



# THE NEWSLETTER

Of The UNTD Association of Upper Canada



SPRING EDITION

MARCH 2000

EDITOR Robert Williamson

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## UNT D DREAM CRUISE IN POLIO QUARANTINE, JULY 1948

Front: Scotty Wilkinson. 2<sup>nd</sup> Row: Marion Magus, John Quincy, John Hobbs, Louis Champagne, Verne Travail, Chuck Miller.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Row: Joe Jarvis, Paul Parent, Glenn Peister, Gus Higuchi, Warren Brittain, Don Gillies behind Bob Grant, John Bandy behind Al Coombes.  
4<sup>th</sup> Row: Weldon Findlay, Ken Lendon, Hugh Bird, Stan Potter, John Russell. 5<sup>th</sup> Row: George Inch, Jean Roy, Bob Nevins (hidden), Thompson, Jack Coon, Ken Corrigan. 6<sup>th</sup> Row: Alan Squires, Harold Snyder, Jim Roberts.  
Absent: Lloyd Pressnal, Andrew Hugessen, Robert Johnson, Alvin Tate, Gordon Glover, Stan Williams and Bob Morris.  
In Hospital with polio: Paul Present, Bill Purvis, Bob Hutchinson.

Photo courtesy Don Gillies

## UNTD NEWSLETTER

The UNTD Association of Upper Canada publishes this newsletter twice a year. Send Letters, anecdotes, suggestions to: Newsletter Editor: Cdr Robert Williamson, 1 Clonmore Ave. Hamilton, Ont. L9A 4R2,

Or: e-mail

[Abxaxas@worldchat.com](mailto:Abxaxas@worldchat.com)

VISIT THE UNTD WEB SITE

<http://www.unttd.org>

## SPINDRIFT UNTDy Tales

With the approach of the Year 2000 Reunion, the few remaining copies of our anecdotal history will soon be gone. You will not want to miss this collection of stories by graduates of the UNTD program who are now admirals, politicians, judges, doctors, lawyers, executives, educators and civil servants. Their sometimes humorous descriptions of training adventures, misadventures, personalities and places, give substance to our 50 year history and the wonderful, wacky world of University Naval Training.

Reserve your copy by sending \$15.00 plus \$2.50 for mailing, payable to: R. Williamson, 1 Clonmore Ave., Hamilton, ON. L9A 4R2

## CAPTAIN STEELES THE SHOW

On top of everything else, the UNTD Association continues to attract outstanding Guest Speakers for their Annual Reunion Mess Dinners: VAdm. Jock Allan, 1995; Cmdre Robert Baugniet, 1996; Cdr Robert Willson, 1997; and Capt. (N) Peter Newman, 1998. This past November, Capt (N) Richard Steele was no exception. His illustrious career reads like an anthology of World War II Canadian Naval History – corvettes, motor launches destroyers, Scapa Flow, Murmansk Run, Tirpitz, D-Day Invasion and finally Nootka in Korea. His war stories and anecdotes could fill a book let alone a newsletter. Those who attended this year's dinner were completely entertained by this 86 year old man-of-all-seasons. In retirement he has become a world-renowned horticulturist, specializing in flowers of the rhododendron and magnolias family.

He was one of the few RCN officers who fully appreciated the value and potential of the UNTD program. As the Reserve Training Commander in HMCS Stadacona in 1949, he gave his full support to Herbie Little's revised training programs for the UNTD. He has been an enthusiastic supporter of the UNTD ever since and is one of three honorary members of our organization.

*Capt. (N) R. Steele, DSC, RCN ret'd is shown below being thanked by Ben Lamb (back to camera) as president, Alex Wright looks on.*



## DON'S DIARY

### Part IV

*The dream cruise from Halifax to Victoria becomes a nightmare!*

June 26, Saturday, 1948: The weather is cool and foggy. We left Long Beach Harbour at 0600. Next stop Canada! Just a few more days and we will be in Victoria and then I can go home for Len's wedding.

