



## Town of Ajax Street Dedication



Street Name: **Searell Avenue**

Name of Veteran: Walter Tryst Searell June 6, 1922-Aug. 11, 2005

Rank: Seaman Boy

Ship Served: HMS Achilles

Date of Service on Ship: 1938 to

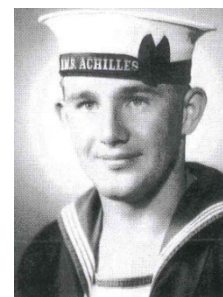
Year of Visit/Dedication September 27, 2009

Veteran or Family Visit Wife Nellie Searell

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

Walter was born in Dunedin, New Zealand on June 6, 1922. Born the middle child of five, he had four brothers and one sister. According to family members he was a very inquisitive and mischievous child.

Walter joined the Royal Navy (New Zealand did not have their own Navy until 1942) on May 17, 1938. The Achilles was sailing around the Pacific when war was declared and was dispatched to find the Graf Spee along with HMS Ajax and HMS Exeter. Wally was a Seaman Boy, age 17, at the time. His fellow crewmates, Bob Batt and Eddy Telford were also Seaman Boys and they remained close friends until Walter passed away.



Walter left the Navy as a Regulating Petty Officer in January 1950 as he was diagnosed with Tuberculosis and spent a year in Waipukarau Sanitorium. While there he studied motor mechanics so he could keep his 'old bombs' (cars) on the road as well as Plumbing and Drainlaying. These skills allowed him to earn his living.

Walter married Norma Fox in 1944 and they lived in Auckland and had four children, two boys and two girls. Norma and Walter separated in 1968.

In September 1972 Walter married Nellie and they moved to Rawene. Nellie had four children of her own, two boys and two girls and they all adored Walter. Nellie's youngest son was only ten when they married and he always considered Walter as his own father. They purchased a lovely piece of land in Rawene on top of a hill with beautiful sea views. He spent his days gardening and involving himself in a number of community organizations.



Walter suffered a stroke in the 1990s but still managed to visit Ajax for the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations in 1999. He passed away in Rawene, New Zealand on August 11, 2005 at the age of eighty three.



Mayor Parish with Nellie Searell