or trial liberation or demobilization? The Japanese also got active in preparing us for air raids and we had at various times alarms and complete blackouts at night.

18 Aug.

The Kempetai (*Japanese military police*) took over the camp guard duty.

21 Aug.

We are allowed to write and I sent a letter to Anky via Wies Ozinga.

24 Aug.

We got our own kitchen in the Hospital so that we could prepare special diets for the patients.

27 Aug.

Rumours were alive that we could expect to go home some time during the next 2 weeks!

31 Aug.

(This happened to be the 3rd anniversary of Anky's arrival in Batavia). We had terrific meals: porridge as breakfast, rice-vegetables-soup-meat-sambal for lunch and kadjang-idju soup and nasi-goreng for dinner. At night a cabaret in front of the house of Lt. Colonel Paulus with songs, music and poetry. I invited Gosma for a nice bowl of soup (from our own kitchen) and because it was late, let him sleep in the hospital for one night.

1 Sept.

Again a good day and a beautiful starry night with the Big Dipper standing out in all its glory. We used to look for that dipper whenever there was a clear sky in Holland, no wonder my thoughts go back to you and Hansje again, wondering where and how you are.

8 Sept.

Six months ago we capitulated and it was commemorated with music and a Dutch song. A sentimental night and that song reminded me of a song: "... that God is everywhere..." which you also liked. Never forget dear that like we can see the same stars, God our Father can see us, wherever we are. Some times I am afraid for you, Anky but then with Geert or Wies you can find support. Also Hansje will be a load and enjoyment in turn. May God give you wisdom, strength, faith and love. Here in the Hospital all is quiet. We have good food and I am getting heavier (they say).

13 Sept.

The beach was made available for swimming, sport and sunning. The number of patients in Hospital is about the same with some going, others coming in. My legs are getting swollen towards the afternoon (oedema?).

16 Sept.

We are now 6 months in camp and tonight we have a cabaret night at the hospital. The Japanese allowed us to buy in bulk for general distribution: sugar, salt, coffee, tobacco, soap and ketjap (45ct). Wim Buys came to tell me that he heard that his wife gave birth to a daughter on the 25th August. Grunewald read my palm and writing! But I am doing all right!

17 Sept.

Kuypers came to tell me, he could send a letter so I quickly wrote a short note for Anky to go with his letter. Also that we would get our rings etc back and allowed to wear them, could write letters and that we were allowed to make our own beer! I was struck down with an infection on my right shin and oedema and had to lay down with my leg up. On the 19th indeed the rings were returned and I could take mine out of the soap stick again and wear them.

20 Sept.

Last night our open-air theatre was officially opened by the Japanese commanding officer OPA (Alva-Takita) with a speech in which he expressed his hope that the war would soon end and that we could go home. Acclamation! Some were hopeful others not, as it was shown so often that they say one thing one day and completely the reverse the next. Today "Yom Kippur" so, fasting for Leenheer and Koster.

Still in bed with my leg "up". Time to think back to the time at home. The period of seeing Hansje growing up and that when I see him again, he will have learned things I did not teach him and know others better than I will. May we meet again?

23 Sept.

Leenheer also fell with the porridge kettle. No news from "Zwet", Wim called in, heavy rain.

28 Sept.

Another rumour came true: we got our insignias back.

3 Oct.

"Leiden day". No "herring and white bread" for us today! (when in 1574 the Dutch place Leiden was recaptured from the Spaniards, this was celebrated with herring and white bread) Last night Cabaret TANIA was on. This is now a regular feature and a group of very able men are giving very entertaining shows. We are again sending working parties to the harbour and it is said that the officers will soon be leaving for another camp.

4 Oct.

A wreath was laid for the fallen soldiers.

Keep myself busy with engraving decorations on my mess tin as I am still in bed because the wound is not improving. Koster also in bed with dysentery. I am told that I can expect a reply to my letter of the 19th on about the 15th next. Our farm got delivery of 2 cows and a bull and they would be trying to serve the cows today.

14 Oct.

I received a letter from Anky dated 30th Sept. saying that she is in Bandoeng.

19 Oct.

A letter for Anky ready. Ordered to shave our heads again.

24 Oct.

Dakar fell in the hands of the Allies.

31 Oct.

A Japanese bulletin was again released in camp after a long period of being banned. It was considered bad for the morale, reading about all the victories of the Japanese!

10 Nov.

As this diary was put away where it was not easy to get at, it is quite a while since I wrote last.

The Japanese ordered us to catch flies and hand them in! (Must have been bad!)

19 Nov.

Vredevoogd sang in the cabaret and Jan Klooster called in with some good news.

(I forgot what!).

5 to 10 Dec.

Alarm practice in camp. In the English-language Japanese Newspaper Jan Klooster just reads that the Japanese say that the war did not start on the 8th December but on the 26th November when America put some conditions to Japan. According to this paper the Japanese did not have any success over the last 8 months, but it was not mentioned if the Americans had any.

11 Dec.

It is "klaverjas" (a card game) night and Phil de Boer just walks in.

14 Dec.

Both Leenheer and Koster had a letter from their wives today and both were expecting them home soon. They (the wives) are keeping themselves busy with all sorts of activities to kill the time and to make some money. My letter and that of Jan Klooster have not gone yet so I started another one to have ready whenever the opportunity comes again. I recorded that Moorman called again, that Slechtenhorst was caught in a very bad anti-social act and that I went to TANIA. On the way I met Wim Buys who was in a very bad mood. With him it is "Himmelhoch jauchsend, zum tode betruibt" (*Up in the clouds or down in the dumps*) and I cannot stand that.

23 Dec.

It will be Christmas day in two days time. There will be a church service tomorrow night. We have been handed a standard form that we can write on by way of a letter to our loved ones (20 words only). (This form was never delivered or found)

7 Jan. 1943.

Christmas and New Year were good days. No camp duties, no compulsory meetings. For many a difficult time. Many letters written and of course also the official one I mentioned earlier. Also many groups have left: 1400 to Tandjong Priok, 700 to Tjirandjang and now another 700 to where? Just to mention a few names for the record: Klooster, Moorman, Kraal, Scheffer, Neus, Lisse, Nuszbaum, Piet Grijpma, Struyck, Carpenter, Visser, Hoens etc. Wim Buys did not want to go yet, so he changed with someone else. Gosma and de Vries are also still here as is Jan Zijderveld. From the Hospital went: Vos, Drukker, Gedeking and Brand, but others have filled their places already. Leenheer is walking again but I am in bed again with a wound caused during one of the blackout practices, early December.

10 Jan.

A beautiful day, sun and blue sky with here and there a small white cloud. I adjusted my stretcher and did some more writing and engraving, in between the Hospital work. Also started to try some rebinding of overused books.

21 Jan.

I was told that the letters of the 10th have arrived in Bandoeng and hope that you got mine as well Anky! You can bind them and publish them as "Letters from a P.O.W." or "Where they laughed and cried" because there are of course plenty of cases that one has to laugh about. Like the chap who opened his shirt when the Japanese soldier pointed his bayonet at him which caused the Japanese soldier to turn around.

Also the relative quiet and freedom in the Hospital after punishment by the Japanese, or the soldier that asked for medicine for his friend's knee, but on inspection appeared to have Gonorrhoea.

On the 17th we had started our vegetable garden, which is doing very well at present.

On the 19th Lt. Col. K.C. had a conference re food, sport, swimming and walking and went to Batavia the day after (presumably to discuss this with Japanese authorities).

28 Jan.

We are going to move. 26th and 27th to Tjilatjap to pack medicines etc. It is said that the Medicine will go to Tjimahi and we to Bandoeng. The Jap Commandant visited us yesterday but we failed in recognizing all the Commands. (Lack of practice in the Hospital) However we were not beaten. That would have happened earlier! We will miss this Paradise on the seashore with a beautiful view over the Bay to Nusa Kambangan.

4 Feb.

My last notes from Tjilatjap. Everything empty, a last view to the kampong (native village) and its statues. No news from Anky yet or would she know that we are coming to Bandoeng?

7 Feb.

Arrived in Tjimahi as the last group. Next day we went through to Bandoeng. Leenheer and Koster here as well as also our boxes with gear and things and also the bag of van Steenberg. I badly hurt my toe and have to sit down again with a water bandage around it, so somebody else is getting my meal.

Well, the food is not as good as in Tjilatjap! The white rice is tastier but not as good as the red (unpolished) rice. Vegetables and meat insufficient. I am hungry by the time the next meal is due. The doctors moved twice so a lot of baggage carrying. Also still trouble with my foot.

11 Feb.

Visited Bokslag and Jiskoot. They were here in Bandoeng when we arrived. They are two of the three Directors of the Company I came to Java and worked for, when war broke out.

13 and 14 Feb.

Sick and feverish.

16 and 17 Feb.

Sore throat.

18 Feb.

All men ex Tjilatjap on parade.

22 Feb.

Farm duty for the first time and earned 15 ct. Outside I looked out for Anky or other women known to any of our group but no success.

23 Feb.

Outside work party as a high official was expected.

27 Feb.

On outside work again. Saw lot of women but not Anky. Last night we had a music night. A choir under Lefebre sung two pieces of Palestrina and after the interval there were three piano pieces of Chopin by Capt. Kramer. The first and last two well-known pieces that my sister often played. The choir finished the evening with "Neerlands Mannenzang" of de Bie, and one of the Christian Martyrs in the Roman arenas. A wonderful night. Tonight (Sunday) we read 1 Corinthians 3 verses 10 to 23. That was also the subject of a brochure by the Dutch Young people organization on the capitulation of Holland. We finished with Hymn 180 verse 5.

28 Feb.

Today it is a year ago that the war actually started for us.

7 March

To day is Sunday. We succeeded in not going on outside work duty and were able to attend Church where Jan Zijderveld and 5 others were making their confession of faith and two others were baptised. The sermon was about Mary's love for Christ and the pouring out of oil over Jesus' feet. Tonight there will be a communion service, more especially for those from Tjilatjap where no communion service had been held.

(The next part of my diary is partly illegible as it was written with red biro and moisture or sweat has made it run on part of the page. Sweat because for certain periods I was concealing the diary on my legs)

10-12 March

It appeared that the Japanese had caught some boys who were exchanging letters with outsiders when they were on outside work duty at Leuwigadjah (a village outside Tjimahi). They were heavily beaten and kicked and sentenced to death. A very tense time for all of us until it was made known that night that the death penalty would be withdrawn if the Dutch Camp commander Major Hoed would put himself guarantor that it would not happen again. However apparently the Japanese are still questioning some women and one woman is said to have been locked up in another camp where the 4 boys are also held. Here of course the tension remains and any misdeeds are severely punished.

22 March

After 7 days "off duty", today in the garbage team. Cleaning up camp! That made me also clean up my bed again as I found traces of body lice. (Even in my bible). It still is a matter of keeping oneself busy. I even did some boxing (getting boxing lessons!). That caused a thumb injury and kept me free of work duty for a few days. This again gave me time to work on a design for a house for our boxing trainer Maup Ossendrijver.