June 28, Monday, 1948: This was a very eventful day. When we reported for the middle watch at midnight, the fog was so thick that we could not see much beyond the bow of the ship. With the foghorn booming every two minutes, I was assigned to stand watch in the "eyes" (far forward) of the ship. The cold mist and spray was slapping me in the face. Boy was it raw! At 0930 there was a great stirring in the bowels of the ship as a second engine was revved up and brought on line. The ship shook from foc'sle to stern with this unleashed power as she increased speed from 16 to 28 knots. The wake from the ship's props rose above the stern and spray from the plunging bow was hitting the bridge. The guys on duty for the forenoon watch reported that we had changed course for Astoria, Oregon to take a sick man to hospital. We heard that during the middle watch, a 23 year old chippie (carpenter), had been carried down to sick bay. By the forenoon he was on oxygen and four men were applying artificial respiration to keep him alive. After lunch, the guys in the mess were buzzing with the news that the sick sailor had died and we resumed our course for Esquimalt. By the end of the day, six more chaps had taken ill and the steward's mess was cleared out as an isolation ward. Two of the ill were UNTD cadets.

June 29, Tuesday, 1948: We arrived in Esquimalt seven hours ahead of schedule. Flying a yellow quarantine flag, we moved from the isolation depot to the jetty at 0800 where the dead man and the sick were taken to the hospital by stretcher. We returned to anchor. There were wild rumours and since we did not know what had caused the sickness, the uncertainty was worrisome. By

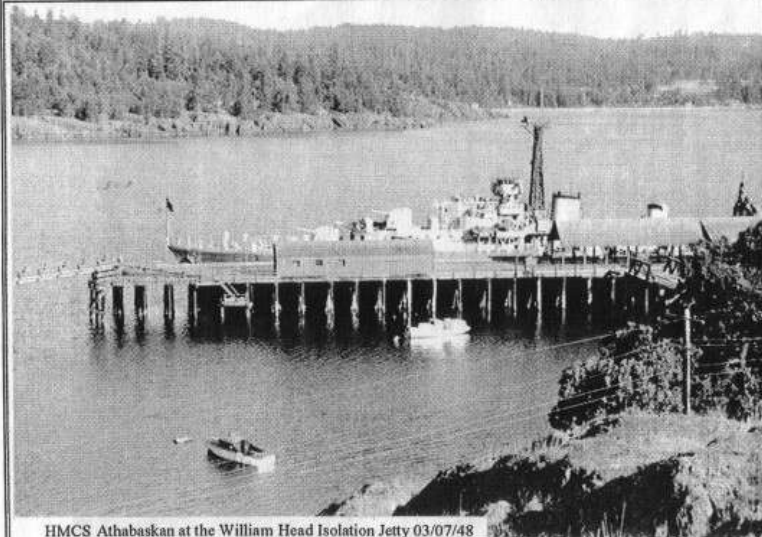
1530 a flag officer came aboard and we were mustered on the quarterdeck. The news was disheartening. The sickness was diagnosed as polio and that required a quarantine period of 14 days. It was a bitter disappointment realizing that I would be unable to get to Len and Mary's wedding. All we could do was sit and pray that no one else got sick.

*Editor's note: It is reported that the senior officer was Commodore H. Brock who read the riot act about using proper channels because the stokers had sent a letter to the Vancouver Sun about conditions on board the ship. The UNTD cadets had also complained in letters home to their parents and consequently some Members of Parliament were asking questions. All this on top of a health quarantine. A dream cruise was becoming a nightmare for the navy as well.*

