

DIARY of HMS AJAX F114 "White Tornado"

(Information collected from various sources and accuracy cannot be guaranteed)

1959

12 Oct Laid down. Originally laid down as a Rothesay Class frigate to be called HMS Fowey. Builder Cammell Laird - Birkenhead

1960 -

14 Mar Named HMS Ajax. Became part of the first Batch of Leander Class frigates. In build. Build cost £4,800,000.

1961

In build

1962

16 Aug Launched by Mrs Dreyer, later Lady Dreyer, (Second wife of Admiral Sir Desmond Parry Dreyer GCB CBE DSC who was Lieutenant Commander on HMS Ajax Cruiser at the Battle of the River Plate and a former member of the HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans Association)

1963

16 Sep Captain D P Seeley assumes command of Ajax and 24th Escort Squadron.

11 Dec Commissioning Ceremony.

12 Dec Accepted from the Builders.

14 Dec Salvage of S.S. Llusanes off the Casquets and tow to Cherbourg.

1964

Jan/Feb Testing and Tuning in English Channel.

25 Feb Stood by M.S. Solklint after collision in fog and escorted her to Cherbourg.

Mar/Apr Work up at Portland.

20 May Left Portsmouth.

23 May Visit Dartmouth for weekend.

26 May Sailed for Far East.

2 Jun Two days at Malta.

11 Jun One day in Aden.

17 Jun Crossing the Line Ceremony.

18 Jun One week in Gan (Maldives).

2 Jul Arrived Singapore. Squadron based at Singapore at the time of the Indonesian confrontation.

16 Jul Four days off North Borneo with Bulwark.

21 Jul FOTEX 1964 in the East Coast areas.

12 Aug On patrols from Tawau, North Borneo.

19 Sep Meet and escort Victorious after passage through the Lombok Straits.

1 Nov Ten days in Hong Kong. Exercise with the Thai Navy.

15 Nov Four days in Bangkok.

13 Dec Anniversary of the Battle of the River Plate in 1939, which was celebrated by opening fire on suspicious radar contacts detected while on patrol in the Malacca Straits.

21 Dec Two days in Port Swettenham.

24 Dec Captured seven sampans with twenty two infiltrators on board.

30 Dec Docking period in Singapore

1965

5 Feb Operational. Back on patrol. Hovercraft trials.

16 Feb	Exercises off Subic Bay with Eagle and Victorious.
23 Feb	Nine days in Hong Kong.
8 Mar	FOTEX 1965 off Butterworth.
16 Mar	Sea Inspection by FO2FEF [Flag Officer Second in Command Far East Fleet]
31 Mar	First phase of new commission joined.
12 Apr	Five days in Karatsu, Japan.
18 Apr	Five days in Inchon, South Korea.
27 Apr	Five days in Hong Kong, including FO2FEF's Harbour Inspection.
May	Self Maintenance in Singapore.
12 Jun	Exercise WINDY WEATHER with Bulwark and Albion off Trengannu.
22 Jun	Seven days in Hong Kong.
3 Jul	Return to Singapore for main party of new commission.
10 Jul	Captain A G Tait assumes command of Ajax and Second Destroyer Squadron Far East Fleet.
14 Jul	Recommissioning Ceremony.
Oct	Maintenance period until 1966
1966	
6 Feb	Maintenance period completed.
12 Dec	Captain G A de G Kitchen assumes command of Ajax and Second Destroyer Squadron Far East Fleet
Dec	Ajax re-commissioned and worked up at Singapore.
1967	
Mar	Returned to Chatham
Apr	Sailed to Hong Kong via Philippines followed by visits to Japan, Kobe, Etajima, Moji, Otaru, and Hakodate. Following the trip to Japan Ajax became the guardship for Hong Kong before returning to Singapore for a maintenance period, and guardship duty
Aug	Returned to Hong Kong mid-August
Oct	Returned to Singapore to join the Aden task force 318 covering the withdrawal of the British personnel during Operation Magister
5 Nov	On passage to Aden ship diverted to search for the crew of a Shackleton plane which had come down west of Sumatra. Three survivors of the crew of eleven rescued.
1968	
Jan	Mombasa (Kenya) and Beira (Mozambique) Patrol covering the withdrawal of British forces from operations off Aden.
Jan/Feb	passage home via Simons Town (South Africa), St Helena and Gibraltar
7 Mar	Arrived Portsmouth
Mar to Jul	Chatham for 4 month refit
9 May	Captain D Hepworth assumes command of Ajax half-way through her refit at Chatham.
2 Aug	Recommissioned for her fourth commission. The band of HMS Ganges attended and Sir Desmond and Lady Dreyer were present.
1969	
2 Sep	Captain H R Keate assumes command of Ajax in Far East
Nov	Ajax returns to Chatham for refit
Dec	Exercises off Portsmouth and South Wales
1970	
Jan	Ajax becomes Gibraltar guard ship, a required deployment at that time due to the tense fears of invasion by General Franco.

