



Town of Ajax Street Dedication



Street Name: **Sharplin Drive**

Name of Veteran: Robert (Bob)John Sharplin June 4, 1911-June 3, 1979

Rank: Petty Officer Mechanician First Class

Ship Served: HMS Ajax

Date of Service on Ship: Mar. 19, 1940-Sept. 30, 1941

Year of Visit/Dedication: June 16, 2014

Veteran or Family Visit: Clive Sharplin, son

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

Robert (Bob) John Sharplin was born on June 4, 1911 into a family with a strong Royal Navy background. He worked as a butcher and errand boy until, when on his eighteenth birthday he volunteered for twelve years of service in the Royal Navy. This was extended another ten years when war was declared.

Bob entered the Royal Navy rated Stoker 2nd Class at HMS Pembroke, the barracks in Chatham. From there it was on to HMS Marlborough, a Torpedo Training School and a Stokers Training School. His certificate from the class states 'Pass Rate of 87.9% and remarks 'very credible'.



It was on March 19, 1940 that Bob began his service aboard HMS Ajax. He joined her at Chatham Dockyard where she was completing seven months of repairs following heavy damage inflicted by the Admiral Graf Spee at the Battle of the River Plate. He saw service on Ajax when she was part of the Mediterranean Fleet's 7th Cruiser Squadron involved in the Malta Convoys, the Battle of Matapan, the Battle for Crete and the North African campaign.

Bob left the Ajax on September 30, 1941 to join the 'Queen Elizabeth' Class Battleship HMS Valiant. He served aboard her until she was damaged by one of three Italian midget submarines in Alexandria Harbour in December 1941. The Valiant had captured the crew of one sub and had time to evacuate the lower decks. As a result no crew injuries were reported, but the ship was severely damaged.

Bob served as a crew member on a total of fifteen ships, one twice, had temporary assignments to eight others and drafts to several shore bases. He retired on February 12, 1952 at the age of forty one.



During Bob's career with the Royal Navy he earned three Good Conduct badges and a Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. He was also awarded The 1939-1945 Star, The Atlantic Star with France and Germany Clasp, The Africa Star, and The 1939-1945 War Medal.

Bob died on June 3, 1979, the day before his sixty-eighth birthday. His complete service records can be found at www.hmsajaxatcrete.com.au