

# **HENK**

**HOLLAND from 21 April 1915 to 18 January 1951.  
AUSTRALIA from 26 February 1951 to January 1988.  
And hopefully for many years to come.**

## **FOREWORD.**

**My name is Hendrik Jacobus Slothouber, born during the First World War on April 21, 1915, in Arnhem, Holland. With my wife Annie and daughter Yvonne, we left Holland for Australia by ship on January 18, 1951, and arrived in Sydney, Australia, on February 26, 1951, where we lived temporarily in the Bathurst emigrant camp.**

**In 1986, through the magazine "VOICE OF THE FORCES", we were invited by the Dutch Embassy in CANBERRA to provide information about our stay and experiences in Australia.**

**In 1987 the same was asked by the;**

**"DIRK HARTOG LITERARY PRIZE FOUNDATION", in Amsterdam.**

**Following these two invitations, I decided to present this information about our family, and especially about myself, in this short manuscript "HENK".**

**I will attach both invitations for clarification.**

# EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

## ROYAL NETHERLANDS EMBASSY

120 Empire Circuit YARRALUMLA A.C.T. 2600

Canberra, November 1985

Dear compatriot

...or former compatriot, if you have, perhaps long ago, accepted Australian nationality. The bicentennial celebrations of 1988 are not so far off and provide an opportunity to delve into the contributions of (former) Dutch people to modern-day Australia and to review post-war emigration from the Netherlands.

Last year, a commemorative book, "To All Our Children," was published in Canada. It details the history of Dutch settlement in that country, based on individual observations and stories of their destinies, and is illustrated with numerous photographs, primarily from private collections. It serves as a source of inspiration and a model for veterans and future generations to follow, and one that deserves to be emulated in Australia. The purpose of this circular is to invite you to contribute to an Australian version of such a chronicle in words and pictures. Please consult your family albums and send us your photos, anecdotes, letters, and other documentation, describing what is depicted as accurately as possible.

Such personal recollections can be used to describe the "memoirs of an Australia-goer," covering the preparations for the overseas departure, the boat or plane journey, the hostels, and other housing challenges. Work forms a subject, as does the language, school, and all the joys and sorrows experienced. But alongside the adjustment difficulties, there are also the successes: the first car, owning a home, establishing oneself independently, reuniting with family after years of separation. The subject knows no bounds!

Your help with this historical account is essential. Your contribution will be especially welcome and will be used with discretion (and returned upon request). All correspondence should be addressed to the undersigned, c/o the Embassy in Canberra. It is, of course, not possible to send this publication directly to every (former) compatriot. Therefore, please make the contents known in your own country around.

Many thanks in advance

(Signed)

Wim Blome EMIGRATION ATTACHEE

## **Dirk Hartog Literary Prize**

**In 1988, Australia celebrated its second centenary. Not only do long historical ties exist between this continent, but more than 200,000 Dutch people and their children still live in Australia.**

**To mark the Bicentenary, the Dirk Hartog Literary Prize was established.**

**This prize is named after the first Dutchman to leave a pewter plate with inscription on Australian soil in 1616.**

**Moving to another country is a life-changing event for many people and can be a source of inspiration for literary work. The aim of the competition is to capture some of these experiences of emigrating to Australia. This has rarely happened in the Netherlands so far, with a few exceptions such as Koos Schuur, Joop Waasdorp, and Henk Romijn Meijer.**

**The Dirk Hartog Literary Prize consists of a cash prize of 10,000 guilders and the publication of the selected work. Anyone in both Australia and the Netherlands can participate. The competition is made possible by contributions from the Ministry of Welfare, Health and Culture, Nationale Nederlanden NV, TNT Ipec Holdings BV, Hoogovens Groep BV, and Koninklijke Nedlloyd Groep NV.**

**Entries are now open. The deadline is December 31, 1987. The jury consists of: Willem van Toorn (chair), Mariolein Sabarte-Belacortu, and Henk Romijn Meijer.**

**The conditions for participation in the Dirk Hartog literary prize are:**

**- Everyone can participate, both in the Netherlands and in Australia, both**

**professional and non-professional writers.**

**it may be in Dutch or English written.**

**The submission may consist of a novel, novella, diary, correspondence, or a series of short stories. Fiction is welcome. Essays and scholarly treatises are not eligible.**

**The topic must relate to the experiences of emigrants themselves, relatives or friends who stayed behind, returning emigrants, and children of emigrants. the work may be set in the past, the present or in the future.**

**- the work must not have been previously published.**

**The length of the submission must be at least 70 pages.**

**a jury will decide on the prize winner.**

**If necessary, the selected work will be translated into English so that it can also find its way into Australia.**

**-entries can be submitted until December 31, 1987, to:**

**Dirk Hartog Literary Prize Foundation  
P.O. Box 685  
1000 AR Amsterdam**

**Willem van Toorn is a writer and critic.**

**Mariolein Sabarte-Belacortu is a translator of works by Gabriel Garcia Márquez, among others. Henk Romijn Meijer is a writer who lived in Australia from 1957 to 1959.**

**Malou Nozeman is a journalist and lived in Australia for a while.**

**Joed Elich is a sociologist and wrote a dissertation on the emigration of Dutch people to Australia.**

After rebuilding the commodities business for the second time, this time after the 10,000 British paratroopers drop near our city of Arnhem, and the subsequent evacuation in September 1944 to Apeldoorn, we thought we could get back on track by working hard.

The tiles were back on the roof, all the glass had been replaced in the shop, basement, all the rooms and kitchen, including the entire upstairs apartment with bathroom and toilets.

We were no longer sitting on the wooden floor but had carpeting again. The commodities business had even doubled in size with the addition of a living room and after three visits from high-ranking postal officials, admittedly, to set up a post office in our shop office.

This later proved to be a major gain in business, with the post office box now right in front of our shop.

At this peak, we had two errand boys for customers, three shop assistants with my wife Annie and myself in the shop and a lady or gentleman for the post office.

However, during that high peak there were concerns.

One was the hated 3% sales tax I had to pay extra to the tax office, which was levied every quarter.

As well after the Battle of Arnhem, with the fires and the destruction, the tax office finally found the tax records from the war years and discovered that I had refused to pay taxes to the Germans from 1940 to 1945.

As a member of the underground, and on the advice of our Queen, this was also part of our resistance, in addition to all the other acts of resistance.

Only occasionally, after advice from my accountant that I would be arrested, did I quickly pay 200 guilders, even though I owed 7,000 guilders by the end of the war.

The tax office was trying to force us to pay those 7,000 guilders, as a free Dutch citizen, in the midst of our reconstruction.

With the VAT on top of that.

This gave my wife Annie and me the impetus to look for a way out, and that way out suddenly appeared.

Our cousin, Mas Kuiper, a pastry chef in Arnhem, told us that lectures on emigration to Australia were held at the Employment Office on Wednesday afternoons.

Those afternoons, all the businesses were forced to close, so I told my wife, "I'm going to listen."

In a small room, many businessmen were listening to a civil servant who had a lot to say and was also distributing booklets.

Also present was a farm boy who had spent three years in Australia and was coming to pick up his family. I learned a lot from him during the break.

I went home very satisfied to my wife who was full of anticipation about what I would say, but I said, "Let's eat first, and then we have to talk calmly and probably make an important decision, yes or no."

At 8 p.m., after dinner and washing up, we sat upstairs in the living room, and I started telling stories, showing a booklet and pictures.

Because of the taxes, we'd already had to fire two of our nice shop assistants. My wife was working 60 hours in the shop, and I was working 90 hours and had to keep the books on Sundays.

### **THE NEED WAS HIGH, AND THERE HAD TO BE A WAY OUT.**

That way out was now here. That evening, we decided to sell our beautiful business, that we had built it up together twice, and go to Australia.

To emigrate to Australia, however, one must be tax-exempt.

The first thing we did was to sell our business to the highest bidder of five interested parties.

We used the proceeds to pay our suppliers first, after which we paid off our house in full, before temporarily moving in with one of my brothers in another part of Arnhem. I worked for our cousin Derksen in removals, until the time came to leave for Australia.

It was then we discovered that our free Dutch government was also making us pay for the entire boat trip to Australia, 1350 guilders for myself, 1350 guilders for my wife, and 350 guilders for our two-year-old blonde daughter. And on top of that, came the cost of the train and boat trip from Arnhem to Glasgow.

So not with a Dutch boat from Amsterdam or Rotterdam, but far away from Scotland with 50 other Dutch businessmen, and Scottish emigrants, who each paid only 10 pounds.

In addition, there were no 3 cubic meters of free space on board for household goods.

With no money left, I wrote an angry letter to our Prince Bernard, commander of all Dutch troops, at Soestdijk Palace.

I wrote that I refused to pay all the taxes owed to our occupiers during the war years 1940 to 1945, during which, on the advice of our Queen, I risked concentration camps, fighting for Holland at the Moerdijk bridges and Dortrecht against the German paratroopers.

I lost 194 comrades there and killed 180 paratroopers. I spent five years in the Resistance, rescued a Jewish girl from the Apeldoorn Gestapo, and four times rescued a Dutch woman from a German prison camp.

That I refused to pay that war tax, now that we are free Dutch people, and if they want to take my business and house, I will pour all the kerosene from a barrel through my house and business and burn everything.

**What I and my wife have built twice over, no one will take away from me.  
My wife said, "How dare you? You'll hear something." I said, "They're not shooting  
anymore, that's all over now."**

**But days later we received a response from Soestdijk Palace.  
"Request forwarded to Arnhem Taxes."**

**Three days later, I received a request from the tax office: "Come talk." After three  
visits with my accountant at the tax office, and after another threat from me, a second  
letter to Paleis Soestdijk (Soestdijk Palace), the 7,000-guilder war tax was finally  
waived, 500 guilders normal tax paid, and safe conduct to Australia granted.**

**My Wife Annie was finally relieved.**

**So, we can go now, after all.**

**After saying goodbye to close family and friends, the three of us boarded the train in  
Arnhem and travel via Rotterdam to Hoek van Holland. There we took the ferry to  
Harwich, the train to London, the train to Glasgow from there onto the boat  
"Camaronia", then the Mediterranean Sea, the Suez Canal, Aden, and Colombo.**

**Finally, we arrived in Australia, in Fremantle, near Perth, West Australia.  
My wife and our daughter, Yvonne, had been seasick for the entire five weeks, and had  
eaten very little.**

**I disembarked by tram and bus and returned with bags full of the most beautiful fruit  
we've ever seen. The enormous plums, apples, pears, pineapples, and the like.**

**They almost ate themselves sick.**

**After departure, there were another five days and five nights along the Australian  
coast, when, early in the morning, we sailed through a narrow, shallow opening into a  
bay with boat wrecks on the shore.**

**Around noon, we arrived in Melbourne, at the station pier near St. Kilda, and took a  
small train to the heart of Melbourne.**

**Annie and Yvonne felt much refreshed.**

**We disembarked at the well-known Flinder Street station, where we entered a wide  
street and discovered the first milk bar.**

**They didn't have any milk on board for our two-year-old Yvonne.**

**Well, she could catch up at that milk bar. I ordered three strawberry milkshakes, which  
cost just 6 pence each back then in 1951, and those aluminium cups were chock full of  
whole milk and ice cream.**

**We don't yet know where our daughter put it, but she drank a full second one with us.**

**After some evening shopping, we returned to the boat. A night of sailing, a day of  
sailing, and another night, and then early in the morning at 6 a.m. we were allowed to  
enter Sydney's beautiful harbor.**

**The pilot came on board to steer us past the various beacons, and the doctor came on board to check for any contagious diseases on board in the sick quarters.**

**We then slowly sailed through the beautiful harbor, with strangely beautiful views: four-engine flying boats, ferries large and small. Finally, around a rocky outcrop, we saw the beautiful, famous Harbor Bridge.**

**We sailed past Pinchgut, an old fort on rocks, Fort Dennison, and under the bridge, where the boat blew its loud steam whistle. We then docked at one of the many jetties, this one being Pymont II and 12, where we temporarily disembarked and walked to Hyde Park.**

**So, we left Holland in January 1951 and arrived in Sydney in February 1951. It was summer here, so the temperature was wonderful.**

**In Hyde Park, we saw all those carrier pigeons and seagulls flying around, landing right next to us, even on the bench, to pick up crumbs or bits of bread. Very peaceful. After walking around a bit, we headed back through Market Street to Pymont Bridge and the Pymont wharf where the boat was moored.**

**A steam locomotive had pulled several railway cars past the wharf, and after having something to eat outdoors, the conductors told us we could climb aboard the train.**

**We had to make room for ourselves, as it was an hour-long journey through the beautiful Blue Mountains.**

**We didn't get to see much of them, as it was already getting dark.**

**After an hour and a half, we stopped briefly in Penrith, at the foot of the Blue Mountains. I believe an extra steam locomotive was attached to help us climb to an altitude of 1,100 meters at Mount Victoria**

**. For the first time in our lives, we went through several tunnels and had to quickly close all the windows because of the smoke. We climbed very slowly and descended very rapidly, up and down for an hour, then descended to a valley and the town of Lithgow. One steam locomotive was uncoupled, and the other took on more water in the tender.**

**At this station, we were finally able to buy sandwiches and coffee in a small waiting room at midnight. Then we boarded again and were now on our way to Bathurst Camp.**

**Upon arrival, we were assigned our temporary accommodation: a small room with a double bed and a cot for our two-year-old daughter.**

**When the Polish cooks heard from our group of 50 Dutchmen what poor and little food, we had received on board that ship, they ordered us to collect full rations.**

**Our daughter now received full-fat milk, and we received large slices of white bread with butter, cheese, and oatmeal porridge. They spoiled us day in and day out, and in no time, we were back on top.**

**In Bathurst itself, I bought my first straw hat to protect me from the bright rays of the sun.**

**Every day I went to the camp's employment office to see if there was a job that suited me. Almost all the hundreds of offers were for farm work, on the enormous farms, some as large as the Dutch provinces, and even larger. Almost all offered a salary of 10 pounds a week plus keep. That meant free living in a garage or shed, your own plot of land to grow your own vegetables, as much as you wanted. And free mutton as much as you wanted, since most farmers have thousands of sheep, and never know exactly how many, as they never count them.**

**Many other jobs were offered by the railways. Deep in the countryside, checking and repairing the railway lines daily, living in a tent camp along the line, which brought you fresh water once a week. However, I was looking for something else, no longer in my own business, but in a large transport company or moving company, like I did the last few months in Holland with my nephew, De Derksens.**

**That's how you see the most of your country.**

**So, after we'd recovered from good food, wonderful sleep, and the healthy fresh air and sunshine, I decided to venture out on my own, and, as a city dweller, to look for work in the metropolis of Sydney.**

**After consulting with my wife Ann, I decided to buy a return train ticket to Sydney at midnight on Sunday, and from there, take the night train through the Blue Mountains to try my luck in Sydney. No sooner said than done. Before midnight, I walked the long distance from the camp to Bathurst station, bought my return ticket, which was then valid for a year, and began the approximately six-hour train journey to Sydney, where I knew no one, taking a chance.**

**I couldn't see much outside, so I dozed off by the window. After several stops, I finally arrived at Sydney Central.**

**I did what everyone did there: first went downstairs to the toilets and washbasins with large mirrors, where you can wash and shave for free.**

