

Robbie Cohen met in 1941 walking through Delft Pim de Bruyn Kops, together with two friends, Oscar de Brey and Jan Jacob van Rietschoten whom he both knew. Cohen spoke to them and told the men that he was no longer allowed to study as a Jew and that he wanted to escape to England. De Bruyn Kops said they had a canoe. Cohen immediately responded and asked Van Rietschoten if he knew a second man. Van Rietschoten was a former classmate of Cohen and named Coen de longh, a well-known rower who in 1938 had won the main number of the Varsity for the Delftsche Roeivereniging Laga as a 'stroke'.

The flight from the Netherlands was very welcome for Coen De longh, he was wanted by the Germans because of his espionage work for the intelligence service of the Delft student Johan (Han) van Hattem.

A small sail was made for the folding canoe in Scheveningen and then brought to the Kaag. To escape from Katwijk they hid the canoe in the troop house of the boy scouts in the Zuidduinen behind the Boulevard in Katwijk.



The troop house between 1938 and 1940 with the sea strip and the Rotterdam Sea Hospitium in the background.

Photo: History of sea explorers from Katwijk, Dik Parlevliet.

We had to wait for good weather. The longh and Cohen probably walked by canoe from the junk house towards the beach and chose the sea at 2:00 a.m. on June 20, 1941. After a journey of about 50 hours they arrived in England.

Training with the Royal Air Force.

Robbie Cohen became a Mosquito pilot and distinguished himself in a number of operations. After him, a special way of hunting was called "Cohennesizing". He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.



De Havilland Mosquito, RAF, 1944

Cohen was the only Dutchman in a Mosquito who took part in the attack on the Central Population Register (villa Kleykamp) in The Hague on April 11, 1944. However, his bomb remained "hanging" so that he was not responsible for one of the actual direct hits.

All duplicate cards of identity cards issued in occupied territory were stored in this building. The destruction was important to those who used counterfeit identity cards. 2500 receipts for issued personal identification certificates sent by municipalities were lost. As a result of this action, the identity card as a control tool had lost a large part of its value.



Villa Kleykamp, Scheveningseweg in The Hague

On August 10, 1944, Cohen took off for an overnight operation over France from which he did not return. Robbie Cohen was 22 years old.



Mitchell bombers

Coen de longh became a fighter pilot and was killed on 10 June 1943 by an "escort" of a bombers formation (Mitchell) that carried out an attack near Ghent. The formation was attacked by more than twenty Focke Wulf-fw 190s, the Luftwaffe's most feared fighter at the time.

Coen collapsed with his Spitfire near Domburg in the North Sea and was 27 years old.

Sources:

- Freedom behind the horizon, Jan de Bruin and Jan van der Werf, 1998;
- Memorial book of the resistance of Delft students and teachers during the years 1940-1945;
- The Hague in the Second World War, Bart van der Boom;
- Die Coburger Familie (von) Sand (www.sand-clan.net);
- mr. H. Fontijn, including photos;
- History of sea explorers from Katwijk, Dik Parlevliet;