

Town of Ajax Street Dedication



Street Name: **Chapman Drive**

Name of Veteran: Alec Ashley Chapman Aug. 19, 1914-Mar. 27, 1963

Rank: Lieutenant Commander

Ship Served: HMS Ajax

Date of Service on Ship: Sept. 1, 1939 to May 17, 1943

Year of Visit/Dedication: April 10, 2013

Veteran or Family Visit: Simon and Jilly Chapman

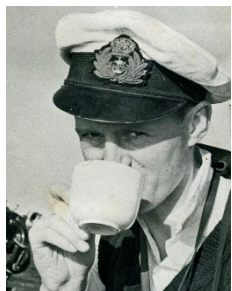
Veteran of the Battle of the River Plate: Yes Died at Battle: No

Alec Ashley Chapman was born on August 19, 1914 in Evesham, in the County of Worcestershire, England. His parents were William Henry Chapman and Lucilla May Ashley. He was educated as a boarder at Taunton Public School, like his father before him. In November 1932 Alec apprenticed as a civil engineer with the South Staffordshire Water Board and in November 1937 became an associate member of the Institute of Civil Engineers.



Alec married Emily Gray Spink on August 19, 1935 and together they had six children; four boys and two girls.

Alec enlisted with the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve in 1938, prior to the start of World War Two. His first ship was HMS Ajax, which he joined in September 1939. At the time of the Battle of the River Plate, Alec served as a Lieutenant.



Early in 1940, while the Ajax underwent repairs at the Chatham Dockyards, Alec was called back from leave to command a private paddle steamer and help in the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk. By August he was back on the Ajax as she sailed for the Mediterranean on convoy duty. While in the Mediterranean the Ajax was involved in several attacks and lost several men. On May 29, 1941 Alec was injured during the evacuation of troops from Crete. After his recovery Alec remained with HMS Ajax as she continued her convoy duties.

Alec was with HMS Ajax until 1943 when he joined the destroyer HMS Opportune. He later trained at various shore bases, such as HMS Vernon, Drake, Excellent and Victory specializing in torpedoes. Serving the destroyers HMS Myngs, and HMS Zephyr, most of his later service was spent in the arctic conditions of the Russian convoys with some time also stationed in the East Indies. In December 14, 1944 Alec was promoted to Acting Lieutenant Commander and confirmed in 1947. Alec left the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve in 1952 and became the Chief Civil Water Engineer for Leicester Water Board. In 1958 he was appointed Head of Medway Water Board.

Alec Chapman died on March 27, 1963 in a tragic road accident. He was only forty eight years old.