**So, at 8 a.m. on Monday morning, I was clean and awake, ready to look for a job.**

**Here I had to keep my Dutch cool and think carefully about what to do first.**

**I walked to a telephone cabinet and took out a phone book.**

**In it, I searched for transport and removals and found a large company with several large branches, Grace Bros.**

**I wanted to go to the one in Bondi Junction.**

**So, for the first time, I asked an Australian gentleman which tram I should take. He said, "The Bondi Junction and Bondi Beach trams pass right in front of here; you can't miss them."**

**So, among all the trams, I picked one of the BONDI trams. On board, I asked the conductor which stop was closest to Grace Bros, and he kindly helped me.**

**First, I looked at the large windows of Grace Bros and then went inside for my first job.**

**I asked to speak to the manager, and he let me into his office.**

**He could, of course, tell from my accent that I was a new Australian and asked where I was from. I told him, "I'm from Holland" and at the same time asked if there were any job opportunities.**

**I also told him that I had been working in removals for the past few months and would like to do that here as well. He asked how many languages I spoke. I said: four: English, Dutch, German, and French.**

**He apologized that there wasn't a job available right now but gave me the name and address of another large transport company where my language skills would certainly be useful. He said that company has the major contract for emigrant baggage transport and storage. They need people with language skill.**

**That didn't fall on deaf ears, I decided to try it right away.**

**So I took the tram back to the heart of Sydney. There, I walked to the indicated street and the shop and... the office.**

**Here again, I asked for the manager, who also invited me into his office. He also asked where I was from and how many languages I spoke. I was in luck right away. He asked when I could start. I said, right away, that's what I'm here for.**

**He said, no, not right now, but can you start next Monday at 8am?**

**I said, "Yes, I'll be here at 8 o'clock sharp." He promised me a starting salary of 12 pounds a week, with an annual increase of 1 pound more.**

**I thanked him, and there I was back on the street, but now with a job in prospect.**

**Now I needed accommodation. After looking around the Sydney Centre for a bit, I booked myself early enough at the Y.M.C.A. ,Christian Young Men's Association, for bed and breakfast, so I had a place to stay for that first night. This hostel has small halls where young people play sports in the evenings, like netball, handball, gymnastics, and the like.**

**I could also get a cheap dinner there and watch the sportsmen in the evening. By great luck, I met a young Dutchman who came to chat with me for a while. He asked if I was booked there permanently, but I said only for this night.**

**He suggested I come with him, because he had a single room with two beds, near Centenary Park. He said if we go to his landlady for that other bed, my friend will get his bed cheaper and I'll benefit too, as would the landlady because she would receive two incomes for that room, plus extra breakfast included.**

**The landlady was very reasonable, and from now on, my friend only had to pay 2 pounds instead of 3 pounds, and I also had to pay 2 pounds, and she now received 4 pounds for that room instead of 3 pounds.**

**So all three of us were happy.**

**In one day, I had a job, a place to stay, and breakfast on top of that.**

The next morning, after breakfast, I couldn't wait any longer for the night train to Bathurst to leave. I had to leave Sydney to tell my wife Annie the good news; I simply couldn't wait any longer.

I walked to the main road to Bathurst, the Great Western Highway, to get a lift. A man picked me up just before the Blue Mountains, a smart English gentleman in an open-top M.G. sports car, and he proudly showed me the Blue Mountains. He enjoyed it as much as I did, and we stopped at a tea house, where he offered me a real English Devonshire Tea with scones, and then dropped me off at the end of Blue Mountains.

So, there I was, hitchhiking again on the main road to Bathurst, and I was in luck again. Shortly afterward, a truck stopped and asked where I was going. When I told him Bathurst, he laughed. He said, "I'm on my way to Orange, so I'll pass through Bathurst. Come on board and don't look at the mess!"

Over hills and through valleys, we soon passed the town of Lithgow. All that daytime traveling had finally made me realize what a beautiful continent this Australia was. In many places, it resembled Germany, sometimes Austria, but nowhere was it as flat as Holland. Always rolling hills, then open terrain, and then back to wooded backcountry. After much chatting during the drive, which allowed us to learn a lot from each other's circumstances, we finally arrived at Bathurst. He dropped me off a short distance beforehand, which was nearer to the camp.

I thanked him politely.

After another half-hour walk, I arrived at Bathurst Camp.

As quickly as possible, I went to our room, where my wife Ann and daughter Yvonne were just drinking tea and milk.

It was nice to see each other again after a day and a half.

After a cup of tea to soothe my throat, I could start telling them about my experiences in the cosmopolitan city of Sydney.

At first, they couldn't believe that I was already working for one of the largest transport companies in Australia, F.H. Stephens, with offices and warehouses all over Australia and in Tasmania.

Now, as an emigrant myself, I would meet all those other emigrants from Holland, Germany, Italy, Greece, England, Malta, etc., etc., upon their arrival and handle all their luggage to the various emigrant camps, by truck or train, and on top of that, the usual sea swarms of tourists and passengers.

Our little family was on top of the world. And when I told her I'd already found lodgings in Sydney, bed and breakfast, for 2 pounds 10 shillings, and was living with another young Dutchman until I had enough room for our whole family, all hell broke loose.

So much happiness in such a short time.

Thank you.

**So, I spent the rest of the week with my wife and daughter in the camp, walking around it in the beautiful countryside. We also took the bus twice to the town of Bathurst to do some shopping and see how things worked here, with its very wide streets, parks, and the war memorial and park, commemorating the many who gave their lives in the First and Second World Wars.**

**All the names are listed alphabetically, so you can see that sometimes two or even three men from one family died overseas to restore other nations to their freedom.**

**Later, we discovered that every town, even the smallest villages and hamlets, has its own monument with all the names of those who fell for us, and everywhere there's an RSL club, where the remaining men remember their fallen comrades every evening at 9 o'clock sharp in a short silence, with all the lights extinguished, only a glowing torch lit, with the president or manager leading the ode.**

**As a former fighter and resistance fighter, I joined them and every year I march with 25,000 comrades in Sydney in the Anzac march, with 50 bands of music, from Scots, Scouts, Police, Salvation Army, etc. I also march in the local march in Penrith, a few days before the big march in Sydney.**

**Finally, Sunday night arrived, when I would take the midnight train to my first job in Sydney. In the camp, I said goodbye to my wife and daughter, as we wouldn't see each other again for a whole week in this strange country.**

**After the long steam train journey through the Blue Mountains, I arrived in Sydney.**

**I cleaned myself of the soot and was at the office for a quarter to eight, when the manager arrived shortly after.**

**After introducing myself, he took me and some other staff to a harbor warehouse. There were rows of crates, or vans, or containers, that had to be opened for inspection by customs and quarantine officers.**

**The manager gave me a hammer and crowbar, and I began to open the first crate. First, however, I asked the customs officers which side they wanted loosened: the lid or top, the front, the back, or the side. For some, they wanted the top open, others the front. Having been asked, I started at the front, trying to remove the entire front with as little damage as possible, rather than breaking it open plank by plank.**

**Next to my crate, I saw another man starting to break planks.**

**I said, "Stop a moment, there's another way to do it."**

**It happened to be a crate made and picked up by my cousins in Arnhem.**

**I'd often helped with that myself and learned a lot in a short time. So, the man stopped, and while the manager asked me how I was going to do that, two customs officers and the quarantine officer stood by and watched.**

**So, I asked my manager for an adjustable wrench from his car.**

**I knew from experience that the front is essentially a lid or door, attached to the actual crate with very long metal screws and long, thick nails. The wooden planks were attached to wooden beams all around.**

**While everyone watched, I first used a hammer and crowbar to remove the large nails from the top and bottom two corners and set them aside. Then, using the wrench, I unscrewed the long wood screws at the four corners.**

**The front door was now loose. I stood in front of it and lifted the entire door two centimetres over the bottom threshold. I carried the whole thing away without damaging it, placing it complete against a nearby crate.**

**I kept the screws and nails together so that the crate containing household goods could be quickly closed again after inspection.**

**So, I made a good first hour of the first day.**

**I did even better when unpacking. Many items had Dutch inscriptions, explanations, and stickers: No one could translate these for customs or quarantine, so I was increasingly called in to explain other open crates.**

**Even these officers were amazed at the beautiful, solid furniture they had brought with them.**

**After that first week as a labourer, I received my first Australian pay check.**

**Because the manager quickly discovered what he was dealing with, he called me into his office and said: "Next week, at 8 a.m. when I arrive, you'll get the keys and the car, and you have to get your Australian driver's license as soon as possible. You have your Dutch driver's license, but that's not enough."**

**"As soon as you get your license, you'll get the car during the day, and with the arrival of the next emigrant ship, you'll be in charge of the shipyard and the harbor warehouse."**

**"On the first morning, you must pick up your own men in the city, outside the hotels, where casual labourers are always waiting for a job, no matter what.**

**You pick the best and strongest and take them in the utility truck to the appropriate harbor warehouse. Give each of them a hammer and a crowbar and ask the customs and quarantine officers which crates they want opened, and ask them to open the top, the side, the front, or the back.**

**Remember, they're the boss, follow their instructions, and let the workers do their work with as little damage as possible.**

**You can go home now, so I'll see you back here Monday at 8 o'clock. All the best."**

**And there I was again, outside, with my first pay check in my pocket. I went straight to my apartment, took a shower, and then had dinner with my Dutch friend.**

**I told the landlady that I would be with her for weekends only when the ships came in, and I had to work overtime.**

**After dinner, we chatted about my first experiences, and about how I'd already been promoted to foreman this first week, or something like that.**

**Then we went to the central station for the night train to Bathurst, and to my wife and daughter with good news.**

**It was midnight in Bathurst. No more buses, no more taxis; everyone was picked up by car or horse and cart, so I had to walk a full hour to the camp, in the pitch-black night.**

**When I arrived, I asked my wife to get out of bed so I could tell her the latest good news.**

**My second week back at my job in Sydney, I quickly began to find my way around, as most shipyards are located in the heart of Sydney.**

**I also quickly learned to drive left-hand traffic, and it wasn't long before I was able to take the test for my Australian driver's license with a Bedford Utility.**

**I had requested to take the test in the most difficult part of Sydney, namely from the Hyde Park Traffic Office, driving in and around Woolloomooloo, with narrow, small streets, some one-way streets, some steep streets, and very heavy traffic in the city centre, with police on the corners, and lots of taxis and trucks.**

**If you pass that, you can drive throughout Australia without mistakes or risk of collisions.**

**I passed the first time, so now I had my Dutch and Australian driver's licenses.**

**So, from now on, I could do what my manager promised: pick up workers at 8 a.m. upon arrival of an emigrant ship, who would be standing in small groups at the hotels.**

**I had worked out that for every 100 emigrants, I needed one man. So, 900 emigrants required 9 men. 1,200 emigrants required 12 men.**

**When I first started, it sometimes took 4 to 5 weeks for the emigrants to receive their crates of household goods.**

**After I got the hang of it, with the help of the customs officers, after a year I was handling those ships in a maximum of 7 days, which saved my company enormously on Labor costs, and resulted in increasingly satisfied emigrants.**

**The magnificent English ships, with regular passengers and tourists on board, usually moored at the Pyrmont piers and sheds.**

**The other emigrant ships would dock wherever there was space, Woolloomooloo, Circular Quay, Walsh Bay, Glebe Island, Darling Harbour, and Pyrmont.**

**With the English ships, we had to be at the small jetty, where the Sydney Opera House is now, as early as 6 a.m. This jetty was called "Men O War Steps."**

**That's where the men from the warships always disembarked from their boats to go on leave.**

**The "GARDEN ISLAND" naval base was right next door, and at that jetty, a large motorboat was waiting.**

**This was ordered by the central customs office, and usually, 10 customs officers would board, and three or four members of our transport and shipping company would be allowed to sail free of charge to the incoming boat.**

After such a seagoing vessel had passed the harbor entrance, the doctor would first climb aboard, and the yellow flag would be raised.

Before that, the pilot would also climb aboard in an orange boat to guide the ship through the harbor, past beacons and rock formations, and later, with the help of two and sometimes three tugboats, moor the ship safely at a designated wharf.

When the yellow flag went down, it meant that there were no contagious patients on board in the small hospital.

At that point, we were allowed to board, following the customs officers.

Our job was to visit all the cabins, asking one by one if we could clear their luggage for that passenger through customs, and then later deliver that luggage, suitcases or trunks, to their homes or hotels using our large trucks.

Passengers usually took the small cabin luggage directly, but the larger luggage from the hold, which was lifted out of the ship with large cranes, could take hours to be loaded into the warehouse. Most passengers preferred to go straight home or to their hotels with family or friends in their cars or taxis.

So, when we had a customer, we would use porters to sort out the luggage alphabetically, summon a customs officer, and, using the keys provided, open the luggage the officer pointed out. Several of our own drivers would then drive trolleys that transported the luggage to their trucks.

We usually divided the trucks according to the cardinal directions: one truck for the northern districts of Sydney, one for the southern districts, and one for the western districts. The outer districts are 60 kilometres from the harbor, and a nonstop hour and a half drive by car.

These include Penrith, Kingswood, Richmond, Windsor, Camden, etc.

#### **BY PLANE TO MELBOURNE AND FREMANTLE AND PERTH**

After a while, I was called back into my manager's office.

He first asked, "Can you be away from your wife for a few weeks?" The answer was, "For what?" Then the truth came out

"Something fantastic for 1951" He said, "Next week, another Dutch ship with 900 emigrants will arrive in Melbourne.

We want to send you to Melbourne. You have to help them there while the ship is there and do the same as in Sydney. When the ship departs with the rest of the emigrants for Sydney, you will board in your own reserved cabin, with about four Australian immigration officials.

All the emigrants line up for you in the smoking lounge, or dining room, which they will point out to you on board.

You are the fifth person, and you have to take their waybills, with the keys to their checked baggage. When you arrive in Sydney, you will have all the paperwork ready, and we won't have any delays.

Those emigrants can then go straight to their lodgings or camps.

I asked, "That's all wonderful, but how do I get to Melbourne? By car, by bus, or 12 hours by train."

He laughed, "No, no. We'll send you by plane, how do you like that?" and what's more, we'll book you into a beautiful Melbourne hotel with bed, breakfast, and dinner for the duration of your stay. Who'll pay for all that? "We will."

I had to pinch myself to make sure I wasn't dreaming. Fantastic. I said, "My wife will definitely appreciate that."

And so, the following week, I went to work in Melbourne. I believe the ship was the Sibajak. Later, I sailed on the Johan van Oldenbarneveld, the Waterman, the Skaurron, the Grote Beer, and the Fairsea.

I found working in Melbourne more enjoyable than in Sydney. They had a different kind of staff in Melbourne. Just like me, office workers. You didn't need eyes in the front, back, and sides of your head, like in Sydney, because of thefts. These people and men all had stable families behind them, with steady jobs. You could sense that immediately.

In Sydney you mostly had, wine drinkers, beer drinkers and unemployed labourers. After two days, some didn't even return. Every now and then, I'd catch one with new shoes instead of his worn-out sandals, with new trousers, replaced with his own shorts.

Or a nice shirt, which he didn't have that morning, etc., etc.

I'd then send those lads straight back to our office for only half a day's pay and to never return to my ships.

I suggested to my director in Sydney to hire four Dutchmen, or two Dutchmen and two Germans, from those emigrant ships.

I told them I'd get more and better work done, and more honesty, with those four, than with those casual labourers, most of whom weren't used to working.

The WEFF watchmen usually kept an eye on things as well and occasionally gave me a tip.

The "Pillage Squad" harbor police were also regularly present, keeping an eye on things through holes in the warehouse walls, and Customs, of course, required that the searched crates be immediately boarded up to prevent thefts or smuggling.