27 March

The entertainment in camp is still well looked after. Tonight the show was "Little man, so what!". Entertaining and well played.

1 April

Today for the first time again to Zonnehoeve, for which I put my name down again for the next 8 or 10 days. In the mean time I finished the plan for the trainer's house. He was very happy with it so I will now further detail it. That will keep me busy. I am also working on the small aluminium box, in the lid of which I am shaping a helmet, the logo of the "Genie", the Dutch "Royal Engineers".

4 April

Sunday again. A very heavy downpour occurred early this evening, and a leak over my bed made everything wet.

11 April

No time during the week to update this diary. The boxing match of last Wednesday was a flop as the main boxers were on duty, and could not come. Rumours galore but too good to be true. Again word goes round that a big group will be leaving shortly. Because of my technical background it is not my turn yet nor is it for Koning and Waas. On the sixth it was my father-in-law's birthday, throwing my mind back to Holland and the situation there. In what sort of condition would they be now? Alive? Healthy? Together? Who knows? We can only pray that we will meet again.

18 April

Padre van Selms talked about Luke 42 "Jesus remember me when you come into your Kingdom". A big attendance. May be because of the departures that are coming. Tomorrow night the first group will depart taking one meal with them. Tuesday the second group will go, taking 4 meals. Where to? Unknown to us. This afternoon 500 men arrived from Surabaya of which 200 went straight to the hospital while two had died during transport. Last Wednesday 500 men arrived from Surabaya. A mixture of Australians, English, Chinese and even Javanese. They mentioned that there had been a pamphlet drop by the Americans on the 12th March. Also that there is a constant shipping of all sorts of goods that can be used, from Surabaya to elsewhere (Japan?). About 5 months ago some 500 technical people and air force men were sent to Japan. Also transport of people to Singapore and other places in the Archipelago to work there. Furthermore that Bali has been bombarded and that recently two heavily damaged Japanese cruisers had been towed into Surabaya harbour. A Sergeant major, who was with us in Tjilatjap and was taken to Batavia for transport elsewhere got dysentery before going aboard and was taken to hospital. He then was included in a group to leave via Surabaya but there he contracted Beri-Beri and again escaped being transported elsewhere. Now he has come back to us here in Tjimahi.

20 April

Church services were still being held when there was a padre in camp and, although sometimes a separate Roman Catholic service was being held, it mostly was a combined service for all religions and those who were looking for some guidance in their lives.

Tonight the sermon was about Jesus saying: "Woman, this is your son" and then to the disciple: "this is your Mother", upon which the disciple looked after his mother. Jesus thus united Johannes with his Mother. For us to realize that, when we will be reunited with our loved ones, we have to realize that God will bring us together again.

Of course at the end of the day when the work has been done and we had our last meal for the day, we have time to sit and talk or to dream about what was and what the future will

be, where our loved ones are and under what circumstances they are living, if they are still alive. Who knows? I have not heard from Anky for a long time and wonder if she is still with our friends or if she and Hansje are interned as well now. And what will be the position with food etc. The saying is that we have more to eat than "outside". I find strength in my belief that our lives are in God's hand and that, although we still have to help ourselves, God will help us and, if we will not see each other again, then it is God's will. I hope and pray that I will be able to see it that way as well, when that day arrives.

This whole week we have had groups leaving for unknown destinations and other groups coming in from other areas or camps. Many of the people I have been with for a long time, have gone, others have filled their places and bring news from other sources or persons we know. Gone are: Prins, Boukema, Bergkamp, Arend, VandeWater. Whereto? Will we see them again?

Work however has to go on and with the last group gone; a big party is to go to "Zonnehoeve" (our vegetable farm) that has been neglected for some time with people going away.

27 April

Another 350 men are expected and another 100 men to go to the hospital.

Notwithstanding the camp conditions, we are still experiencing some wonderful entertainment.

3 May

Last Friday we had some sections of the opera "The unknown singer" and last night a violin and piano solo by Phil de Boer and Herman Blitz, the violin concerto of Mendelssohn. The Tenor, on Friday night, was Stocking, who had not sung before and was fantastic. Phil de Boer had to come back three times last night.

Several letters have arrived recently. Gosma had one from his wife dated 25th Feb. Jan Zijderveld had one from his girlfriend Rien Keulemans and Hartingsveld had one from his mother from Batavia, saying that his father was free again and asking after his condition and shoes, indicating that they know about our circumstances and also that we are able to study or run courses.

14 May

Today is Friday. Been to "Zonnehoeve" every day this week. More and more women are sort of "lining" the road we walk to the farm, looking for husband, friend or relations. However, not Anky, and I wonder whether she is still here or been interned or ill or whatever.

We have been told to have a one-minute silence at 10 p.m. to commemorate the bombing of Rotterdam, which happened 3 years ago. Tonight I attended a talk by a Padre of the Church of England about the history and liturgy of that Church.

29 May

Today is Thursday. Over the past 14 days all Americans and Australians have left and it is thought that the Menadonese and Ambonese will soon go as well. The last ones have signed a blank form and are not sure whether they now will be released or whether they are now to join the Japanese army. Apparently the women are again allowed to write letters to us, whilst van den Heuvel had heard that recently a transport of 4000 men drowned. Today is Japanese Navy Day and thus only half a day work today.

Van Vliet (*no relation*) received a long letter from his wife, telling about their situation. His oldest (14 yrs) works in the kitchen. The daughter helps mother. Three are attending school and the youngest is still at home. With a female doctor and nurses from the Mission hospital, they have set up a polyclinic and it is all running well.

5 June

Today a day of mourning (for the Japanese) probably because of the soldiers that died at A. . . (An island), which is now taken by the Americans. Last Thursday a farewell for the Englishmen that left on Friday and were replaced with some 650 men from Bandoeng, Tjilatjap and Djocja. Leenheer, Koster, Zwet, Sveren, Buys and Zijlstra, still in Bandoeng where it is not so good! In came Piet Kranenburg, Fred Warnaars, v.d. Bent, v.d.Molen, Druif, Engelsman, Hufmeyer and Winkel. Tomorrow Sunday and no work, after Church to vanderHeuvel.

7 June

Today is Monday. Just visited Kees Verhoef who is still not well. Four men, selected by Jamakutsi, to Zonnehoeve today, Hubenet, Vaasekloet, 't Hoen and someone else. Tonight gymnastics demonstration for Jamakutsi. 7 Officers from Bandoeng are allowed to talk to their wives. The supervising officer of Zonnehoeve told that he had heard that Osaka and Tokyo had been bombed and that he was afraid he would not get home anymore. Some days ago, it is said, Jamakutsi asked the Officers to behave like gentlemen and there has also been a warning at Zonnehoeve for a surprise air-raid practice. Yesterday some 75 Aussies arrived but we are not allowed to speak with them.

10 June

After a quick shower and an egg, off to "Platonic Love", a play in the hall. Only after that, time to eat my rice! Schipper has a sore throat and went to bed with some streptocil. The Aussies are here for a film job and so apparently are the four selected last Monday. However of them Hubenet has already dropped out as his children were too old, Cor Visser's wife was too dark and Vaasekloet is still there waiting.

13 June

Today no work party, so able to attend Church. The evening service was about Acts 2 verse 18.

14 June

This morning an early rise in connection with the "Zonnehoeek film". That was a mistake however. From a chap from Bandoeng I heard that Wim Buys has seen Bets (his wife) and was very happy about that. I also heard that Ir. de Man has been interned with a lot more engineers so Freek Dicke will now also be interned I feel and so maybe will Anky and Geert.

The making of the film seems to be very urgent. They are taking shots of all sorts of activities, gymnastics, weeding, digging, fishponds etc. (*This film or part of it has been shown internationally after the war*)

As there are always women along the road when we go to Zonnehoeve I think a lot about Anky, but the chance of seeing her here is negligible.

Would she still be able to attend Church or is that impossible? Here in Tjimahi the Kempetai is stationed in the Church. Is there a minister in your camp? In Bandoeng the Rev. Pieron is in the camp.

16 June

Waiting at the dentist's. Rumours are good again!.

21 June

Gosma heard yesterday that his last born, of which he got news and a photo recently, died. Very tragic. More transports expected.

27 June

Today is Sunday. News (rumours) good. Pantellaria and Campadutia are occupied and they are moving up to Sicily. The south of Italy is being brought in readiness for an allied attack. King George in North Africa. Ambon, Ceram and West Papua have been bombed. Attack on Ambon has been unsuccessful. Surabaya has been bombed three times. Here the Medical service has been warned against planes flying over. The Americans have been told to have Blood group O donors ready. At another camp a Japanese Officer is said to have asked for our reaction if the Americans would come here. Would they be killed? No! Would they be interned? No they would be sent home!

Orders not to be too noisy, no shouting or whistling and only soft applause.

28 June

Another inspection by the Japanese.

30 June

Yesterday was Prince Bernhard's birthday and we were allowed to celebrate quietly! Jamakutsie was at Zonnehoeve and showed interest in the food that was very good. Hopefully the women were also able to have an extra good meal. Zonnehoeve won the Football game 4-2 from Leuwigadjah. Met Wim Buma. The women showed a lot of Red White and Blue yesterday.

2 July

Today is Friday. Talked with Groen about the situation and what is going to happen with our wives and us. Should I try to stay here whatever happens or go if I am on the next transport? Groen says I should put everything in Gods hands and if I am to go then it will be for my good. I am ashamed that he has to tell me that. Why should I worry after all the blessings I have received so far. I have to show more faith in God's ways.

3 July

I did send a card: "My health is excellent! I hope that you are all healthy and are living well. Is our child well? Have you enough money for food to keep yourselves? I am constantly thinking of you. It will be wonderful when we meet again. Receive this as my birthday present. Write back soon. Trust in God. He makes all well. Many kisses for you and Hansje". (for card see Document 1)

12 July

9.55 p.m.! Can't sleep so better write a bit. I did send another letter to Anky today. Now from "Camp W"? Played bridge with Kees Verhoef who is still on the reserve list. Our whole garden team of Zonnehoeve is going away. Last Wednesday Jan Zijderveld came to congratulate me with Anky's birthday. He and Hartingsveld are not looking too well. Thank God I am still ok. I also hope that I will be and keep all right when we are moving. I cannot sleep because Opa, Kees Hengel and Nobel are still playing here and make too much noise. No quiet here at night. That was very good in Tjilatjap where I had a room for myself. I hope that after the next move I will be in a better position and also keep myself a bit more apart. Real friends are hard to find anyhow.

We were ordered tonight to keep ourselves ready for blackout. Since the 4th July the Platoon stands guard with their helmet on. Since the 8th, blackout measures have been taken at the barracks and the Guardhouse.

We are supposed to leave on the 20th. Where to?

14 July

On guard duty from 3 to 4 a.m. As from tomorrow full air raid protection to be installed. Everything has to be blacked out. Also the Kempetai has blue sheets in front of the windows.

19 July

Lots of good rumours again last night. In the Engineers barracks some 400 Australians and some 200 Dutch arrived from Batavia, many of who seem to have worked elsewhere in the Archipelago already or who were released to work elsewhere.