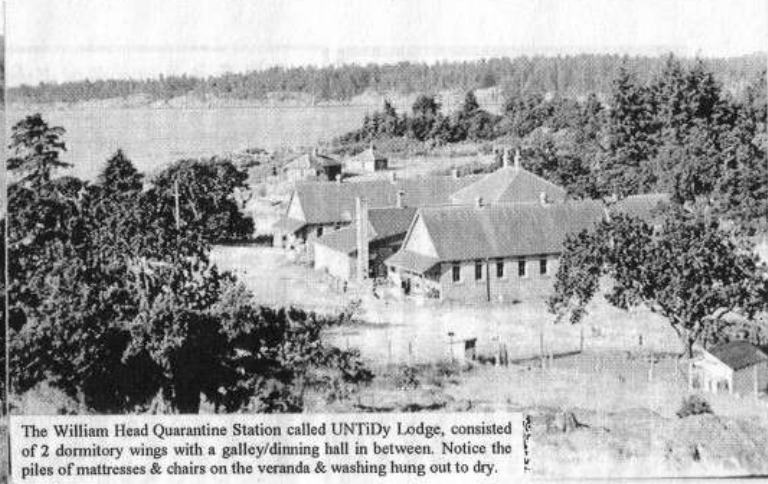
June 30, Wednesday, 1948: Another chap was taken ashore with polio. Everyone is glum. All we can do is sit and wait to see if we get sick or not. *Editor's note: Everyone was also dreading a visit from Canadian customs because a lot of foreign goods had been purchased at low prices. There was no need to worry. Because of the quarantine, the custom official only stood at the rail and asked if anyone had anything to declare. Receiving no response, he made a hasty retreat.* The weather is beautiful and the food is outstanding. We had strawberry short cake today. I guess they are pampering us to keep our spirits up. *(Bob Morris reports that he gained 15 pounds during this extended holiday)*

July 1, Thursday, 1948: The ship was dressed overall at colours, 0800, for Canada Day. The officers challenged the petty officers to a darts competition. The officers, carrying whisky bottles were dressed in pyjamas, bathrobes and straw hats. Carrying a sword and gun, one 6 foot 5 inch officer was policing fair play. As we celebrated Canada's birthday, our time in the Caribbean and Central America, made us appreciate what a fine country we live in.

