

NAME: Suzanne

RANK: Civilian

ORGANIZATION: Not Applicable

OVERSEAS WARTIME LOCATION: Belgium

- The following excerpt is directly from an original wartime period letter written by Suzanne. This is one of several letters from Suzanne in the site curator's possession and more will be transcribed in the future.
- The following excerpt is presented under fair use provisions for educational purposes.
- No controversial material has been omitted from the following excerpt. No grammatical or spelling errors have been corrected.

Suzanne writes a cousin in the United States:

“1st August 1945.

Here is your cousin...again, I say again because I wrote to you a few months ago and did not receive an answer since then. May be your address is changed, I don't hope so.

How are you...O.K.? and your parents too, I hope so. As far as I know nobody in our family is missing, some have been obliged to work in Germany and have had a bad time but they all returned home safely...And the son of your mothers Aunt...has been a prisoner of war until 1942 and had to return to Germany in 1943 for work and only came home a few months ago...I'm so glad that terrible war and German occupation is all over. I'm so grateful to the Americans, especially because they helped most of all, by sending war material, troops and food to the European Theatre of Operations. I'll never forget...

...As you know already I worked as a seller in a big store in Antwerp...But I did not like the job and I started learning shorthand and typing. The result was that I was transferred as a typist to the Personnel Office in 1942. But in December 1942 the Germans wanted more workpeople for their factories in Brandenburg near Berlin so they requisitioned a 60 girls older than 21 at the store where I worked, me inclusif. It was two weeks after that I married my best boy friend...And that was why I had not to go to Germany, only single woman were wanted. Two weeks later I changed for a better job at a Coal Company in Antwerp and worked there until 1944, until the V I and V II came over Antwerp.

Life has been terrible expensive, the rations for a month were just sufficient to live a week and for the other three weeks one was obliged to buy on black market. That is everything 10 times the legal price. Butter 400 fr. 2 pound and a loaf 40 fr. and so on. Since the liberation rations have been increased and now we only buy eggs and milk on black market. Three V I dropped near my parents house which was heavily damaged. Mother was in the cellar in time father to his job but once little Jean was very near the explosion but he escaped luckily. The house stands still there but we need more glasses in the windows and several reparations should be done to different rooms and on the roof. Several friends of mine were killed by the V I and V II. I alone went to my fathers sister in Brussels in November because I could not live in anxiety all the time under that bomb rain on Antwerp. There I worked for the English Forces...until April 1945; when bombing was finished I came home again. Several thousands of people

left Antwerp that time, it was really terrible. I'm sure your mother would not recognize Borgerhout for instance and the Central Station surroundings.

So, I came home and took a rest for 6 weeks, repaired and cleaned my things and did the household. But you see...I needed a gay surrounding and a change, because my nerves were shattered with all these sad stories about lost friends and tortured political prisoners of my home town.

So I tried to work for the American Army and was very lucky to find a job at the U. S. Transportation Department in Antwerp. Two months I'm working with the 'Yanks'. I'm every day at the office in company of 2 pleasant G I's and Captains. One of them...tells stories of his daily life in the States...And the other Sergeant...sings all day in different tunes: 'I wanna go home!' So, it must be really good in the States I think, all the soldiers are 'homesick' a little. It are all good sweet boys, you know I receive every day a piece of chocolate, a cigarette or chewing gum (things we missed 5 years) and they take care of me better than anyone Belgian employee. They expect to go home in a few months and I'm sure I'll regret losing them. That's about the end of my summary...not too dull? I wonder if you are married yet, you profit of your freedom as long you can?...Write me as much as possible about yourself and the rest of the family, as soon you have time to, will you? It will be a great pleasure for me to hear from you again after so many years.

I wish you all the best luck and happiness...and best regards to your family from everybody in Antwerp and especially from

Your loving cousin
Suzanne."

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- Suzanne made it through the Second World War but when she passed away is unknown.
 - **For visual context, this link connects to an original wartime film in the public domain that covers the above time period and Antwerp, Belgium (viewer discretion advised):**
<https://archive.org/details/CB-22>
 - **For additional detail, this link connects to the Wikipedia article that covers Belgium during the Second World War, including the German V-weapon attacks on Antwerp which Suzanne mentions in her letter (reader discretion advised):**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgium_in_World_War_II