



THE NEWSLETTER

Of The UNTD Association of Upper Canada



AUTUMN EDITION

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EDITOR Robert Williamson

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UNTDs PART OF MATTHEW'S FAREWELL

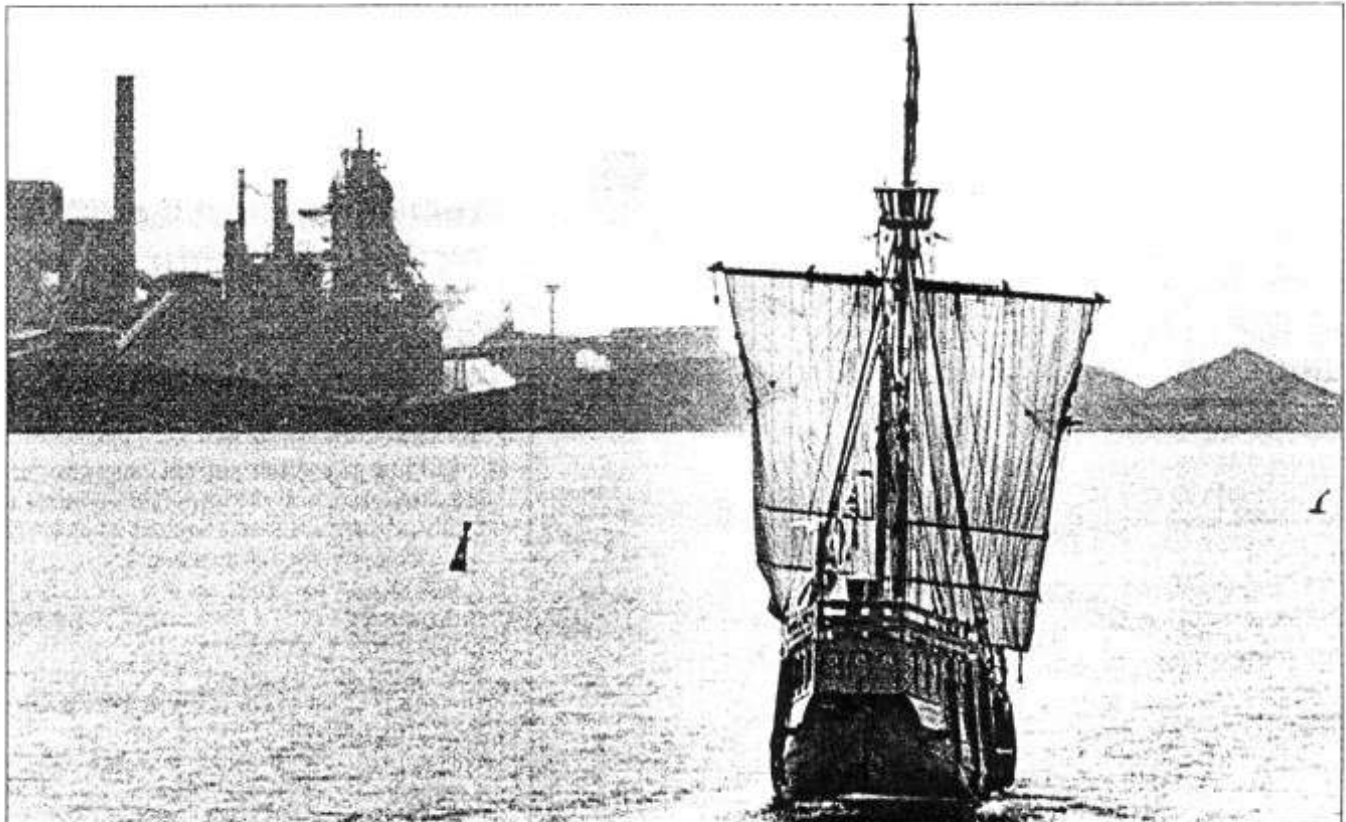


Photo by Ron Pozzer, courtesy The Spectator

UNTD SPRING WEEPER'S HIGHLIGHT, A FAREWELL TOUR OF CABOT'S SHIP

Photographed entering Hamilton Harbour after departing Toronto, the Matthew, a replica of John Cabot's ship in which he discovered Canada 500 years ago, began her return voyage to Bristol, England, on May 27, 1998. The ship initiated her farewell tour at Toronto's Pier 4, after wintering at the Port Credit Yacht Club. A special private visit to the ship was organized for UNTiDies and their friends by the UNTD Association in conjunction with a Barbecue Weepers at HMCS York on Friday, May 8, 1998.

