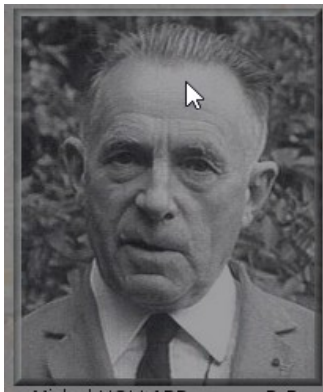# The Man Who Saved London

During the Second World War the Germans wanted to frighten everyone in London. They invented a bomb that would fly on its own. No plane was needed to carry it. That would make Britain give up – they thought. People in London called it the "doodlebug".

The Germans decided they would fire fifty thousand of these flying bombs. Fifty thousand is a lot. Fifty thousand little pennies would make £500! What a lot of damage the flying bombs would do to London! The Germans started to make special places to fire them from in France. If you look at a map you will see that it is not very far from the French coast to London, just a few miles.

One Christian Frenchman decided to help stop the bombs. His name was Michel Hollard. The Germans had taken over France so he had to be very careful – he was going to spy on them.

In his ordinary job Michel Hollard had to travel all over France buying timber. He discovered a way to cross over the border from France into Switzerland without the Germans finding out. The Germans were not in charge in Switzerland.

Quietly, Michel Hollard began to watch the Germans. He had some friends who helped him too. Whenever they saw anything that they thought the British would like to know about, they got the message through by going to Switzerland. Michel and his friends were careful. They had secret signals. On one farm near the border the farmer would leave a barn door open if there were no German guards nearby. Then Michel Hollard and his friends would know it was safe to cross.

 Michel Hollard heard about something new that the Germans were building about 30 miles from the French coast. He decided to go himself and take a look.

Michel Hollard found the place. He asked if he could take Bibles and good books to the Frenchmen working there. He was told he could. Now he was inside the German's special site. Quietly he changed places with one of the French workmen. He soon found that the Germans were putting in big ramps pointing towards London. This was

where the flying bombs would come from!

The British had given Michel Hollard some special tools. He had a tiny, tiny camera. He had a shaving brush that looked ordinary. But the handle unscrewed and there was a space inside where papers or pictures could be hidden! It could go in any luggage and no German would know about the papers hidden in the handle. Michel got all the information he could. Then he sent it back to Switzerland and so to Britain. Now he could only wait. Would his information be used?

The British read and read his reports. They looked and looked at the photos. They made models of what the photos showed to help the British pilots. It was only a small place where the ramps were. The pilots who were going to destroy those ramps had to get exactly the right spot. When they were sure they had studied and trained as much as they could, the brave pilots flew off. They flew very low and very fast. They destroyed the ramps and got back home again at high speed.

Michel Hollard saw what was done. He sent a report of it all back to Britain.

Michel Hollard and his friends, passed on information about a hundred other sites the Germans were building for their flying bombs. If you ever go to London and see the lovely old buildings, just imagine what would have happened to them without Michel Hollard. Fifty thousand flying bombs! No wonder he was called "the man who saved London"!