



“KEPT!”

Some Wartime Experiences
of
J.K.Stehouwer

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of
J. K. Stehouwer
During the Second World War**

2001

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FOREWORD

The following account of the experiences of our friend, Mr J.K. Stehouwer, pastor of the Church at “Zion” Chapel, Grand Rapids, first appeared in the Friendly Companion magazine in the year 2000. Since then it has been suggested that a more permanent record would be well-received by many readers who expressed their appreciation of the original articles.

The remarkable protection, with which the Lord surrounded him during the perils of the Second World War on land and at sea, whilst a soldier in the U.S.A. army, give a powerful meaning to the title “KEPT!”

Especially important is the way in which the Lord’s hand can be seen in preserving the author before he was brought into the liberty of the gospel, until he arrived home safely. It was then that the Lord dealt with him, not in the earthquake, wind or fire, but with the still small voice of the Holy Spirit’s teaching in his soul.

Mr Stehouwer has kindly provided some photographs, and a map which together with the narrative make this little account an attractive addition to any bookshelf.

It is with real pleasure that one recommends this little booklet to all in whose hands it may please God to place it.

G.D. Buss
November 2001

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Chapter 1.

Through the years, I have related some of my experiences while in the armed services during World War II. I have often been asked to write down some of those incidents which I feel show God’s gracious leading, guiding, and keeping, for the benefit of the young people of our own little church and for future generations.

I was brought up in a very godly home and, I would add, a “sheltered” home. My parents feared God, and we were taught to live clean, upright lives. As I look back, I feel the Lord mercifully kept me during my youth from entering into any gross sins and, for the most part, attending anything that was displeasing to my parents. However, I would emphasise the fact that every one of us born into this world is a fallen creature through our federal head, Adam, and we have no righteousness or goodness of our own.

As a young child, I was taught to ask the Lord that He might give me a new heart. In looking back now, as the Lord has given me further light, I believe that already at this time the Lord had planted the tender fear of God in my soul. Yet, in my early days, I could not say with any sweet assurance that it was well with my soul. I could not indulge in those sins and activities and entertainment other young boys were able to, as I felt a restraint upon me. The friends I associated with had good morals and were of a religious nature, although quite Arminian. They were often full of fun, and I could soon join them and become silly and foolish. Even so, I was often kept.

I remember very well when the war broke out and especially the day when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour in December of 1941. We received a call in the afternoon from some friends, telling us of the attack. I was then seventeen years of age, and the government had already begun to draft (call up) soldiers starting at twenty years of age. I can remember my father turning to my brother (who was just one year older) and me and saying: “I don’t believe you boys will ever be involved in this. I believe the War will come to a close before you reach the age of twenty.”

When the United States entered the War, there was a tremendous drain on young men aged twenty and older. They soon reduced the draft age to include eighteen and nineteen year-old’s, and I was immediately drafted.

I received my draft papers in the last part of 1942. The government allowed us to finish High School first. I had sufficient credits to receive my diploma in February of 1943, but I had hoped to finish the rest of the school year and graduate with my class in June. However, the government would not allow this, and I was inducted (enlisted) into the Army on February 25, 1943, just two days after my nineteenth birthday.

It was well known that young boys entering the Armed Services were often introduced to many sins, rough language, and a life completely contrary to that of home, especially to my own home. When I was inducted, I must confess that I had more fear of being overcome by sin



than I did of the enemy. When those who were in the Service came back, they related how they were soon introduced to many evils such as drinking, cursing, swearing, and sinful conversation.

I can remember continually begging the Lord to keep me; yet I feared that I might easily be swayed. I was much plagued about whether or not I could stand against evil and do that which I felt was right, especially if I had to suffer persecution or mocking.

Because many young boys in the area were being

Taken at Finschafen, New Guinea