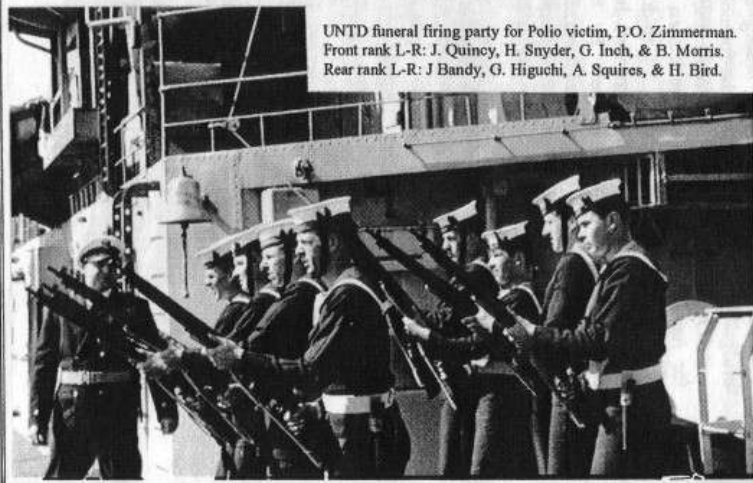




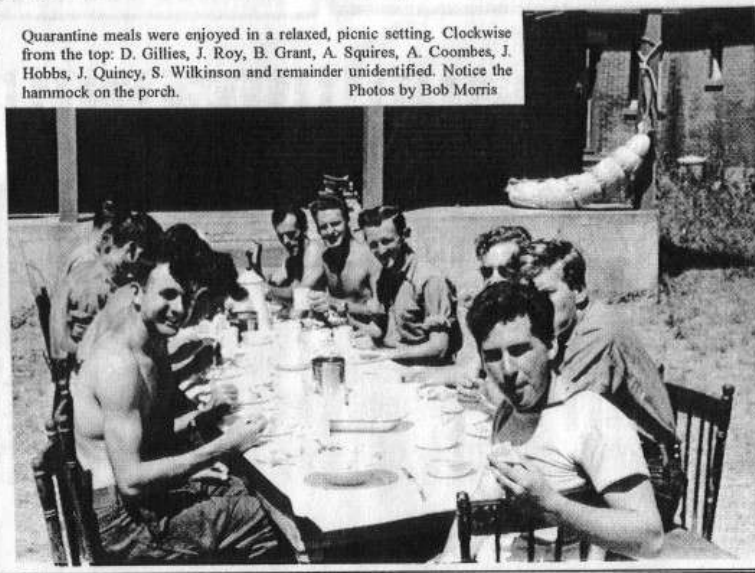
HMCS Athabaskan at the William Head Isolation Jetty 03/07/48



The William Head Quarantine Station called UNTidy Lodge, consisted of 2 dormitory wings with a galley/dinning hall in between. Notice the piles of mattresses & chairs on the veranda & washing hung out to dry.



UNTD funeral firing party for Polio victim, P.O. Zimmerman.  
Front rank L-R: J. Quincy, H. Snyder, G. Inch, & B. Morris.  
Rear rank L-R: J Bandy, G. Higuchi, A. Squires, & H. Bird.



Quarantine meals were enjoyed in a relaxed, picnic setting. Clockwise from the top: D. Gillies, J. Roy, B. Grant, A. Squires, A. Coombes, J. Hobbs, J. Quincy, S. Wilkinson and remainder unidentified. Notice the hammock on the porch.  
Photos by Bob Morris

July 2, Friday, 1948: We weighed anchor and after fuelling, went to the jetty at HMC Dockyard. As the First Lieutenant's messenger, I had a first hand view of all the drama of a burial at sea for Petty Officer Zimmerman who had died from polio. (It has been reported that he had been married in Vancouver just before leaving for the East Coast to join the Athabaskan). At 1400, the naval parade with the casket carried on a gun carriage by 24 sailors came up to the ship. The funeral service ensued with the body and padre on the ship and friends and family on the jetty. After a solemn service, we went to sea. The casket slid down a greased chute into the water as a firing party fired a salute and the last post was played.

Several more men went ashore ill today. There are 9 confirmed cases of polio (*including three UNTD cadets: Paul Presant, Bill Purvis and Bob Hutchinson*).

July 3, Saturday, 1948: We weighed anchor at 0900 and went to the jetty at the isolation station. Most of the crew were landed to live in the shore barracks of the quarantine station. This is the station to which all immigrants, who came from Asia during the building of the CPR, were held to prevent communicable diseases from entering Canada. We are in a good clean building, two men to a room. The floors are mastic tiles and the walls are painted a bilious green. Verne and I share a room with a window overlooking the Strait of Juan de Fuca, a lighthouse and the distant snow-capped mountains of Washington State. We have our own galley which served strawberries and cream today. After supper we played baseball. No one else has taken ill and those in hospital are improving. The future is starting to look a lot rosier than a few days ago when it seemed like we were all awaiting execution.

July 4, Sunday, 1948: This is turning into a vacation. Got up at 0800 (imagine that in the navy), had a great breakfast and walked along the beach. After a fine lunch, highlighted by chicken and ice cream, we

played baseball. After supper the P.O.s beat us, 15-8, so now we are even.

*Editor's note: The next several days were a continuous round of eating, sleeping, bathing, playing cards, competitive tournaments of baseball and horseshoes with beach parties where the old salts from the Royal Navy hauled out renditions of risky songs that the UNTiDies had never heard before.*

July 11, Sunday, 1948: Another wonderful sunny warm day. I pitched for the UNTiDies team and we beat the stokers for the baseball championship. Now we are kings of the ship. Earlier, the coxswain and I won the horseshoe tournament.