Very occasionally, I happened to be in the office, picking up customs papers or returning finished paperwork, when I heard an emigrant complain that goods were missing from his crate.

I then heard my manager rebuff them by saying, "Don't sue us for theft, because that could have happened to a packer in Holland. You have no evidence, be careful, or we'll file a false accusation against you with the police."

would have told the emigrant both the truth and bluffed him at the same time.

When my wife heard about my weeks of absence and my flight to Melbourne and return on a familiar Dutch vessel, she was astonished and incredulous.

Months later, I was called back to the office. The manager said that this time I would stay away even lower because this time I had to fly a full day to Perth and Fremantle, to meet the large Dutch ship, the "Johan van Oldenbanneveld," with 1,200 immigrants, of whom 700 were Dutch and 500 German.

"You can speak German too, right?" "Yes, of course," I said.

"So, fly."

#### MR. VAN RIJN, DUTCH CONSULATE.

So, at the office, I received my plane ticket again, this time via Melbourne, then Adelaide, then Perth.

For this flight, we had a slightly larger plane. Instead of the regular four-engine Douglas D.C.4, we boarded a large four-engine D.C.6 in Sydney. We departed Sydney at 8:00 a.m. and had breakfast on board, two hours in Melbourne, and after departure, lunch on board, three hours in Adelaide in the afternoon, and then disembarked for a longer stop, fuel refills, catering refills and crew changes.

And who did I meet there in the sun, on the tarmac?

Three Dutch gentlemen. Unbelievable. The first was Mr. van Rijn, an immigration official at the Dutch Consulate in Sydney, whom I knew from the emigrant ships in Sydney. The second was a bank official at the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, and the third was also a bank official at the Bank of N.S.W. And all three, like me, were on their way to Perth for the "Johan van Oldenbarneveld."

When the plane was ready for the longest flight, we all boarded and chatted closely together during the flight. Later, we had dinner on board, and around 9 p.m. we arrived in Perth. There, everyone went their own way, and I went to the hotel I'd booked.

After a late meal and drinks, I went to bed, tired from the drone of the plane.

The next morning, after washing, shaving, and breakfast, at 9 a.m., I arrived at the office of the large transport company to which I'd been assigned, who had good connections with my own employer.

I reported to the director and explained who I was. He said, "Didn't they tell you about that boat?" I said, "No, what's wrong?" "That boat was delayed for two days."

When I heard that, I asked the director if he could send an urgent telegram to my head office in Melbourne and ask if I needed to fly back for work in Melbourne or Sydney. He said, OK, so I told him I'd be back that afternoon at 2 o'clock to wait for the answer.

Meanwhile I used the buses to see Perth.

Two hours later came the telegram; enjoy two days in Perth

So, during those two days, I saw a lot in Perth and Fremantle, but unfortunately, I didn't know about all the discoveries made along the Western Australian coast, the wrecks of the East India Company's "India Sailors," Cape Leeuwin, Rotnest, etc.

**Around 1952, the "Dutch Former Servicemen's Club" probably didn't exist yet. When the J.v.O. arrived and had unloaded some emigrants, I went on board and asked at the administrator's office, the purser, which cabin I had been assigned.**

**It was a first Class cabin at the front, 6-berth.**

**What a view from that cabin! Too bad I had to work during the day and missed the view.**

**A while after departure, I went down the stairs to the dining room, and who was sitting there with his wife and children? Jansen, the baker from Arnhem, He looked at me with a grimace. "You, you, you, live in Sydney, don't you?" he stammered. "Yes," I said, "I'll come and see you." When I briefly told them the story, he was still speechless. "I'll see you later," I said. "I'm going to eat something too, just like you."**

**After the meal, I contacted the Australian Emigration Officials. We would meet in one of the smoking rooms. The next morning after breakfast, we started working.**

**The four gentlemen worked side by side, and I joined in as the fifth, to receive the checked baggage forms with the collection keys for customs inspection. And there came all those emigrants, men, women, and children.**

**The officials took turns asking me to translate into Dutch, English, and German So often I fell behind on my own work and said we had to change that system. They said, "We've always done it this way, let's continue." I asked to stop for a moment, saying I had a better system.**

**I went to the administrator's office and asked if it was possible to speak with the "purser" administrator personally.**

**He let me into his private office and asked me what I wanted.**

**I then told him that almost 1,200 men, women, and children were standing in line to pass the emigration gentlemen with their documents. I told him that this was unnecessary and that there was a better way.**

**First of all, we don't need all those ladies and children jumping around us.**

**"If you could first announce in Dutch that only Dutch men, whose surnames begin with A and B, and C, need to report to the smoking room with their papers..., when we're finished with that, I'll tell you, and you can announce in German, only German men with the letters A and B, and C, just like the Dutch, and please no ladies or children. That way we hope to process everyone in four days. Anyone who doesn't have their turn can enjoy themselves on board. Thank you very much."**

**I then went back to the four officials and said to listen to the announcement that came on. I translated the announcement for them, and they thought it was a brilliant solution.**

**All the ladies and children disappeared, and only a group of Dutch men remained in line. What wonderful calm!**

**I could now keep up with my own work, and occasionally just do a few English-Dutch translations.**

**No sooner said than done, after the Dutch ABCs, I went to the office, and immediately an announcement was made in German: German men with ABCs. From then on, everything went smoothly.**

**Later, I asked the manager of those officials if they would work extra overtime hours. They had never done that or thought about it, so, I suggested working overtime from 8 to 10 p.m., for which they would also receive extra pay.**

**The manager became anxious and asked, "What should I tell my director at the emigration office?" Then I said "Eplain to him that we need a day's leeway, because if we sailed into a storm, which had happened to me before, you wouldn't see a soul for a whole day because of seasickness."**

**The Pacific Ocean was calm, and the large ship glided smoothly for the next five days to Melbourne.**

#### **EXISTING SYSTEMS WERE CHANGING.**

**You can make up for a lost day or two like that. When the emigrants arrived and saw family or acquaintances, their thoughts scattered and they ran off in all directions. He thought that was a reasonable excuse. He said, "We'll be finished in four days — so what will we do on the fifth?"**

**He laughed heartily at my answer, because I said, "On the fifth day, we'll be passengers too. We'll lie back in a deck chair in the sun with a cool drink."**

**After the sea voyage we said goodbye, and when we shook hands they asked me, "Will we see you again on the next trip?" Yes — then we would do the same thing again. We had enjoyed it quite a bit.**

**After arriving in Melbourne, I worked there for a few days at Station Pier with my Melbourne colleagues, until the ship departed again for Sydney — a voyage of two nights and one day. In Melbourne, I introduced a new and much faster system.**

**Until then, with every emigrant ship, all household-goods crates were sent to a storage facility first. Only afterward was it determined which emigrants already had accommodation, then the relevant crate had to be located in the warehouse, where crates were often stacked two deep.**

**Searching, customs clearance, and quarantine inspection took an incredibly long time. Emigrants complained bitterly that they had to wait weeks or even months for their crockery, beds, and chairs.**

**For this voyage, I divided the Melbourne waybills into three groups:**

- 1. First group – emigrants with accommodation: On-site inspection and direct delivery.**
- 2. Second group – emigrants continuing to Tasmania: Direct transport by truck or train to ferry or ship.**
- 3. Third group – emigrants without accommodation: Transport to camp, then to a storage facility for later inspection and delivery.**

**This way, not everything ended up mixed together and stacked on top of each other in the warehouse, where there was hardly any spare space. It was no wonder that I was asked twice to move permanently to Melbourne and work there.**

**My household goods would have been shipped free of charge from Sydney to Melbourne in the company truck, and my wife, my child, and I would have been flown there free of charge, plus a two-week vacation to look for housing. And yet I refused.**

**We were living beautifully in one of Sydney’s most attractive suburbs — Manly. At one end of our street was the Pacific Ocean and its beach: at the other end, the view of Sydney Harbour, with the Manly ferry wharf.**

**There was also a permanent fairground with all kinds of entertainment. At the ocean end stood the surf club, and there were weekly concerts in the open-air theatre.**

**Because a police officer lived in one of the four holiday flats, we benefited from rent control and paid only two pounds ten shillings per week.**

**In Melbourne we would have had to pay at least four times as much — and certainly not live by the Pacific Ocean in a tourist resort like Manly.**

**Another factor was the weather. I kept a record of my first twelve flights to Melbourne, and on seven of them I arrived soaked. In Sydney, nobody carries an umbrella or raincoat in advance. We do get more rain than Melbourne, but it falls heavily for a day and then it’s over. In Melbourne it’s like Holland: a week of steady rain or drizzle.**

**Back in Holland we had studied photographs and made our plans accordingly.**

**Sydney, especially regarding temperature, appeared much more subtropical.**

**They threatened me the third time: *go to Melbourne, or you’ll be dismissed.***

**That made me angry, and I told them the truth. I said: “If I leave here on Friday, I can start with your biggest competitor — the newcomer — on Monday. I also have an offer from the head of Customs to transfer there because of my language skills. In either case, I can make things very difficult for you.”**

**After that, the threats stopped. They left me alone.**

I still travelled to Melbourne and Perth whenever required and continued to do the same good work as before. From then on, however, they paid me an extra five pounds per fully booked ship, which they were only too happy to do in order to keep the emigrant contract.

### **CONTACT WITH DUTCH CONSULATE.**

Several times I had to approach the Dutch Consulate in Sydney for assistance.

On one occasion, the quarantine officer confiscated all down bedding — beds, pillows, and blankets — from a Dutch ship. My workers and the officer piled everything high in a corner of the harbour warehouse. I asked what was going to happen to it.

He explained that fowl fever had been discovered in Europe, and therefore anything filled with chicken feathers had to be confiscated and burned.

I could not, nor did I wish to, place advertisements in Dutch newspapers with my own money, to warn emigrants in advance — to exchange their bedding with relatives, sell it, or bring spring or rubber mattresses instead. Otherwise, they would end up sleeping on planks.

So, I contacted the Consulate. That was their role, and they had both the means and the authority to spread the information through Dutch newspapers and emigration offices.

After some time, a gentleman from the Consulate arrived and asked what the problem was. I took Mr. Van Rijn to the warehouse and pointed to the mountain of bedding.

“All that Dutch material will be burned,” I said. “Through the Consulate, you can inform the newspapers and warn future emigrants. I’ll take you to the quarantine officers, who can explain why this is happening.”

Months later, I had to call the Consulate again.

Once more, Mr. Van Rijn was sent. “Mr. Slothouber,” he asked, “what’s going on this time?”

I led him to a corner of the warehouse where two organs and two pianos were standing.

“They look beautiful, don’t they? Nicely scrubbed. But look at the back.”

It was riddled with holes — live woodworm. Australia has larger worms, but not this kind.

These instruments had to be treated at the emigrants’ expense: transport to quarantine, at least seven days in a gas chamber, fumigation, and then transport back to the owner or to storage. I asked him again : “Could you publicize this in the Dutch newspapers and emigration offices?”

Later, wealthy emigrants arrived with two crates of household goods, a car, and even a prefabricated Swedish wooden bungalow. They too wanted to begin a new life in Australia.

But once more I had to call Mr. Van Rijn. During inspection, my men discovered woodworm in some of the wooden beams — again something Australia did not want to import.

The affected section would involve significant costs in transport and treatment.  
Once more, the same request: *could this be communicated in the Netherlands  
beforehand?*

Because of my frequent contact with Dutch officials and the Consulate — and because I was still Dutch myself — this later worked against me.  
After five years, when I left the firm and they lost the entire Dutch emigrant contract, I was accused of betrayal. I was followed and treated like a spy.  
More about that later, when I had to involve the police.

Later I once again, I asked Mr. Van Rijn for assistance.  
Another Dutch emigrant brought a highly complex device in a crate — full of electrical wiring, contacts, pressure gauges, thermometers, and barometers.

Customs called in their highest directors.

Mechanics were summoned, but no one could identify the apparatus.

Some even suspected it was a secret transmitter. The owner refused to explain it.  
In the end, it turned out to be the first such device in Australia, in 1953 — something that today can be found in every large garage: a machine for diagnosing faults in a car engine, mechanical or electrical.

#### ASSISTANCE TO STRANDED DUTCH PEOPLE

Because I was the fifth person on board the emigrant ships, people would occasionally approach me and ask quietly, “May I speak with you privately?” My standard reply was, “Come to my cabin between seven and three tonight. And that was usually enough.

On evenings like that, the cat was out of the bag.

“Mr. Slothouber,” they would say, “I’ve received a message that my accommodation and work in Sydney have fallen through. I’m stranded. Can you give me advice or help?” I always tried to give them hope straight away, and you could see them relax.  
“Listen carefully,” I would say. “When we arrive in Sydney, first go through Customs with your suitcase. Then walk from the harbour shed into the city — it’s close by. Ask for the tram to Leichhardt–Lilyfield. Get off at stop 37 in Lilyfield. To the left of that stop is a former hospital.”

“That building was bought and furnished by a Dutch family named Wagenmaker. Mr. Wagenmaker will certainly have a bed for you to start with. He can accommodate around eighty people.” “If you like, you can speak Dutch, eat Dutch food, and enjoy Dutch company. Through all the contacts there, you’ll quickly find work. You pay when your wages start coming in — Dutch honesty.”

That was all.

On Sundays, when I wasn’t working on ships, I went to church and often met Mr. Wagenmaker there. I would tell him, “I sent you another young man with problems.”

