

The Razza

WHANGAMATA RSA NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 94
AUGUST /
SEPTEMBER 2022

“If you see someone without a smile - give them one of yours”



PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Geoff March

Spring already, hopefully the weather will be kind to us and we will see a lot more sun, we have been busy in the last month with funerals and fun activities. We held a memorial for Fred Barclay a well-respected Veteran, and also Brant Robinson, New Zealand's last Crete Veteran, Brant passed away at an amazing 104 years young, a character and known by many.

We are in a new membership year, from 1st July 2022, so if you haven't repaid your annual membership you will not be financial. Being financial gives you in house benefits with discounts on drinks and ensures you are kept up to date on RSA happenings and events.

Combined Services Day, yippee, we were finally able to hold our special day first time since 2019, we were extremely pleased with the growing numbers who attend these each time, we had a lot more new people turn up, unfortunately there were still those who couldn't attend due to illness etc, one of the groups were the Auckland Chapter of the Patriots, luckily we were well supported by the Hauraki Chapter, our members always enjoy mixing and mingling with them. The crowd of over 160 were treated to Beach Hop vehicles on display as they arrived and two pipers who also did a couple of entertainment numbers. For the first time for awhile we had a live bugler, Thank you Adrian.

There were three Birthdays Kerry Bain, Ying Wenzlick and Cath Stolte. I must apologise to Ying, we didn't get her and her team out to congratulate them on the AMAZING meal, it would have been a chance to publicly wish her happy birthday as well. Our Guests were RSA District President Tony Hill and Vice President Allan Plaistead, plus our local MP Scott Simpson who is always very supportive. A good event, that was enjoyed by all who attended, wait till next year.

Our AGM is coming up on Sunday 25th September at 1100 hours, we will arrange for the biographies of those who have put their names forward to join the next committee to be available, we have more names than needed so we will have an election. This is a chance to find out how we are doing and have your say

Thank you all for your positive and ongoing support, our RSA is doing better in all areas, but we will be a while before we can say we have recovered from Covid 19. Your support is greatly appreciated and is helping us track in the right direction. We have quite a bit of entertainment coming up with a lot of new acts to watch out for, now we are building up towards Beach Hop, and then Christmas, which is not long away now.

As I have said if you have been somewhere and seen something that you think we could make part of our program or activities and events, please let us know, we will try and see if it works for us.

Next couple months we still have a lot of events and activities on so keep an eye on our RSA Website, Facebook page Noticeboards and What's On Board in the front entrance foyer, let family and friends know what is on.

SUPPORT HUB

We would like to offer our Veterans and Members a unique opportunity to get support...

Friday 14th October between 2pm and 4pm

PEDICARE SERVICES
Local Professional Foot Care

BY REGISTERED NURSE

Alison Walkington

PHONE **027 66 32 32 0**

Friday 14th October | 2pm till 4pm

WHANGAMATA RSA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday 25th September 2022 at 11am

Voting to take place between
9am and 6pm

Saturday 24th September

Absentee votes available from
Tuesday 20th September

K. Bain Secretary/Manager



UPDATE CONTACT DETAILS

Not getting emails? Change your address?

**If any of your details need to be updated
email rsamanager@outlook.com
put "Contact Details" in the subject line**

WHAT'S ON

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

SUNDAY 4 - 12PM
COUNTRY MUSIC CLUB

SUNDAY 11 - 4PM
KEVIN GREAVES

SUNDAY 18 - 4PM
MY PENNYWORTH

SATURDAY 24
VOTING DAY

SUNDAY 25 - 11AM
AGM

SUNDAY 2 - 12PM
COUNTRY MUSIC CLUB

SUNDAY 9 - 4PM
KEVIN GREAVES

SUNDAY 16 - 4PM
MY PENNYWORTH



HOUSEIE

**TUESDAY
7PM**

**THURSDAY
4PM**



Friday **QUIZ
NIGHT**
6.30pm

6.30pm start (after Jokers Wild)
Lots of Fun - Test your Trivial Knowledge
Teams of up to six players - \$2/person
Come and join in - All Welcome!

