



# THE NEWSLETTER

Of The U.N.T.D. Association of Canada



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## UNT / NOAC NATIONAL REUNION IN QUEBEC CITY

Left to right: HMCS St. JOHN'S, HMCS PROTECTEUR, Fr. Destroyer, USS SAN ANTONIO  
Bottom: UNTD Association members view U.S. Combat Support Ship up close.  
Cover Story Inside.

Photos by Bill Thomas

## UNTDs JOIN NOAC IN QUEBEC

As we did in Hamilton in 2006, UNTDs made their presence known at the NOAC AGM in Quebec at the end of May. More than 40 UNTDs and partners were given a warm welcome and high profile by Pierre Houle, Jean-Claude Michaud, and Pierre Dudemaine, who arranged for special name tags, transport, and tables, as well as a registration desk and space for the sale of our last remaining regalia.

Following the President's reception on the Thursday evening, UNTiDies were bussed down to the harbour for a tour of the Naval Museum, followed by a meet and greet at the Reserve Naval Headquarters Wardroom. Unfortunately, the planned visit by Commodore Bennett and the CO, was pre-empted by a last minute request from political dignitaries for a tour of HMCS Protecteur, one of 5 naval vessels in Quebec for the "Naval Days" portion of the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events (see photos at [www.untd.org](http://www.untd.org)).

On Friday, partners enjoyed a bus tour and luncheon on Isle d'Orleans, while we sailors engaged in a four part seminar on the effect of Global Warming on the Canadian Arctic – and its implications for the Navy who currently have neither ice-strengthened ships, nor officers trained in ice navigation. The day concluded with a catamaran cruise to Isle d'Orleans for dinner at *Le Moulin de Saint-Laurent*.

On Saturday, while NOAC members held their AGM, UNTDs and partners toured the historic fortifications of Quebec, before we all joined together for the National President's Reception and Dinner, at the Chateau Laurier.

The formal reunion ended with "Up Spirits" and brunch on the Sunday morning, but many stayed on to enjoy the hospitality and festivities of Quebec's 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This included the sail-past of visiting ships. The returning salute for the sail-past was made from the guns of the citadel, where the Governor General and Provincial Lt. Governors were in residence.

In a change from recent traditions, the NOAC opted to make every AGM a programmed reunion. That came as a surprise to the Vancouver delegates who are hosting the event in 2009. On the other hand, it was welcome news indeed for the UNTDs – who as it is widely recognized, are always up for a party.

## UNTDs MARCH IN KINGSTON

Mr. Justice Gordon Sedgwick and his crew of Queen's UNTDs hosted a smoothly functioning, well timed and well attended reunion in Kingston this May. With their legendary hospitality, HMCS Catarqui offered a meet and greet on the Friday evening, featuring an amazing display of photographs, uniforms, and memorabilia, assembled and mounted by their archivist, Chris Varley, CD. Sales of UNTD regalia also boomed.

Saturday saw a number of folks tour the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes in the old dockyards adjacent to the drydock where the former Canadian Coast Guard tender *Alexander Henry* functions as both a museum ship and a Bed and Breakfast facility. On hand to offer comments and interpretation was a former UNTD who had served in the old shops on a riveting crew, before becoming a UNTD, then a Professor at Queen's University. There is a lot of naval history in Kingston. The port served as a naval base and naval command headquarters on the Great Lakes during the War of 1812.

Just over 120 UNTDs and spouses gathered together on Saturday evening at the Queen's Faculty Club, under the patronage of RADM Allan, for a superb meal. During the evening some of the accomplishments of former UNTDs were acknowledged, with great cheering for the just announced appointment of David Dodge (former Governor of the Bank of Canada) as Chancellor at Queen's University.

On Sunday morning more than two dozen UNTDs joined with RMC Cadets, all ranks from Catarqui, as well as Sea, Army, and Air Cadets, in a Battle of the Atlantic Parade. They marched in a cold lakeside wind from downtown Kingston to the Naval Memorial for a Remembrance Service presided over by LT. (N) the Reverend Don Maclean, Chaplain to HMCS Catarqui and SLT. (N) the Reverend Canon Bill Thomas, President of the UNTD Association.

The reunion concluded, back where it began, with brunch at HMCS Catarqui, where former Queen's UNTD, Justice Gordon Sedgwick presented the wardroom with a "Rogues Gallery" of former Commanding Officers – UNTDs all. **What a fantastic way to show the impact of the UNTD on the navy and our nation!**

SLt. Ret'd, the Reverend Canon Bill Thomas

## UNTiDies MAKE THINGS HAPPEN

University Naval Training Division graduates have made a positive impact on the nation far beyond that of graduates from any other Canadian University military training program. An argument for this was published in an article entitled, "The UNTD and Canadian Society" – Maritime Warfare Bulletin 94/1, Historical Edition, Department of National Defence.

