



COMMANDO AP DE JONG,
'THE WANDERING WHITE'

THE MAN WHO DIED TOO LATE.



ALBERT DE JONG

October 15, 1914 - June 14, 1945

Text: Peter Gerritse - Photos: Ap & Guus de Jong
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COMMANDO AB DE JONG SURVIVED EVERYTHING EXCEPT PEACE. THE MAN WHO DIED TOO LATE ...

1943, A folkish boy from Amsterdam wanted to cycle to freedom. That wasn't easy. The cyclist kept a diary. A light minded boy romance ends up like a black tragedy. Read how Ap de Jong survived everything, except peace, which we commemorate every year.

It was a romantic daze. On the 17th of June 1943 the brothers Ap and Wim de Jong started without the faintest notion of what war actually meant, from Amsterdam to a bike ride to what should let them to freedom". They did not even wonder what route they had to take. Their main motive was: away from the whirlwind

of German occupation, which was stifling the low countries. Such an unplanned trip was in line with family tradition. Ap and Wim were sons of a Swiss father and a Dutch mother, from a generation of traveling artisans and artists. The brothers had a great adaptability and a more than average language knowledge. They also carried nicknames. Ap was called "The Wandering White" and Wim "The Wandering Fakir".

Such a bike ride in the summer of 1943, with England as a travel destination, that was the start of a boy's book. >>



1943, the brothers Ap (left) and Wim de Jong (right) prefer to stay in the open air.

In the air, airplanes stumbled upon each other. Moffrikans, who sang their songs, were guided by the *"tjoenk-tjoenk"* of a FLAK cannon. Auschwitz, this terrible symbol of degeneration, was an unknown name.

In the early summer of 1943, two Amsterdam boys were still dreaming of a better world. Ap filmed and photographed loosely and kept a diary. Wim sits in the double tent and processes so-called 'buk-shag' (cigarette ends) to pipe tobacco. Their first night they spend on the Veluwe. It rained showers. The brothers

'Sleeping above the city in the mountains. Saw fireflies. We had an interesting and dangerous day'

are not initially bothered by any rule. They bike in a relaxed way from Stroe to Vroomshoop, from Delden to Lutterade. In Venlo the brothers are fined because of driving on the national road. Wim has a word struggle with a German, *"what has turned lightly violent"*. After they crossed the border illegally, they arrived in Liege on July 1, 1943. (*"... Sleeping above the city in the mountains. Saw fireflies. We had an interesting and dangerous day..."*.)

After they have escaped from a raid, they fled into a monastery. Ap and Wim were arrested anyway the next day. Kept prisoner in the Citadel they speak *"with the Jewish prisoners down below us through a hole in the wall. Terrible what those people still have to deal with and have already experienced. Mice, rats and lice are also here. The Germans have destroyed the last photos we took. So we cannot make a picture of this prison. Our film device is also broken."*

July 5, 1943: *"... In the evening at half past five, taken and transferred to the other side, suspected of espionage. Everything was taken from us and we were no longer in contact with each other...."*

Ten days later, Ap and Wim are transferred to the prison of Maastricht (*"With 21 men in an attic, we ate salt out of hunger"*).

July 26, 1943. *"... Put on transport to a concentration camp near Cologne. We have fled Venlo and arrived that night in Amsterdam. We heard that my sister-in-law and her two children have not survived a bombardment ..."*

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The two brothers from Amsterdam during one of their bike tours through the Netherlands. Ap keeps a detailed diary of their experiences in the early summer of 1943.

The next day in Amsterdam the Grüne Polizei is on the doorstep. Fortunately, the brothers stay with acquaintances that night. Relaxed camping in the Dutch forests is not possible for the time being. On August 8, they pitch once again their tent in Brunssum, on the heath.

The sentences in Ap's journal become shorter, almost staccato. The tension is always present. Through Maastricht, they arrive in Mortel on August 16, where they can live in a fairly impenetrable forest near a remote farmhouse. They stay there until the beginning of October, apparently enjoying the fact that they are not observed by anyone.

Quote from the diary: "... Mother must now also go into hiding. The Grüne Polizei has been on the doorstep. Everything searched. We bring her to a farmer for a few days ...". On October 5, these farmers warned that the brothers are being searched by the police. Ap and Wim cycling away fastly in the direction of Schijndel. They get argue and break apart. On October 11, Ap is back in Amster-

dam. He eats with his family where he meets *"still some people from Vrij Nederland, the resistance paper"*. Tomorrow there will be raids everywhere.

