

-TITLE-ADRIANUS KAMP
-I_DATE-SEPTEMBER 12, 1991
-SOURCE-JEHOVAH WITNESS
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-IMAGE_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-DURATION-
-LANGUAGES-
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
-CONTENTS-

Kamp was born in Rotterdam April 22, 1922. He lived with both parents and was one of a sibship of sixteen (one of his brothers, a J.W., died in a concentration camp).

:03 His father was a dock laborer. A.K. completed elementary school education. Asked about life in Holland in 1933, he responds that he was quite young. His impression was that the Dutch, of course, heard about Hitler's rise to power, but that they expected the League of Nations to defend Holland against aggression.

:05 He states that there was disquiet in the netherlands in the late thirties, but that the Dutch did not expect Germany to invade Holland. There was vast unemployment.

His father became a J.W. around 1928-29 and tried to stuff his belief down his children's throats. However, they and their mother resisted this. Later on his father left J.W. [no date given]. Later, around 1935, a German J.W., name E. Mueller, and brought the children [no specific number mentioned] to D.W. belief. Prior to this his parents had not been religious.

:08 In 1939 he and several of his family members [no numbers mentioned] were baptized, at the time of the publishing of J.W.'s brochure on neutrality. They studied copies of the Watchtower. He does not remember the contents of the brochure on neutrality. He knows that there was a new edition in 1945, doesn't remember the exact content of that either.

:11 He thinks that the Germans were opposed to J.W.'s because Hitler did not like the truth.

On 3/3/42 he and his brother Dik had gone proselytizing and had encountered a woman who had requested a particular book and a brochure (Power of the Demon). A.K. promised to bring it around the following day. On 3/4/42 A.K. and his brother Frans went to distribute the book and pamphlet. The literature was accepted, but when he left the house, the S.S. police was at the door, i.e. he had been betrayed.

:13 J.W.'s were banned immediately after the invasion. He states that he was not afraid to go witnessing from door-to-door, since it was Jehovah's command to do so.

:15 When arrested he was asked to show his I.D. card. The arrest involved officer Simons. He was taken to the bureau at the Haagse Veer. There he was interrogated three times, each time for 45 minutes. He said that they could shoot him, but that he did not know names and addresses of any other J.W.'s. That ended the hearings. He was returned to his cell.

:19 He spent 36 days in solitary confinement, without electricity. At the end of that period, when his cell was being cleaned, he asked to be transferred out of solitary. That led to a transfer to the river Police, where there were 43 prisoners, 7 of whom were J.W.'s. Of those 7 he is the only survivor.

:21 There was no official J.W. congregation in 1942. He was a member of an informal group, and the only one of that group to be picked up.

:22 A.K. spent one month in the River Police prison. Then he and Willem Willegers (a J.W.) were transported to a prison in Rotterdam, and thence to Amersfoort. The transportation was done by the "Green Police", and treatment was okay.

:24 On arrival in Amersfoort they were disinfected, shaved, and put into old Dutch uniforms. He was also beaten. His labor assignment consisted of entering a deep sandpit and digging-- hard labor. Later was assigned to work on shooting gallery (the remains of which are still visible). He saw bad mistreatment of Jewish prisoner by a man, name of Berg, who later became the commandant of the camp. Jews were given the task of cleaning the latrines. A.K. found this mistreatment very unnerving. His stay in Amersfoort lasted 5 weeks.

:27 Asked about his feelings on arrival in Amersfoort, he responds that he thought it was hell, very anxiety evoking. He cites the instance of a Jew with extreme edema of the legs crawling from the Appellplatz to his barrack, only to be greeted by haling pails of water thrown over his head. A.K. got a measure of what was awaiting him.

:29 On 3/31/42 [Date cannot be correct: cf. sequence of imprisonment date and on above.], it was cloudy weather. A prisoner had escaped. All prisoners were forced to stand on the Appellplatz from early morning on until 1 AM the following morning, without food or water. On that day 1,000 English airplanes flew overhead on their way to bombardment of Koeln, thus enraging the S.S. officers.

:32 On 6/4/42 he was moved to Essen, where he stayed for 3 weeks. Then Essen was bombarded. He (along with others) was taken to Hanover for one night, (they had to stand up during the transport), thence he was taken to Alexanderplatz in Berlin, where the prisoners were closely confined, with barely any food.

:33 He arrived in Sachsenhausen on 6/27/42, where he was to remain until 4/21/45, the beginning of the Deathmarch, which was to last 12 days.

:34 The transport of Sachsenhausen was as follows: train to Essen, truck to prison, train to Hanover, train to Berlin, truck to Sachsenhausen-- the last few miles on foot. The arrival at Sachsenhausen was humiliating, due to the body search.

:37 Eventually he was taken to barrack #59, which was a barrack for J.W.'s. His work assignment was at a pumping station, which was located near an S.S. garden, in which 3 J.W.'s were working. Later on he was assigned work on the road. Very heavy labor. He broke his toe, which led him to the infirmary, where two of the M.D.s were J.W.'s. They protected him, by giving him relatively light work assignments, such as taking food around, or taking out the corpses. Then A.K. saw one of the Kapos working in the little gardens around the barracks, which led A.K. to telling the Kapo that he too was a gardener and asking for a job as a gardener, which led to his being assigned as one of the gardeners for the S.S. garden.

:42 Working there enabled him to smuggle out vegetables to Brother Winkler, who was very lame at that time.

