

Herman Preso (13 March 1912 Borgerhout, Antwerp, Belgium – 19 July 1970 Antwerp, Belgium) was the son of Israel Preso (1882-1942) and Esther Preso nee de Groot (1887-1943) of Antwerp, Belgium. His parents were born in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. They got married in 1911 in Antwerp, Belgium. His father was a diamond polisher. Herman had a younger sister Catharina (1916 - 1986) and brother Willem Preso (1924-1943). Herman got engaged to Lottie Valencia (1914-1993) who was born in London and whose family lived in London.

During World War Two, 6 weeks after he married Lottie Valencia (1914-1993) the couple escaped from Antwerp on their bicycles and cycled to France. They left everything behind in Antwerp and had no money. They suffered terribly and had a difficult time. They were initially in Toulouse, France. In September 1940 he received a letter from the Legation des Pays-Bas (Royal Netherlands Legation) in Toulouse stating that he was responsible for supplying the Dutch Refugee Reception Centre at Chateau Clairfonds in La Fougnette. This required him and his wife to frequently run errands in the centre and suburbs of Toulouse and therefore the Vice Consul requested the civil and military authorities to allow him and his wife to move about freely in Toulouse. On 13 July 1942 Preso received a certificate from the Office Néerlandais which stated that for 2 years, he had dedicated himself to the wellbeing of his compatriots with regard to all technical matters including kitchen layout, electrical installation and maintenance, purchase of transport equipment etc. This work, carried out under very difficult circumstances was impeccably executed and the merit of the individual in question is all the greater for it. The director stated that he took ‘pleasure in warmly recommending this modest, selfless and tireless servant’. Herman and his wife were arrested and were interned in a camp with other Jews in Toulouse. They managed to escape one night with their bicycles. They went to Portugal and in October 1942 they obtained a letter from Legation des Pays-Bas, Lisbon, stating that the Royal Netherlands Legation ‘declares that the Netherland subject Herman Preso is going to England in order to be incorporated in the Netherland Military Forces in the United Kingdom. Mr Preso is accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Lottie Preso. In England Preso joined the Free Dutch Army and served in the Princess Irene Brigade. His son, Eddy (1943-2021) was born on the 7 March 1943 in England whilst he was on active service. His wife’s brother, Emmanuel Valenica (1917-1976) served in the British army in the Royal Army Ordinance Corps.

Preso's parents and younger brother Willem remained in Antwerp. They were deported from Kaserne Dossin, Mechelen Belgium to Auschwitz Concentration Camp. His paternal grandfather and 5 paternal aunts and uncles were all deported from Amsterdam and died in the Shoah.

After the war, Herman Preso returned to England to his wife and son. Although his wife had been born in England, he was not allowed to remain in England as he was a Dutch national. The family returned to Antwerp, Belgium. His daughter Anny was born in Antwerp in 1947. Herman Preso obtained Belgium citizenship in 1956. He was a devoted man, who loved his wife and his children. He was very intelligent and was a cultured man. He died prematurely at the age of 58 years following an operation. He was sorely missed by his family.

Source:

In Memory of Herman Preso - Anny Schamroth nee Preso, daughter, Brussels, Belgium.

<https://www.geni.com/people/Herman-Preso/6000000035689078523?through=6000000035689241320>.