



# 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 Mechanic

Ship Served: HMS Ajax

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

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

Robert (Bob) John Sharplin was born on June 4, 1911. He worked as a butcher and errand boy before joining the Royal Navy at the age of eighteen. It was July 8, 1929 when he volunteered for twelve years of service (extended another ten years when war was declared).



Bob entered the Royal Navy rated Stoker 2<sup>nd</sup> Class and trained aboard HMS Pembroke in the Chatham Dockyards. 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 7<sup>th</sup> Cruiser Squadron involved in the Malta Convoys, the Battle of Matapan, the Battle of 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 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 on a total of seventeen ships until his retirement on February 12, 1952 at the age of forty one.



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

Bob died on June 3, 1979, the day before his sixty-eighth birthday.