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KIDS CLUB

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KIDS CLUB
MEMBERS

OUR KIDS CLUB MEMBERS HAVE SHARED
WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN UP TO.

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING THAT YOU
WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH US?

ART, SOMETHING FUN, HOLIDAYS,
SPORTS, SCHOOL, ACHIEVEMENTS?...

DRAW NIGHTS

**Raffles
Jokers Wild
Member Draws**

Wednesday, Friday & Saturday

from 5.15pm

rest well

BRANT ROBINSON

The one veteran alive who fought on the island of Crete in May 1941 has died on August 7, 2022. Brant Robinson would have celebrated his 105th birthday on the 21st January 2023, but he slipped away peacefully after making sure he had his red wine at Happy Hour and his tea at Moana House.

What a life! He has really enjoyed the last 7 years at Moana House in Whangamata. He did enjoy his time there, loved the meals and relished the lolly prizes he won at Housie. Thanks so much go to Moana House staff. Also how good was it from the organisers that he and fellow Moana House veteran, Roy Brooks, could take part in this year's Anzac parade by being in their own "bubble" of the Moana House van.

Earlier, Brant loved his van rides, usually driven by Robbie Harwood, and so it was appropriate that Robbie officiated at the private family memorial for Brant.

Born Cyril Henry Brant on January 21, 1918, to a minister's family life where he was the first of 6 sons, he lived in a pretty strict household with a minister father and a tartar mother.

Then war took him on a new journey: he was part of the advance party, leaving NZ in 1939. The journey took them to Cairo and to Crete ; but Brant's war experience was brought to a halt on Crete, where he was taken prisoner and spent much of the next 4 years as a POW.

The worst thing he remembered was not knowing how long they would be incarcerated!

Paul London, a former president of the New Zealand Battle of Crete Association, believes that Brant Robinson was the last Kiwi veteran of the Battle of Crete and "in all probability, he may well be the world's last soldier to have fought in the battle".

Brant will be remembered by his son, John; daughter in law, Lynne; two sons, Krister (and Lucy) and Cam. As a great grandfather, he had a loving relationship with two beautiful great grandchildren, Zara and Jake, who engaged with him with enormous love.

Rest well Brant; you deserve it.

- Supplied by Lynne Robinson



WOMENS SECTION REPORT

Lyn Ward – President

We held our AGM on Tuesday 2nd August. There was no change to the committee other than Bea Campbell not standing again.

Patron: Millie Hawtin, **President:** Lyn Ward,
Vice President: Sharyn Yearbury, **Secretary:** Jackie Moore
Treasurer: Joyce Deeming, **Committee:** Gay Donaldson,
Anne Hyde, Karyn Jones, Val Kahui, Stella Leach

Our guests were Judith Steele, Women's Section District President and Geoff March, RSA President. They each gave the meeting an update on where the District is heading and our RSA.

It was with much pleasure that three life memberships were awarded to three of our members who have worked and supported the section tirelessly. The three recipients were Jocelyn Wright, Bea Campbell, and Val Kahui. Unfortunately, Val was unable to attend the meeting as she was unwell. Judith presented Jocelyn and Bea with their life membership badges and Geoff presented their certificates.

JOCELYN WRIGHT

Jocelyn joined the Whangamata women's section in February 2003. She went onto the committee in 2004 and did three or four years. Jocelyn was also welfare officer for a little while. She has helped every ANZAC Day with the making of sandwiches that she has been able to and in the last four or five years she has taken on the responsibility of preparing our afternoon teas at our meetings.

BEA CAMPBELL

Bea joined the Whangamata women's section in June 2010. She has been on the committee for ten years only stepping down this year. Bea has been a big part of the catering team for funerals, welfare bowls and ANZAC Days. She sold raffle tickets for the women's section raffles at our monthly meetings.