**“Yes, thank you,” he would say.**

**“And next week in Melbourne, I’ll meet another Dutch ship — I may have four more men for you.” “No problem,” he replied. “We’ve converted another room.”**

**When I asked him how things were going with the health authorities and inspectors, he told me, “I’ve been told I must build two extra toilets and two showers.”**

**And so, together, we helped many stranded emigrants — sometimes three per ship.**

**I also helped people who needed to travel onward. Some said, “I have to go to Brisbane. I thought it was nearby, but it turned out to be a twelve-hour journey by train or car.” Three or four times I gave a Dutchman ten pounds for a train ticket — three-quarters of his weekly salary. Every time, I received it back by post a few weeks later.**

## **HELPING TO ESTABLISH DUTCH PROTESTANT CHURCHES**

### **Reformed Churches of Australia**

**To bring Dutch Protestants together — and keep them together — a small group of Dutch pioneers decided to establish their own church community. The aim was to prevent people from dispersing into the many English and Australian churches. Catholic emigrants could easily join Catholic parishes in their neighbourhoods. But we Protestants wanted to attend services that reflected our Dutch beliefs and traditions.**

**In 1951, a group of about fifty Dutch people founded the Free Presbyterian Church in Castlereagh Street, in central Sydney. After each service, we gathered to talk and to meet newly arrived Dutch emigrants. We regretted that the beautiful old organ was not allowed to be played; the congregation had a cantor instead. After about six months, we decided to request our own minister from Holland. Sometime later, we received word that Reverend Van der Bom would be coming.**

**Our intention was to hold a monthly afternoon service entirely in Dutch, especially for the ladies whose English was still limited. The minister was given a house in the Sydney suburb of Carlton, where meetings, a ladies’ club, and genuine Dutch social evenings immediately began. I still have photographs of the official inauguration of Reverend van der Bom.**

**Several Dutch sailors from the warship BOEROE, which was in Sydney for repairs from what was then the Dutch part of New Guinea, attended that service. Afterward, as a former soldier, I spoke with two of them — Klaas and Arend — and invited them to Manly for coffee and conversation. Coffee was still hard to come by in those days. They gladly accepted the chance to speak Dutch with a real Dutch family instead of struggling in English in that unfamiliar city.**

**Even when I was not in church but somewhere at sea on a Dutch emigrant ship, Klaas and Arend — if not on guard duty — would regularly visit me.**

**They continued to do so until their ship was repaired and returned to New Guinea.**

**Because Reverend Van der Bom knew that I often travelled to Melbourne or Perth to collect new emigrants, he once asked whether I could distribute church letters on board. As I still had passenger lists showing religion and cabin numbers, I could easily do this in my spare time.**

**When emigrants saw me handing out letters and later sitting among Australian passengers, they would ask, “What kind of church is this? Reformed, Protestant, Lutheran, Christian Reformed, Christian Historical, or something else?**

**My answer was always the same “Forget the Dutch labels. We have established our own Protestant church here in Australia, provisionally with our own Dutch ministers for the time being. We call it the Reformed Churches of Australia, just as in Canada, America, and South Africa. Soon we will build our own churches with our own craftsmen.**

**We won’t fight over Bible interpretations anymore. Together, we are stronger.” And so the churches grew rapidly in and around Sydney, and later in other major Australian cities and we also established our own theological college in Geelong.**

**In the Dee-Why neighborhood, where we later lived, I spent evenings helping lay and hammer in the floorboards, along with other Dutch volunteers. The church in Groningen, Holland, was saving up for our church's first car, for Reverend van der BOM. I took a photo of it, and when Mr. Pathuis, also from Groningen, saw it, he said, “That’s what we all saved up for.” Later on, we also built Christian schools. Our own son-in-law, Dick Reitsma, built a Reformed Church in Sydney and in our capital, Canberra, with his own construction company. He also built two Christian schools in the Sydney districts of Warrimoo and Menai.**

#### **NOW LET'S GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING WITH THAT LARGE FIRM**

**When the manager realised that I was reorganising operations and that things were running faster — with far fewer complaints from emigrants about delayed household goods (two weeks instead of six) — he asked whether my wife and daughter were still living in Bathurst Camp. “Yes,” I said, “but I’m looking for a small house or apartment.”**

**Without telling me, he placed an advertisement in the newspaper for accommodation for a staff family, using the company name.**

**One Monday morning at eight o’clock, I asked, as usual, for the keys to utility car No. 200. He handed them over, but this time he said: “Today you’re taking the car for a day off. Here’s an address in the seaside resort of Manly. Go see the owner. She may have an apartment for your family. Then you won’t have to commute to Bathurst every weekend.”**

**No sooner said than done; he didn't have to tell me twice.**

I drove calmly to Manly, careful not to make mistakes — with the car or in the conversation to come. After some searching, I rang a doorbell and a woman answered.

“I’m here about the apartment,” I said. “My company placed the advertisement.”  
“Yes, come in,” she said. “The back apartment is available — overlooking the garden.

How big is your family?” “My wife, my two-year-old daughter, and myself.”

“That’s fine,” she said. “There’s a double bed and a cot.”

We agreed on the rent, and she told me we could move in the following Monday. I spent the rest of the day exploring Manly — the shops, the streets, the surroundings. Every day I could take the big Manly Ferry from here, through Sydney Harbor to the jetty in the heart of Sydney, and then a 10-minute tram ride. And of course, in the evening, the same way back.

It's a beautiful trip, even recommended for tourists.

I returned to the office very happy and told them the apartment was secured.

The manager said that if no ships arrived the following Monday, I could use the car again to pick up my wife and daughter and their luggage and drive them to Manly, to move in and explore the beautiful Pacific coast and its surroundings.

What fantastic offers!

And so it happened on Monday. You should have seen my wife when I arrived in Bathurst Kamp at midnight on Friday night, woke her up, and told her we would be traveling to Sydney together that Sunday night by train.

She waited at the station with Yvonne and their luggage, while I went to get the car, and then took them on a wonderful trip through Sydney and North Sydney, through Mosman, over the Spit Bridge and on to Brookvale and Manly.

They could hardly believe their eyes when I showed them the street where we were going to live.

The harbor, the Ocean Beach and, up above, the rocks, the deep healthy blue sea air, and the glorious sunshine. A tourist town.

After we'd unloaded everything and had something to eat and drink, we strolled along the promenade, and then the "CORSO," shopping street with palm trees and flowers, a bandstand and past the Manly Ferry jetty to the fairground.

I did notice, however, that they were increasingly keen to keep me with the company, because with those emigrant contracts, there were potential buyers. Other companies tried to lure me away and offered me good jobs if I came to work for them.

Customs also discovered me for with my language skills, I would be invaluable for them. The head of the customs officers, Bill Ingram, said: "If you ever want to transfer to us, you're welcome."

However, I wanted to see how things went and found traveling by plane and boat to my liking.

## **WE BUY OUR FIRST BLOCK OF LAND**

**We lived in Manly for years and loved it. Later we moved temporarily to Harbord, with a large living room overlooking the Pacific Ocean and Harbord Beach right in front of us. After that, we moved again along the coast to Dee Why West, where we lived in a small three-room house.**

**While living there, we saw advertisements in the newspaper *The Cover* for cheap blocks of land in Kingswood, near the railway line in western Sydney, at the foot of the Blue Mountains, rising to 1,100 metres. We decided to take the plunge.**

**Kingswood was forty-five minutes by Manly Ferry, then one hour and twenty minutes by train — still Sydney, but the farthest suburbs.**

**We found the land agent easily from the signs. The agent showed us rows of blocks and named the price. We chose a gently sloping block on the high side of the street — 155 pounds. I should have bought a hundred of them, but we could only just afford one. Our aim was simple: pay off a house of our own instead of throwing money away on rent.**

**When we submitted house plans to the council, they were rejected — the street would first need to be sealed with tar or asphalt.**

**Still wanting to escape rent, I went back alone to Kingswood. This time I ended up on an asphalt road with a different agent. “Any blocks left?” I asked. “Yes — only two. I want to go home. Two or none.” “How much?” “Two hundred and fifty pounds. Take it or leave it.” “Which ones?” He showed me — one wide block in the same street, and another around the corner on the next asphalt road. “I only have twenty-five pounds deposit.” “Sold,” he said, signing the invoice.**

**I now owned three blocks.**

**On the widest block of land, I had truckloads of coal dust dumped along the side and at the back, where a drainage ditch ran. This raised the ground and prevented flooding when water levels were high.**

**Along that raised edge, I built a large garage — what in Australia is called a temporary dwelling. At that time, you were allowed to live in such a structure for up to two years, until your permanent house was built. There were windows facing the street and along the side near the entrance.**

**We divided the garage into two sections: at the front, a living room with kitchen facilities — a countertop and a tap — and at the back, a bedroom with our double bed and a cot. Instead of paying rent, we paid off the land and the garage.**

**After about a year and a half, we received notice from the town hall that construction could begin on our first block — the asphalt road had finally been completed. Shortly afterward, I went to a real estate agent and put the block with the garage up for sale. At**

the same time, I commissioned a builder to construct a new house on our original block. I had arranged a loan, payable over twelve years. Not long after, the real estate agent found a buyer — a young man and his girlfriend who wanted to marry as soon as they had somewhere to live.

Our new house was not yet fully finished, but it was nearly ready. I asked the builder whether we could move into the front living room while he completed the rest of the house. Fortunately, he agreed — the sooner the better, he said — because the house was completely detached, and tools and locks were already being stolen at night.

Soon after, we moved in, and the young couple took over the garage. We received a good price for it, which helped greatly with further payments.

In the beginning, my wife had to walk 200 metres to fetch buckets of water for washing dishes and laundry, because our house did not yet have a water connection, that arrived three months later. Electricity followed shortly after. For a while, sheets hung over the windows — but there were no passers-by anyway. There were simply no other houses yet.

### **OUR HOUSEHOLD GOODS — STOLEN**

One could write an entire book about our household goods alone.

When we married in September 1940, after five years of engagement, we had everything we needed. In Arnhem, on Velperweg, above our commodities business, our living room and bedrooms were furnished with solid Dutch furniture — a magnificent collection.

In September 1944, during the landing of 10,000 British paratroopers at Arnhem, we were forced to evacuate after four days. Under threat of death, we fled by bicycle to Apeldoorn, leaving everything behind.

After liberation by the Canadians, we returned to Arnhem to find nothing but a shell — everything stolen, stripped to the bone. Without benefits, we slowly rebuilt both our business and our household goods. Later, when war taxes and VAT forced us to emigrate to Australia, our household goods were packed by our cousins, Derksen, the movers.

Because we were assigned to a ship sailing from Glasgow, Scotland, and had to pay the full fare ourselves, we were not entitled to take a cargo crate. Through our cousins, we were put in touch with a family of six who were travelling to Australia on a Dutch ship and were only taking six suitcases. They were entitled to six cubic metres of free cargo space. We had 5 cubic meters, so after some quick negotiations, the family took our crate, and I took it back in Australia after their arrival. Everything was arranged in writing through a notary.

Years later, when we needed our household goods in our second apartment in Manly, I had the crate, which was stored with my own transport company, delivered free of charge by one of our drivers. When we unpacked it, we discovered that goods worth approximately 80 pounds were missing: my wife's crockery and kitchen utensils, a standing lamp, an almost-new lawn mower, and more.

I requested compensation from my company. The manager responded exactly as he did with many emigrants — and even threatened us, “That could have been stolen in Holland during packing. You can't prove anything. If you sue us, we'll go to the police and take it to court.” Normally, emigrants backed down at that point and disappeared, empty-handed.

But he had the wrong person.

I told him I had three witnesses who had seen the goods in the company warehouse, once when I retrieved the sewing machine for my wife, and again when I collected blankets for the cold Australian nights. On both occasions, those items had been unpacked and repacked in my presence.

The first request achieved nothing. The second also failed. The third, when I threatened to involve the police, worked. My cheque was waiting for me at the major insurance company, whose director, as it turned out, also sat on the board of my firm.

But the money could not replace everything we had lost — including a German SS helmet with camouflage chicken wire, which I had found lying in our Arnhem kitchen beside a pool of blood after the war.

So, in Australia, we started again — for the third time.

One day, while working with Customs in a harbour warehouse, a customs officer and I made a discovery. We came to a crate, and as usual I asked, “Do you want this crate opened from the top, the side, or completely dismantled?”

Then we noticed a row of nails on the outside, about six inches above the floor. As an inspector, he immediately became suspicious; that's their job. “Sorry, Henk,” he said. “Everything out.”

I called two workers and told them to dismantle the crate carefully and stack the contents neatly. At the bottom, we found a false floor. Under the officer's supervision, I said, “Carefully remove that floor.” While the officer called his senior. Beneath it, we discovered 144 large painter's block brushes — whitewash brushes — still boxed, with brass screw rims on the handles.

We checked the waybill declaration, and the owner hadn't declared them. Undeclared and concealed, it was deemed smuggling by customs. Everything was confiscated, the man was fined and registered as a criminal.

After that, I was told: “Sorry, Henk — from now on, 100% inspection. Every crate must be opened.” That decision wiped out five years of trust.

**Until then, not a single serious irregularity had ever been found among Dutch emigrants. I usually only had to open one crate out of every five.**

**Despite this, I had reduced the waiting time for emigrants' household goods from six weeks to a maximum of six days, some even received their belongings the same evening they arrived. This smuggling case — combined with the theft from my own crate and the loss of trust within my company — made me decide it was time to move on.**

**I informed the Dutch immigration officer at the Consulate about the theft, the smuggling incident, and the breakdown in relations with Customs. They already knew about the theft, and after my departure, they withdrew the emigrant contract from that company.**

**That placed me at considerable risk.**

**One theft I personally uncovered involved the two Hoonhout brothers, who were travelling on to Brisbane. They had left four suitcases, containing all their savings, in storage. At Customs, I had only opened two of them; the other two still bore Dutch Customs cords and seals, which I had broken but not opened.**

**Months later, those two brothers were in our office when I happened to bring in my finished customs papers and pick up new ones. The manager asked if I could take them to that storage shed to get four suitcases. The three of us set off in the Bedford Utility and arrived at the shed. I gave the warehouse manager their names, and he checked his card system to see how much luggage there was and where it was stored. He called out, "Here it is," so we went over. No wonder he couldn't carry them. All four suitcases were open, and both locks on each were broken, so those four suitcases were completely unusable. I said right away, "Before we take them, look here first in the shed, in the presence of the shed boss and myself, in case you're missing something,"**

**The two brothers slowly looked through the clothes and various items and said, "For now, we've only lost shoes and boxes of cigars. Maybe we'll find other things we're missing later." I offered to take them back to our office instead of dropping them off in town or at the station. Since I had personally helped their suitcases through customs, they had myself, the best witness, to claim compensation for the damage.**

**In the office, we showed the manager the four suitcases, damaged beyond repair, and from a box full of keys, gave them their own four keys with luggage tags bearing their names. I told the manager that I had only needed two of those four upon arrival at the shipyard. "These gentlemen are missing shoes and boxes of cigars; they haven't discovered anything else yet... They will claim compensation later."**

**I said goodbye and continued my work, visiting the various harbor warehouses. When I returned to the office later, around 5 p.m. closing time, the manager was furious with me for assisting these two clients.**

Fortunately, I heard from most of the emigrants that nothing was missing, and that their crates probably hadn't even been opened.

One exception was Mr. Strikling, a painter, who told me some of his own paintings had disappeared.

Once, while working a full week in that warehouse with an elderly Dutch carpenter, repairing damaged crates, I noticed something odd: just before lunchtime, a car would park outside the sliding doors. Under the back of the car, the spare-wheel compartment door hung open — empty. I had seen this several times before when the men went out for beer. Later, when the thefts became known, I reported this — and never forgot it.

I also told the Dutch immigration officer, Mr. Van Rijn. Whether he informed the police, I don't know. But soon after, the emigrant contracts dripped away — not all at once, but steadily — and went to others.

It did not come as a surprise.

One day, the deputy director asked me for a quiet conversation. He told me he had heard from one of our drivers — or from a freight or baggage handler — that for certain baggage deliveries, no regular cash payments were being used. That raised suspicions that someone was pocketing the money. He asked whether I could discreetly find out who was responsible.

These irregularities only occurred on the large English passenger ships, where we worked with a small group of clerks. It didn't take long for me to discover what was going on, and I reported it back to the deputy director. But I warned him: "Be very careful. One of the people involved might be a customs officer from the main Customs office." "I don't know all those officers. If I can help a *known* officer, I'll do so — free of charge. We work with them daily, and they can make life very difficult for you... or very easy."

In hindsight, the deputy director probably handled the matter badly. Much later, I began having problems with that clerk — and with several customs officers as well.

Meanwhile, my work only increased. More and more emigrant ships arrived — Italians, Greeks, people from Malta, and others. Some of these ships carried up to 1,900 male emigrants, and they often had to be moved through Customs very quickly, usually carrying nothing more than a suitcase. By eleven o'clock at night, all of them had to be on the train — bound for Queensland, where the climate was even warmer.

I organised a convoy of trucks running like a conveyor belt between the wharf and the central station, where the train stood ready on a siding with passenger coaches — and several freight wagons for luggage. After inspection, the emigrants themselves carried their suitcases to our waiting trucks, where our drivers and loaders stacked everything neatly. From there, they boarded buses to the station.

I quickly learned enough Italian and Greek to manage the flow — words like *quickly, faster, passport, customs*. It was enough to get things moving. From a single emigrant's home, all luggage still had to be sent to the quarantine station at North Head for fumigation.

