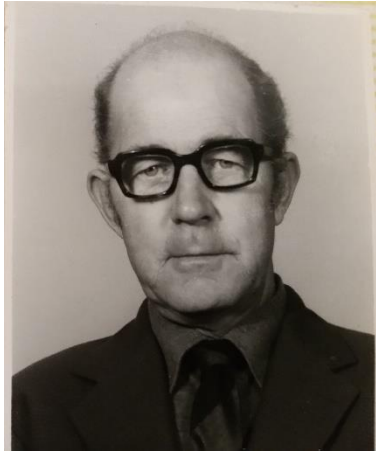


Jacob and Klaasje van der Haar

Jacob and Klaasje van der Haar lived in the town of Hoogeveen, with their 3 young children. Jacob worked in a local metal factory. Soon after the German invasion, the van der Haar family began to resist the new regime.



Jacob van der Haar



Klaasje van der Haar

In the summer of 1942, with the start of the deportations, Jewish couple, Benjamin and Gila (nee Meijer) Gokkes, from Groningen, had decided to seek a hiding place instead of heeding the order to report for "work in the East". They turned to members of the local underground network, who took their two-year-old son, Joseph, to a number of addresses, all temporary ones.

In the fall of 1942, a friend of the van der Haar's family, who was active in the local resistance group, turned to them for help in hiding Joseph Gokkes. Jacob and Klaasje saw it as their duty to open their home to him.

In November 1942, Joseph was brought to the van der Haar's. Now called Joop, he was presented to the van der Haar children and the outside world as a child whose father was working in Germany and whose mother was too ill to care for him.



Joseph with the van der Haar family

When a nosy neighbor commented that Joop's father never came for furlough to visit him, the van der Haars asked a friend to pose as the father and pass by twice a year. Joop was treated as their own child, and soon he saw the van der Haars as his real parents, calling them "mama" and "papa", and the children his brothers and sisters. As a preventive measure in case of imminent danger, the van der Haars arranged an escape plan with their immediate neighbors. A woman, active in the resistance, was able to forewarn the van der Haars a number of times of upcoming raids, so that Joop could be whisked away.

The van der Haar home was often a meeting place for resistance workers. Once, when collaborators came to the house looking for Jacob, his daughter Truida hid Joop in the attic until the coast was clear. In February 1945, a Jewish girl from Amsterdam, Sonja Peters, was also accepted into the van der Haar home. Both stayed until the liberation of the area in April 1945. After the war, Joop was reunited with his biological parents, however separating from the van der Haars was extremely traumatic for all.

Later that year, a fourth van der Haar baby was born, who was called Joop after Joop Gokkes. They stayed in close touch, even after Joop immigrated to Israel and the van der Haars to Australia.

On May 7, 2001, [Yad Vashem](#) recognized Jacob van der Haar and Klaasje van der Haar, as Righteous Among the Nations.

Story by courtesy of [The Embassy of Israel in Canberra](#).