John Bandy, a fellow UNTiDy, cut my hair finally. It may look like a bowl was used, but it was either that or move my ears.

July 12, Monday, 1948: We returned to our ship today after cleaning out our quarantine barracks and having a last glorious hot bath. There was no fresh milk on the ship, reminding us that the holiday was over.

Don Gillies

*Editor's note: Don missed the wedding and spent the rest of the summer working on the family farm near Emo, in the Rainy River District of North-western Ontario. Thanks to his spirit of adventure and joy of recording same, we have a document that is an important part of our heritage and rekindles our memories of when we joined the UNTD.*

*Bob Hutchinson, one of the UNTD polio victims, reported that the Medical officer tried to claim that all nine polio victims had been together in a bar in Manzanillo. It wasn't long before the scenario included a mythical whorehouse. Bob says that none of this is true. He does not recall any situation where all 9 victims were together at the same time or place, and that Manzanillo was targeted because of the outbreak of Montezuma's revenge that occurred there. Bob says that the source of the infection will remain a mystery.*

The End

## UNTD SOCIAL EVENTS FOR YOUR YEAR 2000 CALENDAR

**UNTD ASSOCIATION  
BATTLE OF ATLANTIC WEEPERS**  
Wardroom & Jetty HMCS STAR, Saturday, May 06, 2000.  
Bar Opens 1500hrs  
Boat Tours of Hamilton Harbour 1500 & 1600 hrs  
Steak BBQ 1800 -1930 hrs  
Followed by the usual Camaraderie  
Cost: \$20.00. Dress: Informal

*This will be a Naval Community event. We have invited the Officers of HMCS Star and members of the Hamilton NOAC. RSVP by April 21 to Bill Thomas (905) 527-1316 Ext 250 or [wthomas@niagara.anglican.ca](mailto:wthomas@niagara.anglican.ca)*

### OTHER EVENTS

**RUM TASTING NIGHT**  
Exotic Caribbean Food  
The Pier, Toronto's Waterfront Museum, 245 Queen'-Quay West, Pier 4  
Friday May 12, 1800 to 2100hrs

Last year this was a UNTD Spring Event. This year it is being offered again as an added opportunity for Toronto Area members. Cost \$40.00 per person (\$35.00 if we have more than 6 people). RSVP Gil Hutton (905) 523-9151 or Jack Kilgour (416) 288-0579

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
Pictures and Stories of Reunion 2000  
Wardroom, HMCS YORK, Thursday, September 28, 2000. Bar opens 1700, AGM 1800 - 1900. Steak BBQ 1915 - 2015. Followed by the usual Camaraderie. Cost to be determined. Dress: Informal.

**ANNUAL REUNION MESS DINNER**  
Traditional Mess Dinner  
Wardroom, HMCS YORK, Saturday, November 18, 2000, 1830 for 1930 hrs. Guest of Honour: Dr. Barry Gough. Professor of History & Assistant Dean of Arts, at Wilfred Laurier University, who has just completed a history of HMCS Haida. Dress: Blazer & Flannels with Service tie or Black tie or Mess Kit or any Naval Uniform that you can get into.

### REMEMBER REUNION 2000 IN VICTORIA

**SEND YOUR APPLICATION IN NOW!**  
Remember, for airline reservations, use the UNTD I.D. # "Canadian MO 3356"  
If for some inexplicable reason, you have not received your Victoria Reunion Information Package, call Gil Hutton (905) 523-9151 or Jack Kilgour at (416) 288-0579

26 Oct., 1999

Dear Editor,

How interesting it was to see my picture with such a head of hair in the **Fall Edition of the Newsletter**. I suspect the others look quite a bit different too.