Cover Story Inside

MATTHEW VISIT: CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

The highlight of the Spring calendar was Friday, May 8, 1998 when the UNTD Association offered its membership the chance of a lifetime by organizing a steak barbecue and a private visit to the replica of John Cabot's ship, the *Matthew*. A caravel design, the replica was built in Bristol, England and sailed across the Atlantic to commemorate the 500th Anniversary of John Cabot's discovery of North America. (Columbus, also sailing in a caravel, discovered the Caribbean islands but not the mainland, five years earlier.) To view first hand, in small groups, the equipment, sailing methods and living conditions on this, a significant piece of our North American history, was indeed a special privilege. Seventy members and their significant others, took advantage of this never-to-be-repeated opportunity, just prior to the ship's return to England at the end of May.

Program Chairman, Ron McKinlay, with the help of Barbara Doran, (Terry's wife), began a shuttle service in vans and station wagons from *York* to Pier 4 at about 1700. In all, three groups of 25, enjoyed a private tour of the ship. When the first group returned at 1800, the B.B.Q. steak dinner began on the harbour front lawn at *York*. The *Matthew* was to be the centre piece for the opening of the new Pier 4 home of the Toronto Marine Museum, but that was unfortunately delayed until July. However, the *Matthew* did provide a lot of advanced publicity for this waterfront event.

What most visitors enjoyed about the evening was the opportunity to poke into every nook and cranny of the caravel. This was denied to the general public who were not allowed to go below decks. The primitive rudder device attracted a great deal of attention, along with its simple lever connection that was used on the upper deck in good weather. Although small, there was surprisingly more head room in the living space than most people expected.

An additional feature of the evening was the social hour, beginning at 2000, when

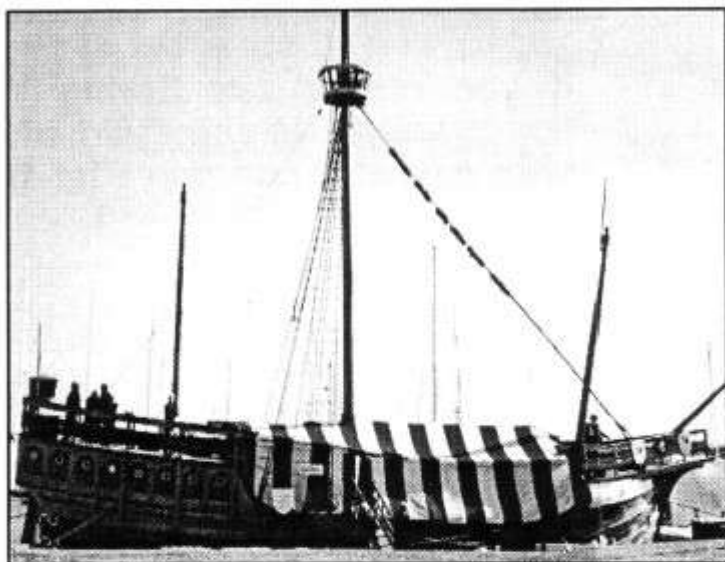
Terry Nash, First Mate of the *Matthew*, dressed in authentic 16th century garb, presented a thirty minute video, showing the research history, construction of the replica and its adventuresome Atlantic crossing. It was fascinating to learn that very little was known about Cabot's momentous voyage of discovery until records were inadvertently found in an obscure monastery in Spain. Some visual highlights were pointed out by Terry, such as the fly-by of the Concord jet as the *Matthew* replica set sail from Bristol, poignantly symbolizing two forms of trans-Atlantic crossings, 500 years apart. After a terrifying storm, the *Matthew* arrived five weeks later, to an overwhelming reception in Bonavista, Nfld. They were met by the Queen as they arrived on that auspicious 24th of June, 500 years to the day after John Cabot's landfall.

