



HMS AJAX & RIVER PLATE VETERANS ASSOCIATION

Memorial Service

**TO COMMEMORATE THE 50TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE VISIT OF HMS
AJAX FRIGATE TO ONTARIO**

Held at

**The National Memorial Arboretum
Royal British Legion
National Remembrance Gardens**

Saturday 26th September 2026 12.30 p.m.

March on by Veterans

Welcome

Chairman HMS Ajax & River Plate Veterans Association - Nigel Masters

Introduction

HMS Ajax & River Plate Veterans Association - Malcolm Collis

Reading of Members' names who have Crossed the Bar since our last Service in 2025

Let us remember before God and commend to his sure keeping, those who have died for their country in peace and war, those who we knew and whose memory we treasure and all that have lived and died in the service of mankind.

THE EXHORTATION

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning
We will remember them

"We will remember them"

LAST POST

TWO MINUTE SILENCE

REVEILLE

PLACING OF WREATHS

*HMS Ajax & River Plate Veterans Association
Town of Ajax*

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

**Presentation of Town of Ajax Street Sign
By Mayor of Ajax, Shaun Collier**

Closing Remarks



**HMS Ajax & River Plate
Veterans Association**

www.hmsajax.org

HMS AJAX (Frigate) Pennant Number 114

Nec Quisquam Nisi Ajax – None but Ajax can Overcome Ajax



HMS Ajax 1963-85

Eighth in the Royal Navy to bear that name, HMS Ajax was a Leander Class Frigate built by Cammell Laird, Birkenhead. Ship Yard No. 1285. Laid Down 12th October 1959 as a Rothesay Class Frigate to be called HMS Fowey. However, she became instead, part of the first Batch of Leander Class Frigates and was re-named 'HMS Ajax' and was launched on 16th August 1962 by Lady Dreyer, wife of Vice Admiral Desmond Dreyer, who had been a Gunnery Officer Lieutenant-Commander in Ajax at the Battle of the River Plate.

Captain The Honourable D. P. Seely assumed command of Ajax and the 24th Escort Squadron and officiated at the Commissioning of HMS Ajax at Cammell Laird, Birkenhead on 11th December 1963. The Association held the 2023 Reunion Service at Cammell Laird to mark

this 50th Anniversary occasion.

Also at the Commissioning Ceremony was the Mayor of Ajax, Ontario, William Parish; the 10th Mayor, Shaun Collier, was present at the 50th Anniversary in Birkenhead.

Captain Seely commanded through the First Commission. On 4th December 1966 he succeeded to the baronetcy becoming the 4th Baron Lord Mottistone and retired from the service. He died on 24th November 2011.

HMS Ajax was nicknamed the "White Tornado" - taken from the advert for a cleaning product of the same name, which "cleans like a white tornado". The build cost was £4,800,000 [*Approx. £130 million today*] Ajax remained in service for seven Commissions. In August 1970 Lieutenant-Commander R S Blackman took command of HMS Ajax as she underwent her Ikara* conversion that would see her out of action until 5th December 1973. [**an Australian ship-launched anti-submarine missile, named after an Aboriginal word for "throwing stick"*]. Designed in the late '60's, the Ikara had a range of 19km and replaced the 4.5-inch gun turret.

Ajax undertook a World Deployment during 1975/76; visited the Town of Ajax on Lake Ontario, August 1976 and was given the Freedom of the Town; and was adopted by the City of Truro September 1977 as part of their centenary celebrations.

On 3rd December 1977 at Devonport, Ajax was rededicated at a service attended by Sir Desmond and Lady Dreyer, the Mayor of Ajax, Canada [*Bob Joel*], and the Mayor of the City of Truro [*Ena Coombe*].