### FROM SHIPPING TO AVIATION

When I visited Mr. Van Rijn at the Dutch Consulate, I told him I was leaving the transport company for the reasons already described and was looking for a new position. He was genuinely sorry to hear this. Over the years, I had reduced delivery times for household goods from six weeks to six days, with far less damage and theft.

He advised me to speak with another Dutchman working in aviation. I did so immediately. This man knew me from my work in shipping, and together we went to the office of an airline to request an interview with the personnel manager. Once again, my language skills worked to my advantage over others, especially now that more emigrants were arriving by air. My five years' experience with Customs and quarantine, my ten years of schooling and typing certificate, also helped.

Two weeks later, on a Monday, I started work as a clerk in the domestic department, later becoming a traffic officer in freight and airmail for departing aircraft. That gave me just enough time to resign properly from my old job. My former manager offered me an extra £2 per week to stay. I replied, "From next week, thanks to full-time paid extra work, and one-and-a-half, and double, pay for weekend work." I quickly learned the ropes there. The airline job suited me well. Friendly colleagues, some Dutch staff, and varied shifts: morning shift from 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. or afternoon shift from 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

I loved that. It meant half the day free — and travel outside Sydney's peak traffic hours.

At first, I travelled by train. Later, I used my own car. For one year I rode a 350cc Velocette motorcycle, but eventually gave it up, too dangerous, especially after we moved to Kingswood, about 57 kilometres each way.

### I MUST BRIEFLY RETURN TO THE EMIGRANT SHIPS.

In Melbourne and Sydney, a progressive Dutchman once tried to start a small transport business with a single truck. If he secured an emigrant as a client, the crate often had to sit in his backyard — unprotected from blazing sun or subtropical rain.

My company, by contrast, had warehouses in every major port city, protecting goods from both sun and rain, and because we held the official emigrant contract, assisted emigrants could store their household goods free for two years.

A single-truck operator simply could not compete with that.

So, what was left? The single emigrant would end up paying for the full fare and transport.

For a time, I was not allowed to book free emigrant crates on board, but emigrants were free to decide after arrival in Melbourne or Sydney. Occasionally, small groups stood near the wharf chanting, *“Hold your luggage forms!”*

These protests faded once it became clear that my company was paid by the Australian Immigration Office for two years’ free storage — and that no small operator without cranes, warehouses, or staff could ever secure such a contract.

This was competition between the largest transport companies in Australia: who had the best service, the most trucks, the most staff, and the widest port coverage.

Between emigrant ship arrivals, only a few of our fifty trucks were used for emigration.

The rest were busy with other work — just as in every major port city in the world.

Eventually, the Dutchman had to take other work.

His wife sometimes handled small jobs. Once, when she asked whether she could rent my crane truck for an hour to load a crate. I offered her, as a Dutchman to a Dutchman, our crane truck for free *“Just give the crane truck driver a 10 shilling tip, that's enough.”* She thanked me sincerely and knew in future cases that I would always help her. If she had had to call and rent a crane from a crane pool or depot, there would have been no profit left.

The saying in Holland was, live and let live.

I met her a few more times later, when she worked for the same airline as me, and she was always friendly, because I understood that without a major contract, it's difficult to keep going.

Years later, I met her again when she worked for the same airline as I did.

#### DEATH WARNING — SABOTAGE OR WORSE

When I began working for A.N.A. — Australian National Airways, I quickly noticed two opposing groups. One worked with me openly. The other, much smaller, worked quietly against me. Because my former transport company lost two major contracts after my departure — the Dutch Emigration Contract and a large rice distribution contract — my situation became dangerous. I reported incidents to the police several times. Because charges in Australia lapse after twenty-five years, I had to file reports again while writing this book — now knowing names I did not know at the time.

One morning, shortly after we had settled into our temporary dwelling in Kingswood, I found a dead duck lying in front of the shelter. In Australian slang, *“dead duck”* means you are marked — as good as dead. It was a warning - watch out, beware

The first incident happened during the night.

**My wife had woken up hear digging under the concrete floor, under the headboard of our bed. She woke me and told me what she'd heard. I immediately wanted to get out of bed and go outside, but she said, "They're just dogs, they're attracted to the smell of meat and garbage." That reassured me for a moment, but in the morning, I remembered the incident and said, "If they were dogs, they should have been digging under the front of the dwelling, because that's where the food is." So I went outside, around the dwelling, and there I saw a large hole under our concrete floor, under our sleeping area. I filled that hole back in and reinforced it with stones. However, it wouldn't let me go.**

**The second incident happened not long after.**

**We hadn't lived in our new house very long at the time. Luckily, we had three German Shepherds there, because our house was so isolated, and my wife and daughter Yvonne were often alone. As well my wife worked at a hospital to help us buy us some new furniture for the third time, yes, yes, third time.**

**On a pitch-black night, my dogs barked, one in front of the house, the other behind. I rushed out of bed, put on my shoes and robe, and with the third dog outside, let the other two off their chains. All three of them bolted across the back of the property, toward the trees and the dense bush, and kept jumping around there. Without a flashlight, the bush was too dense to enter, with poisonous spiders and snakes, five of which I killed much later. After searching along the edge of the woods, I called the three German Shepherds back to me and went home.**

**This second incident haunted me, so the next day I went searching again with the dogs, this time with a flashlight. Among the bushes, under a tree, I found a box of brand-new batteries and a series of explosive charges, detonators, such as those used on the railways as warning signals for railway line workers.**

**I immediately contacted the police.**

**They came into the house with me, And I had to explain what I thought. The police told me they would keep an eye on things. Later, I needed them again.**

**One evening, after finishing my usual 2:00–10:00 p.m. shift at the airport, I took the train to Kingswood, arriving just after midnight, as always. From the station, it was about a ten-minute walk to our dwelling. Near home, as I passed under the last streetlight, I happened to glance back across the street, along my neighbour's fence, where I saw that neighbour standing there with a rifle aimed directly at me.**

**Over the barrel of the rifle, he had tied a hessian bag, clearly meant to suppress the muzzle flash and reduce the sound, exactly we used to do in wartime.**

**In that split second, I considered my options: charge him head-on, keep walking as if nothing was wrong, or try something else. I chose to zigzag the last fifty steps toward our lodging. I did not wake my wife. I let her sleep.**

**The next day, I went to the police again — this time on a first-name basis.**

Nothing more was officially heard about it, although for several nights afterward, a police officer who lived nearby quietly followed me home. That neighbour died a slow death much later. Today, I know who his accomplices were.

There were more incidents after that — incidents that would have terrified most people, but I was a former soldier, with wartime experience. I had also spent five years in the Resistance. I was not afraid of the devil.

Briefly, my war experience was this:

Between Dordrecht and the Moerdijk bridges, on May 10, 11, and 12, 1940, we lost 192 comrades. But there were them were 180 dead German paratroopers.

From our headquarters in 's-Gravendeel, our commander, Colonel Sietzen, seeing me with two captured German machine guns and a full supply of ammunition, asked for volunteers, commandeered a small truck, and personally ordered me to exchange those machine guns at our front line for three disabled Dutch machine guns. With one of those German machine guns, I quickly shot a German observer out of a tree along the Dortse Kil, on our front. As a result, the German mortar bombardment suddenly stopped. Hearing the rapid fire of a German weapon, they believed they were firing on their own troops.

One of the most beautiful — and most dangerous — acts of the Resistance followed later. Together with another person in hiding, a Jewish girl was taken from the Gestapo in Apeldoorn. After that, on four separate occasions, a Dutch Resistance woman was taken from the German prison camp in Apeldoorn. All five were brought to the Juliana Hospital, where other Resistance members later removed them and took them to safe hiding places.

In 1944, the Juliana Hospital was a Red Cross hospital. After the evacuation from Arnhem, I myself went into hiding there.

Even a German Red Cross soldier stationed at the entrance — where wounded British paratroopers were also being treated — said to me: “You are soldiers. You have no fear.” You are a soldier, and you are not afraid. I asked him how he knew. He replied, “We know everything.”

Then he asked, “Do you dare to come with me on your three-wheeler, across the undermined bridge over the Apeldoorn–Dierens Canal, to the cold storage on Deventer Street, guarded by German SS? We have nothing left to eat for the wounded.” I said, “Yes, I dare, but no mean tricks.

When we arrived at the cold storage facility, he asked first — and then I did — whether we could take food for the Red Cross Hospital.

The SS commander looked at me as if he wanted to devour me. I said to him, “If the Canadians arrive this week or next, and you or your men are wounded, don't come to our hospital. There will be nothing left to eat.”

He stared at me for a moment and then ordered his men to load us up with oil, flour, cheese, and more. With flat tyres, we rode back to the hospital. The German Red Cross men took most of it down to their cellar. I kept some of the cheese. From time to time, I rolled some quietly into a corner, where people in hiding would quickly collect it and disappear again into the shelter.

### OUR FIRST CAR

Life in Kingswood returned to normal until we were able to sell our third block of land, which we had to buy together with the second. That gave us enough money to start looking for a car.

We went back to Manly and visited a large Volkswagen dealership. While looking at used cars, I realised that for the same monthly payments, I could buy a new Volkswagen instead — the difference being one year of payments versus three, with a solid deposit. We chose a beautiful car: red with a yellow flash, chrome wheels, whitewall tyres, wool upholstery, and carpeting. It was a Volkswagen 1300cc De Luxe, first series — and it easily outperformed the older 1200cc models.

With that car, Australia opened up to us.

Two days to Melbourne, two days back. The same to Brisbane, to Coolangatta, and the Gold Coast — journeys of up to 1,100 kilometres.

We grew to love this continent, Australia, and the more we saw, the more we enjoyed it, especially around Sydney, where the climate was mild and the weather nearly always good.

I began driving the VW to work at Sydney Mascot Airport, officially named Charles Kingsford Smith Airport, after the famous Australian aviator who flew around the world in a three-engined Fokker, breaking multiple records, including the first trans-Pacific flight. That original Fokker now stands in a museum at Brisbane Eagle Farm Airport. A second aircraft is currently being completed in Holland to honour the Fokker name. I had already sent money, upon request, to participate in the first sightseeing flights. Gradually, I began working with Dutch Fokker aircraft — the F-27 propjets.

When A.N.A. (Australian National Airways) was taken over by Reginald Miles Ansett, who also acquired Butler Airways, the combined companies became Ansett Airlines of Australia. One of Ansett's earliest aircraft was also a Fokker — and it proved exceptionally reliable.

### WITH FOKKER — FULL OF NEW MONEY — INTO THE AIR

Gradually, as deputy head clerk, I learned to keep track of multiple aircraft in the trim books, sometimes for four weeks at a time when another head clerk was on leave.

First came the twin-engine Douglas DC-3s, then the four-engine Douglas DC-4s, followed by the Vickers Viscounts, and later the Dutch twin-engine Fokker Friendship F-27.

**All of this took place in the domestic department, handling Australian internal flights. Because of my language skills, I later transferred to the overseas departments, where I worked with Douglas DC-10s and Boeing 747 Jumbo Jets.**

**As a deputy head clerk, I also worked the night shift, from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. During that night shift, we usually handled freighters, A Douglas D.C.4, Melbourne-Sydney-Brisbane, with through connections, and a Douglas D.C.4, Brisbane-Sydney-Melbourne-Adelaide, with through connections to Perth.**

**One of the clerks had already given me the freight details of the various trucks and the weight of the airmail, so I had almost finished the trim log when we received the telegram with all the information about the incoming plane from Brisbane, with Sydney freight and airmail, and through freight and airmail.**

**Then I discovered who the captain was on board.**

**There was one captain in particular who always asked to offload freight, claiming he needed more fuel, so I instructed that one truck be held back and loaded less freight. As a result, I was able to give him 1,400 gallons of fuel, instead of the usual 1,100 or 1,200.**

**After landing, the captain and his first officer first went to the weather office for the latest information. I had beaten him to it, though, and knew Melbourne had some rain and fog. When he later came into my office, I asked casually “Is 1,100 or 1,200 gallons enough?” “No,” he said, “I need at least 1,400 gallons.” I smiled, handed him the trim book, and said, “Alright — 1,400 gallons. Please sign here.”**

**He looked at me sternly at first, then laughed, understanding the joke.**

**During a long three-day weekend, I was again on night duty from 10 a.m. to 6 a.m. I believe it was Pentecost, so all the freight and airmail had gone, and on Monday night there wasn't much to do. A group of loaders, or porters, with their senior porter and a clerk, had to prepare the leftovers for the first eight departing planes, which usually departed between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. I was the only head clerk present, along with two other safety or security officers, in and around the many buildings and hangars.**

**The mechanics were busy lining up the eight planes, inspecting them, and preparing them for travel.**

**The catering department was also working for those early flights. The only plane that would still arrive that night was a two-engine Douglas D.C.3 freighter, with freight on board.**

**After unloading, our loaders had to bring some very heavy machinery and parts on board. This had to be strapped across some of the three compartments on board, to the floor, on extra planks for weight distribution, so I had to be outside regularly to supervise that this heavy material wouldn't slip through the sides in rough weather.**

**My Canadian clerk had all the weights ready and was going to prepare the trim or balance book before departure. When I came in, I discovered that this clerk had never**

done an aircraft trim before, so I had to quickly prepare that myself. When everything was ready, and the captain had signed my book, they took off.

A few minutes later, a Vickers-Viscount aircraft suddenly rolled up, full of passengers.

It turned out to be the connecting aircraft, which flies directly from Brisbane to Melbourne without a stopover. Due to fog in Melbourne, it was forced to make a stopover in Sydney. I quickly called the porters to move the landing steps and turn on all the lights in the passenger area, especially those by the phones, as most passengers wanted to inform their families so they could be picked up upon arrival.

I also called catering to replace the coffee and tea urns before the next departure.

After several hours on the ground, that aircraft departed as well.

The night shift was nearly over.

Just before 6:00 a.m., I handed everything over to the morning shift and walked to the Ansett staff parking lot, where my new Volkswagen 1300cc was waiting.

One hour later, I was home in Kingswood.

Before owning the car, the journey took almost 2.5 hours by bus and train. The distance from Mascot Airport to Kingswood is 57 kilometres. The car saved me about three hours of travel per day, plus the cost of public transport — money I used to pay off the car.

One day, behind our house, I saw a large block of land for sale for a very reasonable price: £495. It was three times the size of a normal block, tucked behind others, with a narrow driveway wide enough for two cars. It bordered our own land.

I said to my wife, "That'll be a nice block for our daughter when she gets married. By then, those blocks of land will be three or four times as expensive." No sooner said than done, and we told our daughter, Yvonne, "When you get married, you'll get that block of land from Mom and Dad as a wedding gift."

But what happened?

At a Dutch wedding, that she attended with my wife, she met a nice young man who was a carpenter at a large firm. He travelled widely for work and soon found another piece of land: elevated, rocky, with trees and a magnificent view over the Nepean River, about 60 kilometres from Sydney.

They asked us to come and see it. They arrived in his Volkswagen 1600, tools in the back. We followed in our VW 1300. It was indeed a beautiful spot.

We told them openly that it was a good choice and wished them luck. But we also said, "We'll hold on to our block of land until you're married, and when you no longer need it, Mommy and Daddy will still have a lot of fun with it."

They married later, with 100 guests, and Dick began building their home — a double garage below, with a four-bedroom house above.

Not long after, I visited a Toyota dealership. My wife and I chose a brand-new car: four doors, water-cooled, 1500cc engine.