A most enjoyable question period followed the video with Terry revealing a lot of trivia and intimate facts not covered in the film. There were only two permanent crew members: the captain, David Allan Williams and first mate, Terry Nash. The rest of the 18 member crew was made up of idiots, (enthusiastic sailors) crazy enough to cross the Atlantic in a small, primitive and unreliable, 16th century caravel. The oldest crew member, and certainly the most seasoned, was 76 years old. The crew was released upon arriving in Canada and a new crew was recruited for the return voyage this summer. Terry was not enthusiastic about the caravel's sailing characteristics. Like most replica's, lacking the design improvements that were built-in from experience, the *Matthew*, at best, was clumsy. On one exceptional day she reached a speed of 10 knots, but generally averaged less than half of that. Unable to sail more that 65 degrees into the wind, she often made as much headway on the beam as she did on the bow.

There was far too much good stuff about the evening to report in the short space of this newsletter. Therefore let us conclude by saying that all the former UNTiDies were enthralled by the nautical program, and that the Association has once again outdone themselves by providing a most memorable social occasion with Terry Nash and the *Matthew*. *Editor*



Ed File (Kingston), left; and Fred Lee (Hamilton), right; converse about life on a 16th century caravel with Matthew's first mate, Terry Nash, at HMCS York's bar.



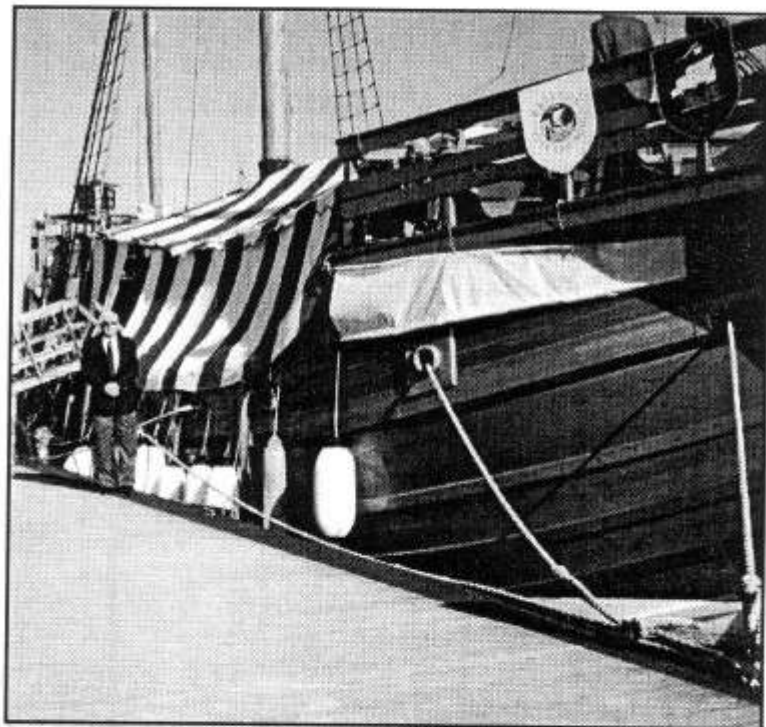
CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The UNTD Association is doing very well indeed, with more successful events and greater attendance, as well as more paid up members. But we still need the rest of you to pay your dues and more help on the Board of Directors to see us through the busy times ahead.

As you will have read in our editor's excellent account, our Spring Weepers featuring the Matthew replica, was a smashing success: one of those rare events which take off and nobody stops smiling all evening.

Now we are looking forward to a "Herbie" Little Night, combined with our AGM, featuring the *Seasoned Sailors* video of his naval career which included being the RCN's first Director of Naval Intelligence as well as Post War (1946-52) Father of the UNTD. Cdr Little, himself has agreed to attend.

