

Nathan's great grandfather Nathan was born in Prussia in 1816. He married Lena Harris and their daughter Rebecca was born before they migrated to England. A son Moses was born in Wolverhampton in 1849, before the family moved to Jersey in the Channel Islands.

The 1851 census in Jersey lists Nathan as a Rabbi and two further children Leopold and Harris were born in St Helier. Two more daughters, Annie and Rachel were born on the island before the family moved to Orchard Lane, Southampton where Nathan was no longer a Rabbi and is working as a pawnbroker.

Nathan's youngest son Moses, Nathan's grandfather, married Bertha Yiegel whose family originated from Germany. Moses also worked as a pawnbroker and a jeweller in Southampton. Moses and Bertha had nine children, Sarah, Dora, Isidor, Abraham, Beatrice, Rose, Nathania, Hannah and the youngest Samuel was born in 1878.

Samuel, Nathan's father was born on 13 November 1878 at 4 Royal Crescent Road, Southampton. In 1901, Samuel aged twenty-two was working as a gold jeweller in the St Mary's area of Southampton.

When Samuel was thirty, he married Ellen Marks who was twenty-nine, in Merthyr Tydfil, Wales. Nathan's family do not know how they met but records do show that Ellen's older sister Jeanette married Isaac Olswang whose children were born on the Isle of Wight. Nathan's mother Ellen was involved in a tragic house fire in 1902 when she was twenty-three. The fire severely injured her and took the life of her oldest sister Phoebe. There were several articles in newspapers appealing for monetary help for Ellen. (See the link for reports on the fire)

Samuel and Ellen had three children. Nathan who was born on 25 November 1909 in Cowes, Isle of Wight, Lena born in 1911 in Deal and Jacob who was born in 1913. In 1911, their father Samuel was working as a wardrobe dealer and he died five years later aged only thirty-seven leaving Ellen with three young children. Nathan attended Sir Roger Manwood's school in Deal where he was a sportsman, excelling in rowing. Nathan was a musician playing the violin and performed with a band called Sid Yeo and the Rhythmic's. After Nathan left school, he continued to row at Deal Rowing Club and worked as the manager at a cleaners and dyers which was owned by a family friend named Phineas Stevens.

Nathan's mother Ellen died in 1931 at the age of fifty-two in Eastry, Deal, Kent. And in 1939, Nathan was living with his brother Jacob at St Kitts, The Marina, Deal.

On 31 May 1940, Nathan took part in Operation Dynamo. He owned a boat called the Golden Spray which was towed across the Channel by a Dutch boat called Hilda.

*Hilda towed two ship's lifeboats and the following motorboats: Moss Rose, Rose Marie, Lady Haig, Britannic, Gipsy King and Golden Spray II. Hilda dropped her tows off the beaches and at once the boats went in.*

*Britannic, one of the Deal beach boats, did excellent work for a long while, but was eventually lost. The Golden Spray, crewed by J. O'Neill and Nathan Cohen, both Deal boatmen, lifted six boatloads of troops before she was caught by the wash of a destroyer taking violent evasive action during a bombing attack. Heavily loaded, the wash of the destroyer roared over the side of the Golden Spray, filled her and she sank. Mr A Crothall, who had sailed from Deal as one of the Golden Spray crew, had transferred off the beaches to one of the Flandres' lifeboats. She too was lost, but Crothall swam into the beach in safety.*

Nathan's family have the commendation that he was awarded after the event.

Later in 1940, Nathan enlisted into the RAF.