**I told the salesman that I had a large block of land for sale in Kingswood, the owner's papers with the bank, and wanted to trade it for the Toyota I had chosen.**

**Coincidentally, he was looking for a large block, so he was immediately interested. My wife and I went shopping, and when we got home, the Toyota agent was already on the block with a friend, a land seller. We let them do their thing, and the next day we went to him. "What do you think?" I asked. "Not bad," he said. "What do you want for it again?" I pointed to that beautiful new blue car. He said, "Okay, go get your papers from the bank and meet me at the lawyers at eleven o'clock." We signed that day. The next morning, the car was registered and waiting.**

**My wife and I then proudly went to visit our daughter and repeated the saying; we're going to have a lot of fun with it."**

**After 150,000 kilometres, I traded it in for another Toyota Corona, 1600cc, mocha colour. I did the same every 150,000 kilometres.**

**Today, I am driving my fifth Toyota Corona, now 1900cc, with 130,000 kilometres on the odometer. I can honestly say: none of those cars ever let me down. When I traded them in, all the instruments still worked.**

**My son-in-law Dick later had two Mercedes-Benzes, a Volvo, a Peuchot, and who knows what else, but when he heard from my wife, that I had never had a problem with my Toyota's, he bought 4 of them at once and got a \$500 discount off each one.**

**Those 4 Toyota's were for his company, which had grown into a large enterprise, with its own architect, its own accountant, both of Dutch descent, and typists.**

**HOLLANDER IS IN COMMAND OF A DUTCH-BUILT FOKKER FRIENDSHIP F27, FULLY LOADED WITH BRAND-NEW AUSTRALIAN DOLLARS.**

**Recently, after 20 years, it was reported in Australian newspapers that the Australian government had decided to exchange the British pounds £££ for genuine, new Australian dollars.**

**Distributing that money to all the banks was a risky business and therefore had to be done quickly and safely. The Reserve Bank of Australia had found a solution, considering the enormous distances involved.**

**We're going to do it by plane. The old money could be exchanged at the banks on a certain Monday. It had to be delivered the week before. It had to be kept top secret.**

**And here's the story of how that happened.**

**The Tuesday before, I was called into our manager's office. He said, "I know you're free for the next two days.**

**Would you like a free flight tomorrow, Wednesday, or have you already arranged something with your wife?" "Nothing yet," I said. "Where to?"**

**He looked me sharply in the eye and asked, "Can you keep a secret, even from your own wife?" I replied, "Absolutely. I worked for five full years during the war in the Resistance, or "The Underground," which means, "One word too many, costs lives."**

**He said, "We knew that, and that's why we chose you, out of a hundred others."**

**He also had information about Emigration, the Dutch Consulate, and the Ex-Service League, of course. Then he went to the safe, opened it and took out several papers, including a Trim Book.**

**He said, "As you know, next Monday everyone can exchange their British Pounds for new Australian Dollars.**

**Tomorrow, Henk, you'll be the captain of a 40-seat Fokker Friendship F27 aircraft." However, you won't have 40 passengers on board, or even two flight attendants, but 4 bank detectives, each carrying 7,200 lbs. (approximately 3,276 kg.) of brand-new Australian dollars, packed in 160 padlocked canvas bags, each weighing 45 lbs. You'll also have a select Senior Porter for loading and unloading, then yourself, and in the cockpit, the crew—the captain and a flight officer.**

**No one, and no one else, is permitted on board.**

**You'll have 200 lbs. of hot and cold meals on board, plus hot and cold drinks in the galley, the port locker, and, of course, no alcoholic beverages on this Special Bank Charter flight.**

**The Senior Porter is also your stewardess during the flight. He or she has already been fully briefed and trained to serve the crew, yourself, and the 4 detectives.**

**For all those bags of money, you have the forward-starboard cargo hold, and the aft or aft cargo hold, plus as many seats as you need in the cabin.**

**During loading or unloading, you're only allowed to have one door open, the nearest one; the others remain closed.**

**After departure, you're not allowed to change anything about the cargo.**

**On each airport tarmac, you have exactly 10 minutes to unload and depart. Everything must work like clockwork, on time, every time.**

**You're going to five different airports. Here's your trim book.**

**No one is allowed to take it home, but in this exceptional case, Henk, you have to do your calculations tonight and make sure the Fokker is in balance, trim, after every unloading.**

**You have to distribute everything so that the plane is constantly in trim, without change; you don't have time for that!**

**Sort everything out tonight and have everything ready tomorrow. Be here at 7:00 sharp, leave at 8:00 sharp. Shortly after 7:00 a.m., the armoured bank truck with the money and the four bank detectives will arrive.**

**You also need to figure out how much fuel the captain can put in his tanks.**

**Every airport you land at is closed to traffic and aircraft for 10 minutes.**

**Expect Police at every entrance and exit. Armoured trucks await you at every airport.**

**You'll be paid double for your day. Here's your free plane ticket.**

**Here are all the details and documents, have a good trip.**

SYDNEY -				vertrek		aankomst	
Tamworth	29	zakken	1305	lbs	08.00	-	09.05 + 450 K.M.
Casino	31	zakken	1395	lbs	09.15	-	10.20 + 340 K.M.
Grafton	20	zakken	900	lbs	10.30	-	11.00 130 K.M.
Dubbo	35	zakken	1575	lbs	11.10	-	12.45 650 K.M.
Orange	45	zakken	2025	lbs	12.55	-	13.30 150 K.M.
Sydney	nil				13.40	-	14.30 260 K.M.
	totaal		3276K.G.	7200 lbs			totaal 1980 K.M.
Set-gewicht	=						
Methanol	=		620	lbs.			
Lading	=		7200	lbs.			
Passagiers	=		1020	lbs.			
Buffet	=		200	lbs.			
Af taxiing	=		100	lbs.			
					pound		
					1 lbs =		0.455 gram.

And that night I made several Trim papers.

Again, and again, and again. Very late that night, I had everything perfectly fine.

The next morning, just before 7:00 a.m., I was at Mascot-Sydney Airport.

The supervisor assigned me my aircraft for the day, after which I met my Senior Porter Lader.

After that the captain arrived with his flight officer. The captain asked me, "Can we fill the tanks?" I said, "Yes, but I can only give you 600 gallons (2730 liters)." He said, "We can't make the entire flight with that." I said, "Captain, you know what kind of cargo we have today; we can't offload any of it." I worked out that we have our own Ansett Airport managers at two of our own airports, Dubbo and Casino, so we can quickly top up there. He said, "Okay, give me the weight after the first two loads right after departure, and work out how many gallons of fuel we can take on, then I'll radio the manager there and tell him to have a tanker ready with that many gallons, so we can complete the rest of the flight without refilling. The captain told the tanker crew he could only hold 600 gallons in his tanks and went aboard for his cockpit drill.

The flight officer, as a matter of routine, inspected the entire exterior of the aircraft.

The armoured truck arrived with the four Bank detectives, and the loading could begin. First, through the forward cabin door, with the others closed. Later, through one of the aft cabin doors, with the others closed.

While the Senior Porter took everything in hand and loaded it into the exact places, or seats, I had planned, airport by airport, I counted every padlocked canvas bag with the detectives.

First, through the forward cabin door, into the starboard baggage compartment. Then, the front four rows of four seats, full to under a maximum of 170 lbs, then through one of the rear doors, the tail baggage compartment up to maximum weight, and then the next four rows of four seats, so a total of 32 seats full of brand-new Australian Dollars, all strapped to the floor rings to prevent air movement during stormy weather and turbulence.

Just behind those eight rows, or 32 seats, was the ninth row, the four detectives, and in the last row, on one side my Senior Porter Loader, and on the other myself, with two

seats and enough space to keep my trim log on my folding table, while the others enjoyed the magnificent view from the oval windows, under the wings of the Dutch-built Fokker Friendship F-27.

All doors closed, and at 8 o'clock sharp we rolled onto the designated runway.

Immediately after take-off, while the others were enjoying themselves, I started working in my trim log, calculating for the Captain how much fuel we could take on for the second landing. Once I had worked that out, I went to the captain in the cockpit, gave him the calculations, and got his signature, after which he made the radio message.

The captain then gave us permission to sit, one at the time, in the cockpit on the jump seat, between the captain and first officer, and to witness a landing and take-off.

The senior detective was very happy when I told him this, and the four of them were able to make the first four landings, then my senior porter the fifth, and I took the last

landing back in Sydney, which is always a beautiful spectacle, with all those waterways, red roofs, and blue swimming pools in the backyards.

Shortly after departure from Sydney, our senior porter/stewardess arrived with a hot breakfast: bacon and eggs, tea, and fruit juice. Later, coffee and drinks with ice cubes. As I mentioned before, on this special Bank Charter, there were no alcoholic beverages.

Before each arrival, you could see from the air that every entrance and exit was blocked by the police.

We laughed and said, "We're surrounded!"

The waiting armored trucks, with one of our doors open, took over their cargo for further distribution to banks in cities and villages, some hundreds of kilometers from the airport.

After a careful count by the detectives and myself, the door was closed again, the engines started, and we were off.

Outside it was very hot, almost mid-summer in January, but inside it was wonderful, and we all drank the refreshing drinks.

On a short flight, of only about 150 kilometers, we hadn't gained enough altitude, resulting in a lot of air movement and turbulence, which caused one of the detectives, on his first flight, to become airsick and couldn't bear to eat another meal. On a longer flight, he enjoyed another meal of asparagus tips, cold, and fruit salad with ice cream.

After the airports along the coast and the Pacific Ocean, we now flew deeper inland.

Upon landing, it was over 100 degrees Fahrenheit, or 42 degrees Celsius. I handed a copy of my trim log to the Ansett Airport Manager, signed by the captain and myself. This is always required in the event of an accident, so there is a record of the lading of the number of people on board, the number of gallons of fuel, and the amount of cargo, baggage, and airmail.

At the second landing, the tanker was already waiting and filled our tanks, while we unloaded and counted.

**So, for the final landing, I sat between the captain and the first officer on the jump seat, and we flew over the beautiful Blue Mountains, then past Kingswood, where I live. Here, the engines of our Fokker were throttled down for the 60-kilometer glide to the heart of Sydney and Mascot Airport, a magnificent sight from the forward cockpit windows.**

**We landed, rolled, and stopped at the Ansett tarmac at exactly 2:30, 14:30 on my watch, as prescribed.**

**The four detectives thanked me for the wonderful flight, the food, and the clockwork service and the captain shook my hand and said, "You really know how to trim an airplane."**

**He had seen that after one of the landings, I, the detective, Sr. Porter, and myself, had moved four rows of seats forward to ensure perfect trim.**

**Immediately after arriving at our office, the director of Ansett answered the phone and asked me how the flight had gone. My answer was that all four bank officers were satisfied with the service, catering, and clockwork, and that it was a good advertisement for our company. The director also congratulated me over the phone.**

**Now something of a former Dutchman, now Australian. Not only I, but all Dutch people should be proud that I, of Dutch descent, was chosen among hundreds of Australians to deliver brand-new Australian dollars, weighing almost 3,500 kilograms, in a Dutch-built aircraft.**

**We can all be proud of that. The senior staff trusted and valued me. The others were incited by members of the company who lost their contracts because of theft from Dutch emigrants of the little they brought to Australia.**

**I know the names and connections of that previous company with some of this company and have the names of the instigators and their threats.**

**I will pass them on to the appropriate addresses and authorities at the same time as these announcements.**

**I can't say when.**

### **GRADUALLY, WE GOT BIGGER PLANES.**

**After the Douglas D.C.3 and D.C.4 and Vickers Viscount, came the Lockheed Electra, D.C.6, and D.C.6B, all four-engined.**

**In our Electras, a safe was built under the seats of the three stewardesses, where valuables were stored, such as boxes of watches with precious stones, a chest of gold bars, and the like.**

**I received the only key to this safe at our airport, and of course, upon delivery to senior cargo, I received a signature in a special booklet. When I brought it on board, I received the signature of the first officer and locked the booklet in the safe.**

**Now we were also gradually getting our uniforms. For the measurements of those beautiful uniforms, we had to go to the tailor's workshop at Melbourne Airport. That**

was midweek, with two days off, after working the weekend, and we received a free return: Sydney-Melbourne Sydney, 900 K.H. return. By road it's 1100 km.

Afterwards you could go straight home, or spend the rest of the day in Melbourne. If a plane was fully booked, you sometimes had to wait for the next one, because full-paying passengers had priority.

Because back then, with proper flights, it was a journey of almost 2.5 hours, you often also got a meal on board: breakfast in the morning, dinner in the evening. Now, with the 100% Jets, it's only a little over an hour. Our names also changed, from clerk to Traffic-Officer, or 1/0 for short.

#### **TRANSFERRED TO OVERSEAS DEPARTMENT.**

Because I often went to our own canteen for a meal during my weekly overtime, I came into contact with the various staff ladies who worked there. While ordering the meal, I would hear the different voices—an English one, a Scottish one, but also a Dutch one, and a German one, and I would make a short comment sometimes in German, but mostly Dutch, “Where are you from, how long have you been here,” etc., etc. They talked about it, and it ended up coming to the attention of the airport manager of Ansett.

Shortly after, I was called into his office and asked, "How many languages do you speak?" The answer was about four: English, Dutch, German, French, and some American and Canadian. That made him laugh. He said, “We have dozens of candidates who want to go to our overseas department, but none of them have any language skills. With your language skills, we will transfer you to that department starting next week. That makes sense. Because as you well know, we do the full catering, the passengers, the freight, and the like, for KLM, Air-India, Singapore Airlines, Cathay Pacific, CP. Air (That's Canadian Pacific), and Philippine Airlines. I think you will like it but listen carefully to the following. If you have any problems with any of the Traffic Officer due to jealousy, let us know, we know how to handle it.”

And so I began a new chapter in my life. There, among arriving and departing passengers and tourists, I encountered all sorts of nationalities. I also saw and handled much larger aircraft: the Boeing 707s, Douglas D.C.8s, and later the stretched D.C.8s.

One thing I didn't quickly forget, due to my own wartime experience, was the arrival and departure of the first American Boeing 707s, filled with the boys or soldiers from Vietnam. With their five days of leave (R&R), they chose Sydney, not America. Getting home to America took two days of flying and traveling, and two days back, so only one day at home, with another heartbreaking farewell.

