



# THE NEWSLETTER

Of The UNTD Association of Upper Canada



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EDITOR Robert Williamson

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## THE WAY WE WERE

As the UNTD Association celebrates its Year 2000 West Coast Reunion, we look back fifty years in this cover photo to May 24, 1949 in Victoria, British Columbia. Term Lieutenant / Guard Officer, Sam Huntington leads a one-hundred-man UNTD Cadet Guard in a March Past for the Lieutenant Governor at Beacon Hill Park. The cadets are wearing their newly acquired battle dress uniforms with the white twist on the lapel. *Royal Canadian Naval Photograph Z9833, courtesy Sam Huntington*

## WEST COAST REUNION

The West Coast Reunion has just come to an end as this text is being prepared and the more adventuresome attendees are enjoying a cruise to Alaska. The Spring Newsletter will have a detailed report on this major event. However, as a member of the planning committee, your editor has gathered a few notes on the work that went into pulling off this extraordinary event and the feedback from some early returnees.

First indications are that the 150+ former cadets and their wives who attended had a wonderful time. Credit must be given to the entire committee for the successful planning of this operation with special recognition to Gil Hutton, Jack Kilgour, Rev. Bill Thomas and Doug Hain. You can be sure that organizing a reunion at a site over two thousand miles away is a most difficult and costly undertaking.

That difficulty was not appreciated by a few former UNTiDies who complained that many of the several thousand former cadets like themselves did not get invitations to the reunion. They, like a few other out-of-touch individuals seemed to be of the opinion that someone has kept an updated roster of cadets for the last 57 years. Some people seem to have forgotten that Defense Minister Hellyer disbanded the UNTD, along with many other aspects of the Canadian Armed Forces and their records in 1968. Nor have some people given much thought as to where the several thousand dollars would come from to pay for a comprehensive mailing, if such a thing were possible. Our committee did in fact send out close to 1,000 invitations to individuals who have maintained some interest in the UNTD over the years. We could only hope that word of mouth would help to further publicize the reunion as it did for these complainers. Too bad they declined to attend.

A few years ago, Bob Morris heard about the UNTD Association by word of mouth and happily did attend the reunion with his wife, Laura. They had a great time, combining their trip with a family reunion. Bob and Laura were both pleased with their registration gift of a book by Latham B. Jenson, "Tin Hats, Oilskins & Seaboats". They also found their accommodations at Royal Roads, very comfortable. The Meet & Greet, held in the setting of the old castle wardroom overlooking the Straits of Juan de Fuca was an impressive

way to begin the reunion. All went well until a few individuals wandered off on an impromptu tour and set off the building security alarm.

Bob was particularly impressed with the Friday tour of HMC Dockyard and the new frigate, HMCS Vancouver. Being an engineer, he found the tour of the ship to be a fantastic experience and was filled with pride in the Canadian engineering that he witnessed. The smorgasbord sandwich lunch that was prepared by the ship's cooks on the helicopter deck was nothing to be sneezed at either.

When the Sooke Logger's Show and Salmon Feast fell through, the organizing committee debated over a replacement program. As it turned out, the Cowichan Native Village Coast Salish Feast was a superior evening. Everyone came away from that event with the impression that the Coast Salish Natives must have gone into decline from overeating.

The Saturday tour of Victoria and Butchart Gardens was conducted under excellent weather. As good as these attractions are, the highlight had to be the hot buffet lunch at the fabulous, new wardroom at Naden overlooking the Straits and Olympic Mountains of Washington State.

The mess dinner held on the quarterdeck in Grant Block at Royal Roads, was the best attended event of the reunion. The West Coast UNTiDies turned out in full force. Radm. Buck, Maritime Commander Pacific, was the guest of honor and Peter C. Newman, the guest speaker. It was a grand affair, although Gil Hutton had his moments of frustration in trying to get the civilian caterer to understand the requirements of naval tradition.

Rev Bill Thomas, using the old RCN Naval Prayer Book conducted a very moving Church Service on Sunday. It brought back a lot of memories, as did the Up-Spirits and Brunch that followed. The brunch caused a few UNTiDies to relive their experiences at fire fighting school when an alcohol lamp under a hot tray exploded, setting off the fire alarm. The building was evacuated until the fire department gave the all clear.

