

ERIK HEINE - PERSONAL HISTORY

I was born 11 Sept 1919 in Tartu, Estonia where my father owned a piano factory.

In Tartu I attended High School and also participated in the Estonian Youth movement "Noored Kotkad". (Note - an organization sponsored by the Estonian National Guard; similar to Boy Scouts.) I also served in the National Guard as the Recruit Training Platoon Leader of Tartu Maleva. (Note - Tartu Maleva: NG Regiment of Tartu.)

After Russian forces occupied Estonia I joined a resistance organization led by Lt Col Kurvits (former CO of the Estonian Cavalry Regiment). We attempted to form a nationwide resistance movement. On 22 Aug 1940 I was arrested by Soviet authorities and charged with resistance activities as a "counter-revolutionary".

In the meantime my parents had immigrated to Germany. (Note - One stipulation of the German-Russian agreements of 1939 allowed all those individuals claiming German ancestry in the occupied Baltic States to immigrate to Germany. Many people took advantage of this clause to escape Russian terror.) My great-grandmother had been a German. My parents were able to obtain my release and in Apr 1941 I was handed over to German authorities.

In 1941 I volunteered for the Osten Battalion which was made up of Estonians in Germany. We were dispatched to the Ukraine to combat Communist guerrillas. I was slightly wounded during this campaign.

In February 1942 Estonian authorities demanded my return to Estonia and the Germans complied. For the next eight months I was employed by the Estonian Police (Note - "Politiline Politsei") where I specialized in interrogating captured Communist agents.

I resigned in the latter part of 1942 when the Germans arrested a group of Estonian patriots, and volunteered for the Estonian Legion which was being trained at Debica, Poland. As a member of the Estonian Battalion "Narva" I participated in some of the bloodiest fighting in the Ukraine. I was selected to attend German Officers Candidate School at Bad Tölz and graduated as a Second Lt. I was assigned to the Estonian Division on the Narva Front. I served in I Bat, 45 Inf Regt in various capacities including Company Commander and Bat Adjutant. I was wounded during the Battle of Auvere and sent to Tartu Hospital from which I escaped when the Russians threatened the city. I rejoined my unit which participated in the defense of Tartu. In these battles our battalion was almost completely annihilated. I was out off for 3 days and while attempting to reach friendly lines I was knocked unconscious by a bomb, and taken prisoner by the Russian Army.

I was taken to a POW camp near Russia's capital. Three months later I was sent to a special camp in the Northern Urals. In March 1945 I escaped, attempting to reach Estonia.

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I managed to make my way as far back as Leningrad where I was recaptured. In 1946 many Baltic nationals were brought back to their homelands and I was taken to a camp at Kopla (by Tallinn). With the assistance of some civilians I was able to escape during Spring of 1946.

From 1946 on I fought as a member of a platoon size Estonian guerrilla unit. When our group leader was killed I took over command. We conducted ~~in~~ numerous raids and ambushes against Russian forces as well as carrying out sabotage and terror acts. By 1950 I was the only member of the unit to remain at large (the rest were either killed, were sent to Siberia or disappeared during missions) and while nourishing escape plans to Finland I was apprehended by the security forces, probably through betrayal or recognition.

I spent 1 year in Patari and Pagari Street prisons in Tallinn where I was under constant interrogation. I stubbornly claimed German citizenship (which I have never had), and my death sentence was changed to 25 years at hard labor. I was in numerous camps in Russia until Nov 1956 when I was released to West Germany as a German POW. Upon reaching West German soil I admitted my Estonian citizenship and requested permission to remain in West Germany which was granted.

Since 1957 I have been living in Canada where I now reside in Toronto.

Prepared by Prit Parming - all notes in this resume have been added by P.P. This resume has been prepared from a tape made by Erik Heine.

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