VAL KAHUI

Val also joined the Whangamata women's section in June 2010. She has been on the committee for ten years and held the position of vice president for 3 years. Val has also been part of the catering team for funerals, welfare bowls and ANZAC Days. Val sold raffle tickets for the welfare raffle run each month at our meetings.

The members agreed that our subs would stay the same at \$10 for the next financial year, catering charge would also stay at \$10 per person and our annual donations to Whangamata Fire Service, Whangamata St Johns and the Westpac Helicopter Trust would be \$250.00 this year.

Our normal monthly meeting followed the AGM. A lovely afternoon tea provided by the committee was enjoyed by all.

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday 6th September at 1.30pm. I look forward to seeing as many of our members there and any new members will be welcome.





back after two years postponed
COMBINED SERVICES DAY

Finally after such a long break we were able to hold our much looked forward to Combined Services Day, it was certainly worth the wait, 160 plus turned up from all around, this year we were visited by the South Auckland Ex Service Women's Association, and the Hauraki Chapter of the Patriots.

Guests arriving were greeted by a line up of Beach Hop vehicles and two Bagpipers.

Our guests were RSA District President Tony Hill, Vice President Allan Plaisted, MP Scott Simpson and members from RSAs around our District.

Service flags were paraded in and blessed by our Padre, Terri Sorenson, followed by the Last Post played by local bugler Adrian Bottling and reciting of the ODE and Reveille.

Tony and Scott addressed us, and Tony presented two Defence Medals. We were then gifted an amazing table from the Air Force Association, an impressive display of Air Force ranks, insignia and badges, worth a look next time you visit our RSA.

Three Ladies had their birthday's Kerry Bain, Cath Stolte and Ying Wenzlick, they were acknowledged, plus President Geoff presented Mike Judd a Certificate of Appreciation for his years of volunteer help.

A buffet lunch was served to the delight of many, Ying's never fails to deliver a high quality menu, followed by entertainment by Neville Ormsby aka 'Ebonyvory'

Another amazing day, we look forward to next year, thank you to all who attended you made the day special.









EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NOMINEES



John Aislabe

I have been a member of Whangamata RSA since 2003 and I have served fourteen years on the Executive Committee.

I have organised the Raffles and the Joker's Wild for over seven years and have organised the Friday Night Quiz and the Quiz Roster for over ten years.

I enjoy my role as an Executive Committee Member and are always willing to help. If re-elected I will continue to support the Whangamata RSA and its Members in any way I can.



Jennie Black

Some may know me as the Editor/Owner of the Whangamata News. I've lived here in Whangamata for more than 11 years and in that time the RSA has been a large part of my social life. I've been in media all my working life, and with that comes many challenges and opportunities, which I thoroughly enjoy every task thrown at me or initiatives of my own making!

I'm also still on the Committee of the Enterprise Whangamata Business Association, so I'm terrific at coordinating events - like the Street Fling Party,

& band performances, Market Days, and the Nostalgia Fair event at Beach Hop. My passions are all things outdoors including fishing, art, design and calligraphy.

Being on the committee in the last year I have more than doubled prizes to Welfare bowls from local business, raising I believe \$6k, donated new cornholing and tumbling tower games to the club for all members and local children to enjoy, found new music entertainment recently and have upgraded the smoking area with new plant stands, new stools and art with no cost to the RSA. I have also been part of finding a new and local sculptor to assist the committee to recreate our Remembrance Wall bringing it into the modern era and hope to be a part of its completion in the coming year.

Keeping our RSA headed in a continued positive direction and holding financial



Wayne Dick

I was a member on the Executive committee during the 2021/2022 period. During this term I attended most committee meetings, assisted with working bees, hall set up for functions, and sold raffle tickets.

My main interest is finance. I played a role in getting accurate timely information about the club's finances for monthly Executive meetings. We have moved on from Covid so we need a committee to bring vitality to the club and improve its financial stability whilst preserving its role of providing support for veterans.



