

-TITLE-ARIE KALBENBERG  
-I\_DATE-1/31/91  
-SOURCE-JEHOVAH WITNESS  
-RESTRICTIONS-  
-SOUND\_QUALITY-EXCELLENT  
-IMAGE\_QUALITY-EXCELLENT  
-DURATION-1 HOUR 30 MINUTES  
-LANGUAGES-DUTCH WITH INTERPRETER INTO ENGLISH  
-KEY\_SEGMENT-  
-GEOGRAPHIC\_NAME-  
-PERSONAL\_NAME-  
-CORPORATE\_NAME-  
-KEY\_WORDS-  
-NOTES-  
-CONTENTS-

TAPE Arie Kaldenberg was born 9/8/1917 in Rotterdam. Both parents were Dutch, had lived in R'dam all their lives. His father's Dutch family can be traced back to the year 1280 in Holland. His father was a grocer and ship's schandler. His mother gave birth to 12 children, of who six survived. Currently Arie has one surviving sister, age 80, and one brother, age 69.

:03 He had elementary school education plus one year high school. Later attended technical school. and some evening courses. His outside interests were playing soccer, drawing, and organ playing.

:05 States that in 1933 the Dutch did not expect the Germans to invade Holland, but that by 1936-'37 some Dutch did. It is his opinion that there was an increase in the number of Dutch Nazi party members by 1938 and 1939.

:06 His parents were members of the Dutch Hervormde Kerk, which Arie joined at the age of 21. He became acquainted with the J.W.'s faith in 1942, and became converted to it in winter 1942-1943. No other family members became a J.W. At that time he was fully aware of German opposition to J.W., due to its neutrality stance and its opposition to arms production and ship building.

:10 Since Arie, at the time his conversion was working in ship building, he resigned his job and went underground, December 1943. He continued his J.W.'s pioneering work.

:11 He was arrested early 1944, in Schiedam (suburb of R'dam), while engaged in a bible study in another J.W.'s house. Gestapo had surrounded the house very effectively, and had blocked the street at both ends. Among the arresting Gestapo men were two ex-J.W.'s:source of betrayal obvious. The lady of the house was able to hide the J.W. literature.

:16 All the men were taken to Gestapo Headquarters (Heemradsingel, R'dam) where they were interrogated. Arie was mainly pressed to give the names of other J.W.'s He refused, having decided that he would persist in this refusal.

:20 There follows a brief description of the division of tasks among the J.W.'s and the use of numbers and false first names rather than real names. Arie's J.W.'s designation was "Gerrit" and "A132".

:21 He did not see arrest of other J.W.'s. He did here about some Jews being arrested. Between 1942 and December '43 he worked in a lumberyard. Bible studies were held in different houses in R'dam and in Schiedam.

After his refusal to answer in the interrogations he was put in the prison in r'dam on the Haagsche Veer. He spent 3 weeks in solitary there. He knew that the other J.W.. at whose house the study had taken place at t he time of their arrest was taken to another prison. After his three weeks of solitary he was interrogated again. After the second interrogation he was confined to the same prison, but no longer in solitary, for another 6 weeks. Among his fellow prisoners was the second highest ranking police officer from R'dam. Although the food rations were sparse, on the whole the treatment of the prisoners was "correct".

:25 From this prison he was taken to the camp of Vught. Again there were interrogations about other J.W.'s. Again he refused to answer. At Vught he met other J.W.'s.

:28 Asked about the sequence of camps, he enumerates: from Vught to an "outside Kommando" near Venlo (in the South of Holland)., then to Sachsenhausen, then Neuengammen, then near hamburg.

From the camp near Venlo he and about 200 other prisoners were walked into German for about 300-400 km in total before being put on a passenger train. This march was very hard on him, since by that time he was already suffering from dysentery. The prisoners wore white wooden clogs. They were also marked with the purple triangle. Other than Arie there were to more J.W.'s in his transport.

:33 Asked about arrival in Sachsenhausen Arie vividly recalls the portal with the inscription "Arbeid mach frei". The camp was so overcrowded that Arie's group was first lodged in empty barracks near the Henckes factory, not far from the camp. After a while his group was brought back to Sachsenhausen proper. He mentions seeing Jews, Gypsies, Poles and Russians in the camp. Life was very difficult. The worst treatment was given to the Jews. The daily routine consisted of lining up for the "Appell", then division into the work routines, then march back to camp, the a few "free" hours prior to sleep time. Food was minimal: rations of little bread, and some soup. Arie was assigned to the Waldkommando, which did have the advantage of being outside, and entailed walking through some farmland, which allowed them once in a while to add some potatoes to their meager diet. (On the whole the guards allowed this 'stealing' of food.)