Sydney was much closer, a half-day flight, and when I saw them arriving early in the morning, they had almost five full fun-filled days in their booked hotels, or by invitations from various families allowing them to finally enjoy some peace and quiet,

**bus tours through parts of beautiful Australia, sunbathing without being aware of it, nature trips in the Blue Mountains outside Sydney, or, if they chose, drinking themselves sick to temporarily forget that cruel war.**

**Also a chance to meet sweet, beautiful girls from wealthy families, or, of their own choosing, to Sydney Kings Cross, with all its attendant dangers, other shows, and other kinds of girls.**

**I personally saw those joyful arrivals many times, but also the many sad departures.**

**The full busloads and busloads of soldiers driving right past us, slowly approaching their planes, ready for departure. Many of them, their heads drooping, from drudgery, tiredness, and drink!???**

**I also experienced the good moments. Very occasionally, I received a Dutch soldier back from Vietnam. Service finished and on their way to their family in Australia. I always asked cautiously. Home for good? Then I shook their hands and congratulated them on their safe return, wrote out their plane ticket to their destination, helped them to our rental car, which then took them to the domestic section of the airport free of charge, and advised them to check your luggage and yourself in first on the next plane, ask for departure and arrival times, and if you have enough time, there are a row of 12 telephones to call your family and ask what time you'll arrive.**

**Then they can come pick you up with their car, truck, or horse. We would shake hands again and wish them a safe journey! That's where you can see the difference between a being bi-lingual or not. No well-meaning Australian could have done that.**

**I also often helped an elderly German lady or gentleman, or an elderly Dutch lady or gentleman, who were visiting their married children on their way to somewhere in this great Australia, and then handed them over to the stewardess.**

**Now that I was working in these overseas departments, I got a 75% discount on the overseas air routes.**

**I made my first flight to Amsterdam on KLM with an Australian friend of mine, Austin Byrne, who also worked at Ansett and was very interested in Holland and the Dutch, because he had a project involving the then world-famous three-engined Fokker, the Southern Cross, built in Holland and flown to Australia.**

**The very famous Charles Kingsford Smith and ULM broke world records with the Fokker, being the first across the Atlantic Ocean and the first across the Pacific Ocean.**

**Austin Byrne built a small replica of the Fokker and recorded the various record-breaking flights on a homemade globe with genuine Australian gemstones. He also kept a book of all the newspaper clippings from Australia and the United States.**

**In America, he even gave exhibitions of the Fokker and its Australian crew at schools, by invitation. I believe the mechanic on board was American himself. He also gave exhibitions for schools in Australia, and his works were displayed for a long time in the Australian capital, Canberra, in Parliament House, behind glass, for the public.**

**So I went to Amsterdam with this Australian. At Schiphol Airport, he knew several very high-ranking people, and we ended up in the office of the Schiphol Airport manager.**

**Here we had a fantastic view of that very modern airport, after its reconstruction after the war. He asked, "What do you both think? Could we still make improvements?" Austin said nothing, looking astonished by the height. I said, "Yes, there are still major improvements that can be made, also with regard to safety." He looked astonished and asked, "How can you have seen that in five minutes? How can we still make improvements?" I said, "What do you think? Those enormous Shell tankers, under the wings of those various planes, are firstly very dangerous, and secondly, they take up far too much space, which is absolutely essential for the free movement of the many carts carrying luggage, freight, and airmail. "**

**The Director asked, "how do you intend to handle that?"**

**I said, " Before I answer that, there's something else that's wrong: those huge, noisy air-conditioning vans in front of the planes should be removed. They take up too much space. For cooling or heating the planes all of this can be changed in the following way.**

**At our Kingsford Smith, or Mascot Airport, we have enormous supplies of aviation fuel, in very large tanks, along the edge of the airfield, far away from the planes. From there, we have an underground pipe system running from those tanks to the many different aircraft stands. Under the wings, we place a small pressure pump (a booster pump) that quickly presses it from that pipe into the aircraft tanks. The same applies to the air conditioning; from a central pumping station, we press hot or cold air through a pipe system to those stands, and from there, connect it with a wide, flexible hose."**

**The Director sat quietly for a moment, watching. What a wonderful prospect for him! He let us look around a bit longer and have a drink and explained that the pier is now being demolished and replaced and extended, and there will be an even larger pier, especially for overseas passengers, etc., etc.**

**We said goodbye and were thanked for all the new ideas. Austin and I travelled by train to my families in Arnhem and Nijmegen and visited the Open Air Museum. After that, he went his way. After returning to Sydney, much later, we kept in touch and had many stories to exchange.**

**My mother was still alive then, and my wife Ann's mother was still alive, so I had some good reunions, as well as with my brothers and sister, and both of my wife's brothers.**

**I also visited the graves of her father, and of my own father, and with family, the graves of my 192 fallen comrades at Dortrecht and Moerdijk Bruggen, Dubbeldam, s'Gravendeel, Dortrecht.**

**The 180 German paratroopers were gone, reburied.**

**I haven't forgotten the Grebbeberg either, as a soldier.**

After my mother passed away, I flew to Holland with KLM for the second time. For this flight, I had won \$1,000 in the instant lottery. \$500 of that was for a quarter-price airline ticket, and the rest was shared with my wife because, as always, she had to stay home due to airsickness, something we discovered before we got married.

We took a day trip from Arnhem to Amsterdam, with a canal cruise and a visit to Schiphol Airport. For only 7 guilders, I made my first public flight, over what was then the Zuiderzee, to Groningen, above Amsterdam, Central Station, the Olympic Stadium, and so on. I thought it was fantastic, and I was won over by flying. However, I finally managed to get my fiancée, Annie, on a sightseeing flight as well, but she came back as white as a clean tea towel. She said, "Never again," and for her, that really means, "Never again." She gets airsick in the air. On the boat to Australia, she and our daughter Ivonne were seasick for 5½ weeks.

In cars, she immediately gets carsick with everyone else, including our daughter, and the same with our son-in-law Dick, although with me, never, and we made quite a few day trips of 600 kilometres in our own six new cars.

So, I'm returning to the fact that she could never come with me to Holland, in my opinion, and a few later times to visit both of our families in Canada.

On this second visit, I saw Mom and all the family again and also saw my few remaining uncles and aunts.

Again, as before, every May 10th, I visited my buddies, and this time also the English Airborne Cemetery in Oosterbeek, the American Margraten Cemetery in South Limburg, and the Canadian Cemetery near Groesbeek, in honour of our liberators. Back in Sydney, I joined the Dutch Ex-Military Organization, and with a Dutch group, with our own banners, I marched annually in Sydney in the ANZAC march, with 25,000 ex-soldiers, mostly our Australians, English, Poles, French, Serbs, with later, the Vietnamese, and about 50 bands: from the Police, Post Office, Navy, Army, and Air Force, student bands, the Salvation Army, and Scottish Pipe Bands.

This is to commemorate those who fell in the wars.

We never joined the few other Dutch clubs, especially because my wife doesn't like dancing, card games, or drinking, and neither do I.

We were dismissed from the Dutch Reformed Churches, which I helped found in 1951, because as a customs ship's clerk and later as a traffic officer in the aviation industry, I often had to work Saturdays and Sundays, for which I was given two days off midweek. My wife also sometimes had to work Sundays at the Nepean Hospital, so they said our daughter would grow up as a *no-good*. Immediately afterward, we joined the Presbyterian Church, which welcomed us with open arms.

After about 20 years, we were welcomed back to those Dutch Reformed Churches through our daughter and son-in-law, a pastor friend, and another Dutch family. They discovered that in Australia, many people worked on Sundays due to shift work. In the past, in Holland, people weren't allowed to go to church by bike or car.

**If that wasn't allowed here in Australia, no one would come to church anymore because of the enormous distances. We're supposedly still close by, but it's still a 15-minute drive for us with the Car. For our daughter and son-in-law and their five children, about a 25-minute drive to another Reformed Church.**

**Now that we're retired, we go on monthly day trips together with those over 65, and we chat pleasantly in Dutch with each other, mostly groups of 18, or a group of 3 Reformed Churches with a bus, 40 to 45 elderly Dutch people, most of whom have been in Australia for over 35 years, to enjoy a bit of camaraderie. That wouldn't have happened if we had been scattered to English churches.**

**We also meet at each other's homes during the day, singing old Dutch psalms and hymns. This way, we don't feel so alone, especially with the loss of a Husband or Wife.**

### **FREE K.L.M. HOLLAND**

**The third time I flew to Holland, I travelled on a free ticket, and that was because: On a Friday morning shift from 6:00 to 2:00 PM, I heard someone whisper that there would probably be a meeting at noon, outside on the grass, of the Clerk's Union, about a dispute with our large company, Ansett.**

**At that meeting, a decision would likely be made to strike for 24 or 48 hours. I inquired further and discovered that it could indeed happen.**

**In my opinion, it was a minor matter and not worth striking for two days. I went to the Union representative himself and said, "Why are we having that meeting at noon?" The entire afternoon shift also has the right to vote. If we decide to strike by one or two votes, then it's possible, if we have that meeting at 2:00 PM, together with the afternoon shift, that we decide by one or two votes not to strike."**

**No, no, that meeting had to be at noon. Then I understood the reason.**

**That day, we had two Boeing 747 Jumbo jets and a nearly equally large Douglas DC10 leaving, together, about 1,000 passengers, plus freight, plus airmail.**

**So, if we struck at 2 o'clock, those three planes would leave on time. However, if we struck at noon, those three Jumbos would be grounded for two days, instead of a 1-hour departure, 2-hour departure, and 3-hour departure time.**

**So, I felt that the whole intention was to get those three jets off the ground, no matter what.**

**I'll try to explain what a loss that would mean. First of all, you lose many passengers to other airlines. The many remaining passengers all have to be accommodated for two days in various hotels. Every hotel has to be called to see how many passengers they can book. All those names and hotels have to be meticulously recorded, including bed and breakfast. A bus trip had to be organised for them in the afternoon, and the next day, or days, the same, plus a full dinner.**

**Imagine unloading and sorting baggage for staying passengers and passengers transferring to Qantas, Lufthansa, Italy, Garuda, etc., etc.**

**Regular freight can remain temporarily, but what do you do with 20,000 kg of frozen mutton legs, in three freezer containers, for the Arabs in Dubai, which required a very special ritual slaughter?**

**After the large, refrigerated container trucks have left, where can you go with all that meat? Certainly, nowhere at the airport.**

**So, I had to make a hard, quick decision to prevent all that. A huge loss. Since I was responsible for the documentation of those three jumbo jets, I first went to the special typist for these flights and asked her, "What time are you going home?" She replied, "2 o'clock."**

**Okay, maybe you're going home at 12:00, but make sure all the manifests and cargo documents, airway bills, are typed as quickly as possible and ready for addition, for the computer copies—at least 50 for each flight.**

**She did her best quickly, and accurately, keeping everything meticulous,. I encouraged her and promised that I would stop everything and close it all at 10:45. At exactly 10:45, I went out onto the tarmac and told the porters, loaders, and traffic officer that from that point on, nothing more could be accepted for the three flights.**

**‘Hold incoming cargo for subsequent flights and say nothing.**

**If the customer does press the issue further, say, "There's an impending strike," or, "There is a strike," nothing more. Quickly go inside, add up all the manifests, sign them, stamp the Ansett Company, and make dozens of copies on the computer. Prepare very large envelopes for the various stopovers, also for customs and quarantine, and the final destination airport. Also, a report for each aircraft commander, or captain, detailing where the various goods are loaded onto their aircraft—radioactive, perishable, valuable, etc., etc.**

**Exactly one hour later, at 11:45, I had everything ready, in the envelopes, in the various ship's bags, and all the copies for our local customs, quarantine, and traffic department, where the trim log was prepared.**

**For the first flight, the designated traffic officer was still able to deliver the documents and bring the ship's bag on board before the 12:00 union meeting. For the second flight, with a 2:00 departure, the cargo manager himself came to collect the documents and ship's bag. He asked, " I hear you are going on strike,?" Answer: “Maybe, but if you bring the documents and ship's bag on board yourself, your plane will still depart on time! Your ship's bag must go in the rummage container, with the crew luggage.**

**That special container, just like your plane, has a gel and a black stripe. This goes in last and is therefore the first to leave, in Singapore, before the crew's luggage, which is exchanged there, and before local customs and airport staff.**

**So you are personally responsible for ensuring a timely departure, without a two-day delay. Quickly”**

**five minutes before the Union meeting, KLM's cargo manager, Max Gelder, bursts in.**

**"Henk, what did I hear? Are you going on strike?" Maybe Max, we'll decide in five minutes. But Henk, we have such an enormous load today, almost 400 passengers, and a lot of freight. Yes, MAX, 25,000, and of that, 20,000 kg of frozen mutton legs are for Dubai. Henk, what are we supposed to do with that? No one here can put it in a cold**

**room at the airport. Quick, Max, your worries are almost over. If you personally deliver these documents and take your own suitcase to the rear locker, tail compartment, your full Boeing 747 Jumbo will leave on time at 3:00 PM."**

**The best part was, I was at the Union meeting just in time at 12:00. Although I voted against it, we still went on strike for two days.**

**But I was satisfied that no unnecessary losses were incurred.**

**Now I was the Black Sheep.**

**When that afternoon, the 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM Import and Export flights arrived, they were faced with the fait accompli: without being able to vote, they could return home for the next two days, without any payment.**

**Others made that decision for them. When the staff discovered that the three flights had indeed departed on time that afternoon, they wondered who had managed to get the documentation for those flights ready in time.**

**Henk.**

**No wonder. Some were envious, some laughed.**

**Singapore Airlines later returned the favour by transporting my brother's extra suitcase, containing gifts and souvenirs, to Amsterdam twice, for my brother and once for a friend who was visiting Australia on vacation. The manager said, "We owe you something in return, Henk."**

**KLM also gave me something in return. The next thing, the manager, Max, called me into his office and asked, " Henk, could you, leave in two weeks with a free return trip to Amsterdam, but on the condition that you take a 10-day course at Schiphol Airport, at the KLM school there, in radio-protected cargo, explosives, firearms, perishable cargo, valuable cargo, and the like?"**

**"You have 15 minutes to think about it, yes or no." I asked, "And accommodations?"**

**You'll be booked into a beautiful hotel in Amsterdam, the "Alpha Hotel," with 15 others from around the world. All meals are free. The KLM bus will pick you up at 8 a.m. and bring you back at 5 p.m. My answer was: I'll go straight to our manager and request those days off, plus I'll try to add two weeks to visit my family there. It would be crazy not to.**

**Then I quickly went to our manager's private office and explained everything. He looked at the schedule and said, "There are already some people on vacation, but we'll add you." And so, two weeks later, I went to Holland for the third time, to KLM school and to visit family.**

**Free of charge.**

**The lessons we learned at the KLM school at Schiphol Airport were already in English, which shows that with a fair share of the English language, you can go anywhere in the world, even if the teacher was Dutch. As adult students, we had the following people:**

**from Australia, myself born in Holland, a young lady born in Poland, both from Sydney, a native Indonesian from Melbourne, a young lady from New York, a**

gentleman from Boston, a gentleman from Karachi, Pakistan, a gentleman from Athens, Greece, a gentleman from Frankfurt, Germany, a young lady from Zurich, Switzerland, two gentlemen from Suriname (all black), a young gentleman from Bangkok, Thailand, a gentleman from Amsterdam, Holland, two gentlemen from Dubai (darker brown), and a gentleman from Berlin, Germany.

Honestly, we all learned a lot there, and it fit perfectly into my daily work. The two extra full weeks with my family in Arnhem and Nijmegen after those lessons made for an educational and enjoyable trip, and after returning home to Sydney, I heartily thanked the KLM cargo manager for this compensation, which I had never asked for.

### **POISONOUS SNAKES IN AUSTRALIA.**

My wife found the first poisonous snake, curled up in the warm sun on a wooden floor in front of our garage. She quickly called me, and together with my Dutch guest, we went looking. The snake had disappeared along, or inside, three tea chests filled with books, some pottery, and photos. One by one, we pulled the tea chests out into the street, so the snake couldn't escape into the grass. We turned the chests upside down and then slowly lifted them up, with all sorts of goods falling down. Naturally, it was the last tea chest full of books that the snake fell out of. It lay there, stunned, just long enough for me to hit it hard across the back with a rake. It writhed and writhed, so I could give it more blows until it was dead.

### **TIGERSNAKE**

This snake had only a small head and a zigzag mark on its back, which meant it was a tiger snake, highly venomous. I found the second one a street away from us, curled up on the sidewalk. My shepherd dog nearly stepped on it and bolted, but returned to the snake, standing upright. It turned out to be a long, beautiful, shiny brown snake with a light-yellow belly.