However, we don't have to look in military bulletins to prove the point, - the evidence is all around us. Look in the Halls of Power, Boards of Governors and Executives of business and industry and you will find former UNTD cadets. At a recent meeting of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires, I discovered six former UNTDs: Richard Baker, Paul Costello, Fred Lee, Richard Oland, Bob Siemens and myself, Bob Williamson.

What other groups like the UNTD have formed a National Organization with branches in Vancouver, Victoria, Toronto, Kingston and Ottawa? What other groups like ours: - hold regular Mess Dinners and National Reunions; publish a bi-annual Newsletter; has published an anecdotal history, "SPINDRIFT, UNTiDy Tales of Officer Cadets"; and a pseudo history, "The UNTIDIES, Bonding A Nation"? I have never seen another group like ours with their own web site. Here is a list of some of the key people that make all of these things happen along with some photographs to illustrate recent activities.

*Editor*

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Members of the **Ex-UNTD Cadet Club** in Victoria, BC, left – Jim Munro (Munro Books), centre – Dr. William Griswold, present 55 naval history books donated to VENTURE, Naval Officers Training Centre (NOTC) represented by Cdr. Kurt Salchert, CO. The books will be presented to the top students of the Maritime Surface Officer Training courses.

Photo courtesy MARPAC Lookout News 08/05/06



In Kingston, Justice Gordon Sedgwick presented the wardroom of HMCS Catarauqui with photos of former Commanding Officers – **UNTDs all**.

Photo courtesy Bill Thomas

## Commodore Bennett to attend 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner, November 15, 2008

To mark the commissioning of the UNTD in 1943, an Anniversary Dinner will be held at HMCS Star, where it all began.

Barring emergencies, Guests of Honour will include:

Commodore Jennifer Bennett,  
& former Minister of Defence, Bill Graham,  
& as many of the original class as we can locate.

**If you are in contact with any of the members of that class, please send names and contact information to Bill Thomas, 7 Hilltop Place, Dundas, ON, L9H 3Y5 or [wctpts@sympatico.ca](mailto:wctpts@sympatico.ca)**

Formal Invitations, together with menu, & costs, will be mailed out in early October. **Accommodations available at nearby Admiral Inn for \$109.00 if reserved before October 15 quoting confirmation # 105746 - email [Hamilton@admiralinn.com](mailto:Hamilton@admiralinn.com)**

Take a look - <http://www.admiralinnhamilton.com/>

### THE FIRST UNTD Doug Hoffman's Story

*As we celebrate the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the UNTD, what better time to tell the story of one of the original members. This article has been taken from "The Portico" the University of Guelph Magazine for Alumni and Friends, Winter, 2008, courtesy of Bob Morris.*

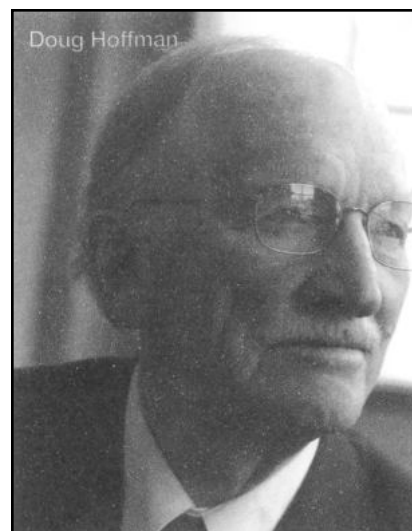
Doug Hoffman arrived at the Ontario Agricultural College in 1939, a city kid attracted by rural life. "I chose OAC for a number of reasons," says Hoffman. "One was the fact that it was very inexpensive. For \$22 a month, we got three meals a day, a private room and tuition. They even washed our linen once a week but drew the line at underwear."

He came to OAC at a time when Canadians were still feeling the effects of the Depression. However, it was World War II that made the biggest impact on his life. Within a week of his enrollment, Canada was at war.

OAC president, George Christie, told new students that the best way that they could serve their country was to stay in school. He encouraged them to join the Canadian Officers' Training Corps (COTC) in preparation for

future military service. Students were required to train two hours a day after classes and football practice. In the summer they spent two weeks at an army camp in London, ON. The worst thing Hoffman remembered about that was being sprayed with tear gas. It was harsh training.