Colin Fairweather

My wife Claire and I came to New Zealand in 2009 from the UK for me to work with Auckland District Health Board, became New Zealand Citizens in 2015. Moving permanently to Whangamata in 2019.

My work experience is in Procurement and Supply Chain across many industries. I was a member of the New Zealand government Procurement Technical Advisory Group (TAG), and worked in the private tertiary education sector. I recently completed a role with RNZAF and am

Having worked with the UK MOD and New Zealand Defence force along with supply into the military environment I have experience of the Military environment and the needs of the personnel.

As I approach the end of my career, I would offer my commercial and education experience to my local RSA in particular advice to support the transition from military to civilian employment and provide commercial input into general business decisions and look forward to the opportunity to get more involved with the RSA



Puti Gage

Hi all, I have been a long time resident of Whangamata for around 30 odd years

Although I wasn't born here I take a lot of pride in my community.

I served on the Whangamata coast guard as a Volunteer Radio Operator for 5 years, I am a Honorary Fisheries Officer and love everything about the Ocean.

I have been on numerous Committees in the past President of the Citizens club and just recently became President of the RSA fishing adjunct. My partner Wayne and myself are associate members of the RSA and have been for a number of years.

I am a partner, Mother, Grandmother and Great Grandmother and if elected bring to the committee a fresh Perspective and an understanding of all age groups.



Craig Kahui

I am an Associate Member and have been a member of Whangamata RSA since 2010 when I re-joined following a brief lapse in membership whilst I was overseas. I have been on the Executive Committee for the past seven years, assist with Raffles and Joker's Wild, along with my wife Val.

I supervise the conditions of the RSA grounds, assist with the setting up for functions/funerals etc. and help with all the working bees and all five District Meetings, often driving the other committee members in the van.

I was a Chef for the RSA in the early 2000s and still make myself available to help with the Women's Section Xmas Function, 8 Ball Barbucos and Ham Tournaments. I enjoy my position on the Executive Committee and wish to carry on serving if I am re-elected.



Barry King

I am standing for my second term on the committee and if re-elected wish to continue assisting with my mix of financial and leadership skills along with common sense life skills to assist taking the club into the future.

I moved permanently to Whangamata from Wellington (Hutt Valley) with my wife Sharon 7 years ago after holidaying here for the previous 10 years.

After leaving Dannevirke High School I ran away up from Ordinary Rating to Petty Officer and then on to Commissioned Officer retiring as a Lieutenant. I served on most of our NZ Navy ships during that time and some of the highlights being a tour of duty posted to Her Majesty's Yacht Britannia for the Queen's Silver Jubilee world tour in 1977, along with a short posting to an Australian Navy submarine.

After retiring from the Navy I became an accountant and setup my own practice in 1985. During that time I had an active involvement and consulting role in many successful client businesses most of which still exist today. At our peak we had 1500 clients situated all around the world. Sharon and I sold the accounting practice in 2014 after 30 years and moved to Whangamata to "retire". Since that time, I have been actively involved in Whangamata Volunteer Coastguard, serving on the committee, as Training Officer and Tutor and hopefully teaching some of the skills I acquired in the Navy to our town's committed volunteers. I hold a Certificate in Adult Education which is a requirement to become a Coastguard Tutor.

Currently I am employed by the Waikato Regional Council as a part time operational Maritime Officer (Deputy Harbour Master) for the Coromandel area and again teaching maritime skills to new Harbour Masters in the region. My hobbies include boating, fishing and a game of golf when I can.



Pam Murray

I have lived in Whangamata since 1983. I am recently widowed.

I have worked in St Johns Whangamata for 10 ½ years, Moana House as a Night Carer for 14 years. I love working and helping the elderly making sure life is okay for them.

I am currently doing my training to become a Local Support Advisor. I have been on the Executive Committee now for three terms and I would love to serve again this year.



trip to Katikati for a
MURDER MYSTERY

A group of our local RSA members traveled to Katikati for a Murder Mystery fund raiser evening.

