



# HAROLD SOUTHGATE B.1932 -



Supply lorries waiting to embark

Harold was born in one of four cottages, "Tower Cottages", beside Freston Tower, on 28th May 1932. When he was nine years old, his family moved to Woolverstone to live with his uncle Alex. Harold has lived in the same house ever since, for over eighty years. Even though he moved to Woolverstone, he continued to attend Freston village school and later Holbrook school. On leaving school he went to work at the old shipyard "Fox's" at Bourne Bridge. With a short break for National Service at 18, Harold continued to work in ship building, at Fox's, later at Woolverstone shipyard for several years, and then as a self-employed carpenter until his retirement. Here are some of his boyhood memories of events leading up to D-Day:

**"My earliest memory of the war would be 1940. When at the start of the coastal defences a gun was stationed behind Monkey Lodge. And by walking along the shore, we children wandered into the camp unchecked. Of course, the first thing was this big gun. They also had a machine gun there and one day, they opened fire on a familiar old plane that flew around here every day, mistaking it for a German bomber. I remember seeing the red tracer bullets going up and a green flare from the plane to show that they were friendly. It was a research plane testing radio equipment from Martlesham airfield. We thought it was very exciting. One day, in the distance, we could see German planes bombing Martlesham airfield."**

"As part of the D-Day deception a number of what appeared to be landing craft appeared near Cat House. They look very realistic but close up, by going along the shore, it was possible to see they were made of canvas."

"For some days before D-Day, the roads were closed to civilian traffic so we had to walk along to Holbrook school and were surprised to see hundreds of numbered pegs in the banks, a vehicle length apart. The pegs were about a foot high and pinned to them were a white enamel sign with black numbers on. And one day, the roads were full of vehicles, chock full, and parked nose to tail. They were mostly supply lorries with some Bren carriers. Their crews were with them in battledress, some involved in waterproofing. Next morning they were gone; it was D-Day."

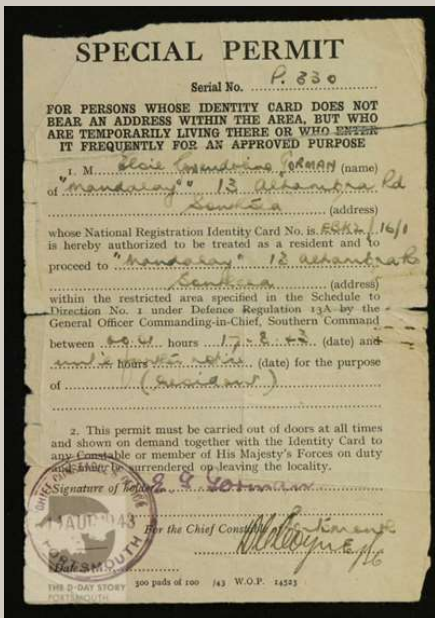


Bren Carrier, Mk 1

**Note:**

**"The whole area along the Orwell from Ipswich (Bourne Bridge) to Shotley was sealed off, and no unauthorised person was allowed within half a mile of the river. Special passes were required by residents."**

"Guard posts were set up at various places to prevent access by roads or lane...The road along the "Strand" From Bourne Bridge to Woolverstone was filled with tanks, lorries and other vehicles. No civilian traffic was permitted to use these roads, and cars and buses to and from Ipswich were diverted through Tattingstone, Stutton, Holbrook and Harkstead entering Chelmondiston by Lings Lane." Chelmondiston, Suffolk - War Diary. H.A.R. Edgell. O. St. J., A.K.C.



"The scariest thing was the V1 flying bomb. The teacher at Holbrook school had just told us it had been announced that the Germans were using these and tried to describe the noise they made and what to do if we heard it. We were just getting into the bus to go home that afternoon when we heard this noise, very loud. The teacher said, "Down!"

And just then I saw and it fly past above the trees and went down towards Woolverstone where it exploded in a field near White House farm."