



Town of Ajax Street Dedication



Street Name: **Morden Crescent**
Name of Veteran: William A. Morden
Rank: Royal Marine Gunner
Ship Served: HMS Ajax
Date of Service on Ship: 1939 to 1945
Year of Visit/Dedication: June 2006
Veteran or Family Visit: Francis Curwood and her daughter Iris Gengembre, cousins
Veteran of the Battle of the River Plate: Yes Died at Battle: Yes

William (Bill) Morden was one of nine children. He was born just after the First World War and grew up during the Depression. Bill's father was very fortunate as he landed a job of managing the Peabody Trust Apartments, an enormous block of flats located very close to the Thames. A philanthropist built his first subsidized housing in Fulham where the Morden's lived. The family lived in a beautiful apartment on the ground floor and there was a great playground for the children in the complex as well.

When Bill left school, the job prospects were still very poor and the catchword all over was 'Learn a Trade my boy...Learn A Trade'. Bill soon became an apprentice to a company that made medical instruments. However, after only two or three months Bill left and joined the Royal Marines. Bill's father disagreed with this decision and paid the requisite £50.00 to obtain Bill's release, which in 1938 was more like £250.00. Bill persisted and shortly after rejoined the Marines. This time there was a real dispute over it but his father managed to once again arrange for the release money to be paid (this time by an Aunt). Once again Bill joined up. This time his father gave up the fight and six months later Bill found himself on HMS Ajax participating in the Battle of the River Plate.

Bill's cousin Francis Curwood was a long time resident of Ajax and helped organize the tree planting and street dedication for William Morden in 2006.