There are three thousands members of the Grüne Polizei in the city! Wim also returns on his Amsterdam base. The brothers settled their disagreement.

'Tomorrow there will be raids everywhere. There are three thousand members of the Grüne Polizie in the City!'

On October 15, 1943, Ap wrote in the diary that he had signed up for France. He will be brought across the border. The diary ends on October 23, 1943. Ap is waiting for his contact person.

How Ap de Jong fared, became known later in pieces. In any case, he did not come to realize his postwar ideal, his own photo shop. That was realized later >>



Ap de Jong on the lookout with a Stengun.



A few times you became burglar. For paper or other items.



Ap de Jong (right) infiltrated after his Commando training in the German Bewachungs-Schutz.

by his only son, the late Amsterdam photographer Guus de Jong (Amsterdam, June 16, 1934 - Amsterdam January 23, 2015).

He finally finishes the story of his father: "He and his brother have been arrested four times in total. Each time they managed to pinch out. Eventually he arrived in France and on a fishing vessel he escaped from Normandy to England. Along with his brother, he has undertaken various actions, but he often operated alone. In April 1944, Wim and he were in any case involved in the sabotage of twenty-eight omnibuses in northern France. In England he was selected for the commando training in Achnacarry, Scotland. The Dutch who came through were classified by the No. 2 - Dutch Troop, one of the hardest commandos of the Allies. Instructor was Raymond Westerling."

It is clear that Ap de Jong has been very active behind the German lines after this training as an agent-saboteur. Guus de Jong about his father: "From Wim, now living in Brazil, I have learned a little bit about what he has done as a saboteur. They threw kilo's of sugar into the gasoline tanks of German aircrafts. Their motor soon broke down and fell into the sea. He has been infiltrating in the German Bewachungs-Schutz. He has executed liquidations using disguises.

"A number of times he has returned to England", said Guus de Jong. On September 17, 1944, Ap, together with thousands of Airborne soldiers, came at Arnhem back to home soil. The operation turned out disastrously. The group to which De Jong belongs consists of 180 commandos. Only 24 boys survive the slaughter.

'The trew kilo's of sugar into the gasoline tanks of German aircrafts. The motor soon broke down and fell into the sea.'

Guus de Jong: "My father has survived all the actions. But in peace time, on June 14, 1945, there were relocations of troops near Apeldoorn. He was in a transport from the Canadians. Suddenly they stopped. The soldiers in the back of the truck instructed stop signals. But the car behind my dad saw nothing. Then he jumped off to make that driver clear that he had to brake. But that guy did not see anything. He drove over my father, who was killed instantaneously. The tragedy is actually that he died a month too late."

>>



Albert de Jong during his Commando training in Scotland



Albert (second from right) with his fellow soldiers during an exercise in the Scottish Achnacarry.



Albert far left in the army truck.



Soldiers are resting along the road, standing in the middle is Albert de Jong with a cigarette.



Albert posing with a blown up German tank.



Albert together with a fellow soldier pose at a bombed bridge, location unknown, 1944.



Albert at the remains of a destroyed church, location unknown, 1944



Albert lays flowers at an improvised grave of a fallen soldier, location unknown, 1944

'THE WANDERING WHITE' WAS BURIED WITH MILITARY HONOUR

Ap de Jong has only seen one month of peace. He died at the age of 30 and was buried with military honors at the Canadian War Cemetery & Memorial in Groesbeek. The last campsite of "The Wandering White" is marked by a stone that Queen Wilhelmina has let put there. ■



June 16, 1945 at 3.30 pm. An solemn burial of soldier Albert de Jong at the Canadian cemetery Jonkerbosch. Albert de Jong was buried here temporarily and later reburied at the Canadian cemetery (Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery & Memorial) on the Groesbeek Zevenheuvelenweg, the Canadian cemetery was opened on May 4, 1947 by Queen Wilhelmina.





Teraarde-bestelling

Soldaat Albert de Jong

Onderdezielich hier in Winterswijk omgeving bevindende Commandotroep I.A., bevond zich een jong Amsterdammer en Vrijwillig Soldaat, die op 14 Juni j.l. nabij Apeldoorn bij een noodlottig ongeval het leven verloor. Zaterdag 16 Juni om half vier vond op de Canadese begraafplaats Jonkerbosch bij Nijmegen zijn begrafenis plaats.