They had a fabulous night full of antics and laughter. The theme was 1920s. The murder plot was jealousy over the family gems.



Rick and the Biker

Rick is sitting at the counter in a roadside bar in Austin staring at his drink when a very large and mean-looking biker is suddenly standing right next to him. The biker grabs Rick's, as yet, untouched drink and swallows it in one gulp.

"That tasted real good boy," said the biker, punching Rick on the shoulder. "So, what are you going do about it?"

Well, Rick just bursts into tears.

"Oh, man-up," says the biker. "I can't stand seeing a man crying. What's your problem, buddy?"

"This is the worst day of my life," Rick responds. "I'm a complete failure. I missed my sales targets again this month and I got fired. When I left the office, I discovered that my car had been stolen from the parking lot and I don't have any insurance. I left my wallet in the cab I had to take to get home. When I got home, my dog bit me."

The biker's attitude towards Rick softened a little.

"I came into this bar to work up enough courage to end it all," Rick continued. "I bought my drink and dropped a Strychnine capsule into it. The capsule has just fully dissolved when you showed up and swallowed the whole damn drink in one gulp."

Rick paused momentarily and then said, "Anyway, enough about me. How's your day going?"

INDOOR BOWLS

On Tuesday 23rd August we welcomed members of the Waihi Beach RSA Indoor Bowls Club who came to join us for a day of bowls.

The 10 teams were made up of a mixture of members from Waihi Beach and Whangamata. The format was 3 games in the morning and 2 in the afternoon.

We all enjoyed a lovely lunch at Yings Restaurant for the lunch break.

At the end of the play the winning team was Ann Coster, Brian Wyatt and Barbara Mathieson who topped the day with 5 wins. Runners-up were Jim Foley, Keven Meanie (Waihi Beach RSA) and George McCartney who had 3 wins.

The raffle draws were won by Cynthia Colville and Ann Coster.

An enjoyable day was held by all with much friendly rivalry and laughter throughout the day.

We finished the day with a delicious afternoon tea and prize giving. Sadly, Waihi Beach RSA didn't take home many prizes but enjoyed the fellowship of the day.

We hope that we can make this an annual event.



Winners: Barbara Mathieson, Ann Coster, Brian Wyatt.



Runners Up: Jim Foley, Keven Meanie and George McCartney.

8 BALL

GRAHAM DOWLING MEMORIAL

JP was the winner of the Graham Dowling memorial trophy this year taking home \$100 cash and the trophy. We had a great night and a drink remembering our friend Graham.



TRADIES TOURNAMENT

This years Tradies saw a shared winner 1st equal Wade Booth and Matty Aro splitting 1st and second prize money with JB ad Warren. 3rd place was Ken Stone and Noel. Ronnie and Jason who come across from Waihi each year to play took out 4th prize.

Thank you to our our players for committing to our five week tournament. A big thanks goes out to our sponcers, Mark Speirs Roofing, Super Liquor, New World, Te Ra Charters, the Whangamata 8 Ball Club and the RSA itself.

Everyone had a great time and enjoyed their games each week. Plenty of laughs and cheers. We look forward to the next one.



SNOOKER

Golden Oldies Practice Round

12th July 2022 Players: 6
Winner: Ying's @ the RSA - Chips, 5 Wins, 288 Points
Runner Up: Meat at the Beach - Graham W,
4 Wins, 277 Points
Raffle: Meat at the Beach - No. 2, Grant

19th July 2022 Players: 9
Highest Break: Rex 18
Winner: Ying's @ the RSA - Rex, 4 Wins, 277 Points
Runner Up: Meat at the Beach - John N,
3 Wins, 265 Points
Raffle: Meat at the Beach - No. 12, Bob S.

