



# Town of Ajax Street Dedication



Street Name: **Stevensgate Drive**

Name of Veteran: Alfred 'Moe' Stevens 1926-July 8, 2007

Rank: Gunner and Able Seaman

Ship Served: HMS Ajax

Date of Service on Ship: 1942 to 1945

Year of Visit/Dedication: n/a

Veteran or Family Visit: n/a

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

Alfred 'Moe' Stevens was only thirteen when war broke out in Europe. He was young and fit, and had been a champion swimmer since the age of nine. He lived behind the Albion pub on Albion Street, Rotherhithe in the United Kingdom and had spent many days in the early years of the war cleaning up wreckage alongside his friends.



Moe waited until 1942 at the age of seventeen to join the Royal Navy and help with the fight. He was very pleased to learn that he would be serving aboard HMS Ajax, famous for the Battle of the River Plate. He made a name for himself by volunteering for everything while on the ship. ***"Others thought I was mad as anything going on aboard I volunteered for- even rowing out before bombarding the Germans on the shore, being careful not to make any noise with the oars. I ended up volunteering for anything and everything and boxed and swam for the Navy to entertain the troops"***.

Moe was even a messenger to Prime Minister Winston Churchill in 1944 as he planned the D-Day invasion aboard the ship with Anthony Eden. ***"Churchill would sit there in his chair and he would chuckle as I spoke to him in my broad cockney accent"***.

Alfred manned the four inch guns while on the Ajax and helped defend the ground troops storming the French beaches. ***"We were supposed to start our bombardment on June 4, 1944 but bad weather delayed us. We started out on June 5 and just after midnight on June 6 all hell broke loose. From about 4 a.m. we started the bombing and continued until ammunition ran out. We were up for over two days at a time and when the German planes came over to hit us we shot them down"***. After the first landings the Ajax went back to England to get more ammunition and then went to southern France to carry on more bombardments and help secure victory in Europe. She carried out more bombardments in Italy and German-occupied Crete. ***"At Crete the Germans saw Ajax and gave themselves up before we started the bombardment.. They knew the Ajax all too well. We had a record for accuracy."***



After the War Alfred began his career as a door to door jeweler. He later opened a shop on Jamaica Road and began to attract celebrity customers. He was known by his neighbours as a 'colourful character' in the South London district of Bermondsey. Alfred 'Moe' Stevens died on July 8, 2007 at the age of seventy nine.