

I was born in Amsterdam, Holland on July 12, 1922 to Racel Gobets (May 16, 1893 – March 15, 1984) and Jozua Vanderpol (November 13, 1891 – June 6, 1946).

My childhood was secure and normal. As a Dutch Jew, I did not experience any antisemitism or violence before the Nazi German occupation on May 10, 1940. I was forced to wear a yellow star and carry an ID card stamped with the letter J to identify me as a Jew. In 1941, when all Jewish students were forced out of the universities, I continued my studies in a secret medical school. With every new anti-Jewish measure, I would say, "we will go on, we will live".

In 1942 with the increased deportations to the death camps, I obtained a false ID from a friend named Egon van Blommestejn, and then went into hiding with my mother and brother. My mother sold jewelry for food and we used his radio to monitor the BBC broadcasts.

On May 5, 1945 I walked out onto the street a free person, but did not believe that this day had actually come.

In the confusion and terror of the occupation, my father was separated from the rest of the family and escaped to New York. Sadly, he died before we were able to reunite. My mother, brother, and I moved to New York and Boston where we worked to rebuild our lives and I completed his medical studies.

In 1949, I married Netty Vanderpol, a Terezin survivor. We have two children and four grandchildren. As a symbol of our survival and the unbroken link of family, I gave my then 8 year old grandson a little kettle that was given to me by my grandfather.