Every time the barking dog got too close, the snake would dart its head forward and back, its tongue hanging out. I quickly grabbed a branch from under the trees and struck the snake very hard, just below its head, on its back. That stunned it briefly, long enough for more blows, until I had broken its back. It also writhed for a while, until I gave it a final blow. I actually felt sorry, because it was a beautiful brown and yellow creature, a highly venomous brown snake. Later, in our neighbourhood, Kingswood, I caught another brown and two black poisonous snakes.

It turns out that before we moved there, teachers and their students would come to Kingswood by train to search for various snakes in the woods and long grass, catch them, and bring them back for research in their laboratories, and try to produce an antivenom.

During our many car trips, we've often seen snakes killed by cars, but always after the first days of October, our spring. The road surfaces are already warm then, and that attracts the snakes after their hibernation.

## **KANGAROOS and WOMBATS.**

**We've also seen those animals lying dead by the roadside many times, usually early in the morning. That's why it's so dangerous to drive on open roads outside of cities. Some of their colours are difficult to see even with headlights, and before you know it, you're right on top of one, and such a collision could completely destroy the car. A garage could be a hundred kilometres away up there.**

**One evening, while I was working in the Export department at Mascot Airport, from 2:00 to 10:00, one of the Traffic Officers in the Import department approached me and said, "This and that porter-loader was supposed to help me tonight, from 6:00 to 10:00, with overtime and double pay. Now it's 8:00, and he still hasn't shown up, even though he clocked in at 6:00, or through someone else. What should I do?" My advice was, "That porter-loader is known to drink and has already received numerous warnings, including a demotion. Call the airport manager in as a witness, and you and yourselves wait for him. Then you'll have proof of his turnout and, at the same time, whether he's capable of working, considering his level of intoxication. "**

**No sooner said than done.**

**He called the manager, and they waited together. At 9:00 a.m., he arrived, after three hours of double pay and doing nothing. They prepared a preliminary report for the next morning's management meeting with the Union. That morning concluded with a final warning to the porter-loader. A few weeks later, the same thing happened to me in the Export department, with the same porter-loader. He clocked in at 6 a.m. again, and showed up at 9 a.m., met by me and a witness from Import. He was visibly under the influence of alcohol. I immediately told him that we have to handle another full truckload of incoming goods before 10 a.m., with names and numbers. "Can you park an empty truck next to it with your tractor, and we'll start right away, otherwise we won't make it." He started cursing, didn't want to park another empty truck next to it, climbed on top of the goods, shouted the numbers in a slurred voice, which I could barely understand, and threw everything from that great height onto the concrete floor.**

**I didn't hear anything break, but I warned him again that it was too dangerous for fragile items. Then he started cursing and swearing even more at me as a new Australian. He took a large package, with goods wrapped in linen, from a poor immigrant from around the Mediterranean. I'd seen that so often before. Those are their few possessions: pottery, a few cups and saucers, family photos, books, and linen. That rough customer threw all that from the top of that fully loaded truck down onto the concrete. I heard all the pottery shattering, their sole possessions destroyed by drunkenness.**

**I became furious after this incident and stopped the unloading, saving it for the next morning, and told him I, too, would write a report about this case. This produced more ranting and raving. At 10 o'clock we all went home. The next morning, I wrote a report and requested a meeting with the Airport Manager for that afternoon. I explained to**

him everything that happened the night before. I also told him about the report from three weeks earlier, concerning the same porter-loader, and all the warnings from the other acting manager and Import Officer.

Shortly afterward, this porter-loader was fired, something most people understood and expected. Still, a few of those same scoundrels hated me and growled.

There were later threats, for which I had to consult the police.

Whether they were Dutch, German, English, Greek, or Italian emigrants, I always stood up for them, because we ourselves had been robbed, even by people in our own company. I have never forgotten the warning from the official in Arnhem, at that employment office, about emigrating to Australia, and especially Sydney, and I have witnessed the truth of it many times and personally.

However, Australia is a beautiful continent and makes you forget those terrible cases. If you could see it from our car, or dozens of times from the air, then you would see the good and forget the bad.

In 1977, when I took that free flight with KLM, to attend the school in Amsterdam, I also received a free flight from my Ansett company to the Ansett school in Melbourne at Tullamarine Airport. Here again there were traffic officers from all over Australia. We all booked a nice hotel, with free breakfast and dinner, a fair amount of pocket money, and continued salary.

From Monday morning, after the first flight, until Friday afternoon at 3 o'clock we learned a lot about import and export items, radioactivity, perishable goods, firearms and ammunition, animals, valuables, Air Express and Airmail, etc.

When we finished at 3 o'clock that Friday afternoon, I quickly checked the computer and saw, to my horror, that all flights to Sydney after the 4 O'clock flight were full. I rushed downstairs, booked my suitcase on the first flight to Sydney, and bought a helicopter ticket. I quickly went outside to the taxi rank right in front of our building, hopped in, and asked the driver to go directly to the helicopter landing pad on the Yarra River, in the heart of Melbourne. I rushed out of the taxi and ran straight to that floating platform, no helicopter. The officer in his tiny office said, "There's none at the moment, but I'll call Tullamarine Airport right away." There were no other customers, but they sent the helicopter anyway. Immediately after it landed on that platform, I boarded, gave my bag to the porter-loader, and sat directly behind the pilot, with a fantastic view.

We first went straight up until we were hovering next to the windows of the nearby offices. The typists waved, and we waved back, and then we accelerated forward and climbed. At this altitude, you have a fantastic view of people and traffic. After arriving at Tullamarine, I quickly went to the booking office for one of the few remaining empty seats, and off to Sydney, 900 km in a three-engine Boeing 727.

**Just after 5:00 a.m., we landed, I picked up my luggage and went to the pay office for my salary, just in time.**

**Big Pete asked me, "How come you got back so early?" Most people won't get back until 2 a.m. because on Fridays all flights are full until 10 p.m.**

**I said, "I was the only one thinking about the helicopter."**

### **SUSPECTED OF BEING A SPY?**

**Working in the airline departments now, I increasingly sensed that, behind my back, I was being thwarted in all sorts of ways.**

**That customs and shipping company, where I worked for about five years, couldn't stomach the fact that I now had a higher, better-paying job after they lost their large Dutch emigrant contract because of me. Their warehouse, where all the Dutch household goods chests were stored, many of which disappeared, especially before I had many chests delivered directly from the harbor warehouses to the customers, or emigrants, didn't receive a single chest from me, and after deliveries, it became emptier and emptier.**

**Because I so often called the Dutch Emigration official, Mr. Van Rijn, at the Dutch Consulate and had him with me in the ship's warehouses, and because that company lost that contract immediately after my departure, they considered me a spy, and with the discovery, next to my own Dutch army helmet, of a souvenir German SS helmet, found in the empty, stolen shell of my house, next to a pool of blood, in Arnhem, I was already an SS Mof, or German.**

**After work, I was followed by several cars. With one of them, I had the following joke!**

**This was a van, with benches and a small table in the back. An older gentleman was behind the wheel, and at the table next to the window, on my side, sat a young blond man. On that table, he had a kind of sextant, the needle pointing in my direction. I drove into Parramatta, a Sydney neighbourhood, and started speeding, but they stayed with me, also driving faster. When I noticed this, I started driving even faster; they followed beside me. At the traffic lights, I suddenly turned left, up the hill toward my house, and those two spy catchers had to drive straight ahead quickly. Otherwise, they would have been stuck in three lanes full of waiting cars! I maintained my speed and later reached the open highway before the 100 km/h speed limit, and I didn't see them again.**

**Another time, just past the same Sydney neighbourhood, Parramatta, coming onto a more open road with a 100 km/h speed limit, I could only do 40 km/h at most due to heavy fog. Another van pulled up next to me, but this time it was a closed one, so I couldn't see what was happening inside. I did see immediately, however, that it had several antennas. Since I drove this road daily, I started the same game. Even in the heavy fog, I went faster and faster, very gradually, but he stayed right next to me. When I knew, from experience, that we were approaching a traffic light, I turned on my right turn signal and drove behind him, keeping the right turn signal on. We both**

had to stop for the red light. When the light turned green, he turned right, without using his right turn signal, to stay ahead of me. However, I suddenly turned off my turn signals and headlights and sped off straight into the pitch darkness. Then I turned the lights back on, and at the next traffic light I turned left, and then came home in a large circle. I could list several other cases. I once heard the Prime Minister of Australia, Robert Menzies, say on TV, "What the Dutch have done in Africa, taking over from the English, will not happen in Australia."

Because of my contacts with the Dutch Consulate, I was shadowed extra closely. Several times, they searched my house, searching papers and all the photos. Did they make a mistake; or was it a warning? The only photo of me, together with Harry Costello, manager of F.H. Stephens, the man and the company that lost the contract for Dutch Emigrants, was placed on my dressing table.

They also damaged my Dutch helmet, so, they also went through my always-closed garage.

I had kept that army helmet for years since the evacuation from Arnhem, Paratroopers, to Apeldoorn, where I had to go into hiding because I reported slave labour, I went there, from my family in Bosweg, to the Juliana Hospital, which then became a Red Cross hospital, with wounded prisoners of war, English paratroopers, and wounded Germans. That hospital was a wonderful hiding place for me, together with nine people from Apeldoorn who were also in hiding. My army helmet, which I brought with me, was painted white there, with a red cross on top against low-flying American Typhoons with their rockets. Here in Australia, they sanded off that white paint and replaced the red cross with a scratched-in swastika.

When I discovered this, I kept the helmet in a plastic bag inside a linen closet. This shows that they are trying to thwart me and make me suspicious in all sorts of ways! Personally, after my many war experiences, and here in Australia, attempts to shoot and blow me up, I find it worthwhile to record these actions in writing, with, for the police, the various names that cannot be mentioned here. I wonder if other Dutch, or ex-Dutch, like myself, have noted the same experiences.

A correspondent traveling to Holland once asked me about my experiences for the Dutch newspapers, but I didn't do so at the time.

Now that I'm home on my Australian Military Pension, many cases come back more clearly, and thank I heaven that, 40 years after the war, my wife Annie, or Ann, and I will still be able to enjoy our lives, despite the threats here.

Our daughter Yvonne and our hard-working son-in-law Dick, Dirk Reitsma, gave us five grandchildren. In addition to their own beautiful home, they moved, to another Sydney suburb, Mulgoa, where their own construction company, with a Dutch accountant and their own Dutch architect, built an even more beautiful and larger two-story house on a six-acre block of land, a so-called hobby farm. I personally helped put up the gates and entry gates, and recently a new shed for the tractor, etc.

**As soon as I drive into their driveway, the two dogs and the cat come running towards me and are already in my car. I always have something for all their animals. Meat scraps and bread for the dogs and the cat. Vegetable and salad scraps, carrots and bread, for the white rabbit, the bantam chickens, and about 25 Australian parakeets, and for eldest daughter Jodie's own horse, Jilly. That horse purrs as soon as she sees me and quickly comes from the two water dams, into the sloping pasture, to the fence that divides their 6-acre block in two.**

**The grandchildren have their own canoe that they use in the water dam, and Jodie occasionally swims in it with her horse.**

**There are also all kinds of waterfowl, herons, ducks, pelican, cormorants, and a kind of stork, all white, and at night foxes roam along the banks, and in the trees you find kinds of large squirrels, Possums.**

**There are huge lizards and Goannas some meters long.**

**My wife, Ann and I love going there, and I often think back to our first home, a year and a half in a garage, and then, after 30 years, in our own house. How good our children and grandchildren have it, after our pioneering lives. Only then do you appreciate that we didn't make that big leap from Holland to Australia for nothing.**

**WE ARE BLESSED.**

**Currently, our son-in-law's own company is building about 10 houses, a Catholic school, and a Christian school—that's at least another full year's worth of work. I believe this is his third Christian school. That usually brings more work later, such as, after the first six classes for an elementary school, the four classes for a high school, a library, gymnasiums, and higher floors above.**

**To cover the costs, the mothers of the schoolchildren help with landscaping, and the fathers work weekends laying concrete floors for the sports fields; and so on. You feel and see this young country growing, and young and old unknowingly enjoying it. Everything is new and young, not dilapidated. As a pioneer, you love it.**

**When my brother Martien, three years younger, was in Australia for the first time for a three-week visit, we, along with my son-in-law Dick and his son Damian, took a flight over Sydney and the surrounding area in a single-engine plane, departing from one of Sydney's six airports, Camden, about 60 kilometres from the centre of Sydney, on the very edge of the city of 3 million.**

**It was a wonderful flight for him, with fantastic views everywhere, especially over Sydney Harbor, right over the famous bridge, and past the Opera House.**

**He took an aerial photo of it, which I later saw in Holland in his Australia album.**

**During my brother Martien's second visit, and now his wife as well, we took another flight, over a different part of Sydney, near Pittwater and Palm Beach, this time in a single-engine seaplane.**

**This flight was shorter, and we followed the Pacific Ocean, the coast with its many inlets and some of Sydney's 37 beaches, such as Palm Beach, Newport, Bilgoa, Warriewood, Avalon, Narrabeen, Collaroy, Dee-Why, Manly, Harbord, and Freshwater. He took photos of these as well, which I later saw in Holland.**

**Because of my 25 years with this airline, Ansett, I received a plastic identification card with a color photo. With it, I received a 95% discount on domestic flights and a 75% discount on overseas flights. So when my daughter Yvonne, her husband Dick, and their children rented a motor caravan for five days to try out a longer trip in Europe, they also planned to visit the zoo in Dubbo while inland.**

**I said, "I've never seen it myself, but I've heard a lot about it. I'll meet you in Dubbo at the zoo."**

**For just \$6, I flew round-trip in a Fokker F-27 Friendship, an hour each way, arriving there at 8:30 a.m., and returning to Sydney in the late afternoon for an hour. With all that space in Australia, all the animals have an entire pasture to themselves—the elephants and giraffes—no fences or bars.**

**My grandson Damien came with me on a flight to Brisbane; he was eligible for half-price. It cost me \$12 round-trip, 800 km there, and 800 km back. In Brisbane, we took a bus tour and saw a lot of new things, including another zoo with eight young koalas you could photograph in your arms.**

**When I heard from my brother, Martien, that he and his wife, along with a hundred-member choir from Barneveld and Amersfoort, were going to Canada to sing at Toronto and Hamilton, I decided to meet them there. Initially, I wanted to fly KLM to Amsterdam and then join them on their trip to Canada, but that was too expensive because I had to buy two return tickets.**

**Since I had also worked for Canadian Pacific Airlines for 12 years, I could fly with them directly and return, much cheaper. Sydney, Fiji, Honolulu, Vancouver, Toronto, and back.**

**It all worked out perfectly, and together we were able to see a lot of family on my wife's side, and our own. I had discovered that our families had all immigrated to Toronto, Hamilton, and Canada.**

**What an unforgettable reunion we had there, and we saw much of the beautiful scenery, and of course, the famous Niagara Falls, on the border of Canada and the U.S.A., a few times.**

**I met so many family members there that, after retiring, I made the trip again, but this time with a return trip, via Canada, on to Amsterdam.**

**That was killing two birds with one stone. All the family in Holland, and all the family in Canada at the same time, for only \$525, return.**

**It was overcrowded on both flights from Vancouver for two days due to overcrowded Jumbos with full paying passengers, but the next flight still had room for me and was even placed in a much better position.**

**The only unfortunate thing was that my wife couldn't join us due to airsickness, but all the many photos made up for it.**

**All in all, my wife and I have never regretted taking that big step.**

**SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA, NATURE, TEMPERATURE.**