

Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

Peter Rudling, THE001, previous recording. So we should be recording now. So OK, Peter Rudling. Thetford. I've forgotten what I just said. But anyway, carry on.

00:00:15 Speaker 1

So OK, so you were brought up in the same cottage for your whole life?

00:00:21 Speaker 2

Yes, I was born down the bottom end of [?] cottage.

00:00:29 Speaker 2

Lived there all my life till I got married.

00:00:34 Speaker 2

My mum and dad are in Thompson churchyard.

00:00:39 Speaker 2

We often go back to Thompson for different things that are on in the village. I went back there on Wednesday for one of my schoolmate's funeral.

00:00:50 Speaker 2

And I was born in March 1938.

00:00:55 Speaker 2

And the first memory I have is I was outside and barrage balloon came over.

00:01:12 Speaker 2

And the aeroplane was flying round it from Watton Airfield.

00:01:20 Speaker 2

And I can remember my mother come out and grabbing me by the hair and taking me indoors because of what was going on up there.

00:01:31 Speaker 2

And then, sort of from then on, we had a lot of military about because they took over Tottington and Stanford villages for the battle area.

00:01:51 Speaker 2

And the Americans used to do quite a bit of exercise around there.

00:01:59 Speaker 2

And the first memory I had of that was about there was when all the children from Thompson Heath was told to meet on Thompson Shop Corner, and these three big American trucks turned up, and we had to stand one side of the road while they turned round, and then we walked up to the back of the trucks and they just picked us up and put us in the back, and took us to the Griston end to the airfield, and we went into these Nissan [?] huts, and had a Christmas party.

00:02:52 Speaker 2

And I think that was the first time I'd seen a banana and an orange because I was from a family of nine and there was two or three born after me.

00:03:07 Speaker 1

Right, we're off again.

00:03:08 Speaker 1

Right, orange, no, oranges and bananas, we got to.

00:03:13 Speaker 2

And a big plate full of food in front of us.

00:03:18 Speaker 2

But the the bit what impressed me was that when we all stood there, it wasn't very big. And this massive American stood on the ground and he just picked us up one at a time, stood us in the back of the truck, and another American on the truck took us to a seat and sat us down at the side.

00:03:40 Speaker 2

And then they took us to Griston. And that was that was the one thing that does stick in my memory.

00:03:54 Speaker 2

And then after that, after I'd started school, I can remember, my aunt that lived just up the road from us, an American officer used to come to her house every week and he used to bring a kit bag full of his linen.

00:04:18 Speaker 1

What was what was your aunt's name?

00:04:20 Speaker 2

Gladys Carter, that was my wife's, you know, my mother's brother's wife.

00:04:30 Speaker 2

And he used to come in a little 4 by 4, Jeep and all us kids used to be clambering all over while he was there, delivering and collecting his linen.

00:04:43 Speaker 1

Oh dear. So so was it just the one person that she did the washing for?

00:04:49 Speaker 2

I think so, I aren't that sure, but that's the [?].

00:04:51 Speaker 1

OK.

00:04:56 Speaker 2

And we used to see them. They used to come in their jeeps or trucks, sometimes, to Thompson shop, when we had a shop, and do some shopping there and.

00:05:15 Speaker 2

We used to see quite a lot of the Americans in their trucks and jeeps come through Thompson village, and.

00:05:28 Speaker 2

While I was at Thompson School, I think that must have been sort of more or less after the war, at the bottom of our where we was at the end of the road, and at the bottom of our road was a medal that belonged to the farmer at Red Brick Farm Carriages [?].

00:05:53 Speaker 2

And they used to bring 3 lorry loads of Italian prisoners of war.

00:06:00 Speaker 2

And they used to use them to trim all the old doors, bushes and the rubbish down off [?] Meadow.

00:06:10 Speaker 2

And then, at lunchtime, used to be a lorry turn up with a mobile kitchen thing. They used to set it all up on the ground, light it up and then cook then a dinner or lunch for the prisoners of war.

00:06:30 Speaker 1

OK.

00:06:31 Speaker 2

And because, soon as we come out from school, first place we went to was to up onto the meadow to see what they were doing. And if there was any food left, they used to heat it up and we used to eat that.

00:06:44 Speaker 1

So you had a quite well-fed war, then in the end?

00:06:47 Speaker 1

Yes. Yeah, that's.

00:06:52 Speaker 2

But there was a few Americans about there with guns, and when they loaded them up, when they were ready to go home at the end of the day, the prisoners used to try and persuade us to hop on the lorry and go back with them, but that we daren't do. But the Americans were there, they would have stopped us from going on them trucks anyway.

00:07:21 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm yeah.

00:07:24 Speaker 2

And then sort of after that, that sort of quietened down, come to the end of the war, and they sort of handed the airfield back to the RAF.

00:07:43 Speaker 2

And that was sort of it, but I can remember seeing the old Wellingtons and that, flying round there, coming backwards and forwards when they'd been out.

00:07:57

Yeah, yeah.

00:07:58 Speaker 2

And that was sort of a things that are stuck in my memory.

00:08:04 Speaker 1

Yeah, fascinating.

00:08:08 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:08:09 Speaker 2

That's I think that's sort of more or less about as much as I could tell you, I didn't I wasn't old enough to be.

00:08:14 Speaker 1

No, no, no, no. But you've got, yeah, some some good memories from there. It's the oranges and bananas are it's amazing. I think that's brilliant.

00:08:23 Speaker 2

I I couldn't believe how many bottles of drink there was stood on the table and the glasses that we had and.

00:08:30 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:08:32 Speaker 2

Because Father was just a horseman working on a farm.

00:08:38 Speaker 2

Mother went to work on the farms when she hadn't got littluns to look after.

00:08:45 Speaker 2

And that sort of stuck in my mind.

00:08:48

Yeah, yeah.

00:08:49 Speaker 2

And when somebody told me this was going on, I thought I'd just come and see what was happening. I didn't realise this was sort of like.

00:08:56 Speaker 1

Ohh yeah, yeah no it is. So. What I'll do is I'll I'll stop recording, so don't remember anything else.

00:09:03 Speaker 1

OK, there you go.

00:09:07 Speaker 2

But not necessarily me, but I know that there was some people that I knew and other lads and that **out of [?]** the village they had some American coins which they thought was great and because they wouldn't let them out of their sight.

00:09:26 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, exactly.

00:09:32 Speaker 1

So I'm just gonna put click it, right, OK.