Our largest project is UNTD REUNION 2000, to be held on the West Coast in August of the year 2000. The reunion will be centred in ROYAL ROADS with possible add-ons which could include the train through the Rockies, a Seattle - Bremerton Navy Yard tour, a Blaine Naval Base tour (USS Abraham Lincoln Battle Group), and best of all, an Inside Passage/Alaska tour, possibly in our own mini cruise ship. **SO BE AT THE AGM ON SEPTEMBER 17, AND MAKE YOUR INPUT COUNT IN ALL OUR PLANS.**



Program Chairman, Ron McKinlay (above) visited the Matthew at her winter quarters in Port Credit (above right) in preparation for our ship's tour at UNTD Weepers in May. At that time the main deck of the 70 foot ship was covered by a canvas awning.

OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS FOR 1998

If you missed the Spring Weepers, you still have two more opportunities to meet old friends and reminisce. Mark them on your calendar and don't let them pass you by.

UNTiDy AUTUMN WEEPERS AND AGM

Includes wives and significant others

H.M.C.S. YORK

(Note change of venue)

Thursday Sept. 17 from 1730

FEATURING

***CDR HERB LITTLE'S STORY**

FROM

THE SEASONED SAILORS VIDEO SERIES

A Premier Showing

**Cdr Little, approaching his 91st birthday
is expected to be in attendance*

Only \$10.00 including lasagna

AGENDA AND SCHEDULE

Plans for the National Reunion in Victoria will be unveiled at this meeting and a special Alaska Tour information programme will be provided for wives and significant others.

1730:	Bar Opens
1800-1900:	AGM for members; Alaska program for wives
1900-2000:	Buffet Supper
2000-2100:	Seasoned Sailor video
2100-E.T.D.	Reminisce

UNTiDy REUNION MESS DINNER

H.M.C.S. YORK

Saturday Nov. 21 from 1830

FEATURING

CAPTAIN(N) PETER C. NEWMAN

**Nationally Acclaimed Editor, Defence Critic, Historian
and former UNTD**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Thanks for the copies of the back issues of the UNTD Newsletter. I devoured them in one sitting and found the Canadian Navy on the internet as you directed. Now if we could just get the UNTD on-line as well.

Tom Kuiper,
Radio Astronomy Manager,
California Institute of Technology,
Pasadena, California.

Editor's Note: Creating a home page on the internet for the UNTD was discussed at the last executive meeting. The process, cost and management are being investigated.

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your letter and copies of the UNTD Newsletter containing my story of the Wartime UNTD. It is no longer convenient for me to attend your functions but I did want to share my wartime memories in gratitude for the wonderful time that I had with you all at the Halifax Reunion.

Warren Forrester, PhD,
1904 Concession Six,
RR#1 Hampton, ON.

Editor's Note: With the help of people like Warren Forrester, we will continue to flesh out more details about the early years of the marvellous UNTD story.

Dear Editor,

After you published my letter about my UNTD Diary, I received a call from Jim Roberts who was on the 1948 cruise recorded in that diary. It was a thrill to hear from him again after 50 years and we shall get together and chat further. I look forward to receiving regular copies of the newsletter, and thank you for your continuing work in the UNTD.

Don Gillies,
4709 8th Line,
RR#1 Beeton, ON.
(905) 775-5800

Editor's Note: Don and his wife Jeanne have just bought a house at Craig Bay,

south of Parksville on Vancouver Island and will take possession on Oct. 1 '98.