Ajax was paid off at Devonport on 31st May 1985, decommissioned 10th June for disposal and, after a potential sale to the Thai Navy fell through, replaced HMS Sailsbury as a static training ship at Devonport. She continued in this role until replaced by a converted former dockyard fuel lighter in 1987 which took the Frigate's 'Ajax' name. Her fate was finally

sealed and Ajax was laid up at Devonport until she was towed to Millom in Cumbria for breaking. She did not, however, give up without a fight as on arrival, a few days later, off Duddon, she was unable to cross the bar and was towed instead to Barrow [*where the Cruiser Ajax had been built*] to be lightened and then await a suitable tide. It was late July 1988 before she finally arrived at Millom and on 3rd August 1988, breaking began.

Her anchor now lies as a monument outside the Royal Canadian Legion in Ajax and her bell hangs in the Ajax Town's Council Chambers.

BATTLE HONOURS H.M.S. AJAX 1767 to 1985

St Vincent 1780

Martinique 1780

Chesapeake 1781-82

St. Kitts 1782

Saintes 1782

Nile 1801

Calders 1805

Trafalgar 1805

San Sebastian 1813

Baltic 1854

Jutland 1916

River Plate 1939

Mediterranean 1940-42

Matapan 1941

Greece & Crete 1941

Malta Convoys 1940-42

Aegean 1944

'D' Day Landings 1944

South of France 1944

CAPTAINS OF HMS AJAX

David Peter Seely: 16th September 1963 to 9th July 1965

Allan Gordon Tait: 10th July 1965 to 11th December 1966

George Armand De Gavardie Kitchin: 12th December 1966 to 8th May 1968

David Hepworth: 9th May 1968 to 12th March 1969

Harry Robert Keate: 2nd September 1969 to September 1970

R. S. Blackman: 16th January 1971 to June 1973

Richard J. Bates: June 1973 to 5th December 1974

David John Mackenzie: 5th December 1974 to 28th June 1976

Robert Risley Squires: 15th July 1976 to 28th February 1977

Peter Cobb: 1st March 1977 to 27th December 1978

Michael John Fielding Rawlinson: 28th December 1978 to 7th July 1980

Timothy Michael Bevan: 7th July 1980 to 3rd April 1981

Jeremy Michael Porter: 4th April 1981 to May 1983

Peter Charles Abbott: May 1983 to December 1984

SPECIFICATIONS

Complement: 251 as built; 255 as an Escort Leader; 257 after Ikara refit

Displacement: 2450 tons standard, 2860 tons max

Dimensions: Length 372 feet overall [132m] Beam 40 feet 6 inches [12.3m] Draught 17 feet 6 inches [5.3m]

Main guns: As built: 2 x Vickers 4.5" in Mk6 turret (1 x 2) - Refitted: 2 x 40mm (2 x 1)

Secondary guns: As built: 2 x 40mm (2x1) - Refitted: None

Other weapons: As built: ASW: 1 x Mk10 Limbo AS mortar - Refitted: ASW: 1 x Mk10

Limbo AS mortar/1 x Ikara AS rocket: SAM: 8 x GWS22 SeaCat (2 x 4)

Countermeasures: Type 182 towed decoy/Corvus decoy launchers

Aircraft: 1 x Westland Wasp

Radar: As built: Type 903 tracking/Type 965 surveillance/Type 993 search/Type 978 navigation - Refitted: Type 903 tracking/Type 993 search/Type 978 navigation Sonar: Type 177 attack / Type 170B attack / Type 162 bottomed target / Type 199 VDS

Other: As built: N/A - Refitted: ADAWS5 Ikara fire control/GWS22 SeaCat fire control

Cossor 1010 IFF interrogator/SCOT communications

Engines: 2 x Babcock & Wilcox 550psi boilers: 2 x English Electric steam turbines

Power output: 30,000 shp: Shafts: 2 Speed: 30 knots [34.5mph]

Range: 5300nm [6100 miles] at 12 knots [13.8mph]

Fuel: 460 tons of oil



**HMS Ajax & River Plate
Veterans Association**



TORONTO HARBOUR AUGUST 1976



HMS AJAX F114