21 July

Last night the prisoners from the Engineers barracks came here but the Japanese did not allow any contact. We are to move. Those from the 9th Battalion are to go, those from the 4th stay here.

27 July

About noon a slight tremor. May be cause of total darkness tonight. New camp commander Shono whom camp officers are meeting today.

1 Aug.

Since yesterday I am "Sergeant of the week".

No newspaper today as there is a paper shortage? (And things are going so well!)

We have to put Norit in containers, water purification tablets gathered, vegetable seeds are to be kept, and taken with us (are we going somewhere else?), we are making bags of sisal and classes in Japanese are restarted again. I made an aluminium badge for Jan Schipper (ex pilot) and I will roll some cigarettes for sale.

Had a chance to read in my bible after a long time, as it is often very busy and not quiet enough to concentrate.

5 Aug.

Life is getting a bit easier, not so many errands. I almost chucked it in but "Groen" told me to shut up, as it was better to do this than heavy-duty work.

Today Princess Irene's birthday and a lot of Orange is showing.

Tomorrow my birthday, Anky may put my picture amid flowers as usual. I heard last week that Freek Dicke is still free. Somebody had spoken to Geert and the kids. Are you still with them Anky? Did you get my letters? I did not get any. It is thought that we will be leaving shortly.

14 Aug.

Today Hansje's (Harry's) Birthday. 3 years old and I have not seen him for half that time. More rumours about landings on Indonesian islands.

15 Aug.

Dressed in my Sunday outfit for going to Church. Khaki shorts and clean shirt, green stockings and black shoes polished with brush and boot polish borrowed from "Boender".

18 Aug.

Sicily taken by allies? Tonight bread for the first time.

Meals said to be from now on: one rice-meal and twice bread or once porridge and once bread.

Japanese suddenly asked for names of those specialized in agriculture and horticulture. Later those in building bamboo houses, digging wells and acquainted with fishing with nets.

Rumours about bombing of Makassar and Balikpapan. Slight damage.

23 Aug.

Blackout still on. Yesterday talked with Aldewereld, also Reformed and from The Hague. I laid on my stretcher and thought of how Sunday afternoons were and how they will be later. How will I meet my sweethearts and where? I don't think we will be moved again, that would be nice but is not impossible. We are well off here. Yesterday afternoon I opened a tin of corned beef, from Geert still, and allocated it to breakfast and evening "sandwich" and noon meal. Also shared with van Eggelen, Hiemstra and Tuit. Saturday afternoon everything outside and then an inspection inside. I was back in time but Tuit had put everything out already, with my torch in my pocket it all appeared ok. A new Japanese order that we are not allowed having sarongs, pistols, bombs, hand grenades, electric lights or candles!

30 Aug.

The night before the great "trek". This is the third time already and we are used to it. Last night air raid alarm from 12 to 5. Everybody tight.

31 Aug.

Today at 7 am, the first section left. On the evening of our arrival we had a demonstration of the habits of our new Camp Commander. Sticks and stones. The last order of our old camp commander was to remove all orange from our coats etc. (*it was Queen's birthday*). Glad they noticed it although not understanding, a pity to remove them.

The arrival here was quiet, many women outside Tjimahi and Meester Cornelis when we went past. One Japanese soldier lost his rifle and would have been "told off" about that. For me the beginning of our honeymoon celebration. 1st Sept. was the day Poland was invaded and war started. In the afternoon a re-allocation of areas and we landed in this barrack, old and very dirty, no ventilation, outside no grass so very dusty. No church services here.

4 Sept.

More people from Surabaya arrived and I just heard that within 2 months all Europeans were to be picked up, even Indo Europeans.

9 Sept.

Today is Tuesday. Rumours about capitulation of Italy, occupation of Kiev and Mariopol, general withdrawal of German troops, 10 German divisions out of Denmark, Danish Navy in Swedish waters, Swedish protest against German troops and no more supplies to them. Slow progress in Italy, no resistance, but everything destroyed. Balikpapan and Tarakan heavily bombed. This evening many heavy bombers passed over here. Yesterday heard about bombs on Surabaya and that Jaap Ozinga leads Church services in Adek Camp. Also that the Government of Indonesia is passed on to the Indonesians like happened in

Burma where the Br. Indians declared war with the allied. Heavy bombing of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Eindhoven.

14 Sept.

The ninth was Henk Amelink's birthday. This morning inspection. Since last night unarmed Japanese watched us eating and looked at food rests. Bathrooms have no doors so a nice bare behinds parade. Yesterday our shop articles arrived so now I am smoking a Deli Club cigar. Yesterday morning Bombers with bombs flew over from Kemajoran.

19 Sept.

Sunday afternoon. Just had our meal. Spoke to Piet Volte this morning; he said that 600 men are on "Onrust" (*an island off Batavia*). Big purchases made at Senen (*a market in Batavia*), but unknown for whom. Yesterday we heard the bells of the Cathedral. When will we hear them again every Sunday? Anky and Hansje far away, when will we be together again? Would you have changed much? I pray that we may grow together again, and unite in Christ, also with our children, as only then the world will improve.

23 Sept.

Today three weeks in Batavia and still no indication if and when we will leave. Last Tuesday news from Sonai (*the Japanese Commander*), and he said there would be more good news shortly.

Southern Italy now occupied by the Allies and the Italians did capitulate. Last night rumours that Burma was finished. A section of 600 men are building big sheds at Tandjong East. Lae (New Guinea) free? Steel and carriages shipped from Tandjong. Priok. Typhus and dysentery in Priok. Rumours of landings in Denmark and other places in West Europe. Luzon reoccupied, Rangoon and Burma Road free.

25 Sept.

Last Thursday night instruction to be ready for inspection for departure at 6 pm. Order given at 10 a.m. and cancelled at 3.30 p.m. Friday 10 a.m. instruction for regrouping, but it never reached us as it was cancelled shortly thereafter and at 9 a.m. order for "glass-rod" inspection. Was painful, Piles? Rumours of negotiations with a German in England.

Yesterday 3 p.m. a sudden inspection. Everything out of the barracks and on the road. Everything turned over and checked, except my backpack and book. Lost all my tools and light so I don't have to carry that any more!

Last night it appeared that the 27 men who looked after the vegetable garden were in jail, because of contact with women who apparently had called. Last night suddenly all lights out and even the Japanese Music stopped. Why? This morning handing in of faeces samples.

3 pm instruction to fall in at 4.30 p.m. with our gear, and here we are sitting on the road. Japanese are coming to inspect name cards and numbers. After that inspection of belongings, many lights and electric cables found. Sonai very angry, running around and screaming. As a penalty all lamps taken out so darkness. This morning at 2 a.m. reveille fall in at 3.30, 4.30 at Weltevreden station, 5.30 at Priok, waiting till 8 a.m. Then to the Quay, aboard 1.30 p.m., departure 2 p.m. About 400 men in this hold, each about 25 c. m. Up on deck also full. We are sailing. It is 6 p.m. now.

29 Sept.

Just finished a meal and now ready for disembarkation. Since this morning when I was up top we are moving N to NW, so possibly past Singapore and entering from the East. Yesterday passed Banka 5 a.m. Now at anchor in the Bay. Talked with Piet Vonke a brother of Ds Vonke of Bolnes. 3 a.m. strong winds and then a downpour. Those on deck all drenched; below not much better as it is leaking everywhere, all my stuff wet and, as by sitting under a borrowed coat would give me a stiff back, I stood up. Later slept under the

coat again. Breakfast at 7.30 a.m. was rice with vegies and now 11 a.m. we are getting ashore.

We were the first off but the last to leave at 5.45 p.m. Went through Singapore and along well-known places to a place faraway. After about 1/2 hour we had a tyre puncture of the left rear tyre. Off the truck and on the side of the road, till a spare truck arrived which took us to the new camp. Many timber barracks with atap (bamboo) roof cover. Trusses at 2.5 m over 5 m span. Shower area and toilets outside and in the dark, dangerous to get there.

1 Oct.

Washday.

2 Oct.

Today outside duty. Behind our camp is some heavy coastal artillery, about 40 cm. We are on the Changi Road and the Camp is the Changi Camp. A bit further on is a cemetery where also our dead POW's are buried. No compulsory hair cut here and also no "kéré" only salute. Dysentery and cholera around here. Water not safe, so boil or chlorinate.

Rumours: New Guinea occupied, Celebes bombed, Burma offensive expected, Churchill said: 2nd offensive still to come, in Russia Smolensk is taken and allies are proceeding.

3 Oct.

"Leiden's beleg en ontzet" (*See same date last year*) We are still in prison! Today again on duty so not to Church, tomorrow again on duty, 3 days in a row. It rains so, go inside. I am repairing a watch. Tuesday no duty. Leaving the 10th.

6 Oct.

Just attended an Australian band that gave very good music. Finished with Dutch and English anthems.

Yesterday 47 ships went past, including a heavily listed cruiser. Warm coats came in for officers? Heavy bombardment on Germany. Tonight music by an English jazz band, good but not as good as the Aussies. A very nice duet of a violinist and one who plays the concertina. First an allegory of: "Na nicht liebes Mutterlein" and "Roten karavan", we so often played and sung at home. They were very nice days Anky, would they come back again??

It is a year ago that I heard from you, are you both still alive and where? The worst thing is that I do not hear anything from you for so long and how much longer will that last? May be we will be back on Java before we hear anything from you. The Dutch people that are here have not heard anything from their wives or family. At least we know that until October you were still ok. May be from here we could still be able to contact you but what if we go still further away, to Formosa or Japan? One thing they can never take away is our trust in God and our prayers, Darling let us never forget about that, help each other and teach Hansje to pray also.

15 Oct.

Rumours: Rabaul heavily bombed, Japanese losing many ships and aeroplanes. Italy fighting the Germans

18 Oct.

Boarded a freighter. A cable breaks and two men are wounded.

19 Oct.

We moved, went for anchor in the bay. A derrick falls down.

20 & 21 Oct.

For anchor, loading coals. 6 p.m. all to go on deck, with luggage, ready for disembarkation. That happened at night and at 1 a.m. back in the barracks. Luggage left on deck and brought later. Lost nothing. Others did. Dell was hit with a box. Tomorrow my brother Joh's birthday.

1300 men, including technicians and generals, left 21st in the morning on two ships.

27 Oct.

8 p.m. I sit on the back-veranda next to the sporting field along Changi Rd. Last night I was here with Wijzman, and discovered the quiet of this place. The problem is one can never be alone with his thoughts and now it is getting too dark to write any longer, Rumours galore, Burma is getting serious, New Guinea bad, Russia back to the Dnepr. We have to submit attendance reports again as on Java. Japanese also suffering of diarrhoea and dysentery. Since Sunday no outside duty anymore to avoid contact with inhabitants of other camps. Sunday morning went to the Church service. At night I saw the big photo of Hansje again in my bible.

