

**Alan Johnson 1925 – 2018**

**Royal Navy**



Alan aged 18



Alan aged 92



**HMS Onyx**

The minesweeper on which Alan cleared mines on June 5<sup>th</sup> 1944

The skipper then came down to address the company: *'Right lads, I suppose you've all guessed where we're going. It's the Big One'*. (At this point, leaflets were handed out with a message from Eisenhower on the importance of the invasion in freeing Europe). *I don't have to say it to you lads. Good luck and God Bless Us All. I know you'll do your duty. So we're going to Action Stations shortly'*. At 9.00 p.m. the flotilla finally started minesweeping towards the French coast. The misty conditions made it impossible to see the French coast. HMS Onyx was close to a gun battery at Fleury, so the cover of the mist was crucial. The flotilla had sent a signal down: *'Good luck to everyone. We're now starting sweeping towards the French coast. If the ship in front of you hits a mine, you are not to stop to pick survivors up. Just swing over and take his position up because this mine field has got to be cleared. The trawlers at the back will pick up survivors.'*