BULLETIN BOARD

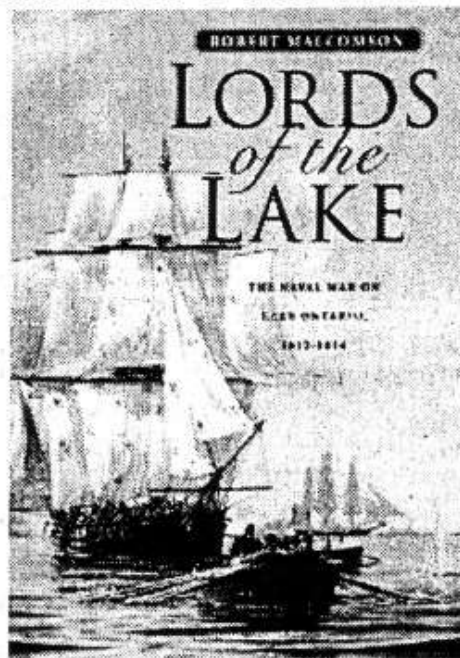
HMCS UGANDA REUNION

There are a few UNTDs who will remember sea training on HMCS Uganda prior to 1950. They may be interested in knowing that there will be a ship's company reunion on September 4-6, 1998 in Hamilton, ON. For information call Bud Bergie at (905) 383-8323.

NEW NAVAL HISTORY Ready For Release

LORDS OF THE LAKE: The Naval War on Lake Ontario, 1812-1814, by Robert Malcomson. Hardcover, 408 pp, 50 illustrations, ISBN 1-896941-08-7, \$34.95. Publisher, Robin Brass Studio, 10 Blantyre Ave., Toronto, M1N 2R4.

Of all the struggles that took place along the border between the United States and Canada during the War of 1812, the most important was the battle for control of Lake Ontario. Armies on both sides depended upon it for transportation and supply. Therefore both nations threw men and materiel into a feverish effort to build vessels at Kingston and Sackets Harbour in order to maintain domination over the lake. Readers of Canadian and Naval History will enjoy Robert Malcomson's dramatic account of these events.



DON'S DIARY

Part I

This is the first instalment of excerpts from the diary of Don Gillies, Ordinary Seaman/Officer Candidate, *HMCS Prevost*, a Math and Physics student at the University of Western Ontario 1945-49. It relates the story of the UNTD "Dream Cruise that Became a Nightmare" in 1948 aboard *HMCS Athabasca*. The record began when a classmate, Parker Alford, gave Don a little black book to keep a record of his experiences. Parker Alford went on to eventually become Head of Physical Science at Western. Don achieved a M.A. in Atmospheric Physics at U. of T. and in 1953 joined the Ontario Hydro's Research Division, retiring in 1987 as Manager of Environmental Protection. The editor notes how the jargon in the diary becomes more nautical as the writer makes the usual UNTD transition from civilian to sailor. The sentiments, routines and activities will be most familiar to anyone who joined the UNTD.

May 14, Friday, 1948: The Alford family was at the London station to see us off: including Parker's sister with a flowery hat, and Jan, his girlfriend. She kissed me on one cheek and Mrs. Alford kissed me on the other so I wouldn't feel neglected. What a royal send-off! When we got to Toronto, my brother Len and his fiancée, Mary Sanderson met me. I assured them that I would be home for their wedding on July 16th. As events unfolded, it was a promise I would not be able to keep.

May 15, Saturday, 1948: After a horrible night of jiggling in an upper bunk, we arrived in Montreal's Central Station at 9 am EST where we had a nine hour wait for the sleeper to the maritimes. We walked to the McGill University Radiation Lab where Parker, Gord Bowman and I were treated to an explanation of the cyclotron, cloud chamber and Beta-ray Spectrograph. Then we took in a movie, "Cass Timberlane" and walked to the top of Mount Royal. After dinner we boarded our train and I climbed into my upper berth above Chuck Moore and across from Verne Trevail and Parker. I settled down and prepared myself for the roughest means of travel since corduroy roads. Give me a nice smooth ship ride any day.

May 16, Sunday, 1948: It was a very drab day riding through New Brunswick. We saw the great Chaleur Bay where Jacques Cartier landed. Otherwise the countryside was most unimpressive. Time advanced an

hour at Campbellford, causing some confusion over meal times. The food was good and we didn't want to miss any. We stretched our legs at Moncton. Boy was it cold! We arrived in Halifax at 8:50 pm and were lined up on the platform - all sixty of us, and then divided according to our final destination. Chuck Moore and Don Arscott stayed at *Stadacona*; Verne Trevail and I went to *Athabasca* while Park and Gord Bowman went to *Portage* for a cruise to Bermuda.