Just when I opened this pad the 4 small photos of you fell out. It is all so unreal. How and where are you now and how will it be when we are together again? Some time ago I went through the wedding formula in the back of a bible and I did see the ceremony in the Kwitang church in my mind. Had we ever thought that I would read that again under these circumstances? I do not know your condition and where you are, what you do and how your health is and it will be a long time before I will hear anything about it. I so hope, and it is my daily prayer, that you do not try to go through this difficult time alone. Darling I would love to be with you again to live and love. May God bless you and do not forget our wedding texts: "I will be with you to the end of time".

31 Oct.

Yesterday inspection of our gear, with which we had to fall in at the parade ground. Stretchers and chairs and the like taken away. Then again back to the barrack. Today all on duty. We have to dig ten trenches, as the action radius of the allied planes has increased. So? According to rumours many people from the country will come here, as there is big damage. I am on M.P. duty, so no outside work. Rumours good.

5 Nov.

As from tonight also on gate duty, many changes, and more food. Last Tuesday rumours that Germany is beaten back in Russia and that they are withdrawing in South Russia. 700,000 men in the Krim? Japanese head-office 200 miles back in Burma. Bangkok bombed. Wednesday the first dysentery patient died (Geerlings from Bandoeng)

6 Nov.

1 p.m. fall-in for departure. 5.30 p.m. to the Quay and aboard, till 11.30 watched the loading of rubber and copra.

7 Nov.

About 10 a.m. we were leaving with 7 other ships. No 1 with women. No 2 is a "2 piper"; No 4 is us, No 6 a lightly loaded ship. First accompanied by submarine and patrol vessels, later on our own. Straight away on hygiene duty.

8 Nov.

Dad's birthday. First dysentery case. In this ship earlier transports from 2 to 5 April and 15 to 22 April, Singapore, Saigon, Formosa. (All written on the planks and walls).

9 Nov.

Very rough weather, rain and storm, small waves. Rumours of Japanese/American sea battle.

10 Nov.

Will we call at Saigon or are we past already? Strong waves.

11 Nov.

End of First World War. Arrived in Saigon 2 p.m. At first sight it was not recognised by one of us who worked here for ten years.

12 Nov.

At anchor just before Saigon. The sun is setting so back on deck again. Thinking of Anky and Hansje again.

13 Nov.

Early this morning already signs that we are leaving. The "2 piper" comes back from Saigon and the officers that went with her are back on board again. Took on water. Fruit for the Japanese came by a small separate vessel. In the afternoon we left, all in line and fairly fast.

14 Nov.

Request for Church service denied. We are moving very fast and have caught up with 4 other vessels and patrol vessels. We are now 8 ships and are sailing close to the Indo China coast. Course NNE. During the night the course was E and NE. Last night there was music and song and a fantasy on the tune of a Dutch sailors song, in connection with our "cruise". Today life vest practice. Food very liberal, twice a day. Two more men on the Hygiene duty, very difficult.

15 Nov.

Food still plenty but "desserts" monotonous, more and more onions.

17 Nov.

Today Wednesday. 5 more man on hygiene duty to work below. Confusing! Much wind and sea spray blowing over.

18 Nov.

Today on duty below. Very much ship movements, I feel sick and lie on bed. Other ships spread out. Fore hatch closed.

19 Nov.

Sea still rough, I stayed below and laid down. Many seasick. Once on deck to clean toilets. Beautiful to look at the sea.

20 Nov.

Today Saturday. Same as yesterday, sea slightly calmer. Wind blows water over ship. Much damage on deck and to the toilets, which hang overboard. Also to the rafts that are stored on deck and to the covers over them.

21 Nov.

Sunday. Arrived at Formosa (Taiwan) at noon. For anchor in harbour. One aircraft carrier and 7 other ships for anchor. After all the onions, now fried fish and tonight fried pasta.

25 Nov.

This afternoon Chinese planes came over the harbour. We are in a war zone now.

26 Nov.

Left Formosa (takao) at 11 a.m. Sea quiet, much wind and spray coming over.

27 Nov.

During the night some waves came over. This morning read Philippians. About 10 a.m. 3 Chinese planes attacked the convoy. Bombs on No 1. (The carrier and the tanker). No 1 badly hit. Much flotsam and dead fish. Convoy spread. Three stayed together No 1, No 10 and us and the torpedo boat. Passengers and crew from No 1 to our ship and the torpedo boat. No 1 sinking. Torpedo boat alongside to take the military.

POWs from rear section to the front (where we are) Chock full! While Lt. De Vries explained that he guaranteed that he would arrange that we all would come off safely – what neither he or anybody else could do, an expression, meaning that that was not possible, slipped out of my mouth, which he heard! He also said that the “A.A. gun had been used” (a 20 cm gun on the foredeck). Consequently I had to come before the “military court” where I was told that I was a “naughty boy” etc, that I would no longer serve with the M.P. and that, when we would be on land, I would be further punished!!

We can but hope for the best of it. Weather a bit milder today.

28 Nov.

After a fast sail along the coast and islands along the coast we come into yellow water. On our way to Shanghai. This afternoon read Psalms with Dr. vanderMeer, on deck.

29 Nov.

We overtook the rest of the convoy and remained far ahead of them. Still along the coast, much wind and ice-cold water many days. Patients, everything disinfected. 6 p.m. dropped anchor at the mouth of the Yellow river (Yangtze).

30 Nov.

Last night about 11 p.m. up anchor and up the river. Had to wait for high tide. This morning again up anchor and towed to the Wharf where the ship took on vegies and rice. After that down the river and follow the convoy.

1 Dec.

Mother's birthday. Would she still be alive? And how will she celebrate her birthday?

2 Dec.

Colder again, calm sea, no waves, along islands.

3 Dec.

Still sailing along rocks and islets. About 7 p.m. dropped anchor in the bay of Modji on Kyushu.

4 Dec.

After a dangerous entry arrived in the harbour. Rain and very cold. Many strange Japanese come aboard. According to a sergeant we are going to work in a mine. In the afternoon we disembarked and went to a big shed where we got buns and about 8 p.m. to the station. On the train at 9 till 11 a.m. Out and to a hall.

5 Dec.

Sunday today. Slept there and had breakfast. Again boarded a train from 4 till 5 p.m., and got off at a small station. Everything frosted, and very cold. Today St Nicholas! Walked to a camp about 15 minutes, were talked to, had to leave everything on the ground and go into the dining room. Hand in my fountain pen and knife. Others also watches and pens and pencils. Had 2 bowls with lovely soup. Back to our luggage. Medicines gone, books, milk, pens and pencils, tools etc. All things we had in our luggage, gone! Kept my Bible. At night to an English Church service, about Jesus' life and his call to us. Very well spoken.

7 Dec.

Food is rice. Often soup with rice and gort (a grain). Last night for the first time fat in the meal in this camp. Here 200 Englishmen who departed from Batavia before us. Off Saigon one ship of their convoy was bombed (and sunk). We are here with 150 men under Dr vanderMeer, as the only part of the 1200 we were when we left. The rest unknown. Many camps around here, all for mine work. No news for the last 9 weeks. Yesterday received warm clothes, old Japanese gear, overcoat, suit, underwear and 2 pairs of shoes. With 6 men in a room, Eberhardt, Stam, Verkade, Berg, Beer and Burgers. No work yet. Check ups, inspections, blood test, photo (?). Barracks very simple, everything slides and is of paper or rendered bamboo. Floors are "tetamis", about 6 cm thick. Shoes outside. Daily two "tenkos" (parades), 5.30 a.m. and at 8 p.m. Nights very cold notwithstanding 5 layers of blankets (doubled up). Today hail and snow.

Dec. 12

Yesterday sun, today again a bit. Yesterday also medical inspection (outside) and eyes testing. Left 1.2 Right 1.5.

15 Dec.

Today started with theory on the mine terrain. Introduction to mine chiefs and assistants, tools, terminology. Weightlifting and gymnastics. Yesterday checked in the hospital: L: 179 ½, Weight 74 kg, B (?) 91 ½. L (lungs) 4600. HL (?) 35, HR (?), Blood sample taken, TBC test, Lung x-ray, Urine check.

As from yesterday one porridge meal per day. Yesterday also "Jasme" (rest) day and thus to Church. The English speaker gave a nice talk and prayer and closed with God Save the Queen.

My mouth is improving, still a sore throat, feet sore under the heel.

21 Dec.

The shortest day. Kammer died last night, the first of how many more? May the end come soon! Number of tummy patients increases by the day. Camp feet and hands more than half. Food is less every day, mostly porridge and thin vegies-soup. Yesterday fish. Today for the 4th day working on the underground shelters and corridors. Friday suddenly taken away from the mine and all tummy patients on parade.

We are working inside the camp. Saturday I was on toilet duty and the rest started to dig. Sunday I also had to dig. Sunday evening injection in the breast against dysentery. Last night Verkade was taken to hospital and Burgers came back. This morning cadet Loopuit to hospital. Saturday Christmas day, the program is ready. 1 p.m. Protestant Service. How are my darlings. I am praying that you too may be healthy and still keep your faith in his grace and promise: I am with you to the end of time.

Darling, when I started to use the back of the pages at page 34 I thought that I was halfway.

26 Dec.

Sunday. And we had a very bad week. Monday Kammer died, Wednesday Spoelstra and Friday Laperon. Every second day 3 men were murdered because of lack of medicine. Yesterday we had Christmas day with very good food: porridge, soup, rice, vegies fried in oil with rice and shrimps, Puree of Oebi (sweet potato), meat, thick juice and pudding with sauce, ¼ bottle of beer and 2 oranges, rice soup, fish, cake with chocolate. All very nice. (*I assume they were the three meals of the day and that "very nice" has to be read as relating to the circumstances.*)

I hope that Anky and Hansje also had something nice today. At night a sort of cabaret in which Japanese also took part. The Church service was by Leydelmeyer and closed with the 6th verse of Wilhelmus (Dutch Nat. Anthem).

As from Friday I am a permanent nurse in this camp, due to my long hospital service in Tjilatjap. The only Dutchman free of the mine and I have to run as Hughes (the English nurse) does not work and Macarthy is useless. This morning washed 9 blankets and clothes full with shit.

Darling I am working again and not worrying so o.k. Every night I think of you and hope to be home in 6 months. Yes?? How often did I postpone that already? Hope gives life!!

2 Jan. 1944

New Year started with a lot of cold. I write this on my knees under the blanket. This past week last Sunday out of hospital duty, not necessary!! Monday back to work, Tuesday the same. Wednesday in the mine. Mine train, draughty corridors, steep slopes, water pump area, up steps, corridor left, corridor right, temperature ok. Thursday outside in cold and wet weather. Friday New Year's eve. Suddenly "jasme" for the Dutch. No extra meals. Saturday New Years day. Left early and worked from 7.30 till 11.45, rest till 12.30, work till 3.30, an hour longer than agreed. In the evening arranged the teams and this morning the first team left 5 a.m. Cramer goes this afternoon, Manus and I tonight. For seven days. Doctor is recovered but not yet in his room and did not give a New Years speech. Just showered and with the built-up warmth, under the blanket in my bed.

12 Jan.

Back to work again, now p.m. shift. Work not heavy, not interesting and monotonous.

16 Jan.

We did get engaged 8 years ago.

18 Jan.

Up early, get ready for inspection by General. Feet sore, middle of right foot.