Jan	Exercises in the Mediterranean
May	Return to Chatham and sails for Liverpool to attend the anniversary celebrations of the end of the Battle of the Atlantic.
May	Present at the Queen's visit to Port Talbot, to open the deep-water oil terminal
May	Clyde for exercises in the area and off Northern Ireland (Operations Oceanex and Opeval, in company with submarines)
Jun	Hebrides and visited Stornoway in June. The Chief Scout, Sir Charles Maclean and Lady Maclean visited the ship.
Jun	Hull for 'Meet the Navy' week
12 Jun	Sailed for Kiel for 'International Kieler Woche' (annual sailing event held in Germany)
16 Aug	Lieutenant-Commander R S Blackman took command of HMS Ajax as she underwent her Ikara conversion.
Sep	Devonport Ikara Conversion. Ikara was a ship-launched anti-submarine missile, named after an Australian Aboriginal word for "throwing stick". At a cost of £5 million per ship, the Ikara conversion programme for the Leander class frigates commenced in 1970 and took until 1978 to be completed. Ajax was one of the first conversions to start in September 1970 at Devonport and would not be completed until February 1974. The Ikara anti-submarine missile system replaced the 4.5-inch gun turret. A pair of quadruple GWS22 SeaCat launchers were fitted aft while the two Bofors guns were retained but moved forward to abreast the ship's mainmast. The Limbo anti-submarine mortar and Wasp helicopter was retained. The long-range Type 965 radar was removed, with improved navigation and target indicating radars fitted, and the ADAWS 5 computer aided combat direction system added to direct Ikara operations, while the Type 199 VDS was restored.
1970	Ikara Conversion
1972	Ikara Conversion
1973	Ikara Conversion
Jun	Captain R J Bates took over command of Ajax
5 Dec	Recommissioned at Devonport
1974	
Aug	One of the ships involved in the evacuation of the refugees from Cyprus following Turkish invasion.
3 to 10 Aug	Guardship for Cowes Week.
Sep	Escorted flotilla of lifeboats from Poole to Portsmouth for the RNLI celebrations.
Sep	Sailed back to Cyprus and exercises followed, visiting Malta and Gibraltar.
27 Sep	Arrived back at Devonport
Early Dec	At Amsterdam
5 Dec	Captain D J MacKenzie assumed command of Ajax and the 8th Frigate Squadron.
1975	
Early '75	Ajax took part in exercises in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.
22 Jul	HMS Ajax left Devonport to sail round the world as a unit of the Group 3 Deployment. The squadron (HM Ships Ajax, Berwick, Llandaff, Plymouth, Rothesay and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries Tidespring, Gold Rover and Tarbatness) was led by Rear-Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse, with his flag in HMS Glamorgan. Group 3 headed towards the Mediterranean, then made the first transit of the Suez Canal by HM ships since the 1967 Middle East War. After a spell in the Indian Ocean carrying out exercises with Australian and American ships, they visited Gibraltar, Malta, Port Said, Port Sudan and Djibouti. The Group then split up for visits to Bombay and Madras (HMS Ajax, Berwick and Llandaff, and RFA Gold Rover to

Madras). Off the west coast of Malaysia the complete Group carried out weapon training in conjunction with the Malaysian and Australian Air Forces and Malaysian fast patrol boats.

On to Singapore for the last planned meeting of the whole Group until February 1976. HMS Ajax led six ships to Hong Kong. On the return passage to Singapore HMS Ajax and Rothesay were both slightly damaged when they met up with a school of whales. After leaving Singapore, HMS Ajax, Berwick, Plymouth, Rothesay, Tidespring and Tarbatness exercised with the Royal Australian Navy in the South China Sea, following which the whole Group headed for the Torres Strait, steered south between Australia and the Great Barrier Reef and 1,809 miles later, arrived at Sydney for a ten-day visit.

