



Town of Ajax Street Dedication



Street Name: **Dreyer Drive**

Name of Veteran: Desmond G.C.B. Dreyer April 6, 1910-May 15, 2003

Rank: Lieutenant Commander, Gunnery Specialist, Admiral

Ship Served: HMS Ajax

Date of Service on Ship: 1939

Year of Visit/Dedication: 1976

Veteran or Family Visit: Admiral Sir Desmond Dreyer and wife Marjorie, Lady Dreyer

Veteran of the Battle of the River Plate: Yes Died at Battle: No

Desmond Dreyer was born at Cheriton, Hampshire on April 6, 1910. He was the younger son of Admiral Sir Frederic Dreyer, himself a gunnery specialist. He went to Dartmouth Naval College at thirteen years old. A midshipman in 1927, he qualified in gunnery in 1936 and joined HMS Ajax in 1937. For his actions during the Battle of the River Plate he received the Distinguished Service Cross.



In 1940 Desmond became gunnery officer in an anti-aircraft cruiser squadron and took part in that year's Norwegian campaign. After a year on the Home Fleet staff, Dreyer became gunnery officer on the battleship Duke of York in 1942, in time for the 'Torch' landings in French North Africa in November. The last two years of the war were passed in the Admiralty's gunnery division.

Post-war, Desmond was second in command on HMS Vanguard, Britain's last battleship. In 1956, he was chief of staff to the Commander in Chief, Mediterranean, at Suez. He was made CBE for this, and as a rear-admiral served as assistant chief of naval staff. He commanded Commonwealth naval forces in the Far East as a vice-admiral in 1962, during the 'confrontation' with Indonesia, for which he was knighted.

A full Admiral from 1965, Dreyer was Second Sea Lord in charge of personnel when, like the rest of the board of Admiralty, he resigned over Labour's decision to dispense with aircraft carriers. The First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir David Luce, however, de-creed that his own resignation would suffice. Dreyer became the first Ministry of Defence chief adviser on personnel and logistics, his final post before leaving the Navy in 1968.

Dreyer's first marriage in 1934 was to Elisabeth, daughter of Sir Henry Chilton, GCMG, who died in 1958. In 1959 he married Marjorie Whiteley, who died in 1997. He is survived by the son and daughter of his first marriage. In retirement he was noted for his gentleness and devout Christianity, a man much loved by not only his large number of great grandchildren but by all the community of his native village of Cheriton, Hampshire, who celebrated his 90th birthday by ringing the church bells.