



Town of Ajax Street Dedication



Street Name: **Panter Crescent**

Name of Veteran: Frank Henry Thomas Panter April 5, 1906-June 15, 2000

Rank: Shipwright

Ship Served: HMS Ajax

Date of Service on Ship: 1939

Year of Visit/Dedication: n/a

Veteran or Family Visit: n/a

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

Frank Panter had a very eventful career in the Royal Navy. During World War Two he served in many of the heaviest combat areas in the Atlantic, Mediterranean and the Far East.

Frank had a brilliant record of service in World War Two. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his part played as the Damage Control Officer in HMS Ajax at the Battle of the River Plate. He was thrown into the air when one of the 11 inch shells from the Graf Spee hit the Ajax. Wounded on one side, he continued working despite the pain. ***"I found myself flying through the air until I hit the bulkhead, and there was shrapnel everywhere. Why our own cordite and shells never exploded we shall never know,"*** he said in 1996 to a Portsmouth newspaper. Frank's account of the Battle of the River Plate is featured in naval historian Max Arthur's book, The True Glory: The Royal Navy 1914-1939.



Frank was a member of the Royal Naval Shipwright & Hull Engineer Officers Association and a regular contributor to its newsletter. He fascinated readers with the many articles on his wartime exploits particularly when serving on HMS Glengyle, a merchant ship converted into a Commando carrier. He saw action in Crete, Syria, Egypt, Tobruk and had some 'hairy' experiences during the air-raids on Malta. Later he helped transport the ill-fated Canadians to Dieppe in 1942.



Frank's 90th Birthday,
with gifts from Ajax

In 1945 Frank served on HMS Anson which joined the Pacific Fleet for the final stages of the war. He saw the surrender of the Japanese in Hong Kong and went on to visit Hiroshima, Japan.

After the war Frank had a great love of fly fishing and became a bailiff on the River Meon. He was also instrumental in saving the figurehead from the predecessor to the Royal Yacht Britannia and having it installed at the naval barracks in Queen Street, Portsmouth.

Frank died of pneumonia on June 15, 2000 leaving behind a daughter and granddaughter in New Jersey, U.S.A. He was held in high respect and esteem by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

Panter Crescent is shared with Ronald Anthony Harry Panter, Sub Lieutenant with HMS Ajax during the Battle of the River Plate.