Dec After Christmas the Group sailed for Pearl Harbour then three days later for the west coast of America. However, Ajax, did not make the trip to America as she was detained for repairs after a serious fire had damaged her main switchboard. She rejoined the Group later but missed a visit to San Francisco, and the exercise 'Valiant Heritage'.

1976

16 Feb Ajax celebrated the 1,000th deck landing of the Wasp helicopter

14 Apr Ajax berthed at Devonport

28 June Captain Mackenzie left Ajax

15 Jul Captain R R Squires assumes command of Ajax and the 8th Frigate Squadron.

Aug Ajax sails for Canada visiting St John's, Newfoundland, Halifax and Ottawa.

25 Aug Ajax berths at Oshawa, the port on Lake Ontario for the town of Ajax, named after the cruiser of the Battle of the River Plate fame. The Frigate HMS Ajax receives the Freedom of the City and the ship's company march through the streets with fixed bayonets.

Sep During the passage home Ajax took part in NATO exercises with ships from Canada, America, Portugal, Holland, France, Germany and Norway.

25 Sep Arrived back at Devonport.

Sep/Oct Maintenance period followed by visits to the Clyde and Dundee.

29 Nov Ajax began a Deep Water Fish Patrol.

1977

Jan Ajax took part in various exercises, including 'Locked Gate' and 'Spring Train'.

7 Jan Captain Squires appointed an Aide-de-Camp to the Queen.

28 Feb Captain Squires leaves Ajax.

1 Mar Captain P Cobb assumes command of Ajax and 8th Frigate Squadron.

May to Dec Refit Devonport

Sep Adopted by the City of Truro at the Centenary Celebrations

3 Dec Ajax rededicated at a service attended by Sir Desmond and Lady Dreyer, and the Mayors of Ajax, Canada, and the City of Truro.

1978

Apr Ajax went to the assistance of an Indian merchant vessel, the State of Kerala, near Falmouth. She had defective steering and was dragging her anchor. A messenger line was passed but before the tow could be passed the Kerala surged ahead towing her anchor. The Ajax, also dragging her anchor, was unable to move seaward without risking a collision but eventually the Kerala passed clear and the Ajax, then within a few cables off shore, was able to move into deeper waters.

28 Dec Captain M J Fielding assumes command of Ajax and 8th Frigate Squadron

1979

The ship took part in exercises in the South Atlantic, and showed the flag at Agadir, Morocco.

Aug Ajax visited the Clyde area for exercises
 Oct/Nov In company with HMS Scylla visited the ports of Haifa and Toulon during a Mediterranean deployment. The City of Portsmouth being twinned with both these ports, Ajax acted as messenger and carried letters containing the City's official greetings for presentation to the Mayors of Haifa and Toulon. The ship also called at the Greek islands of Santorini and Patras (Santorini surrendered to the cruiser Ajax in October 1944)
 13 Dec Ajax arrived back at Portsmouth 13 December 1979 with battle ensigns flying to mark the 40th anniversary of the Battle of the River Plate.
 17 Dec Captain Rawlinson presented the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth with a gift from Haifa.

1980

Jan Captain and Mrs Rawlinson visited 4th Thames Ditton (Ajax) Sea Scout Group.
 Early Feb The ship sailed from Devonport for the Clyde and visited Newcastle at the end of February.
 Apr After main leave she sailed for Liverpool at the end of April, with three Ajax Venture Scouts on board, for a week.
 May Ajax was in Scottish waters and visited Aberdeen. From Aberdeen, in company with HMS Active and RFA Green Rover, she sailed for the Baltic and visited Karlskrona and Stockholm followed by a visit by Ajax and Green Rover to Copenhagen. Karlskrona was celebrating its 300th anniversary as a city. HMS Ajax then spent a day at the naval cemetery at Hano Island and Captain Rawlinson presented copper plaques from HMS Victory to commemorate the English sailors of the Napoleonic Wars who are buried there. One hundred of the ship's company put the cemetery into good order, after which a service of remembrance was held. The ship's company was entertained at a barbecue and at sunset the Ajax weighed anchor and did a steam-past the harbour. Two days later all three ships entered Stockholm and immediately the ships' companies were involved in a programme of tours, visits and sports; the ships had about 6000 visitors. Captain Rawlinson had the honour of calling on King Carl Gustav XV1. Ajax and the Green Rover proceeded to Copenhagen.
 May After the Baltic deployment Ajax returned to Devonport, where three more Ajax Venture Scouts joined her for a week.
 7 Jul Captain T M Bevan assumes command of Ajax and the 8th Frigate Squadron.
 Mid-Aug Refit at Gibraltar. Captain and ship's company transfer to HMS Ariadne as Leader of the 8th Frigate Squadron.

