



Town of Ajax Street Dedication



Street Name: **Batt Crescent**
Name of Veteran: Robert Batt
Rank: Seaman Boy
Ship Served: HMS (HMNZS) Achilles
Date of Service on Ship: 1939 to 1943
Year of Visit/Dedication: Tree dedication June 2005, visited 1999, 2005 and 2009
Veteran or Family Visit: Bob Batt and wife Joan
Veteran of the Battle of the River Plate: Yes Died at Battle: No

Bob Batt joined the Navy in May 1938 as a Seaman Boy. He was just 15 years old at the time and was posted to HMS Achilles in May 1939.

After an initial Pacific Island cruise, Achilles returned to Auckland, to replenish stores and ammunition before returning to the sea. On August 28, 1939 the ship headed for Panama and was at sea when New Zealand declared war with Germany. The ship's sailing instructions were changed and Achilles headed for Valparaiso and ultimately to the River Plate.



Bob Batt (left) with Alfred Hunt, return to New Zealand, 1940
Source: New Zealand History Online

Bob stayed on Achilles for a while and then served on other ships in various theaters of war; escort duty from New Zealand to Freemantle, minesweeping and patrolling up around the Philippines alongside the British and Americans.

His final war time service was again on the Achilles off the coast of Japan with the American Task Force that dropped the A-bomb on Hiroshima. He retired from the Navy in 1952 as a Chief Petty Officer.

As of 2009, Bob and his wife Joan lived in Whakatene, on the North Island of New Zealand in an area known as the Eastern Bay of Plenty.



Bob Batt, 1939