In summing up the reunion, what was the bottom line for Bob Morris? He would not have missed it for the world, and it would not have happened without guys like Gil Hutton & Co. *Editor*



## THE PASSAGE OF FIFTY YEARS

### THE WAY WE WERE & THE WEST COAST REUNION

(Top) Fifty years ago in 1949, these UNTD cadets from HMCS Antigonish and HMCS Beacon Hill formed up for a Church Parade. The site has been lost to memory, but judging by the size of the jetty and the coal / ore cars in the background, it has to be a large port in British Columbia, possibly Victoria. If anyone recognizes the location or cadets, let the editor know.

*Photo courtesy Sam Huntington*



(Center) Bob Morris and wife Laura at the West Coast Reunion, August 24, '00 and the way he appeared as a UNTD cadet in 1948 on the polio cruise in HMCS Athabaskan. Note that in 1948 UNTD cadets wore sailors' rig.

*Photos courtesy R. Morris*

(Bottom) On August 25, '00, former UNTD cadets attending the West Coast Reunion gathered at Cowichan for the Native Village Coast Salish Feast.

*Photo courtesy R. Morris*



## IN MEMORIAM

Donald Kenneth Alan GILLIES

Jan. 17, 1924 – Mar. 14, 2000

UNTD HMCS Prevost (U.W.O) 1946-49

The Spring Edition of this newsletter, containing the last installment of Don's Diary, was being mailed to our membership when your editor received the sad news that Don had passed away. He died of complications brought on by a bad case of the flu, bronchitis and asthma. How unfortunate that Don did not get to see the final part of his diary in print. His wife, Jeanne, said that he had gained great pleasure in having his story featured in our newsletter. He was both honored and flattered by the popular response that his historical record of the polio cruise had engendered in our readers. It is therefore fitting that we include a brief tribute to his memory.

Don was born in humble surroundings near Emo in northwestern Ontario, 76 years ago. After graduating from high school, he taught in a one-room schoolhouse, until he accidentally burned it down. He managed to enroll in a science program at the University of Western Ontario after receiving a scholarship from a successful businessman who made a fortune in the lumber industry. He joined the UNTD in 1946 and graduated with a BSc. in 1949. After completing his MA in Atmospheric Physics at the U. of T. in 1950, he married Jeanne de Jausserand whom he described as his lover, friend, homemaker and arguing companion. They raised three boys, Doug (California), Bruce (Vancouver) and Grant (Edmonton). Don joined the Ontario Hydro's Research Division in 1953 and retired as Manager of Environmental Protection in 1987. His work in meteorology and hydrography was exciting and creative. It involved research in winds on the Great Lakes, water levels and ice jams. Don and Jeanne lived in Etobicoke until retiring to the rural life near Beeton, Ontario. There, they enjoyed curling, lawn bowling, golf and horticulture for nearly 13 years. Then, looking for a gentler climate and closer proximity to their children and grandchildren, Don and Jeanne moved to Parksville on Vancouver Island two years ago.

In his funeral plans, Don's naval experience and love of the sea was reflected in his final request. After cremation, he asked that his ashes be scattered from the ferry between Nanaimo and Horseshoe Bay. He also wanted "Amazing

Grace" played at his memorial service. The latter was accomplished with great feeling, but the former could not be arranged and he is interred at St. Anne's Cemetery, Parksville.

Don's son, Bruce, remembered in his eulogy that his father's great passion was major league baseball. Starting as a boy in Emo, Ontario, he listened to games on the radio. His life-long dream came true when he was able to attend an All-Star game and the World Series in Toronto.

Life-long friend, Parker Alford, remembered in his eulogy that he and Don met 55 years ago when they registered as science students at U.W.O. Their friendship expanded when they joined the UNTD and were shipped off to Esquimalt to learn how to march, scrub decks and chip paint. They also learned that British Columbia was a beautiful part of the world and a great place to live, even though it would take the better part of a lifetime before they moved there. Parker felt that living together in the men's mess of a naval ship was a great way to learn about people and it was there that it became clear that Don was an unusually cheerful, kind, patient and unpretentious person. He enriched the lives of all those he met. For that reason, Parker gave Don a diary to keep a record of his UNTD experiences. It was that diary in which he recorded the 1948 dream cruise in HMCS Athabaskan.

By sharing the recorded thoughts from his diary, Don has helped to rekindle the happy memories of our past experiences. In keeping with that sentiment, Jeanne Gillies would like to hear from any of Don's friends. She can be reached by e-mail: [jgillies@nanaimo.ark.com](mailto:jgillies@nanaimo.ark.com) or Phone / Fax: (250) 248-2492, 1229 Saturna Drive, Parksville, B.C. V9P 2T5.