22 Jan.

Today in the first shift, the last for me and then we start with the third again. Got "wakamoto" (*sick-leave*) today because of my hands and feet, although nothing is wrong! Rumours good: Russia on German territory, Warsaw fallen, Rome fallen, Rabaul almost finished, heavy fighting in Burma, Landings in the Archipelago. If that is true, may God watch over you?

23 Jan.

Almost 5 p.m., waiting for the food that should have fish with it. Soup better but no second helping. Rice first reduced but today reasonable. 250 kg for 400 men. Last night the first Englishman died, weakened by lack of food because of dysentery, affecting many. I only have a cold.

And how are you both? The engraved lid lies next to me and goes with me to the mines every day. I am also wearing my (your) ring again. How long still? Home this year? I hope so.

1 Feb.

Have to ask what day it is as our Sunday is now every 9 days, when every one has jasje. This morning watch duty, almost two days. Very cold. Today Beatrix's birthday. Churchill refused peace negotiations. Today inspection again. Much ado about the food, one day more, then again less. For 3 days now the kitchen is baking bread for the sick and the Japanese. Bread is good, no yeast but well baked and nice crusts. No Church service today due to lack of attendance.

4 Feb.

A year ago we left Tjilatjap. Rumours that we will leave in 2 to 4 weeks, plenty of variation.

Rumours very good, peace negotiations in Europe, Bombs on Java and Sumatra. Not so good but indicates progress in Pacific. Last two days awake in bed hungry, can't ask you to come with me so I am lonely. I hope that this misery will soon end and we can go home.

11 Feb.

3 a.m., I am in the end corridor of the NIOROSKI mine where the ceiling of what will be the Transformer or Pump station just exploded. Nothing to do but sleep for another two hours and then home (back to camp) to start jasje.

18 Feb.

One more day and then it is jasje again and we start the last shift of February. I write this in the train down the mine. Today my second bread roll.

1 March

Today jasje because of "hara biochi" (*can not read what I wrote*). This week Red Cross clothing received. As a G (ood) W(orker) I got a jumper and pyjama pants and a pair of socks. Rumours: Russians in Warsaw pushing west, withdrawing in Burma due to lack of planes and men, in the Archipelago backwards as 1 Jap has 10 Americans against him. Also we may move later this month.

13 March

Back from night-duty. Early today. Nice weather yesterday, this night was cold and still is. Thinking of home and hoping to move. Jasje every 12 days now.

18 March

My weight is 69 kg!

24 March

American doctor and nurse arrived today. 20th March the 6th Englishman died. My leg is infected. No rumours.

13 April

6th April Dad van Vliet 's birthday. 7th Good Friday. Extra bread roll as English specialty. That night another Englishman died and the next day, another one. Total now 8 Englishmen and 3 Dutchmen. After my diarrhoea from 30/3 till 3/4 very swollen feet and legs. Oedema, immediately on salt less diet and vitamin tablets for 5 days. Yesterday even some drink from the Japanese Dr. Today a bit better already. Tonight in the nightshift again after 2 jasje days. Red Cross stuff again. Cigarettes, butter, cheese, jam, sugar, pâté, corned beef, wurst, coffee. Rumours good: America to Luzon, and in control of everything East and South of it. From letters from England it appears that everything there was o.k. in June '43."The Church bells ring again". Here we hope for a soon end to this camp with rumours of "sayonara" (fare well). Also chance of change of work. For some days no more soldiers to take us to work, and some days ago the guard was taken over by civilians and some handicapped soldiers. 4 days ago they discovered my watch, which was taken away, and I was beaten, the first time since my POW time. How would it be on Java? Always thinking of and praying for Anky and Hansje. Darling, never forget that and I hope that you are thinking of God as your Protector and Guide.

21 April

Jasje day (Rest day, no work). My weight 65 kg. Mainly due to my loss of Oedema, but still I'm losing weight.

26 April

The last two days worked at "Ibigizachi", another mine, which is only 5 minutes walk away instead of ¾ hour each way.

9 May

Whilst enjoying an "Old Gold" and a cup of Java Red Cross Tea, back to writing again. Tomorrow jasje, a day earlier than the rest but we are working in the shaft. Walking down the mine but back up by train. Light work so ok. Tomorrow 10th May, 4 years ago the Netherlands were attacked by the Germans. How much longer? The rumours here are from reliable source and very favourable. Russia against Germany on the German-Polish border. Japan retreating in Burma. Heavy fighting in North of France (Is that true? invasion or raid?). Let's hope the first. Italy was occupied about two-thirds. Going home this year?? Home at Christmas?? Let's hope that will be true. Last jasje-day a Church service of 5 men, Siemens, Lindenhovius, Angenet, Meyer, Beem. Not many but we hope for more each time. Last days beautiful weather, during the night very warm. Today rain however. Food is o.k. the last days. Fish and more vegies than in winter. Rice and beans, 610 and 120 gram respectively.

16 May

Yesterday my 800th day as a POW. I just woke up after my night duty so slept about 4 hours. The morning shift is just coming in. I felt I had to write because I was thinking about you and Hansje and wanted you to know! Anky how long still? We do not know but I am not worried about it because I know we are in God's hand and whatever will happen to us three it will all be to the honour of God. 5 days back I reread your letters and you wrote you were glad that you went to Jaap and Wies (Ozinga). That is why I am also happy that you went to Geert and Freek (Dicke), although Freek may have been picked up also by now.

Someone just calls in to say that there are another 23 boxes of Red Cross stuff came in. Hurrah, that means a few days of nice and healthy meals again. Last night more meat in the soup after no meat for weeks. Generally the food is slightly better, fish, vegies, but not much rice. Rumours are that big troupes are waiting in England to repossess Europe and fighting in Belgium.

29 May

Yesterday was de Groot's birthday, 41 years. H.O.2nd class with SCS, a good job.

3 days ago Abeleven was brought back from the mine with damaged back. Lower body lame, ribs damaged, dying?

Yesterday Abbing crushed his finger and v.d.Boon working above (*means not in the mine*). So now only Esser down in the mine "Itsioroski". Rumours confusing but generally good. Indicates the war in Europe is approaching its end? I put the photos of you and Hansje in my little box so that I can look at them every day.

6 June

Yesterday and today jasmie because of an infection on my left middle finger. What looked innocent first is now much bigger and into the hand. After the first cut I now had a second deeper and further one. The weather is fine so not too bad to be "home". The infection is bad though. Today I put a new back on my bible. Work in the mine very dangerous, already 15 ceiling collapses. According to Mulder they put more timber in to support wall and ceilings, making it less dangerous. 3 days ago rumours about negotiations between London, Berlin and Moscow. No further news after that. The first "parade" bell is going (6.50 p.m.) so I have to stop.

9 June

Yesterday rumours that the German Top General has died, that the invasion started the 6th and that Italy has been left to the allies. Berlin has been bombed heavily and from all the news it was thought that there must be some truth in the rumours. The infection of my finger turned very bad and cuts have now been made in my hand as well. I have to soak my hand in hot water 5 times a day.

11 June

Jasme day and went into hospital for my finger. Daydreaming about landings North and South of Seine like a successful "pincer" movement. Very big Fleets in North Sea and Channel. My weight now 65 kg.

13 June

First of June I had a vaccination of which 5 came up, proof that I needed them. I am now in hospital since 11th June and enjoy the rest and the good food. Yesterday for instance an egg in the morning, at 10 a.m. milk and a second serving of sweet. At night meat and bouillon with the vegies and a small fish. At 4 p.m. I had a third cut after a local anaesthetic. Much pus came out, very painful and tiring. Glad to lie down and also got some more milk. I dreamt that the war would finish in 6 weeks. Hope so. Will continue tonight. Last night an Englishman was reading his bible when somebody asked him what

he was reading. He said: "guess what, a best seller from 1940!" "Gone with the wind?" "No my bible, it always is a best seller!"

14 June

I just was able to use a longer pencil and now use it. Our daydreams are getting bigger, and show a very fast and big offensive, mainly in West and South France. Also in the East progress appears to be made over a big area and near Paris many parachutists. My left hand is lying on a board, it is much more painful than yesterday and also a big lump under my arm. It may take a while still but the rest does me good and the food is very good here too.

19 June

Yesterday I got the fourth cut in my finger and is now open from my hand to the end of my finger. If he wants to cut more he has to start on the underside of the finger. The lump under my arm is still there and very painful. Also my temp is a bit high, 37.6 under my tongue.

The night from 15 to 16 we had our first air raid alarm. It started at about 6 p.m., all inside and doors and windows closed. Lights inside off but outside on. About 12, midnight, the p.m. shifts were just in, we were told: "All to the trenches" where we stayed till about 5 a.m. During that period we were allowed to get fresh air twice. That was stopped when planes flew over. They must have bombed a station near here. 5 American planes came down. The nips are very excited and slap happy.

No more smoking outside the mess hall. Outside Asia, all is also going well. The Russians are on German territory, Paris is surrounded.

(We are here in Inatokumati on the island of Kyushu. We arrived at Modji.)

Heavy fighting around Cannes and in Northern France.

20 June

After 3 nights without light and everything outside, trains, factories etc dark, the lights are on again and everything is back to normal. Here in the hospital we are allowed to smoke again.

Yesterday dinner consisted of 3 potatoes, 1½ onion, 3 spoons of macaroni porridge and meat sauce. At night the meal included a piece of meat, which I cut with knife and fork on a board, as it should. That is for the first time since Feb. 1942!

This morning at sick duty a dry bandage on my finger, but still in hospital, as the lump under my arm is still as big as a ping-pong ball.

Last night we were told that an army of 10,000,000 men and 120,000 airplanes are ready to start with the big push. Total losses said to be 700,000 men, which is quite a lot. Quiet on all frontiers but slowly moving forward. Peace negotiations request from Hitler refused by Churchill. Rommel taking over from Hitler?

26 June

The 842nd day as POW. This morning released from hospital by Dr. van der Meer and now on jasmie. Rigged my mosquito net and my lamp so that I now can read and write under the net. I hope that I can read this again once I am home, and then Anky can write a book about it.

How are you both? Yesterday about 360 letters came for 95 of the Englishmen. Their family only heard a year ago that they were imprisoned, that is bad.

Anky knew that all along. Would she ever have received any letters from me? How would she be, alive and healthy? I pray that it may not be much longer before we see each other again darling! Rumours still good. Tonight about a sea battle above New Britain, where the Americans had big losses. Darling I am going to sleep, a night kiss for you and Hansje. In a month's time we will be married 5 years of which we were together for 2 years and 3 months!!

27 June

Tuesday today. Last night I intended to write a long letter with a summary of what happened to me, as the end will be coming closer now. In Europe the full offensive has started on both sides. Also fighting in Finland (?) Southern France is cut off and fighting goes on in the North.

Here many planes coming over now. According to the Dr. I would have to have my hand on a board going into the mine. Well then that is also past but I had 24 days of rest and good food.

28 June

About 9.30 p.m., I have caught 6 fleas already and I still feel them. No good. After my diarrhoea in hospital now oedema again.

