

From Resident of Holt 9th April 2024

For obvious reasons on 6th June 1944 Holt would have been deserted. Troops camped here, in a restricted and secret area, would have been embarked several days before, then being stalled by weather on 5th. (My father embarked on the LST he commanded at Tilbury and was held off Southend until landing on Juno beach on D+2).

The Old Vicarage was the pre-D-Day HQ I think of the 24th Lancers - a cavalry regiment, but by 1944 equipped with Sherman tanks. I have failed to substantiate this but regimental records I have seen show they took dreadful casualties.

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Brian and his family were living at Holt Lodge Farm where his father Doug was looking after the cows. Doug went out early one morning just before D-Day to bring in the cows for milking. As he walked over the field he saw American soldiers asleep. When he returned from milking they had all gone!

From a Resident of Holt 28th March 2024

The fuel depot, to the north of West Moors, which had been set up in 1939 as an ammunition depot was handed over to the Americans in November 1943. They used it as an ammunition and petroleum depot. The fuel was transferred to drums and jerrycans and then driven in lorries to wherever it was needed for units taking part in the D-day landing. Large numbers of American soldiers (according to a history of the depot) were accommodated locally to work there. It seems possible that this was in tents on the Heath. Uddens House was some sort of administrative centre for D-day. In 1943, Uddens crossing on the railway line had sidings built alongside it.

The Americans set up a hospital on the St Leonard's site.