A Fairmile took about thirty of us over to the *Athabasca*. After getting our bedding, we made up our micks. I had a tough time getting mine level but decided to climb in anyway. Totally unlike my experience on the train, I fell asleep instantly.

May 17, Monday, 1948: Woke up feeling well rested at 6.30 am. Breakfast was drab and the weather was even worse. Cold!!! Brother, I never felt anything like it - there was a tang of salt air a mile wide and the sting of a cold north wind a foot thick. I was assigned to the top part of the ship for cleaning stations and nearly froze up there polishing brass until 10 am.

During our "In Routine" we marched over to clothing stores on the base to be issued tropical garb and have an X-ray at the hospital. Saw Phil Chaplin, Don Ramsey and several others from McGill. Also ran into Chuck Moore and Don Arscott who informed me that they have been accommodated in the former wren's block at *Stad*. At 4.30 pm we returned to our ship to mark our newly issued gear. We saw a schedule for tropical routine today: up at 0530 and secure at 1230. I guess it's going to be hot.

Captain Pullen who is Captain D of Canada's destroyers, spoke to us today and I rather enjoyed his comments. After supper, Lionel Janna from Montreal who was with us on the west coast last year, dropped by. At 8.30 pm we listened to the Bob Crosby show on the radio and then watched a movie in the mess, "The Swordsman", starring Larry Parks and Ellen Drew. I am in the forward starboard mess, No. 5, up where it should be good and rough in stormy weather.

May 18, Tuesday 1948: We were supposed to leave harbour today but didn't because of dense fog. Visibility was reduced to 50 yards. We had the afternoon off but stayed aboard the ship because of the weather. The damp cold was so intense - nothing you could imagine unless you experienced it. What a depressing place! Nothing but fog, slums and bitter cold.

May 19, Wednesday, 1948: Finally the fog began to lift and we set sail in the afternoon. *HMCS Portage* and *Swansea* left earlier for Bermuda. As we were leaving Halifax Harbour the sun began to shine and it seemed like a good omen. Then the ship began to pitch and roll in the Atlantic ground swell and by 1630 many green faces began to appear. At supper, few had the stamina to face food. Vern Trevail and Doc from U. of T. were okay, but I could not fool my stomach forever and by 1900 I was as sick as everyone else. The heads were in the worst shape and many guys were just lying on the upper deck around the funnel. After rounds I crawled into my mick and fell asleep until shook for duty watch at 2330.

May 20, Thursday, 1948: I ate no breakfast but worked all morning and slowly began to feel better. Dinner was okay at noon and I went on watch again. This time I got to steer the ship from 1500 to 1600 and did quite well. New Jersey is abeam to starboard and we have a New York City radio station tuned in. My left arm is getting rather stiff as we received shots in each arm for typhoid and small pox. Although Halifax was dismal, now that the sun is shining brightly on a sea that is as blue as the sky, and the air is as fresh as a newly bathed baby, I feel His Majesty's Canadian Navy is a great life for summer employment.

May 21, Friday, 1948: We are opposite the coast of North Carolina today and have entered the Gulf Stream. The water has changed colour to a gorgeous medium blue and the weather has warmed considerably. The wind is still quite strong and my face looks like a shiny red apple. Tropical routine would begin tomorrow at 0530. We'll be on watch from 0400 to 0800 so it won't inconvenience us. While on watch we wear tropical gear: a T - shirt, shorts and knee length socks.

I was painting ship most of the day and have paint all over my hands, face and clothing. Most of us are dead tired from lack of sleep and bodies can be found sprawled in any quiet place especially on the locker cushions in our mess. We have all regained our appetites, except for poor Gus Higuchi. The ship's canteen supplies fountain cokes and chocolate bars to sooth our empty stomachs. Meals have suddenly become more enticing. We had spuds, roast fish, and cabbage salad for dinner with coconut cream pie as duff (dessert). The pie was excellent but too small.