Don Gillies & Ralph Swartz 1948

*Photo courtesy Bob Morris*



## **UNTD SOCIAL EVENTS FOR YOUR YEAR 2000 CALENDAR**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

#### **FEATURING**

**Pictures, Videos and Stories  
Of the West Coast Reunion**

**Wardroom, HMCS York  
Thursday, September 28, 2000  
1800 hours for A.G.M.  
1915-2015 Steak B.B.Q  
Dress Informal**

### **ANNUAL REUNION MESS DINNER**

#### **Traditional Naval Mess Dinner (Stag)**

**Wardroom H.M.C.S. York  
Saturday, November 18, 2000**

**Reception on the Quarterdeck 1830  
Roast Beef Dinner with Yorkshire Pudding 1930  
Dinner Wines & Port  
Tariff \$60.00**

#### **Guest Speaker**

**Professor Barry Gough  
Assistant Dean of Arts & Professor of History  
Published a Comprehensive History of HMCS Haida**

**Invitations mailed early October  
Mark your calendar now**

**Note: Fines for breach of etiquette will be the requirement to tell a humorous story**

**For further information contact Bob Wilson  
(416) 927-1496  
or  
bwillson@istar.ca**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

11 May, 2000

Dear Editor,

Just a note to acknowledge receipt of "Spindrift, UNTDy Tales". I thoroughly enjoyed it, especially the input from Herbie Little. It was fun to read about people I have known such as: Buck Bennett, Jim Houston, Dave McLay and of course the ubiquitous Gil Hutton. I must admit, he tells a good story. Other familiar names included Don Bethune, Derek Bates, John Deadman, Stan Schatz (whom I served with in DT 7 in 1949), and Sam Huntington (whom I worked with at FOND).

Another item that I found interesting was the mention of the "Great Imposter" in HMCS Cayuga under the command of Cdr. Plomer. He was mentioned in Milner's book as contributing to the debate on unification led by Paul Hellyer. The widow of one Captain Plomer lives near to us. I wonder if there is a connection?

Needless to say, now that I've read your book, I'm sorry I didn't do it sooner. It would have influenced the UNTD stories that I told in my book: "The Book That Almost Couldn't Be"

Will Ogden, P.O. Box 39,  
Milford, ON. K0K 2P0

Aug. 12, 2000

I am Hadden Whitelaw, UNTD Discovery 1954, same class as Bob Wootton and Mike Cooper. I hope I can still order a copy of "Spindrift, UNTDy Tales". I will be at the West Coast Reunion. Hope to see you there.  
[hadiaw@yahoo.com](mailto:hadiaw@yahoo.com)

June 14, 2000

In my view the Spring Weepers at HMCS Star in Hamilton on May 6, 2000 was a great success with a good turnout. A number of the attendees were surprised at the beautiful setting of Star's new wardroom and the ease of access from Hwy 403. A tour of the new facilities and naval museum was conducted by Bob Williamson, UNTD 1958-61, former C.O. of Star. The catering was excellent and the camaraderie, first class.

Wm C. Thomas  
[wthomas@niagara.anebcn.ca](mailto:wthomas@niagara.anebcn.ca)

## CORRECTIONS

### Photo Captions

In the cover photo of the March 2000 issue of this newsletter, the cadet in the middle of the back row was misidentified as Harold Snyder. We now believe that it is Ralph Swartz. The same mistake was made in the picture of the UNTD funeral firing party. This information now helps us identify Ralph Swartz in several other pictures that were not used in the newsletter. Also in the cover photo, we now know that the Thompson in the 5<sup>th</sup> row is Mike Thompson from Nova Scotia. *Editor*

### E-mail

The editor of this newsletter now has a new e-mail address. He can be reached at:

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

### CAN YOU HELP?

Your editor has recently discovered that Gus Higuchi, a shipmate of Don Gillies on the Dream Cruise, also just passed away and was buried at sea. More information has been requested on the Internet.

### SPINDRIFT UNTDy Tales

Now that the Year 2000 Reunion is over, 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 57 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 or phone: (905) 283-6064

### UNTD NEWSLETTER

The UNTD Association of Upper Canada publishes this newsletter twice a year. Send letters, anecdotes, or suggestions to Newsletter Editor: Cdr Robert Williamson, 1 Clonmore Ave., Hamilton, Ontario L9A 4R2; OR e-mail

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