

Vetta Frances



This photo of Vetta Frances, my sister's adoptive daughter, was taken in Thessaloniki in 1947.

The brother of my brother-in-law hadn't gone to the mountain, but stayed in Thessaloniki and got married to an Italian girl called Vetta, who was pregnant.

He would go somewhere and secretly, with his friends, would listen to the radio, from London, as the Germans had officially confiscated all the radios. Somebody betrayed them and they came in and arrested them all.

As the woman was Italian she tried to save him and get him out of prison. She would send him food daily; she couldn't go herself, as she was very close to giving birth.

Exactly on the day she was giving birth, the Germans had returned the food and the lady next door decided not to tell her, as she would think that her husband was taken to be executed.

However, right upon giving birth another neighbor said, 'Vetta, why is your husband's food still here?' She gave birth and immediately, maybe from the shock, died. The baby was also called Vetta.

However, her father returned from jail, and since there was no active marriage anymore with a dead wife, he was sent to the concentration camp. He died either in the train or in the camp.

After the occupation this little girl, little Vetta was taken by my sister Nina and her husband and as the Italians had been expelled from Greece, Vetta's aunt kept on sending letters, particularly when

Nina had her first son, Mimis.

The Italian woman wrote, 'Now that the son has been born, things are different.' So we responded to her, 'Dear Anita, the only person to remind us that Vetta is not our daughter is you.'

And that's when she stopped bothering us, and indeed we all love Vetta very much. Now she has three daughters and six grandchildren.