:43 Asked about mistreatment of other prisoners, A.K. that he particularly witnessed beating of Jews, one of whose barracks, #39, was opposite his own. He comments n the beatings the Jews were subjected to on the Appellplatz.

:45 Asked about mistreatment he was subjected to, A.K. gives an account of enforced exercises he had to perform in punishment for his having put his hands in his pockets-- a transgression of the rules, even in very cold weather. He was also beaten. Another time he was beaten for having had J.W.'s literature in his locker, actually put there by another J.W., and found during a search. The J.W. who had hidden the literature there suggested to A.K. that he give that J.W.'s name to the S.S. A.K. refused to betray him. After beatings on three successive days, the beatings stopped.

:54 Asked re other incidents, A.K. mentions an example, dating back to Amersfoort. There Bible texts were affixed in the latrine. Although others than J.W.'s could have done that, the J.W.'s were blamed. This led to J.W.'s having to do exercises under guard by Dutch Nazis. When they were totally exhausted, they laid down on the ground, and started singing religious songs, which actually was very encouraging.

:57 Interviewer asks whether A.K. knew a German J.W., by name of Eric Frost. A.K. did, knew that Eric Frost played accordion for the S.S. And he knows of the song composed by Eric Frost.

:58 Further incidents: He had had to watch the hangings of prisoners, and prisoners were forced to watch the torture meted out to escapees. He recalls being told by Jan van den Berg (another Dutch J.W.), who worked in "disinfection" about a whole group of Yugoslav prisoners, whom A.K. had seen arrive, being slaughtered. Jan van den Berg had been forced to bury pieces of the slain people.

1:01 There had been a Russian prisoner, who stole a small root vegetable, who was caught. He was forced to sit naked, with the vegetable in his hand, until he froze to death.

1:03 Wim van Klaveren and his two brothers, all J.W.'s, were together in Sachsenhausen. The two brothers died. Then Wim v. Klaveren was called to the entrance of the camp and was told that his wife had died in Ravensbruck. They had two children. He signed the papers to renounce his faith, so that he could be released from the camp. Before that could happen, some time was to lapse. Wim then was assigned to military work, which he refused, which, naturally led to his not being released. He again was offered the opportunity to renounce his faith. This time he refused to sign. He was brought before a firing squad. Again he was given the chance to renounce his faith. He again refused, and was executed. All this actually was experienced as inspiring by the other J.W.'s.

1:06 A.K.'s reaction to all this? He found Wim's example inspiring. It never crossed his mind to give up his faith.

1:08 The Deathmarch started with 27,700 prisoners, of whom 10,000 died, or were shot during the march. A.K. walked behind the wagon on which e.a. Arthur Winkler was being pulled along. A.K. never thought about giving up. What was worse for him was homesickness. At some stage during the march he could no longer remember his own address, and physically he could no longer run. He was totally exhausted.

1:09 How would A.K. describe Sachsenhausen to young American students, who are ignorant of history? A.K. responds that, looking at current youth, this is difficult to do. However, he does want to tell young people about this history, especially in view of the fact that it is hard to encourage young people to proselytize. He thinks that they should know about Sachsenhausen, so that these things do not happen again.

1:12 What is his answer to people who deny this history? He would tell them that they haven't really heard anything yet about what the true experiences of the prisoners were, even after listening to his account.

1:13 He returns to describing the Deathmarch. It was all very frightening, yet the mutual support among the J.W.'s was amazing. They marched 5 days, then they remained in a forest where they ate thistles and beechnuts for three days. Then they marched again. They survived only due to the mutual support. The march on total lasted 12 days, and ended when they encountered Allied troops. Yes, it is true that the Germans shot those who could not continue the march. Within 100 meters of the camp he saw the first prisoner shot. The first day march lasted 21 hours [others state 36 hours] without food.

1:18 He could not have imagined that people shot people in cold blood, but he learned that during his years of imprisonment, but the death march was unimaginable beyond that.

1:19 Reaction to encountering U.S. troops [Were they Canadians?] after 12 days? He was relieved, when the troops took the arms away from the Germans. Very excited about receiving food. The first evening the J.W.'s built a shelter for themselves and thus stayed dry, when there was a heavy thunderstorm at night. Actually they were liberated the following day. At night they kept watch, having stolen a clock from the S.S. They dug 8 meters deep to get water so they could wash some.

1:24 The end of the march was 5/3/45. He returned home, in Rotterdam, on 6/2/45.

1:25 He cried when he crossed the border into Holland. He stayed in Ommen for two weeks (gathering place, where ex-prisoners were stationed, due to fear of typhus). Then he went for one night to Amersfoort, then by train to R'dam. He walked from the station to his sister's house, then later to the house of his youngest brother. Jaap, who in 1942 had had one young son, and in the intervening years had had a second son. Finally, he went to his mother's house. His parents had not heard from him for many months. His two nephews are now J.W.'s.

1:30 Asked about adjustment problems, A.K. first answers that he did not really have any. He mentions that he needed bedrest for this first three weeks after return home, and then went back to work. After he had been married for a few years, he had become very tense. His wife was able to help him through this difficult period, and after some years he was able to react normally to other people.

1:33 Wife is introduced. He had met her in 1945, while they were witnessing. She was baptized J.W. in 1941.
[Please cf, interview with Truus Kamp, nee Heindijk, same date.]
.END.→