

HOEVELAKEN Now and then.

Towards 4th and 5th of May this column brings, 68 years after the end of WWII, a series of never told stories. Today episode 4: resistance daughter Nel Dumon.

Nel did what she had to do.

In the summer of 1943 German soldiers took Nel Dumon off the train. They thought she was a Jew and wasn't wearing her yellow star. Nel left her coat behind in the train. Under the arm piece there was a heavy metal item sowed, a pistol. Many girls of her age did smuggle jobs; they were less likely to be picked out than boys. When it came to knowledge that she wasn't Jewish, she could continue her path. A relief. On Utrecht Central an unknown man waited for her. After speaking a coded sentence, they swapped jackets and Nel returned to the train to Amersfoort. Petronella Halima Theodora was born on 19th of December 1924 on the Amersfoortse Schimmelpenninckstraat, as daughter of Karel Dumon and Trude Rijken. She grew up in Hoevelaken, where her father was a municipal receiver who did the taxes. And as officer of civil status sealed marriages. Thanks to the functions the Dumon family was rooted in the local society. Karel was born in Dutch-Indonesia. As 6-year old he came in Holland, in a boarding school in Velp. His mother died at his birth, as well as his twin brother. In 1927 the family Dumon bought a house in Hoevelaken. "My family called me Halima, but in Hoevelaken that name was old-fashioned." Nel says in her flat in south-Delft. "Teacher Hendriks changed Petronella to Nelleke. Since then everyone in Hoevelaken calls me Nel. My father is known as the Peanut man, because of his Indian roots. In 1939 Nel saw the first signs of war on the streets. Dutch soldiers were given shelter in farms in Hoevelaken, Terschuur or Achterveld. With aim to defend the 'Waterlinie'. Nel got secondary education on the Mulo, and then she got into the Grammar School in Amersfoort. On the 10th of May 1940 she saw that the bridge over the Valley canal near Stoutenburg was destroyed.

“The war has begun, everyone go home,” Teacher Laseur shouted, who was cycling coincidentally with the students. Great, Nel thought at first, no more school. “You had to gather your stuff quickly and walk to Putten, Hoevelaken was the firing line. Very exciting, it surprised us.”

After five days, the family Dumon returned to Hoevelaken. From that moment on the Germans were in charge. As head of distribution, Karel gave the coupons where people could buy sugar, milk or bread. Nel picked up the coupons at the head quarters in Nijkerk, then she cycled back home through the Hoevelaakse forest.

Very often she let people know she took that way home, hoping the opposition would surprise her. That never happened.

“When someone died, then my father didn’t instantly reported that, so he could give their portions of food to the persons in hiding, who worked on the land at the farmers, and slept in haystacks or shelters. “

Her mother Trude worked at the Red Cross. In exchange for treatment of wounded German soldiers, she got wood to heat the unity building where travels passing through could sleep and eat. With the Red Cross Flag she got milk at the farmers.

People in Hiding

During the war, the family Dumon kept a lot of people in hiding. Yews, Man with a bounty on their heads and people who were passing through. They slept on hay sacks in the attic or corridor. Nel never knew their names. “That way we couldn’t betray them.” Secretly she listened to Radio ‘Oranje’ with her parents. Nel noted the messages on shorthand and spread them through the village. In a covered cargo bike she once delivered with Gerda Tromp a German who burned his behind to the hospital, after a bombing from allies. Once arrived at the hospital ‘Elisabeth’ he was already dead. “That image will remain in my mind.”

In April 1945 Hoevelaken was being liberated. At the ‘Tweede Steeg’ and ‘Koedijkersteeg’ Germans who were patrolling were

captured by citizens. The family Dumon never got discretion for resistance work. No problem, Nel thinks. "My father never talked about the war. We did what we had to do."

Nel worked at NATO in the Pentagon in Washington. Annually, in the run of the annual Remembrance Day, she shares her memories with higher classes of primary schools in Hoevelaken.

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