Here is an interesting sequel to the 1948 cruise. On my way home by train with Jim Roberts, I mentioned that my brother was working at Jasper Park Lodge for the summer. We decided to stay over a day with him at the lodge. Since many student workers had headed home for the new school term, my brother told us to find an empty bunk in the dormitory. That evening we enjoyed a great party. The next morning while returning to the dormitory, we noticed that our kit bags were being confiscated. When we identified our property, we ended up in the manager's office. Except for being sailors, so soon after the war, he probably would have called the Mounties and charged us with some crime. Instead, he billed us \$3.00 for the night's stay and put us on the next bus to the train station.

Ever since then, Jim and I can say with confidence that "We've been thrown out of better places than this"!

George D. Inch,  
RR#3, Burk's Falls, ON.  
P0A 1C0

6 Oct., 1999

Dear Editor,

Please send me a copy of "UNTiDy Tales which I saw advertised on the **new UNTD Web site**. As the Millennium approaches, I am more and more drawn to memories of my days at the University of Manitoba and the Navy. Due to a very thin wallet in my final year of Medicine, I transferred to the RCN. It was the best decision I ever made. In addition to getting my post-grad education in Ophthalmology, I had the opportunity of serving with the U.S.N. for over 3 years in San Diego, and then with the Air Force in Germany at #3 Wing in Zweibrucken. I ended up in "Slackers" before receiving a medical discharge.

Good times – good memories!

Gordon Woodall (Chippawa 1948-51)  
1007-11753 Sheppard Ave. E.,  
Toronto, M1B 5M3

Dear Editor

I came upon your article in the latest issue of "STAR SHELL" with the reference to the UNTD Newsletter. I was a UNTD at HMCS Discovery 1953-55 with summer training on the West Coast in HMCS Antigonish. I would like to join the UNTD Association. Please send me the latest copy of your newsletter.

Ed Brady (O-8263)  
793 Lonsdale Rd.,  
Ottawa, K1K 0j9

9 Feb., 2000

Dear Editor,

I came across this newspaper clipping when I was doing research at the local newsprint mill. It might be of interest for the newsletter. I look forward to seeing you all again at the UNTD reunion at Royal Roads in August.

Charles Copelin,  
P.O. Box 127, Hunts Point,  
Nova Scotia, B0T 1G0

### Learn Value Of Teamwork



NOVA SCOTIANS IN U.S. NAVY SERVICE—Charles W. Copelin, of Liverpool and John Jay of Halifax are shown above with a U.S. Navy midshipman at a summer operation of a .30 calibre light machine gun, using dummy shells, at the U.S. Navy's amphibious base, Little Creek, at Norfolk, Virginia. From left are Midshipman John D. Jerome, USN, of Ridgefield Park, New Jersey; Cadet John Jay and Cadet Charles W. Copelin, Fifty Royal Canadian Naval Cadets are training with the 500 American midshipmen in a naval amphibious warfare exercise known as TRAMID '55 (Training Midshipmen In) at Camp Pendleton, California. The exercise provides a unique opportunity in the U.S. Navy's five-year academy training for midshipmen and cadets from 1948 and were together at a time. TRAMID '55 was organized over the week-end by a detached detail at Camp Pendleton, Virginia, where a full base of 20 midships and some 1,500 men were involved in amphibious operations.

### Halifax Chronicle Herald, June 20, 1955

Fifty UNTD Cadets joined 900 American midshipmen in a naval amphibious warfare exercise, TRAMID '55, at Camp Pendleton, Virginia this weekend. This unique operation in international teamwork will climax with a beachhead assault involving 30 ships and 8,500 men. Shown operating a .30 calibre light machine gun are: Midshipman John D. Jerome, USN, of Ridgefield, New Jersey; Cadet John Jay of Halifax and Cadet Charles W. Copelin of Liverpool, Nova Scotia.