De Jong, die de leeftijd van 30 jaar bereikte, werd op 14 Juni j.l. bij een auto-botsing bij Apeldoorn opslag gedood. Dit is wel zo tragisch omdat hij gedurende de bezetting bij pogingen om zich bij de Nederlandsche strijdkrachten over zee te voegen, meerdere malen in handen van de Duitsers viel, maar steeds met levensgevaar wist te ontsnappen. Tenslotte is het hem gelukt zich aan te sluiten bij Neerlands meest fanatieke soldatentroep No.: 2 Dutch Troop van No 10 (Inter-Allied) Commando. In zijn soldatentijd heeft hij zich bij alle voorkomende gelegenheden een actief cameraman getoond en honderden foto's vervaardigd,

waardoor hij wel en wee van onze Nederlandse troep heeft vereeuwigd.

De begrafenis vond plaats in tegenwoordigheid van zijn troepcommandant, kapt. J. Sinzel, terwijl zijn sectie-Commandant, luit. v.d. Bergh, het bevel voerde over zijn vrienden van dezelfde subsectie, die het stoffelijk overschot, escorteerden op weg naar zijn laatste rustplaats. Nadat de Canadese legeraalmoezenier een kort gebed had uitgesproken, werd zijn stoffelijk overschot, dat bedekt was met de Nederlandse driekleur, onder hoorngeschal met militair saluit in het graf neergelaten. Het neerleggen van een krans van zijn troep en een bos bloemen van zijn officieren besloot deze indrukwekkende plechtigheid. Met een laatste groet namen de jongens afscheid van hun vriend Albert de Jong. Als mens en als soldaat wordt hij en door zijn superieuren en door zijn mede-soldaten ten zeerste gewaardeerd. Zijn nagedachtenis zal blijven voortleven in het nieuwe Nederland. Zijn offer zal niet vergeefs gebracht zijn.

Commandant van de troep R. I. P.

IMAGE TIMELINE ALBERT DE JONG 1914–1945



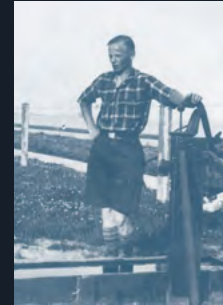
Albert (top row, second from the left) ± 14 years old in the gymnastics, about 1928



17 year old Albert in front of the Amsterdam Central Station, around 1931



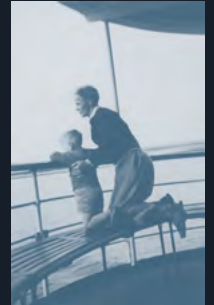
Albert together with his mother, around 1933



Albert around 1933



The family De Jong, Albert and An de Jong-Moorman with their son Guus, around 1935



Albert with his son Guus, around 1935/36



Portrait around 1936



Albert sitting with pipe and brother Wim far left with poster. Schijndel, September 20, 1943



Albert about 1943



The brothers Wim and Albert de Jong during one of their bike rides, around June 1943, Waalbrug Nijmegen



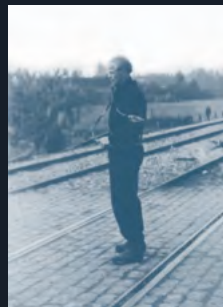
Albert prefers to be in the open air during the beginning of the war. Together with his brother Wim they often spend the night in the woods, around 1943



Wim (left) and Albert (middle) at their temporary hiding place with Doede Ruiter and his wife (right), Rotterdam, July 30, 1943.



Albert with binoculars on location. On the back of this picture is a note written, "Take a good look at the place", around 1943



Armed with a Stengun, Albert is on the lookout, 1943



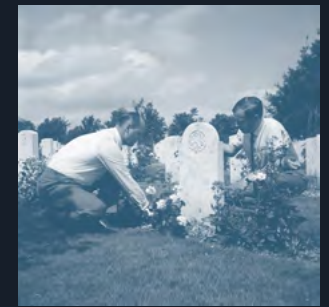
Albert (second from right) with his fellow soldiers during an exercise in the Scottish Achnacarry, around 1944



Albert de Jong as a commando in 1944



"The Last Post" in June 1945. Commando Albert de Jong is the only Dutchman buried at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek



Brother Wim de Jong (left) and son Guus de Jong (right) lay flowers on the grave of Albert, Groesbeek 1964

WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING WAS FORBIDDEN... Albert's secret photos during the German occupation



Albert had been an avid photographer since his teens. Later on it would be his specialization to secretly take photographs of the German occupation in the Second World War.