4 July

My oedema is gone. My tummy not good, 3 to 4 times per day and very thin. I'll eat less today, see if that helps. Heavy fighting everywhere. Another sea battle near the Mariannes. Jasme days one day later than usual. Much rain the last days. Since 30/6 on camp duty. The bandage is off my finger but still very stiff and my arm isn't fully useable again. Today the 851st day in camp.

5 July

Rumours about peace conference, sea battles in the Pacific, Breslau fallen. Tomorrow down the mine again. 2 days ago the air raid shelter is broken through (finished?). Been 31 days out of the mine. My finger still a bit bent and stiff, but is being massaged by a Japanese nurse!

12 July

Jasme day. Tested by the Japanese as in the beginning. (Stretching breast) 87.7, L.H.9, R.H.23, Lungs 3700, taken blood. Weight 67 kg. Strength a lot less. Finger gets better and more flexible. Still pus coming out. Hospital changed 2 days ago. Repaired bible of Angenet. Manu again Good Worker. Very hot weather. Heavy fighting, heavy losses, peace conference still on.

22 July

Saturday today. Germany withdrawing on Western front, no more bombs on England, Mariannes evacuated by Japan. Food slightly less, no vegies. Many submarines around Japan.

23 July

Yesterday moved to barrack 5-2 which is now 7-2, as 2 hospital barracks are included. Yesterday afternoon celebrated Holy Communion with the Englishmen, what we hope to repeat in 20 days. At the evening service the Roman Catholics held their service in the other corner, which looked a bit strange.

28 July

Yesterday a visit by a representative of the Pope and the Swedish Consul. After some formal questions about our health and treatment, the Pope man gave us 500 yen(?). The Consul was very politically active and was asked by our government to ask after our condition. Thanks to a special meeting with our Doctor he was very well informed and will try to get dental tools (for our dentist, who was promised by our camp commander), books, and musical instruments. Newspapers were refused, as we had to stay calm, upon which the Swede said that good news would be good for us, to which he added: "it is worthwhile waiting for". 1,000,000 yen was promised for the women on Java. He knows about our over-tiredness, shortage of food, insufficient jasje. Very surprised that the Red Cross had not been here. However the outside world "now knows about you and wants to do something for you". He would also arrange for mail.

30 July

12.15 hours. Would Anky still go to church, or do you arrange your own services? Are you also in a camp and is Freek still free? Were the bombardments of Java and Celebes, which we heard about, very bad? Peace conference in danger of being broken up.

31 July

Since 4 days there are women working in the mine. We still work in corridor 15. Because of the salty fish many sick men. Health generally very bad. 23rd July new arrangements of the barracks, exactly one year after leaving Tjimahi. What in about another year??

8 Aug.

My birthday 2 days ago and the start of a long jasje, as I now have an infection in my left knee. Started from inside, first a bee sting which increased to a 5 cm red and painful area. After 2 days of ichtiol and complete rest with leg up, the leg is now swollen to below the calf, very sensitive red and painful, and a bit more concentrated. May be hospitalised later today. Weight 65 kg.

15 Aug.

Went to hospital 12th Aug. The knee remained painful and it seemed to be more inside, upon which Dr. v.d.Meer recommended the hospital. After two days, out again. Yesterday Hansje's birthday. He is now 4 years old. How would he be, healthy, hungry, accommodation? No problem with the Japanese? And what about our friends? Allies out of Paris? Russians west of Warsaw, Singapore bombed since 6th August. Turkey in war (?).

Tonight to the mine again.

19 Aug.

No recent news. Last was that big convoys are going to the Philippines with about 100 aircraft carriers (?). Churchill and Roosevelt agreed USA fleet only in the Pacific. Roosevelt's talk said: "wait a little longer and the war will be finished". This morning a pig slaughtered for the soup. The first of seven promised.

23 Aug.

The 2nd pig still walking around. According to an elderly Japanese nurse, Dr. Baalder is in a camp close-by. Yesterday again gort with the rice, which makes a bigger ration. Now we get 730 gr., in December 900 gr. (*not clear what was meant*). 8th August overnight an air raid. Three planes came down causing little damage. 20th August from 5 to 7 p.m. and 21st August from midnight till 3 a.m. planes were sighted and Bill Davidson an American nurse, who looked after two dying men, heard guns and bombs.

Fighting about 100 miles west of Warsaw. Expected end of war by December. Fleet is reaching the Philippines.

25 Aug.

Abeleven died after 3 months. Paris occupied.

26 Aug.

Van Amerongen died, no 16!

29 Aug.

After 4 or 5 days of nervous tension and cleaning, an inspection by a Colonel.

Since the last jasje, now working in corridor 18 under “driftkop” (No 33) and ‘Bruintje Beer’ (178). (*These were the numbers on their hats*).

Here my pad is full and I changed to loose paper, which I had folded together, however the outside leaves got lost so I continue with what is on page 5.

No date. . . . we hope to reach Java but are not sure. The news (rumours) is terrific, action on all frontiers and strong Russian offensive. May be free this year and home next year?

27 Sept.

Woken at 7 a.m. to see the camp commander because our shift had worked less than the a.m. and nightshift. (Ha these hard workers). Yesterday found a map of Europe with lines on it and dates from attack and occupation I think.

Food the last time rice, gort, and “vlokken” (*Oats?*) mixed in proportions of 10-5-7. Sometimes also vermicelli. Sometimes fish in the soup, which makes it tastier. The camp commander has already predicted that the rations will get smaller, 705 gram against 740 now.

4 Oct.

Yesterday news that Holland is free and attacks on Java and Sumatra. Also big Russian offensive and more landings on the Philippines.

Many festering wounds on my hands.

12 Oct.

Hands still bad, now sulphur ointment on them. I had 2 jasje days and tonight to the mine again. Yesterday received winter clothing. The day before air raids. Hondo attacked. Big convoy leaves the Philippines direction Formosa or China.

16 Oct.

Weight last week 65 kg. Questions: how long to go, how are you both? If Holland is free how are the families, how many still alive. What is the condition on Java? We do not know but do so long for the end.

I was dead tired today. Do you remember that I came home to Kramat Laan and just fell down on the bed of tiredness!

Now I am lying on my belly under the mosquito net and want to talk to you but you are not here. It is crazy two and a half year POW, 955 days today, married with one son! Hard to realise.

Yesterday Bouwmeester taken to hospital, delirious and unconscious. This morning they tried to make him eat something. Could it be encephalitis? Manus is now 3 days on jasje skigoto. The bandage was taken off my hand this week, after 14 days. The hand is still a bit stiff and bent. (Happened 29th September)

25 Oct.

In the air raid shelter. Yesterday was Joh's birthday. How would he be? Holland, Belgium and France liberated. Russians are 100 km from Berlin. In the Pacific also good.

20th October Hazenberg broke his right leg caused by a rock fall in corridor 18. Bouwmeester is improving but no control over his bowel movements yet. This week 3x a small orange from the fund (of the priest?). Since the 20th October we have distribution cards for the food. A stamp at every meal. If one loses the card one misses out on one meal and 10 ct penalty.

27 Oct.

Today we can buy butter, seaweed, pepper, etc. The butter is a sort of hard fat but tastes all right.

31 Oct.

Today the last day I gave "D" (?), as it should finish this month according to me. Fighting on Formosa, Philippines. Hong Kong taken. Somewhere a camp commander has said not to spread news. (Afraid for some reaction?).

4 Nov.

First of November had a typhoid injection. Work again in corridor 10 under "de kop". Wet wound on foot. Started with vitamin tablets again. Today talked with English speaking Japanese, the first one I shook hands with. At jasmé day talked about Psalm 119 after communion with the Englishmen. Now we pay for 40 cigarettes and get 40 free per month.

It all points to going home by Christmas

7 Nov.

In the dining hall. Trouble with swollen legs, Oedema. Had a bath, water was nice, shaved and brushed teeth. Yesterday new shoes (tabbies). Just had half a cigarette and some pickles with mustard, a delicacy. In the mine rather quiet with "driftkop", the Japanese supervisor. He likes to explode the charges after we put them in the drilled holes. Ha the buffet opens so: enjoy your meal. Rice with gort and some soup. The rations are a bit bigger over the last three days as we do not get beans anymore. A good stomach filling although the Soya beans are very healthy.

8 Nov.

From the mine came the news that Europe had peace on the 23rd. What a relief. So that was on Joh's birthday and today, on father's birthday I heard it. Now if we are still here on the 1st December (Mother's birthday), all the birthdays are finished.

The weather is getting colder. From 9 to 11 we had air raid alarm on the 7th. First everybody in the barracks, then there was a sick-report and later we were told that work in the camp was put on again.

25 Nov.

On the 21st we had again an inspection by the Sergeant who plays the boss when the commander is away. The 13th we got a new camp commander. On the 9th we got 9 boxes of Red Cross stuff in. Yesterday a 1000-yen worth of goods came in like: Chilly, cherries, oranges, tea etc. Also had a biscuit with sweet and an orange. Rumours: fighting on Java and Sumatra and Malacca.

29 Nov.

Rumours about the departure of 4 Dutchmen and 28 Englishmen from the camp. Next morning Dr. v.d.Meer told me that I would be included as well. That would then be my last day here. It turned out to be true.

15 Dec.

We are home early from Kamiama station, the best outside duty we now have as from the 6th December on. 1 December was a jasmie day. All 37 Englishmen and 5 Dutchmen were tested and put on jasmie till further order. Left 3rd December, as thought. At the first station I met Jan Volkers, one of the section of Tangerang and a brother of Francis. At the last point I met van Oort, Oudewereld and Montanus. This camp is bad as far as barracks and baths is concerned. The barrack walls are from tree bark, so very draughty and the baths only available after 1 p.m. and not very hot.

Yesterday jasmie. Nice weather. Had a bath, and shaved. Separated into carpenters, electricians, brick and concrete workers. Yesterday also had Red Cross goods again: biscuits, jam, sugar, tea, prunes, raisins, milk, salt, and chocolates. The evening meal had corned beef and liver paste with the rice. The quantity of rice is here about the same, the vegies a bit better than in camp 11. (This is camp 1 of the Fukuoka district that contains in total about 10,000 men). Today again 670 Red Cross parcels came into the camp, which is about one per man. Also an extra blanket. Rumour is that the allies landed on Formosa.

20 Dec.

Since 17th December I am ill and in bed. Again one of these mysterious infections from within. Now at my right ankle. Burow water dressing on it, which I just replaced. Today 6 men from the Airport job carried in. All collapsed from cold and misery. Past week 8 men died and last night another 2, an Englishman and an American. In total 10 men. Some 2 days ago, some sick people have been sent back to their original camps and replaced with healthy ones.

For the last two days 70 men go to the new camp to prepare that. Last night the Korean camp went up in flames, the electrical supply damaged and the whole night in the dark. Our ration of 430 kg per day has now changed in connection with the supply of "Oebi" (sweet potato), and is now 140 kg barley, 150 kg rice and 250 kg Oebi per day for 650 men. However as the Oebi is very heavy, the rations are only small.