26th July 2022 Players: 12
Highest Break: Graham W. 17
Winner: Meat at the Beach - Ray;
4 Wins, 217 Points
Raffle: Meat at the Beach - No. 4 Mike

2nd August 2022
Winner: Ying's @ the RSA - Rex; 3 Wins 245 Points
Runner Up: Meat at the Beach - Stephen;
3 Wins, 210 Points
Raffle: Meat at the Beach - No. 10 Bill S.

9th August 2022 Players: 10
Winner: Bill S; 4 Wins, 202 Points
Runner Up: Mike J; 3 Wins, 195 Points
Raffle: No. 7 - Graham W.

16th August 2022 Players: 13
Winner: Graham W; 4 Wins, 268 Points
Runner Up: Mike Ju; 3 Wins, 230 Points
Raffle: No. 6, Bob S.

30th August Players: 11
Highest Break: John, 15
Winner: Ying's @ the RSA - Ray,
4 Wins, 173 Points
Runner Up: Meat at the Beach - Bob S.
3 Wins, 207 Points
Raffle: Meat at the Beach - No. 10 Jack

Golden Oldies Tournament

27th July 2022
Home Game
Played: Te Aroha
Won: 12 - 4

Thursday Snooker

11th August 2022
Winner: Paula, 5 Wins, 279 Points
Runner Up: Alex, 3 Wins, 316 Points
Hi Break: Gavin, 48 Points
Sponsor's Prize: Grant
Raffle Winner: #9, Chips

18th August 2022
Winner: Mike Judd, 4 Wins
Runner Up: Colin, 3 Wins
Hi Break: Gavin, 32
Sponsor's Prize: Paula

I wanted to be nice so I meowed back at my cat. Not sure of what I said, but she's been staring at me like:



The neighbors just got a new refrigerator.



Look at the size of that box!

THE CREATIVE CORNER

Wool Felted Mice created by local creative fibre artist Cherry Estcourt

Artists and Crafters

Have you made something you would like to share.

Let us know and you can be featured here...



A big thank you to Colin and the rest of the guys from Ventia who install the street signs around Whangamata including our Poppy Signs.



We have seven signs. Tamaki Rd, Achilles Ave, Bellona Rd, Leander Rd, Philomel Rd, Exeter and Ajax Rd.

HMS Ajax was a Leander-class light cruiser which served with the Royal Navy during World War II. She became famous for her part in the Battle of the River Plate, the Battle of Crete, the Battle of Malta and as a supply escort in the siege of Tobruk. This ship was the eighth in the Royal Navy to bear the name. In February 1942, she was adopted by the civil community of Halifax.

Ajax was built at Vickers' shipyard, in Barrow-in-Furness, England. She was laid down on 7 February 1933, launched on 1 March 1934 and completed on 12 April 1935. She was commissioned for service on the North America and West Indies Station, but after working up in May 1935, she was deployed instead to the Mediterranean on detached service after the Abyssinian crisis. This lasted until November when she finally joined her squadron in Bermuda. Until 1937 she undertook exercises and visits to ports in the Americas. At the end of her West Indies deployment, Ajax returned to Britain for refit. At this time, her 4" battery was upgraded by exchanging single for double mountings.

She rejoined her squadron in the West Indies in February 1938 and remained on that station until 1939 when she was redeployed to the Pacific, off South America. On 27 January, Ajax went to assist the rescue of earthquake victims at Talcahuano, in Chile. She then returned to Bermuda and was redeployed to the South Atlantic Division in March. When the German raider, Admiral Graf Spee, became a threat, Force G was formed from Ajax, Exeter and Achilles, all cruisers. Force G located and engaged Graf Spee on 13 December, despite the German warship's greater firepower. Ajax was hit seven times by the Germans: X and Y turrets were disabled, structural damage was sustained and there were 12 casualties including 7 killed. Exeter, more severely damaged, retired, leaving the two light cruisers to maintain contact with Graf Spee when she withdrew to Montevideo. Ajax and Achilles awaited events and successfully bluffed the Germans into believing that a superior force was on hand. Graf Spee was scuttled by her own crew. Ajax refuelled at Port Stanley and resumed her patrol.

