

Samatrides – Shmitkomen – For the Republic

In WWII a small country of northern Europe found itself steeped in a war with Germany. The date was June 1942. The political leaders in Estonia had a secret meeting. These men once worked with the occupying Russian Army. That was before the German army took over Estonia. They were now forming a secret Government. It was an attempt to hold onto the illusion that they could hang onto their Republic.

By 1944 the German security agencies had arrested most of the men. The men of the organized resistance had escaped arrest.

Two of these men were Karrel and Hugo Shmitkomen, born in 1902. Their father, fearing the Germans, had changed the boys' names. They were born Tony and Christopher Samatrides. They became Karrel and Hugo Shmitkomen in 1904. These names the boys kept until death.

The two brothers joined the resistance in 1941. Both men had to learn as they went how to use explosives as well as the weapons of war. The brothers went on raids against German-held buildings, outposts, and fuel dumps. The men were very good at what they did. The resistance fought the Germans with guerrilla tactics, making the German occupation extremely difficult to control.

As the Russian Army was closing in on the Germans in Estonia, the Nazi's left in retreat, the German's would never enter again.

The Red Army marched into the capital September 1944. They wasted no time arresting anyone that could be a problem for them. Karrel was arrested in 1945. He was executed December 1945. Hugo was arrested the next March 1946. He was sentence to a prison somewhere in Siberia. Hugo was 44 years old facing a cold hard lifetime, his soul was broken. Death would have been a mercy. It would take eighteen years to locate the prison that held Hugo. He was found by the S.G.L. in 1964. Hugo was now 62 years old. Prison life made him a lot older. The S.G.L. ran a rescue operation. They were able to get Hugo to Switzerland.

The S.G.L. wanted to change Hugo's name but he refused. He used his name on all his documents and passports. It was a matter of both pride as much as his last act of defiance in the face of the Red Army, his Soviet oppression.

Hugo lived out his life in Switzerland for 48 more years until 2012. He passed away at 110 years old. Before he died, he reclaimed his father's last name of Samatrides.

His sister insisted he have a traditional Stavrosian funeral. She had both names put on his marker to honor both her brothers, Karrel and Hugo Samatrides, - Shmitkomen - 1902- 1945 - 1902 - 2012.

The sister's daughter works for the Swiss Stavrosian S.G.L.. She is now a researcher working northern Europe. She is called Olga Shmtko, living in Zurich.

In the hidden world of the Stavrosian people, most of the rest of the world will never know of their contribution to the whole of mankind. They ask for nothing, only to be accepted, to live in peace.

S.G.L.
C. Smith