Although slated for graduation in 1943, Hoffman didn't cross the stage at War Memorial Hall until 1946. He transferred into the newly formed university Naval Training Division in 1942 by Professor A. W. "Jack" Baker.



“We went down to the navy base in Hamilton for one day and then did most of our training in Guelph at the boathouse where Gordon Street crosses the Speed River,” said Hoffman. When he transferred into the active service, Hoffman ended up on Fairmiles, wooden vessels, 34 metres in length.

“We sailed the coast of Nova Scotia, Labrador, Newfoundland, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Rumour had it that there was a German radar relay station on the coast of Labrador but we never found it”. *Submitted by Bob Morris UNTD OAC*

### THE LAST FAIRMILE

This story will be of interest especially to those UNTDs who served in Fairmiles when they were used as training vessels on the Great Lakes in the 1950s.

I sailed as XO of HMCS Wolf 062 in September 1954 out of The Great Lakes Training Centre on Hamilton Harbour. That was prior to the building of the Burlington Skyway and I remember that it gave a great feeling of power to have the heavily travelled QEW closed while the Canal Bridge opened to allow a Fairmile out into Lake Ontario. It was at that time (September 9) that another Fairmile went out to cheer on Marilyn Bell as she made her marathon swim across Lake Ontario. That was a piece of history!

Now a group in Sarnia, Ontario, interested in marine heritage, is trying to rebuild a piece of

Canadian and UNTD history. They are investigating the possible restoration of Fairmile Q105 to her wartime condition.

The Q105 was built in Sarnia in 1943 by Mac Craft Industries and served on the East Coast and Bermuda from 1943-45. Following the war she was used in the St. Lawrence as a research vessel. She then became a cruise ship operating out of Quebec City and renamed, Duc d’Orleans.

In 1978, Q105 was purchased and brought back to Sarnia where she was used as a cruise ship on the St. Clair River for 28 years. Recently she was donated to a volunteer group – Friends of Q105 - who plan to restore her to her wartime condition. The goal is to complete the work by 2010 so that she can sail to Halifax for the centenary of the Canadian Navy. Following that she will return to Sarnia as a training ship for local sea cadets and as a floating museum.

The last CO of the Q105, Lt. Bill McGhee, RCNVR, has been located in Kelowna, BC. McGhee, now 88 years old, is planning to travel to Sarnia in 2010 for the re-christening of his old vessel.

The ship was recently lifted out of the water and sits on a cradle close to where she was constructed in 1943. Her condition is currently being assessed.

*Noel J. Gaspar, Lt. RCN(R) Ret’d.*  
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## RECOMMENDED READING

In keeping with the previous article about the Last Fairmile, this book is highly recommended: **A Leaf Upon The Sea, A Small Ship in the Mediterranean, 1941-1943**, by Gordon W. Stead, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 1988. ISBN 0-7748-0299-5

It is the story of Motor Launches, known in Canada as “Fairmiles”, sent into the Mediterranean as larger ships were driven out. Stead recalls passages through hostile waters, successful fights with aircraft, the siege of Malta, convoy battles, minesweeping in the forefront of the action and landings in Italy.

It is the personal memoir of Gordon Stead, D.S.C., LL.D., former head of the Canadian Coast Guard and LCDR in the RCNVR.

*Editor*

## A UNTD CROSSES THE BAR

We are advised that on Friday May 9, 2008, Arthur Kroeger, died suddenly in Ottawa from cancer. He was a very distinguished federal public servant and a UNTD Cadet (first summer 1953 on the Coronation Cruise.) He made an effort to attend as many UNTD Reunions as possible – Halifax, Victoria and Ottawa.

Arthur was a Rhodes Scholar, 1958, a Companion of the Order of Canada, a Federal Deputy Minister of five major government departments, including Transport and a former Chancellor of Carleton University. Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs is named in his honour.

He is survived by his partner, Huguette Labelle, also a Companion of the Order of Canada, his two daughters, Kate and Alix Kroeger and a stepdaughter, Chantal Labelle.

Arthur expressed in his will that a scholarship should be set up in his name at Carleton University which can be accessed on line at [www.carleton.ca](http://www.carleton.ca) under “Giving to Carleton”, Scholarship Fund.

To me and to many, Arthur was simply a fine and gracious friend, sadly to be missed as one of the platoon markers of life.

*Bob Duncombe UNTD, Carleton University*  
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## WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT?