## SAVING HAIDA

Friends of H.M.C.S. HAIDA recently received a letter from the Honorable Cam Jackson, Minister of Tourism, saying that \$100,000 has been given to Ontario Place in order to proceed with the repair and restoration of the ship. He also indicated that responsibility for managing the project has been assigned to the Management Board of Cabinet, chaired by the Honorable Chris Hodgson. This is encouraging news, but much more needs to be done. The estimated total repair bill is \$5 million, to which the Provincial and Federal Governments should each commit at least \$1 million.

Friends of H.M.C.S. Haida has written to Ministers Jackson and Hodgson, asking for a meeting of all the organizations concerned in this project in order to plan for the future. The meeting would include representatives from Management Board, Tourism, Parks Canada, Ontario Place, Friends and other interested parties such as Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage. We hope that she will agree to a cost-sharing plan with the Ontario Government to refit the ship. While we welcome this latest positive step, a firm government commitment to **save Haida** is necessary before we can convince major corporate donors to join the campaign.

Therefore, everyone who reads this is urged to write to: Premier Mike Harris, the Honorable Cam Jackson, your local MPP & MP as well as Sheila Copps, urging them to take immediate action to **SAVE HAIDA**. It is an important monument to the men and women who fought and died so that we could enjoy the freedom that is ours today. We must not let this irreplaceable symbol of our heritage disappear.

Bob Willson

### Addresses:

The Hon. Michael Harris, Premier,  
Rm. 281 Legislative Bldg., Queens Park,  
Toronto, M7A 1A1, Fax: 416-325-3745.  
[ontpc@ontla.ola.org](mailto:ontpc@ontla.ola.org)

Hon. Cam Jackson, MPP, Minister of Tourism,  
900 Bay St., Mowat Block, #rd Floor,  
Toronto, M7A 1R3, Fax: 416-326-9338.  
[ontpc@ontla.ola.org](mailto:ontpc@ontla.ola.org)

MP & MPP Web pages for names and addresses:  
<http://www.parl.gc.ca/36/senmemb/house/MemberDetails.asp> or <http://www.ontla.on.ca>

Hon. Sheila Copps, PC, MP, Minister of  
Canadian Heritage, House of Commons,  
Ottawa, ON. K1A 0A6

If you would like to be put on the mailing list for the Friends of H.M.C.S. HAIDA, please contact Bob Willson at 417 927-1496.

## RELIVE YOUR YOUTH

Do you recall, with pleasure, those wonderful days of your youth spent aboard one of Her Majesty's Canadian Ships? Do you long to stroll the upper deck once more? Would you like to immerse yourself in the nostalgia of that other life? Here is your chance. H.M.C.S. HAIDA is looking for volunteers for a number of tasks (training provided), ranging from naval interpreter to explain things about the ship to visitors, through assisting in the Gift Shop. A commitment of half day a week or every two weeks is required. However, if you want to help out with cleaning and maintenance (no additional experience necessary), you are welcome anytime. Organize a group and spend a day or weekend having fun and helping out. Volunteer benefits include free admission to the ship, and passes to Ontario Place as well as an invitation to an Annual Volunteers Appreciation Night. Help keep Canada's most famous ship operating smoothly while getting away from it all. For details contact Bob Willson at 416 927-1496.

## BOOK PREVIEW

Inspired by the works, literary and otherwise, of local naval historians such as John Harbron, Archie Hodge, Fraser McKee and Robert Williamson, **Will Ogden** has written what will pass for an autobiography of his Naval Reserve experiences. It covers the decade from 1946, when he joined the UNTD, to 1955 when he retired after several summers with the Great Lakes Training Command. Entitled, **The Book That Almost Couldn't Be**, this well illustrated 130 page book has been written in a conversation style which allows the author to employ his flair for witty asides and political commentary. As the author says in his own words, "The purpose of this book is mainly to entertain you. Along its string of anecdotes, I hope the reader may occasionally find a pearl." If you would like more information about this Naval Reserve nostalgia, contact Will Ogden, Box 39, Milford, Ontario, K0K 2P0, Phone. 613 476-8791.