In January 1940, she returned to Britain for refit, via Montevideo, Rio de Janeiro and Freetown, Sierra Leone. Ajax arrived at Plymouth at the end of January; the following month, she was handed over to Chatham Dockyard for refit.

When war was declared in September 1939, Ajax took up her appropriate station and patrolled off the River Plate. There she sank the German merchant ship Olinda on 3 September. She intercepted the German merchantman Carl Fritzen and the passenger ship Ussukuma (with the cruiser HMS Cumberland) on 4 and 5 September, respectively. Both ships were scuttled by their crews to avoid being taken as prizes.

After a brief deployment in and around the Falkland Islands, Ajax returned to her station off the Plate on 21 September.

Once refitted and worked up, Ajax became ready for service in August 1940. Her refit had included the addition of a Type 279 Radar, a tripod mast and zerebas for the 4" batteries.

In August 1940, Ajax was allocated to the 7th Cruiser Squadron for Mediterranean service. She sailed from Britain on 21 August as part of the escort, to a convoy for Egypt routed via the Mediterranean (Operation Hats), but she remained with a portion that was diverted via Durban. In late September, she escorted a troop convoy from Aden to Suez. Ajax joined HMAS Sydney at Alexandria on 30 September.

From 2 to 16 October, Ajax was engaged in major fleet manoeuvres to interdict Italian convoys to Libya and to protect British convoys to Malta. Firstly, she sailed with the fleet to search for Italian convoys, possibly with their own fleet escorts. On 8 October, Ajax again deployed with a major naval force to cover the passage to Malta of convoy MF3. Ajax and Orion patrolled south-east of Malta before covering the return of Convoy MF4 to Alexandria on 12 October.

During the night of 11–12 October, Ajax intercepted a small Italian force. In a close-range night action, two Spica-class torpedo boats, Airone and Ariel, were sunk and the destroyer Artigliere was disabled. Two more warships escaped into a smoke screen. Ajax herself was hit by seven shells that destroyed one of her whalers, caused severe damage to the bridge and radar installation and 35 casualties, including 13 killed. She returned to Alexandria on 16 October.

At the end of October, Ajax set out on the first of two operations to carry troop reinforcements to Suda Bay, on Crete in Operation Barbarity; she suffered near misses from air attacks. On her return to the fleet on 6 November, she helped to provide cover for a Malta convoy, MW3. This was a large operation, involving most of the Mediterranean Fleet and part of a wider set of ship movements, Operation Coat. She was part of Force X which was detached from the main fleet on 11 November to sortie into the Straits of Otranto, between Italy and Albania, to provide a diversion and give cover for the successful naval air attack on Taranto.

On 12 November, after turning to return to the main fleet, they intercepted a small convoy of four Italian merchant ships escorted by naval auxiliary Ramb III and the obsolete torpedo-boat Nicola Fabrizi. Ramb III fired 19 salvos in its own defense and succeeded in breaking away without suffering any damage. Nicola Fabrizi stayed with the merchant ships and attacked the British forces. As a result, Nicola Fabrizi was hit immediately and suffered serious damage. The Italian torpedo boat continued to fight until it was unable to fight any more and retired badly damaged. After Nicola Fabrizi was neutralized, the British force

divided up the targets and sank all four of the Italian merchant ships. This action took place near the Strait of Otranto Force X also bombarded the port of Durazzo (now Durrës) and set the oil refinery on fire, before it rejoined the fleet. Ajax and other vessels were detached from the fleet and refuelled at Suda Bay before they returned to Alexandria.

From 15 to 20 November, Ajax and four other cruisers transported troops from Alexandria to Piraeus, the port of Athens, and returned to Alexandria. On 23 November, she was deployed with Force B [note 9] to cover a convoy to Crete and to support air attacks on Tripoli from Eagle.

Ajax participated in the Battle of Cape Matapan and was hit by bombs from Ju 87s on 21 May 1941. She evacuated many troops from Crete up until 29 May. She then covered Syrian operations in June and joined Force K at Malta in November, being withdrawn in February 1942 for refit.