*When I read this story by John Scott, it made me realize why I have a fixation on the navy and spend so much of my retirement years writing UNTD stories.*

*Editor*

My name is John Scott and I have just finished reading SPINDRIFT, UNTiDy Tales of Officer Cadets. My wife found the book in the University of Toronto library. It really brought back a number of UNTD memories. I learned a lot about the origins of the UNTD. It is surprising that I could relate to a number of experiences that the book’s contributors commented on, some almost 20 years prior to my time in the UNTD. Some that hit home were the khaki summer uniforms that wrinkled easily and turned pink when ironed too hot, forgetting to lower the centre board in the whaler, the trips along Vancouver Island in the YFPs, the pranksters, the end of the UNTD in 1968, and of course the camaraderie.

All that reading about the UNTD got me feeling nostalgic and I collected a number of UNTD mementos. My wife wonders why I’ve kept one collar stud for 40 years!

I’d like to share with you a story that illustrates the impact the UNTD has had on my life and career. I retired last year from industry as a Corporate Vice-president. In my climb up the corporate ladder I was required to undergo a psychological exam. When the psychologist’s review was complete, I was asked if I had any comments. After hesitating, I told him that it appeared to me that I was mentally focused in time on my college days when I joined the UNTD.

The psychologist explained that when something good and memorable happens in someone’s life it is common for a person to lock in mentally at that age. He said it would always keep me feeling young. Well, he was right. I still feel young at heart, and I owe this in part to the great time I spent in the UNTD.

I can’t thank you enough for recording all the great stories in your book and newsletters. They have brought back so many wonderful memories.

*Best regards,*  
*John Scott* [j.scott@sympatico.ca](mailto:j.scott@sympatico.ca)

## Remembering the UNTD CADET INTERVIEW BOARD

*As probationary UNTD cadets we all had to face an Officer Cadet Board interview at some time. It meant reading Time and Newsweek magazines to be up to speed on current events and learning all the names of prominent politicians, senior officers and relevant military events, especially if they involved the navy. In some way we all had to find an opportunity to present our best face as potential officer candidates. All these memories came flooding back to me as I read this story by Bob Middlemiss.*  
*Editor*

In 1959 I remember how uneasy I felt as a UNTD Probationary Cadet sitting the Promotion Board for Officer Cadets. As I faced those severe looking senior officers part way through the interview; - I knew I was floundering, but then I saw my chance.

Asked why I wished to join the RCN(R), I told the board that I came from a seagoing family. Cousin Harry served in HMS Warspite and was known as "Dempsey" for his boxing prowess. Cousin Tommy served in the Merchant Marine and lost his plumbing during a convoy strafing. Cousin Alan was also in the Merchant Marine and served as an engineering officer in oil tankers. My uncle, Ernest Abrams, was a Lt. Cdr. RNVr. As a frogman he carried out classified operations for the Normandy landings. My father had a merchant ship's clock salvaged by him and displayed it on our living room wall.

I could see that I suddenly had the interest of the board officers. The interview had taken a turn in my favour. Then I played the most powerful and tragic card of my family history. Uncle Ernest Abrams' son, Robbie, a Petty Officer, was lost at sea on board HMS Hood during that famous encounter with the German pocket-battleship, Bismarck. To this day I feel the guilt of having traded on the memory of a fine sailor and a fine ship. But I also remember the board's reaction at the mention of HMS Hood. The atmosphere changed. Sunlight suddenly came streaming in to brighten the solemnity of the conference room.

When my father died in 1969, the surviving cousins: Harry, Tommy and Alan took the train to my parent's home in the picturesque countryside of Sussex to remember my father and comfort my mother. They hugged her when they arrived and drank a "cuppa" served with extra thick ham sandwiches. They noticed my

photograph on the mantelpiece - a smiling young UNTD officer cadet RCN(R) and beside it the merchant ship's clock salvaged by Robbie's father.

The conversation soon turned to the sinking of HMS Hood and our lost cousin, Robbie. They talked of the ship's great power and lovely lines - and soberly of the political machinations that denied her the refit that might have changed her role in history. They retold the story of how Robbie had phoned his sister Mary, before setting sail. Mary cautioned him to take care of himself and he replied, "Don't worry, Luv, I'm on the safest ship in the world".

My daughter grew up on the stories of the loss of HMS Hood and my cousin, Petty Officer Robbie Abrams. She told me the other day that she would hand down our family stories to my grandchildren and take care of my officer cadet photo, my navy newsletters, and the salvaged merchant ship's clock inherited from my father. I thanked her and got back to work, but in my head lingered the memory of my cadet board and the voices of my sailor cousins, now stilled, telling family stories of a gallant ship and a lost relative.