1981

4 Apr Following refit at Gibraltar Captain J M Porter assumed command of HMS Ajax and the First Frigate Squadron (comprising eight Leander Ikara class frigates - HM ships Ajax, Arethusa, Aurora, Dido, Euryalus, Galatea, Leander and Naiad).
 End Apr Sea acceptance trials.
 15 May Arrived back at Devonport
 16 May Devonport. Re-dedication service held.
 27 Aug Present at Devonport's Navy days.
 Sep Sea Training after refits at Portland after which the ship returned to Devonport
 Year end Ajax visited Hamburg and Aberporth followed by an assisted maintenance period, and Christmas leave.

1982

Early year Ajax visited Stavanger, after training exercises, followed by joint maritime exercise in Scottish waters.
 Mar Copenhagen
 Apr Sea training which lasted until Easter. Ship's company was recalled from leave and preparations made to sail.

20 Apr Sailed to relieve a Frigate required to take part in the Falklands Operation. Ajax then proceeded to Augusta (Scilly), Port Said, through the Suez Canal, and Djibouti. Then on Gulf Patrol with HMS Amazon until May

10 May Sailed for Singapore in company with the Amazon and RFA Gold Rover. Took part in Exercise Starfish in conjunction with the New Zealand, Australian and Malaysian Navies.

May or Jun Ajax towed into Singapore the merchant ship 'Singapore Island' which was in trouble – said to be one of the longest tows in naval history!

29 Jun Joined ships of the US Navy for Operation Gunzo.

29 Jul Returned to Devonport and summer leave. Following a maintenance period and training a Submarine Warfare Training exercise at Faslane followed

25 Oct Ajax sailed for Gibraltar, docking for essential repairs.

18 Dec Left Gibraltar for Devonport for Christmas leave.

1983

May Captain P C Abbott assumes command of Ajax and the First Frigate Squadron.

1984

Ajax completed a four-month deployment around the Falklands as part of the South Atlantic Protection Force becoming the first Ikara Leander to deploy to the South Atlantic. During the patrol she underwent a short assisted maintenance period alongside the RFA repair ship Diligence.

Late 84 Announced that Ajax would pay-off for disposal in 1985.

Dec Captain J F S Trinder assumes command of Ajax and the First Frigate Squadron.

1985

Apr/May Ajax acted as escort to the Royal Yacht Britannia on the tour of Italy, including Venice, undertaken by the Prince and Princess of Wales.

May A final Anti-Submarine Warfare exercise in the North Atlantic.

31 May Ajax paid off at Devonport.

10 Jun Decommissioned for disposal

Jun Ajax was inspected by representatives of the Thai Navy with a view to purchase but they decided that the ship was not in good enough condition and the sale fell through.

Jun Ajax allocated to the role of static training ship at Devonport to replace the older Type 61 frigate Salisbury which was subsequently sunk as a target on 30th September that year. Ajax was then used for the training of seamen in the handling of RAS gear and other deck equipment.

1986

Ajax continues as a training ship

1987

Ajax continued as a training ship until she was replaced by a converted former dockyard fuel lighter in 1987 which took the frigate's name.

8 Nov The port anchor of HMS Ajax was unveiled and dedicated in the memorial garden outside the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 322 Headquarters on Hunt Street, Ajax, Ontario.

The anchor was obtained for the Town of Ajax by the Commanding Officer of HMS Raleigh and transported to Canada by HMS Fife and presented to Mayor Bill McLean.

Two granite cairns in the memorial garden read:
In Memory of Those Who Made the Supreme Sacrifice on Behalf of Freedom. 1914 -1918 1939 – 1945 Korea 'Lest We Forget'
This Cairn is Dedicated by the Citizens of the Town of Ajax in Memory of All who

Served on HMS Ajax

The ship's Bell was also presented to the Town and hangs in the Council Chambers and is rung to commence every Council Session. Inside the Bell is inscribed the names of many children christened on board the ship.

1988

Feb

Ajax had been laid up at Devonport until she was towed to Millom in Cumbria for breaking. Although she arrived off the Duddon only a few days later, the frigate was unable to cross the bar and was towed to Barrow for lightening and to await a suitable tide.

Late Jul

Ajax finally arrived at Millom in late July 1988 for breaking.