May 22, Saturday, 1948: The fresh water on the ship is now being rationed and we cannot have a shower. I have given up washing in the morning and just lash up my mick (bed roll) and dash down to the galley for breakfast. Today when we came off watch at 0800, everyone else had turned to and we had the galley and washrooms all to ourselves. What a luxury! Everyone secured at 1230 and after lunch, caught up on much needed sleep in a shady spot on deck.

After supper, Vern Trevail and I played bridge with a chief from the engine room, who goes to McGill. His partner was the coxswain who is a good head. Before turning in we went to the galley for a cup of kye (cocoa to you landlubbers) and it was hot for a change. ...to be continued



Don Gilles, (left) & Verne Trevail, (2nd left) play Bridge with the coxswain.

UNTidy TALES

From

CAPTAIN LITTLER'S MEMOIRS

The following stories have been extracted from Captain Littler's memoirs, entitled, Sea Fever. The book was edited and published in Canada through the efforts of Commodore ret'd, Jan Drent, a former UNTD and brought to the attention of your editor by Sam Huntington, a former cadet instructor and divisional officer.

After *HMCS Micmac*, the West Coast was a very pleasant change and I threw myself into the training programme. I realized that we were not providing a balanced sea and shore training for the university naval cadets. A plan was drawn up whereby two frigates; one from the fleet, and one from the reserve, would be manned from the allowed complement of the one frigate and the cadets under training. These frigates, plus one of our fairmiles, would be based on Bedwell Harbour in the San Juan Islands remote from the flesh pots for the period of sea training. It was also proposed that we take over the empty barracks in *HMC Dockyard*, Esquimalt. The plan was approved by my commanding officer, Commodore "Dutchy" Edwards, and forwarded to the Flag Officer Pacific Coast, Rear-Admiral Harry De Wolf, who ordered it put into effect right away. I started the spring of 1949 with my own barracks and a first-class, hand-picked team. Once a week, we had the *HMCS Naden* band for ceremonial divisions; while the frigates, *Antigonish* and *Beacon Hill*, were attached for the sea-training programme. We had some 500 UNTD cadets under training, plus about the same number of officers and men from the western reserve naval divisions to be passed through the appropriate HMC Schools in *Naden*.

It was a rewarding and hard-working two years; rewarding because the cadets in particular became splendidly fit, what with our physical fitness campaign, so that we easily trounced the rest at each year's Pacific Command track and field meet. Our 0615 training run each morning was tough but it paid off handsomely. I received letters from people like Colonel

Bell-Irving, telling me how they appreciated their son's improvement in physique and outlook. From time to time the high spirits turned into pranks, of which the most famous was the night raid on Royal Roads Naval College. (see *Spindrift* pp 40-44).

As a sequel, I was required to wait upon our Admiral; but prior to this, I had been tendered an apology by my senior cadets to the effect that they hoped that their innocent prank had not caused me problems of their making. Furthermore, they had given me a well-produced operation plan worthy of the naval staff: complete with tide and meteorological details. I was received somewhat gruffly by Admiral De Wolf, who wanted to know what my young devils had been up to. In answer, I gave him the operation plan to read, and he became lost and obviously interested in the well-written detail. Suddenly, a thought came to his mind and he said, "Did you know about this beforehand?" I could truthfully say that I knew nothing until this morning early, when I was acquainted of it by the senior cadets involved. The plan had been concocted by my best senior cadet, a Peter Robinson of Montreal, who was a first-class athlete and a good brain. With an understanding grin, and the thought that perhaps I should start the early morning run at 0500 rather than 0615, he dismissed me to get on with more important work. I often wonder what happened to the cadets who stand out in my memory - Robinson, Hogg, Havelock, Kelso, and the Kings, J. & R. - and so many others.

....to be continued.

SPINDRIFT UNTidy TALES

A must for every UNTD alumni. Reserve your copy by sending \$15.00 + \$2.50 mailing, payable to Robert Williamson (See below)

UNTD NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is published twice a year by the UNTD Assoc. of Upper Canada. Send Letters, anecdotes, suggestions to: Newsletter Editor: Cdr Robert Williamson, 1 Clonmore Ave. Hamilton, Ont. L9A 4R2.