Bob Middlemiss U-823  
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### A FACE TO A NAME AND A STORY

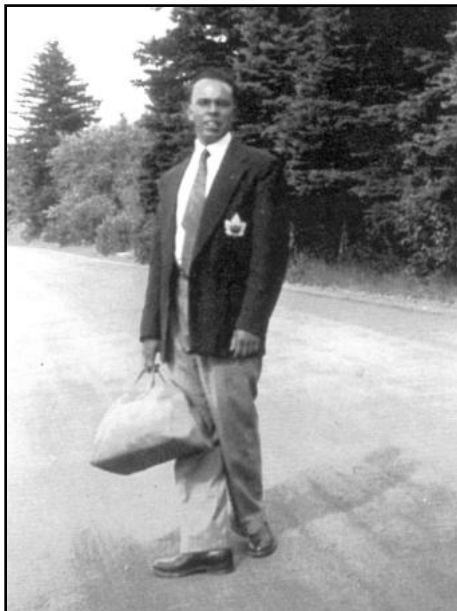
*A wonderful UNTD anecdote written by former Cadet Captain Gordon Wells of Kingston, Jamaica appears on page 155 of SPINDRIFT, UNTiDy Tales of Officer Cadets. It is the tale of a 1955 cadet cruise to Argentina, Newfoundland and Boston, Massachusetts ending with an encounter by three cadet captains with Senator John F. Kennedy. Thanks to former Cadet Captain, Bill Milne, Queen's / McMaster 1955, we now have a photo of Gordon Wells, the names of the three cadet captains and more details about this auspicious piece of UNTD history.*  
*Editor*

The three cadet captains were: Gordon Wells, Jim McKeen and myself, Bill Milne. The disappearance of the Admirals flag from the U.S. navy base at Argentina was a good lark by the UNTD cadets but it put the three cadet captains in a very awkward position with the squadron commander, Captain Finch-Noyes, a rather stern

man. However, not only was he concerned about an international incident by some high spirited cadets but a fire had broken out in the boiler room of one of his destroyers. He was not a “happy camper”.

When we arrived in Boston, it was a Saturday and they were experiencing a heat wave. We were tied up to a wharf beside a steel-sided warehouse. There was no breeze and the radiant heat pushed the temperature over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Nevertheless we had to clean our Messes. It was so hot, salt pills were distributed to the crew and some cadets were suffering from heat exhaustion. Then we were told that the three cadet captains had to attend a reception and the dress was formal. The most suitable formal uniform we had was our navy blue woolen battle dress known as # 5Bs. We were boiling in that rig and our shirts were saturated with sweat when we met Senator John F. Kennedy in the story related by Gordon Wells.

*William J. Milne*  
615 Hurd Ave., Burlington, ON. (905) 632-0930



Cadet Captain Gordon Wells wrote the “Senator From Boston” anecdote for UNTiDy Tales.

Photo courtesy W.J. Milne

*Justice Gordon Sedgwick of the Ontario Superior Court was a term-mate of Gordon Wells in the Queen’s University UNTD and still keeps in touch with him. He recalls that Gordon Wells was a wonderful raconteur and was hoping that he might attend the UNTD Reunion in Kingston.*

*Editor*

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Williamson

The summer of 1952, my first in the Navy, was a compelling experience, and one that, in many ways, changed my life. Being a rather typical Pre-Med. “geek”, I was not particularly good at the kind of give and take necessary in the bonding process of a UNTD Division. The time spent at Stad and in the training ships taught me lessons and gave me memories that I have never forgotten and for which I have always been grateful. With 47 years of medical practice behind me you can see that there are many memories competing unsuccessfully with those of my training in the UNTD.

I still remember standing at attention that first night, having arrived in Halifax from Vancouver, tired, not a little apprehensive and thinking, “What have I got myself into this time?” – especially when the Chief Petty Officer addressing us said we were, in his opinion, spoiled college kids. He planned to make it his personal goal to send us packing. He fanned a bunch of train tickets and told us that when we had had enough, just come to him and we would be on our way home.

Of course, along with the others, I immediately made the determined decision, “Not bloody likely!” As the summer wore on, I began to believe that if I survived, nothing would ever seem difficult again, and not much ever has!

Thanks to your Newsletters and the UNTD Association for stimulating the memories of those wonderful times.

Jim Rogerson, M.D. / Lt. (S) (MED) Ret’d. 1960  
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