



## Town of Ajax Street Dedication



Street Name: **Strathy Road**

Name of Veteran: George H. Kirkpatrick(Pat) Strathy 1918-Oct. 12, 1940

Rank: Sub-Lieutenant, R.C.N.V.R.

Ship Served: HMS Ajax

Date of Service on Ship: 1939 to 1940

Year of Visit/Dedication: June 2002

Veteran or Family Visit: Members of the Strathy family, Toronto.

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

George Henry Kirkpatrick (Pat) Strathy was born in England in 1918, while his father was in the military there at Orpington. When his family returned to Canada he attended Trinity College School in Port Hope where he won a number of distinctions and graduated at the age of sixteen. Considered too young to go to University Pat's parents sent him to Charterhouse School in England in 1936. When he returned to Canada he attended the University of Toronto where he received considerable distinction in Mathematics and Physics. One of his professors in physics said that Pat was so brilliant that he kept some of his solutions to problems for reference.



Pat was one of a few men who joined the Royal Navy from the University of Toronto through the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve (R.C.N.V.R.). They along with others became known as the Canadian Raleighites. These were men selected to be trained by the British Royal Navy onboard HMS Raleigh in the U.K. They were sent from Canada in six groups of twenty five to aid in the war effort. In the mid to late 1930s Pat, along with John Woods, Mike Mills, Ollie Mabee and Bill Macdonald were friends at the University of Toronto. The small group were considered 'Whiz Kids' that were taken straight out of Professor Burton's 'Maths and Physics' course in 1939-1940. They were engaged to help perfect and make operative the Admiralty's new RDF (later known as RADAR).

Fellow 'Whiz Kid' Jock Maynard stated, ***"by the late thirties we were beginning to think about a future war and what it might mean to us all. None of us fully realized the enormity of what was in store for us"***.

The Telegram reported on October 16, 1940:

***"While patrolling near Sicily, the Ajax suddenly came upon the two Italian destroyers and opened up with her big guns. Shortly after sending both ships to the bottom the Ajax encountered a heavy Italian cruiser and four destroyers, one of them the 'Artigliere. Again the Ajax opened up with everything her guns could throw with the result that the Artigliere was crippled. The other Italian vessels ran for home."***

Ajax received a minor hit in the middle of the ship which destroyed the RDF Hut and Pat Strathy's action station. There were thirty-five casualties and thirteen deaths at the end of the battle.