Albert's Leica II (Mod D) from 1932.



Amsterdam, at the Dam square on the corner of the Nieuwendijk was the recruitment office (Nebenstelle Amsterdam) of the German Ersatzkommando Waffen SS during the occupation in the Second World War. The Dutch could register here for the German army.

The shop windows showed propaganda and information about the Waffen SS. Inside, propaganda films were shown that the Dutch people could view for free. Access required nothing but the ambition was clear, recruiting new members.

Albert made this photo with a hidden camera, Amsterdam 1943



Film poster from 1943 for a free movie show especially for the SS Ersatzkommando Niederlande.

Source of information:
AF/00714 (Poster, Lithograph), War posters
NIOD 1933 - 1946, NIOD/KB



June 20, 1943, Amsterdam-Zuid (Amsterdam South) and a part of Amsterdam-East was closed to pick up and deport the last remaining Jews with a big raid. In cooperation with the Amsterdam police, German soldiers shut down streets and did house searches. The arrested Jews were transported by tram to the Muiderpoort station from where they were transferred to camp Westerbork. Most of them went to the extermination camps, such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, Bergen-Belsen and Sobibor. In total, 6000 Jews are arrested on that day.



'THE DIARY OF THE WANDERING WHITE'

A quote from the diary of Albert de Jong:

July 26, 1943. "... Put on transport to a concentration camp near Cologne. We have fled Venlo and arrived that night in Amsterdam. We heard that my sister-in-law and her two children have not survived a bombardment ..."



Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery

June 3, 1956, An impressive commemoration on the
Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery in the presence of Prince Bernhard.





Photographers record the arrival of Prince Bernhard and the Duke of Gloucester at the memorial service and unveiling of the British monument at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek, June 3, 1956



Tribute to 1103 fallen soldiers. Canadian, Dutch and British soldiers of land, sea and air force stand as a guard of honor to the memorial, June 3, 1956



TIMELINE GRAVE ALBERT DE JONG – Plot 12 Row A Grave 13



June 16, 1945 at 3.30 pm. Interment of soldier Albert de Jong on the Canadian cemetery Jonkerbosch. Albert has been here buried temporarily and was later reburied on the Canadian cemetery.
(Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery & Memorial)



Albert reburied at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, 1946/47.

The cemetery was officially opened by Queen Wilhelmina on May 4, 1947.

Plot 12 Row A Grave 13



The grave with the official tombstone in the late 1960s



Albert's son Guus de Jong photographs the grave of his father, Groesbeek 1964



Wim de Jong (left) and Guus de Jong (right) lay flowers on the grave of their late brother and father, Groesbeek 1964



Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery is the final resting place for 2619 fallen soldiers, the largest number of Canadians, from the Second World War, located in the Dutch municipality of Berg en Dal. The cemetery is maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The field of honor was opened on May 4, 1947 by Queen Wilhelmina. The location of the field of honor was chosen by Mayor Jonkheer van Grotenhuis van Onstein. He found this location very suitable because the German border could be seen from the cemetery. The work for the field of honor started in the summer of 1945 and was conducted under the leadership of six Canadian soldiers. After two years, the first version was ready. Over the years, the gravestones have been replaced twice. In the first version they were made of wood. Later they were replaced by steel crosses. Later they were made of natural stone. The Cross of Sacrifice was for the first four years made of wood. In 1950 it was replaced by a natural stone tumbstone.

Every year in November a 'Poppy Day' takes place. Canadian soldiers stationed in Germany then commemorate their fallen colleagues in Groesbeek. Several veterans come here to commemorate. A special Canadian army chaplain comes from Canada to pray and speak.

Source: Wikipedia. (2018, February 8). Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery. Retrieved February 26, 2017, from https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groesbeek_Canadian_War_Cemetery



The grave of Albert de Jong in 2017 photographed by his grandson Richard de Jong.

Colophon

In memoriam - Albert de Jong

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The brothers Wim and Albert de Jong in the early summer of 1943.