24 Dec. 1944

Yesterday we were allowed to use telegram forms, two of ten words each, and for our barrack of 100 men we could send 3 broadcasting telegrams of 150 words each on which we would include as many names and addresses as possible. (*None of these ever turned up*).

. . . And here finishes my diary as the last 4 pages of this self-made booklet have been lost.

I now continue from memory.

The Christmas that followed was one I will never forget. Roby Van Oort was the main instigator and we had arranged for a white cloth to serve as the table and with coloured pieces we arranged a Christmas effect. What we ate was composed from our normal meal but with the decorations and the atmosphere we had a dinner as never before, notwithstanding the cold wind that reached us through the badly constructed walls.

No doubt the days went on as they had been going. Rumours kept coming in that the allies were on the move and that the Japanese were being pushed back, although with very hard fighting.

The over flying US planes became more frequent and one day they dropped what looked like long strips of light metallic material. After the war we found out that the purpose of it was to misguide the Japanese radar used to direct their anti aircraft guns, or at least to make them useless.

In the beginning of May 1945 the first signs appeared that there was something wrong with my mouth and teeth. When blowing my nose, food rests came out, giving off a nasty smell. This became so bad that it was even noticeable around me. Dr Ensing expected an opening in one of my right top back teeth was the cause, but did not dare to put a filling in as, if that landed in my cheek, it could cause problems. For about one week he then washed the opening out with a Permanganate solution. By placing a hypodermic needle between these teeth, he pressed this solution through the needle through the cheek and out through the nose, sometimes bringing dirt with it. After that a gauze was placed in the opening to avoid food rests settling in the opening. I had to control that this stayed in place.

One day however, the filling had disappeared. About a week later, when on parade, I had to sneeze, and with that the gauze came out and I had to collect this in my hanky.

Early July the opening became so big that I could not smoke anymore as I inhaled air through my nose instead of through the cigarette. Also when drinking I had to watch that, when swallowing, the liquid went through my throat instead of out of my nose.

Then just after the 6th August 1945 we noticed heavy disturbance of the guard and heard that heavy bombardment had taken place not far from us. That was, the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

The end came when one day we were called to parade and were spoken to by a high Japanese officer.

The message was that Nippon had surrendered. That we still had to stay within the camp and would need permission to leave, until the U.S. military would take over.

(I then was able to get a piece of paper upon which, I understood, was written in Japanese, that I was able to travel outside the camp. However I have never been able to find out what it actually says, it is written in an old Japanese style apparently. The left hand side may indicate the camp I was in. The right hand side something like: Show these people the way to the station ORIO, the station closest to the camp. That paper is shown on the front page).

With a few more ex POWs we went outside to the railway station and took the train to the next stop, to have a look what was there. I found a photographer who I talked into taking a photo of me, so that I could show you what I looked like.

A group of us went to a military depot in the hope of being able to get some Samurai swords. It appeared that, apparently on order of the US military, they had put their entire armoury together so indeed we found a box of Samurai swords of which we took what we wanted under heavy protest of the soldiers. However, them having surrendered, they let us go.

During the weeks after the surrender we were fed from the air. American planes came over and dropped food and pamphlets. Within a few days we were told to get ready for departure and were taken by trucks to Nagasaki.

That place was a horrible sight. Practically everything was flat with only a few steel columns or likewise resisting structures were still standing, but it was a landscape I will never forget.

At the harbour side we were taken through various buildings and sheds, erected by the American Army. We had to get rid of all our gear, clothes shoes etc which were to be burned, and were given American military clothing. I was able to retain the two samurais, my diary and some small items I had made and engraved over the years and which I wanted to keep. We were then taken aboard the American war ship the "Renville", where we got our first civilized meal. It was only ordinary bread but I will never forget the taste. It tasted like cake!

Here I exchanged one of my Samurais for an American watch to replace the one taken from me on the 13th April 1944.

Aboard the "Renville", a Roentgen photo was taken of teeth and cheek and on the basis of that the Dental surgeon advised to have one or two teeth extracted as soon as we arrived in Manilla. There the back-tooth was removed. It showed a groove at the back, which had most likely caused the problem.

In Manilla we were accommodated in the Fifth Replacement Depot, APO 711. There we were given a booklet describing the facilities and a plan of the camp. We were given three sets of clothing. Physically we were checked and given the treatment necessary to restore us to a healthy condition before going "home".

The food was excellent and plenty, we could travel to and in Manilla and surroundings with whatever transport that was available.

Manilla had suffered badly from the war, not much glass was still in place, buildings were damaged and roads blocked. However we had opportunity to write and receive letters. *(There are too many to list them here. Except a few, they are all in Dutch, but they are all held in a separate file at home).*

10th November 1945 we were given Blue pre-printed cards by the Red Cross for information about family etc. I lodged one for Anky and one for Hansje. These were sent to Batavia where any information available was printed on the card and returned to me, by then in Balik Papan. *(see Document 2).*

12th November 1945 I received a Radiogram that all were safe and well. *(See Document 3)*
At the end of 1945 I was able to get a transfer to Balik Papan after the doctor declared me fit enough to leave the camp.

Balik Papan was badly damaged, all the petrol installations were blown up but a transit-camp was set up there for ex POWs and internees travelling to Singapore and Europe.

There I met Gé, a sister of Anky, who came from an internee camp on Java and was on her way to Singapore to meet her husband Anton, who had been a POW in Sarawak (Borneo). She told me that Anky was alive and in Semarang.

From then on I was anxious to go to Batavia hoping to meet her and Hansje there.

I was able to "arrange" a flight to Batavia, from where I found transport to Laan Trivelli to be united with them after about four years.

T h e R e u n i o n a n d A n n ' s s t o r y

The last time I had seen Ann and Hansje was in *February 1942*, at Kramat Laan in Batavia when I had permission to visit them before withdrawing to Bandoeng.

There she told me that an announcement had been made that all women and children had to go to the centre of the city and that the older men, that were left, would form a guard around them as a protection against the Japanese, having no idea what was going to happen. That had not worked and many people then had left for friends or other cities, while transport was still available.

Ann then had sought refuge with the family van Steenis at Kramat Laan 8, a “safe area”, where the Japanese closely guarded them.

Now January 1946 I saw them again at Laan Trivelli at the house of Mrs. Dwarshuis.

We recognized each other straight away and I knew immediately that the little boy was our son Hansje, who now had to be told that, of all the men he had seen since they left camp, I was the “real father”. How lovely to see them both alive and looking well and to be able to take them in my arms.

Of course we had to tell each other many many things but it was very difficult to know what to say and where to start.

As Ann had not kept a diary, slowly, over the years following, stories came out in order of importance on the life in camp. The worst events earlier than the less unpleasant events but over the years, with her help, I was able to sort of put them in chronological order and make a story of it.

In the meantime the most important thing at that stage was to get to know each other again and to find out what the future had to offer.

During that time Mrs. Dwarshuis was very happy to let us stay with her, which solved the accommodation.

I found that the company I worked with pre-war still existed and that one of the then directors had also survived and immediately asked me to come back with them, which I did. It so worked out that Ann was also offered a job and so our lively hood was secured. This took all our attention and the camp years were hardly discussed.

I now continue with what I call: “*Ann’s Story*”, putting together parts from various sessions and talks about her camp period.

First of all I pick up from when I left her at Kramat Laan in February 1942.

Life in this “safe area” had been little more than being in a big prison with constant guard. There were regular instances of the Japanese bursting in and disrupting activities in the homes or rooms. Once, she said, when they were playing Mah Jong, two Japanese came in and threw the stones in the gutter.

As the family with whom she was staying moved, Ann moved over to the Ozingas, who lived in Kebon Sirih Park No 40. When there everybody had to have an identity card and Ann did get one but had to give a passport photo of her and pay eighty Rupiah. (*See Document 4*). On one occasion, when Jaap Ozinga was playing the piano, a few Japanese came in and whilst they all immediately stood up at attention and bowed, the Japanese made them sit down and asked Jaap to continue playing.

Ann then later heard that I was a POW in Tjimahi and so she wanted to move to Bandoeng, to be closer to me. She contacted our friends, the Dicke family, if it was o.k. for her and Hansje to stay there.

Geert Dicke then sent her houseboy to get her and Hansje. They had to leave everything in the cupboards and wardrobes, (dresses, some of which she had not even worn yet), all our furniture etc. The boy only took the box with the silver set of cutlery that was our wedding present and was engraved with our initials. All her new linen she left for the nuns. She only took Hansje's potty in her hand and a box with building blocks in a backpack.

In Bandoeng it appeared that Geert had already more people in the house, and that she again had to apply for an identity card. This one was a bit simpler and smaller than the Batavia one. (*See Document 4*)

Contact with me and other friends in the camps, was made by trying to get letters or notes over or through the "kawat" (fence) in and out of the POW camps. They usually found their destination and some of them did survive and are in our archive. Of course these were all in Dutch.

Shortly after they "settled in", the order came that all white women and children had to report to "Tjihapit Camp". That was an area or suburb of Bandoeng that had been made ready (fenced off) to serve as a camp. Her friend Geert Dicke and her husband had to stay, as he was an engineer and the Japanese wanted him to work for them.

In that camp, which in a short time contained about 15,000 women and children from Bandoeng and surrounding areas, Ann was given a little room in a house for Hansje and herself. However in a few weeks time the house became full.

By some amazing coincidence her sister Gé, who came from Borneo with her son Tony, joined her in the same house, and later also two more-distant relations of mine, Corrie Rijneveld and her daughter Dinie, joined them. In the end there were 5 women, four Dutch, (Ann, her sister Gé, Corrie and Bets Buys) with one child each, and an English woman on her own.

As food was getting short, camp-kitchens were started and Ann worked in one for about one and a half years, distributing food to thousands of people. Ann said: "You never knew whom you served as you always had your eyes on the food and the plates and was too busy to look up".

Then rumours started that they all had to move, but where to? Nobody knew.

Ann then approached the Camp leader and asked not to be in the same group with her sister Gé. They were both looking after a son, who were cousins, and who were always fighting with each other. Instead, she asked to be together with Corrie and Dinie, as Dinie got on very well with Hansje.

They went with the first lot, on the 18th November 1944.

Ann did pack her backpack with some clothes, the "potty" and Hansje's building blocks. She said: "there I was with a little bundle on one hand and Hansje on the other".

Arriving at the station, they were hoarded in boarded-up train-wagons. All women, and children less than 12 years old. Boys older than 12, had already been taken away to another camp.

Ann continues:

It was afternoon and the sun was burning down on us. It was stifling hot and there was no ventilation. The train did not leave till it was dark. Nobody said anything except that the children were crying.

In every wagon a "head" was appointed. I (Ann) was in charge of the "sick" wagon. Because of that, Hansje stayed with Corrie and Dinie in another wagon. After dark the train went and we were on our way, nobody knowing where to.

When the train stopped, all "Hanjos" (as the "heads" were called) had to come out on the platform to report on the "passengers". How many were in the wagon and, if any, and how many, had died because of heat and illness, etc. I had to report about the "sick" wagon, and if any died they had to be taken out.

So it went on for two days. The train was standing still during the day and moved during the night.