:38 Asked about his reaction and thoughts at this time, Arie responds that his reaction consisted of a mixture of pride on his belief, and following the true God, and of enormous fear.

:40 In Sachsenhausen the J.W.s were originally kept together, but later on they were spread around the camp. This allowed arie to "spread" the word. He did talk Bible with other prisoners, although possession of the bible was forbidden. Some J.W. got together in the morning and gave each a daily text for study.

:46 In September 1944 Arie was moved to Neuengammen: a transport of a few hundred prisoners. Means of transportation was "reasonable".

:47 In Vught and in Sachsenhausen he, and all J.W.s were asked to renounce his faith. They refused.

:48 In Neuengammen he was placed in a very bad, very overcrowded barrack, where three men had to share one mattress. The Gestapo and SS often awakened the prisoner 5 to 6 times per night and made them run the gauntlet, while beating them. "It wasn't nice." Some SS were cruel, some were O.K. Among the SS were Germans, Ukrainians, even some Dutch.

:52 At some point he recognized a J.W. by the J>W. witness's whistle. He recognized this man as the man who had brought him to baptism. (Name: Leen V.D. Graaf). This man subsequently died in the camp.

:54 Arie became very ill, so that he fainted on the Appellplatz. A J.W. risking his own life in this way, took him to the infirmary, where Arie was unconscious for two nights and three days. When he became conscious the first sight he saw was that of a man's extremely swollen buttocks, due to a severe beating. He next saw the face of another J.W. who had visited him daily and daily had left him a bit of food.

:59 For a while in Neuengammen he did not work. Eventually he was sent to another "outside kommando", near Meppen, where he again worked in the Waldkommando". In Meppen he met a number of Dutch people,. These were men who had been rounded up in Putte in retribution for the assassination of a German general in Putte. These Dutch prisoners were very badly treated and many of them died.

1:01 From Meppen he was returned to Neuengamme, where he was assigned to an "outside kommando". Eventually it was there that the prisoners heard the approach of the Allied Forces. At that stage the suffering on the part of the prisoners became very intense. A division of the prisoners into two groups took place on the Appellplatz. One group, supposedly the "healthier" contingent was to be transferred to a ship in the harbor. Ship's name "Capricorn" (ph). That ship was bombarded by the ?? Allies. Only one person survived, a J.W., name of Knedendorf(ph), with who Arie spoke post-war.

1:04 Arie belonged to the other group, of about 5,000 prisoners. They were placed on a transport consisting of cattle cars. The guards occupied the middle of each car, near the exit doors. Prisoners were very tightly packed into each of the halves, no food, no water was provided.

1:06 The train went back and forth along the same route most of the time, as the Allied Forces advanced and the Germans tried to escape them. Each morning the corpses were tossed out of the cattle cars, and stacked up in the last compartment of the train. This ordeal, which did include prisoners fighting among themselves, people going crazy, in addition to the dying of starvation lasted 12 days and nights.

1:09 Eventually they were released in a place called "sansboston" ( ) . Arie states that he has never located it subsequently on any map.

There the corpses were put into special containers. The remaining prisoners were sent into what apparently had been a French field camp. There typhus broke out. A sign outside the camp stated this in large letters. so no outsider dared approach. Many of the remaining prisoners died there. The survivors in the morning had to crawl over feces and corpses. There were no longer any guards. "You waited for death". There turned out to be a few French P.O.W.s in the area who occasionally tossed them some bits of food.

1:12 One morning Arie thought that he saw a "moving hill" this turned out to be helmet on the head of an English soldier. It was the 8th English Army division. The English couldn't believe what they found at this camp, when they evacuated it. Prisoners were taken to British field Hospital to be deloused, fed, and treated.

1:15 The English army forces forced the nearby Germans to walk through the camp.

1:17 Arie states that he is convinced that without Jehovah he could not have survived.

1:18 Post war, he returned to Holland on May 8 or 10, 1945. it took him a few months to recover from his extreme debilitation.

In 1948 he met his wife. He held a number of jobs, eventually went into business for himself; dealing in scrap metal. Retired from work at age 60.

1:20 On tape Mrs. Kaldenberg introduced. (She had become a J.W. in 1946). Photos of the Kaldenberg children (seven in total) and their spouses are shown., as well as some photos of some of the grandchildren. Also some photo of some J.W.'s taken in 1947 and 1948.  
.END.