

de Wit Family History

Dad's brothers and sisters were all born in Hank. They are in birth order:

Piet - married Tonia

Kees - married Nellie

Cornelia - married Toon

Marinus - married Nettie

Sien - married Dirk

Nardus

Johannes (b 1924) - married Gloria b 1926)

Gerrit - married Jaantje

Annie - married Harry

Wilhelmina - married Toen

Jacobus Gerardus de Wit (dad's father) (18/11/1888 - 19/6/1973) was a crane/lorry driver. He married Johanna Theodora van Dinteren (18/1/1891 - 25/4/1945)(home duties).

Towards the end of WWII the de Wit home in Hank was occupied by the Germans and Dad's family were forced to live in a barge on the river. Dad's mother was killed by a stray bullet fired by a German in response to a noise he had heard on the river (25/4/1945).

At the time of his Mother's death Dad was on the Allied side. He was 20. Prior to his escape to the Allied side Dad had worked at a paper mill and grocery store during German rule. His escape was planned over a couple of weeks and it was by canoe during the night of 7 December 1944 across the Biesbosch. It involved borrowing a cart from the Germans (Dad fooled the Germans into letting him have it), painting the canoe black at his cousin's place, making a paddle and mapping the trip through the Biesbosch. Up against this activity was the night time curfew.

Dad's escape was to Drimmelen (the Allied front line) over the river Maas which separated the German and Allied troops (the front line). As Dad and Adrian van Dinteren (his cousin) approached the Allied troops they had to identify themselves so they were not mistaken for Germans and so they sang the Dutch anthem. They were then locked up for a couple of days while their identities were checked.

Dad joined the Dutch Interior Forces (DIF). Dad had been a part of the Underground prior to crossing to the Allied side. He was with DIF for about 6 months doing things like checking who crossed bridges.

Dad then joined the Dutch Airforce and was sent to Australia. He left England for Australia on 20/6/1945. He came across by ship and landed in Fremantle (17/7/45), he arrived in Sydney on 23/7/45 and then traveled to Bacchus Marsh by train on 24/7/45.

On 13/8 he went to Ascot Vale for training (for example, in morse code) and he marched in VP day in Melbourne on 15/8. On the 10/9/45 he arrived in Casino.

Dad was at Casino for about 12 months. The camp was called Victory camp and it was out near the lawn cemetery. Dad's job at the camp was guarding Javanese POW's. The Dutch were protecting their colony Indonesia from Japanese invasion.

Dad met Mum in June 1946 at a dance. He left Casino on 16/11/46 and arrived in Indonesia (via Sydney and then Brisbane - 21/11/46) on the 18 Dec 1946. He left Indonesia for Holland on board the "Kota Inten" on the 4 January 1947 (a 4-5 week trip) to await discharge from the Airforce. Dad asked to be discharged in Australia because he wanted to come back out. He had to have a sponsor to do this so Mum got him Jack Buckland who said that he would have work for him on the farm. He therefore was able to come out and he landed in Darwin on 13 August 1947. He was one of the last few Dutch to be allowed to return to Australia to discharge. He flew to Brisbane and then got a goods train to Casino. He started as an Apprentice barber to Jack Hudson on 23rd September 1947 and married Gloria Jones on June 14, 1948.