



Town of Ajax Street Dedication



Street Name: **Harwood Avenue**

Name of Veteran: Admiral Sir Henry Harwood January 19, 1888 – June 9, 1950

Rank: Commodore (at time of battle)

Ship Served: HMS Ajax

Date of Service on Ship: 1939 - 1940

Year of Visit/Dedication: October 3, 2009, During the 70th Anniversary Reunion

Veteran or Family Visit: Grandson Jonathan Harwood and wife Susan Harwood

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

Admiral Sir Henry Harwood, for whom Harwood Avenue in the Town of Ajax is named, is best known as the Commodore who led the British hunting group of naval cruisers (HMS Ajax, HMS Exeter and HMS Achilles) against the German Pocket Battleship, the Graf Spee in the Battle of the River Plate, December 13th, 1939.

Born in 1888, he was first appointed to South America in 1919. It was during this time that Commodore Harwood developed a great appreciation for Uruguay and its people. Harwood's personable demeanor enabled him to establish excellent ties with the South American people. It was his visits to South American ports in the 2½ years prior to WWII where he fostered goodwill and trained his ships and crew that enabled Harwood to lead a successful battle at the River Plate on December 13th, 1939.



Admiral Harwood

The Battle of the River Plate was the first major naval success of the Allied Forces in the Second World War. Following the battle there were celebrations throughout the city of Montevideo and within the allied Forces. Harwood received medals and appreciations from His Majesty King George VI and Prime Minister Winston Churchill for his outstanding strategy and leadership.

Given a 'battlefield' promotion to Rear Admiral, Harwood remained in the South Atlantic until the late summer of 1940. Later in the war he became Commander in Chief of the British Naval Forces in the Mediterranean and was then promoted to substantive Admiral. He retired in late 1945 to spend five happy years at home, but in deteriorating health. Harwood died of a heart attack in June 1950.



In 2001, Harwood's sons, Henry and Stephen, both themselves retired naval officers, presented his full dress uniform, unchanged since it was worn in 1939, to a museum in Montevideo. There is a street named after Harwood in Carrasco, a neighbourhood on Montevideo, Uruguay. Harwood Avenue in the Town of Ajax serves as a reminder of this great hero.

Admiral Harwood's grandson, Jonathan and his wife Susan, represented the Harwood Family during the 70th Anniversary Reunion in 2009 and attended a special tree planting and street dedication in honour of Sir Henry Harwood.