On 6 February she departed Suez for the United Kingdom via the Cape of Good Hope, calling at Mombasa (9 March) and Freetown (9 April), arriving in the Clyde on 14 April. On 6 June, she was taken in hand for refit at Chatham Dockyard, which lasted until September. Her anti-aircraft (AA) gunnery was augmented by eleven Oerlikon 20 mm cannons. Various radar sets were also installed; fire control radars for her main guns, AA armament and barrage control; an improved aircraft warning radar, surface warning radar was also fitted. Her aircraft facilities were removed. Ajax underwent post refit trials in October and after being recommissioned on 24 October, she worked-up at Scapa Flow with the Home Fleet during November. On 31 December, she joined Force Q at Bône, in Algeria for the interdiction of enemy convoys and convoy defence.

Ajax was disabled by a 1,000 lb (450 kg) bomb—dropped by an aircraft from Il./SKG 10 or Il./StG 3— hitting "B" boiler room on 1 January 1943 while at Bône, after convoy escort duty; she was towed on 7 January to Gibraltar for temporary repairs, which continued into February. Permanent repairs were arranged to

take place in the United States and she was taken in hand at Norfolk Navy Yard, Virginia; these lasted until September. During repair work, Ajax was equipped with US quadruple 40mm anti-aircraft mountings with provision for a British fire control radar Type 282, IFF Type 242 fitted and a US fire control radar replaced her existing Type 284. After post refit trials in October, she returned to Britain, via Bermuda, in November and the fitting of British equipment was completed. Ajax was recommissioned at Portsmouth on 25 December and joined the Home Fleet at Scapa Flow once more for work-up before returning to the Mediterranean in February 1944 after nearly two years out of action – apart from just a couple of days in January 1943.

As part of Force K, Ajax bombarded Gold Beach during the D-Day invasion; the battery at Longues gave some trouble but was silenced by 6-inch shells through the embrasures of two of the four casemates. She later supported the landings in southern France. Ajax also operated in the Aegean during the reoccupation of Athens and the communist uprising in Greece.

After the war, Ajax was used to repatriate German sailors from the crew of Admiral Graf Spee from Uruguay back to Germany – a historic irony since Ajax had been a member of the squadron that battled the German ship in 1939 and ultimately caused her to be scuttled. Ajax was then assigned to the Royal Navy Palestine Patrol and took part in the efforts to halt illegal Jewish immigration to Palestine. In July 1947 it took part in the Exodus 1947 incident, in which she formed part of the Royal Navy task force which subdued the illegal immigrant ship and later escorted it back to Germany.

Ajax was decommissioned in February 1948. Sales to the Chilean Navy or Indian Navy were mooted, but this latter deal did not materialize due to Winston Churchill's apparent disapproval of the sale; he felt that such an important vessel would be better off broken up to preserve her history. After running aground at Newport, Monmouthshire, while under tow to the scrapyard, she was refloated and duly arrived at Cashmore's, in Newport, South Wales, for breaking up on 18 November 1949.



ADJUNCTS AND GROUPS



GOLDEN OLDIES SNOOKER

Tuesday
1pm

SNOOKER

Thursday
6pm



500

Wednesday
1pm

INDOOR BOWLS

Tuesday
9.45am



FISHING

Please check
noticeboard by
8 Ball tables for
trip info



MAH JONG

Thursday
10am



8 BALL

Wednesday
Register by 6.30pm
Play starts 7pm
All Welcome
\$3 Entry

UKULELE HIGHLY STRUNG'

Thursday
1.30pm



TAI CHI WITH CHERRY

Wednesday &
Thursday
9am - 10am
\$5



BALLROOM DANCING

Tuesday
4pm - 6pm



LINE DANCING

Friday
(every 4th Friday 1pm)
9.30am beginners
10.30am - 12pm
\$3/person
all ages, abilities welcome