

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Jopie de Jong**  
**September 15, 1991**  
**RG-50.028\*0011**

## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Jopie de Jong, conducted by Robert Buckley on September 15, 1991 in the Netherlands on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview cannot be used for sale in the Museum Shop. The interview cannot be used by a third party for creation of a work for commercial sale.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

## **JOPIE DE JONG**

### **September 15, 1991**

[ Transcriber's note: This interview must have been conducted off camera, in view of the interviewee's old age and hearing problems. The Dutch spokesman read the summary of his conversation in English, while Mr. deJong was looking on.]

T:To start with it will be very difficult. His name is Jopie de Jong and he is born April 16, 1879.<sup>1</sup> So that's why it is very hard to have a normal interview with this old man. So it's very difficult, because he is deaf and very hard to converse with. But I will relate a few of his experiences that he has written down on paper. He has been picked up in 1942, he is caught by a Dutch police officer. He has been brought to several prisons and one of the prisons that was, let me see, in the Alkemade Laan in The Hague. He has been there for seven weeks and was starving from hunger. He got only three sandwiches. Once a day he was let out for fresh air and he was then beaten. That was normal that they hit all the prisoners there. Seven weeks later a German officer came to him and asked him to sign a paper for release and he did not do that, and they started to beat him until he became unconscious. He did not know how long he was sitting or lying on the ground and after he became conscious again they hit him again until he dropped down again. And one Dutch officer even hit him with a piece of metal. Later on he was brought to the concentration camps and he experienced that the NSB officers were even more cruel than the German people.

Q:What was the concentration camp he was in?

A:Well first of all he had been in prison in the Hague and later on he has been brought to Amersfoort and it was like this. They had to stand in a courtyard and they had to wait without food.

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<sup>1</sup>This is a mistake, later in the interview the birth date is stated as 1897.

They had to stand there for hours completely naked, let's say even sometimes blood came out their feet. They were completely shaved, their hairs, and they had to work all day long in cutting trees and no morning they got any food to eat. If one person was not there at the end of the day they had to wait outside until the last one was in and most of the time it was during the night that they had to wait. One time, he related, that in Amersfoort where the Witnesses hardly got anything to eat they had to go to the forest to look for nuts for the pigs. So, they had to feed the pigs good food, while they were not able to eat good food. So what they did, they hide the nuts under their clothings (sic), but what happened, he says when we came in they searched for things that were under our clothings. Surprisingly they did not find the nuts that they had picked up so that very same evening other witnesses in the barrack got good food to eat. From there he has been brought to camp Vught and he had to stand outside so long that his leg was completely frozen. So he wasn't able to walk anymore, so they had to bring him to the hospital. From this onward he has been brought to Buchenwald where, he said, that every day he saw ten to twenty people dying. And they just throw them on a hill like garbage and he said it is really something that you get used to the view of seeing dead bodies every day. But after all it is a terrible view if you think back, what had happened in camp Buchenwald. He had also been in Henkel, that was the airplane factory that was also a kind of camp, he was there too. When I asked him what dates or which time it was, at least he did know that it was from 1942 onward, but he does not remember details anymore. But it is very encouraging to see that somebody of this age, of 1897, still is a faithful witness of Jehovah and is encouraging others. It is really something that this man, who has went through all those difficulties and before we filmed him he started to cry because he has that emotions from time to time as a result of what has happened to him in concentration camps. And I think we can thank him for what he has related to us and that we can be very glad that the world can see what happened to him may never happen to anybody else anymore.

Q:Will we be able to get his testimony?

A:[Translator] We will get this piece in Dutch and I will translate it for you.

Q:Please extend our thanks to him for taking the time to be interviewed this morning.

A:[Translator] I have to thank you in his name that we were able to see you and make a film. Mr. de Jong says I did not intend to hold this meeting but you talked me into it. What he said in the first place he was sorry to come but you convinced me that on the other hand it was necessary to do something for other people so he was happy after all when we pictured him. Thank you.