The third day the train stopped in the middle of the night and all were ordered out. Nobody had any idea of where we were.

All women and children were loaded on trucks that were standing there. All standing up and packed together.

I continue:

As Ann was still looking after the sick women, she was in the last truck to leave and was taken to a camp. When looking for Hansje however she could not find him and she started screaming. Apparently a Dutch doctor, who was in the camp, then gave her an injection to calm her down.

Her screaming seemed to have drawn the attention of the Japanese, as the next morning a soldier came to the camp with Hansje on his arm. It appeared that the whole group from the train was taken to two camps and that Hansje had landed in the other camp, not far away. I imagine she would have been very relieved to have Hansje with her again and able to look after him. Hansje had been taken to "Banju Biru 10" and Ann was in "Banju Biru 11"

That Camp had about 3000 women and children, (except boys older than 12 years of age). They were housed in bamboo barracks, about 50 per barrack. They were lying on bamboo slats, about 50 cm above the ground and about 45 cm width per person.

"Banju Biru 11" had been a military compound, in which bamboo barracks had been built to accommodate internees. The wives and children of the original military personnel were the first in there. They had taken as much personal furniture etc with them as they could. However with every additional group of internees they had to get rid of that to provide the extra accommodation. Their furniture had been removed and burned. That hurt and was not appreciated, so there was tension between them and the new arrivals.

Ann continues:

And so started our life in Banju Biru.

After a short settling in period, the necessary work was allocated to various people. For instance Hansje, 4 years old, was in a group of children who had to sweep the guards yards and sometimes got a crust of bread.

Elderly women had to clean the vegetables for the kitchen, do the cooking, look after the small children and do other work in the camp, like pulling grass (no knives or scissors available), collecting snails (for the sick or mix in the soup), cleaning the yard or could

volunteer for cleaning the two toilets “Mexico” and “Algiers” (as they were called), for which work an extra bar of soap was given.

We were not allowed to be together talking or so, in groups of 5 or more.

Early every morning there was a “roll call”, standing in rows of ten. We put the young children in the front because we had to call out “one, two, three etc” (itchi, ni, san) in Japanese and the kids picked that up much easier than the elderly. After that it was work and work.

In the beginning the meals were 3 times a day, provided from the big camp kitchen. The calling for meals was done in order of military rank, as they had been used to. After some complaints about that system because there were more non-military than military connected women, that was changed to calling the barrack numbers. In changing the numbers daily, every barrack had a chance of being first etc.

I was in charge of a group of about 8 young women. We walked with a Japanese guard early every day about 5 miles to the station of Ambarawa. We had two two-wheeled carts with us and, when at the station, we were told what to do. Mostly that was taking heavy bags (with rice, sugar or flour), from the train, put them into the carts and bring that back to our camp. Sometimes we had to deliver it to the other near-by camp No 10. We were often beaten, which they did to their own people as well.

At some stage there was much less food arriving and also the wood for the kitchen fires became less and less. We were then told to go up into the mountains to cut bamboo.

By that time our footwear was almost non-existent and many, including me, were going barefoot. When off the main road that was very painful to the feet.

One day a plane came over and dropped pamphlets. I never got to see any. However somewhere in the camp there must have been a radio and so all sorts of rumours went around. Also that we would soon be free.

The Japanese got very nasty and sometimes we stood for hours in the sun or were beaten as punishment for anything anyone did wrong.

On one occasion a child had died and whilst we were standing on parade, a Japanese soldier carried out the body, sewn up in a bamboo mat. Nobody dared to move and the mother was not allowed to grieve or even move a muscle. We were all powerless and unable to offer comfort.

Christmas 1944, what later became the last Christmas in camp, somebody started to sing “Silent Night“. In no time we had roll call and we stood at attention from about 8 p.m. till 4 a.m. without any food or drink. If anyone fainted the soldiers threw a bucket of slop over her.

On the 2nd March 1945 I received via the Red Cross a message that my Father had passed away on the 28th November 1942. (*See Document 5*)

(Looking at the message, which was meant to go to Jan Berg, it appeared to have been typed in Genève on the 12th April 1943, after receipt of a message from Ann’s mother dated 2nd March 1943. It was then sent to the Japanese Red Cross in Tokio for further deliverance to me, a prisoner of Japan. Instead of being sent to me it reached Ann, an internee of Japan in Banju Biru, almost 2 years later.)

The last weeks in camp we often had only one meal a day of tapioca with water.

Then one night I was called to the Japanese office and told to get any food that was in the store, out and to hide it in every barrack under the sleeping floors.

The next day when we woke up, the Japanese soldiers were gone and chaos reigned. Nobody did go out however, we were all afraid.

With the camp left totally to the women themselves, a bit of unrest and disorganization developed. For about a week there were odd raids by guerrillas from the surrounding forest. This meant that some women, who had “hung in” so far, were beginning to go “over the edge”.

Then came a company of Sikhs who looked after the protection of the camp and a number of Red Cross personnel who were to organize the return of the women back to a safer area and the handling of incoming and outgoing mail.

Then the evacuation of the internees, back to civilization, began.

The first 3 or 4 convoys of liberated internees were ambushed and killed by guerrillas or pelopors (groups of armed Indonesians fighting for “freedom”), on their way to Ambarawa or Semarang. This slowed down the liberation until the Ghurkas arrived to take over. They got the following convoys through as they dealt with the ambush attacks on the way.

Communications improved and Red Cross news came through. As I received two telegrams from Red Cross that Jan was missing, I had nowhere to go to directly.

I then started working for the Red Cross in the camp sorting all the mail that came in.

In that position I did get a pass, dated 15th November 1945 (and a follow up one dated 16th November) signed by the Camp Commander that I was allowed to move in and out of Banju Biru 11. (*See Document 6*)

Some letters were written only on a piece of paper. Some notes were from husbands, asking where their wives were.

The situation outside was getting worse. The intention was that all the remaining women and children were to be evacuated to a safer area, Semarang. We, Hansje and I, went with others, like the cooks who had to cook till the final day, in the last truck that left the camp for Ambarawa. Mattresses were put over our heads for protection against bombs or grenades. The Ghurkas walked and fought alongside the truck to safeguard us against the “pelopors” who followed and attacked us all the way.

In Ambarawa we stayed in the prison (originally camp Banju Biru 10) but were under constant attack by pelopors. One of their grenades exploded on the second floor of a barrack and caused several deaths. When they managed to get the buildings on fire we had to leave and again were loaded on the trucks with the mattress protection over us. The Ghurkas virtually fought our convoy from that jail all the way to Semarang.

In Semarang we were accommodated in houses, were given some clothes by the “RAPWI” (Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees) and were allowed to walk around. I was still working with the Red Cross.

With no further news about Jan, being alive or not or where, I was allowed to go to Ceylon. However the day before departure the Red Cross received a telegram that Jan was safe in Manilla.

Hastily I was put on a military plane to Djakarta, the most likely place to meet him. Arriving there I was asked what I was doing, as they had no warning and had to put me somewhere. I was finally put in a building set up to accommodate soldiers, on field beds, and I laid down there to sleep. During the night however the soldiers did arrive and I was told to leave the next day.

That morning I took Hansje by the hand and started to walk in the direction of where we lived before the war. That was the Moesi Weg, which was part of Tjideng Camp and which was a “protected” area. Walking along Laan Trivelli I passed a house and in the garden was a lady whom I thought I remembered from Church, from before the war and asked if she was Mrs. Dwarshuis. She said yes and I burst into tears. She took us in and we stayed there till Jan came from Manilla.

The day after I arrived I had to go back to where I left the potty and building blocks, so I started walking again. Luckily an Officer in a jeep came past and asked where I was going. I explained and he took me there to pick up my things and brought me back to Laan Trivelli again.

Mrs. Dwarshuis taught us again to say Grace before the meal, how to eat from a plate, with knife and fork, how to sit on a chair and not to cross our legs etc.

There it was that we waited for husband and father to come “back” to us, and that is where we eventually found each other.

P o s t s c r i p t

Many years have gone since we met again and many are the times that our lives went through unexpected periods and changes.

In March 1946 we went to Holland for a short recuperation and then I returned to Indonesia for a four-year contract with the same company. We got two more sons who in turn married, gave us grandchildren and one great grand daughter. During these four years I spent some time in Saudi Arabia and later in the Philippines for Company projects, in an effort to get some establishment outside Indonesia.

Realizing that we, as a family, would have to leave Indonesia as well, we had to decide whether to go to Holland or another country. I then had the opportunity to spend one year in Australia for the company. This I accepted so we lived here for 12 months but were called back because of increased contracts.

After a further 4 years in Indonesia, we realized that we could not stay there and having had the Australian experience, we migrated to Australia. We lived and worked in Perth, Geelong, Canberra and Sydney, where I retired and where we still live.

My wife and the family, as well as I, are still happy and healthy, notwithstanding the war years and the time in the tropics. Our wedding text: *“And know that I am with you always: yes, to the end”* is never out of our thoughts.

A d d e n d a

When going through my diary, and putting Ann's story together, I remembered that we had a lot of papers somewhere put away that had a connection with all I was writing.

I had placed these in a photo album "for later reference" and so it appeared that some items I had written about are in our possession. I also found papers of which I did not remember we had.

Letters, some of which were folded to a small size for easy handling and which had been sent between Ann and me over or through the fences, either by themselves or trusted Indonesian boys and/or maids. Most of these are in Dutch so there is no reason to attach these to this book.

A number of these Documents, although in Dutch, are of interest because of the story they tell, looking at dates, sender or what is written on them. I have attached photocopies of these documents and mentioned them in the story where applicable.

The Documents included are: **Note. These documents are not attached to this article.**

Cover: the story of the card on the front page is recorded in my diary.

No 1: was written by me whilst I was still in a POW camp.

No 2: I wrote after the war when I was in Manilla.

No 3: was received by me in Manilla on the 12th November 1945.

No 4: shows the two identification documents Ann had to have with her all the time and which therefore survived.

No 5: is a very early Red Cross message, sent during the war from Holland, which took almost two years before reaching Ann instead of me.

No 6: shows two remarkable slips of paper not many of which still would be in existence I think.

No 7 and 8: show front and back of a Red Cross message sent by my father from Holland in August 1945. This and many others show the big part the Red Cross played in bringing people together again. I do not remember when I received it but the note on the top indicates that it was in Manilla. These and others were kept because of the sentimental value they had, both for sender and receiver.

No 9 and 10: show another type of card that was available after the war, from some official bureau in Holland, to send messages to close relations in the hope they would be alive and read them.

No 11: a Red Cross form again confirming receipt of an earlier letter and sending further information.

No 12: is of interest because of the places from where these letters were sent, the places they went to find the addressee and the dates.

All these papers show the consequences of war, splitting existing families, not knowing where they went or whether they are still alive or not, due to breaking down of existing communication channels.

As is clear from these documents the Red Cross did a tremendous task in setting up agency-organizations in the various countries and preparing forms to enable people to ask for information or addresses of relatives and for sending messages to relatives to last known addresses, in the hope the Red Cross would keep forwarding these to the later addresses if known.