THE NEWSLETTER

Of The UNTD Association of Canada

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UNTD ALASKA CRUISE 1960

The camera recorded the first class of third year UNTD cadets to complete their watchkeeping training in YFP 320 and YMT 10. Left to Right - Rear: Jim McGarry (London), Mike O'Dwyer (London), ~~F. McCutcheon (Toronto)~~, W. D. Allin (Toronto), Don Strangway (Toronto), Chris Carr (Surrey Eng.), Jim Graham (Toronto), Phil Lake (St. John's); Middle: Bob Williamson (Hamilton - Newsletter Editor), ~~Bob Kerr (Winnipeg)~~, Jim Reid (Ottawa), Vic Hay (Winnipeg), Harvey Newman (Halifax), T. Finn (Ottawa), Gary Muir (London), Dick Blosdale (London); Front: LS. Walsh, LS. Brouse, Lt. Clark, Lt. Svensen? Lt. Walker, Unknown, Unknown, LS. Girvan. Now over 40 years later, this officer cadet sea training program is making Naval news! See the Cover Story inside.

DND photo courtesy Bob Williamson.

John McElwain Bruce Henderson

COVER STORY

OLD YARD AUXILIARY TRAINING VESSELS TO BE REPLACED

Announced in CFB Esquimalt Lookout, 17 June '02

The days of helping junior naval reserve officers find their sea legs on the west coast are coming to an end for several Yard Auxiliary Gate (YAG) vessels, formerly known as Yard Ferry Personnel (YFP) 306, 308, 312, 314, 319 and 320. For the last four decades, these fifty year old wooden-hull harbour boats have served as training platforms for MARitime Surface (MARS) officers in Phase II & III of their training at CFB Esquimalt. Finally, high maintenance costs and out-dated equipment are forcing them into retirement. The first three of six new boats are expected to come into service in 2005.

The new vessels will incorporate the latest technology and modern accommodations. Speed will grow from 10 to 18 knots and the length from 75 to 100 feet with a draught of six feet, making it more difficult for these vessels to come alongside small marinas as they did in the past. They will also have a greater endurance and will not have to frequent marinas as often, based on fuel and water requirements. Improved living space, galley and waste storage will mean a hotel endurance of three to five days. The greater speed and endurance will give them the legs to reach larger ports.

The bridge of the replacement vessels will be fitted with an electronic charting system, radar and global positioning system. On the old YAGs there was a plain chart table and a gyro.

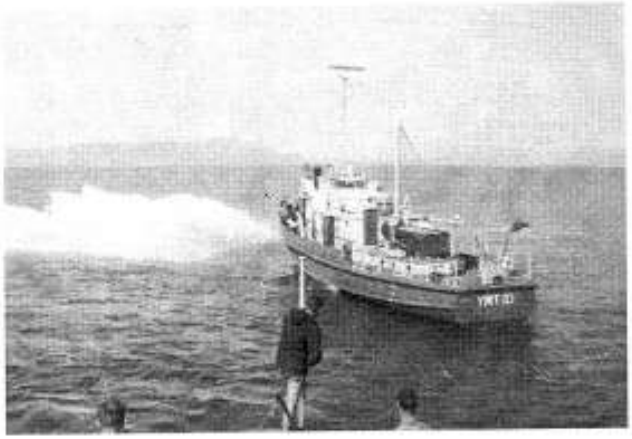
Each MARS II class spends two weeks at sea to learn seamanship, line handling and anchor work. During MARS III the emphasis is on watchkeeping. The old YAGs have proven to be essential to this form of naval reserve officer training.

The program began in 1960 when the few remaining frigates were devoted to Regular Officer Training Plan (ROTP) training. This left the UNTD planners scrounging for sea training resources. Two wooden harbour or yard craft were signed over as UNTD training platforms. They were YFP 320 and Yard Maintenance Tender (YMT) 10. The 10-boat was an essential part of the package because it alone was fitted with radar, a gyro and crew accommodations. YFP 320 didn't even have a compass. To convert the vessel from a ferryboat configuration, the passenger benches had to be removed from the main cabin, abaft the engine room and from the smaller cabin forward of the wheelhouse. A make-shift galley and bunk beds were installed in the forward cabin. Bunk beds for cadets as well as a chart table were installed in the main cabin with a compass binnacle on the quarterdeck. (There was no bridge on the first YFP training vessel). Since the YFP was not designed to facilitate mess decks, the capacity of the small fresh water tank had to be supplemented by lashing brand new galvanized garbage cans on the upper deck. The electrical system also had its limitations. The toaster and electric kettle could not be used at the same time.

The YAGs proved to be ideal for the UNTD because of the more relaxed atmosphere in dress, discipline and daily routine compared to RCN ships. On the other hand, cadets had to do everything, including the cooking. There was a real sense of ownership and independence. Victualling might include an afternoon of fishing for salmon, while painting involved adding UNTD lettering on the kisbie float and a red maple leaf on the funnel. The shallow draught meant that these vessels could visit marinas, resort and beach communities untouched by the rest of the navy, not to mention virgin fjords with breath-taking scenery.

In addition to the eight or ten cadets, the crew consisted of two officers, a diesel mechanic and communicator. The training program proved to be so successful that it gradually expanded to include six YAGs and two diving tenders. The YFPs were soon modified for navigation training by adding a bridge to the top of the wheelhouse. It was fitted with a gyro compass, chart table, voice pipe and radio.

The following YAG stories can be found in UNTiDy Tales: The Boat Boom p93, Missing and Presumed…p97, Pass the Bucket p99, Sea Otter Saga p102, Sailing in Circles p104, Who Stole the Ship? P131, and Involuntary Stampeder p132.



Yard Maintenance Vessel 10 was photographed from the top of the wheelhouse of Yard Ferry Personnel 320 as she approached an iceberg off the coast of Alaska in July 1960. This was the first time that these vessels were used as UNTD training platforms.

Photo by Robert Williamson

FORT NIAGARA CAPER

By Hugh Franks, proxy for Lt. Peter Jones Q.C.

On October 13, 1962, two Naval Reserve Gate Vessels visited Niagara-on-the-Lake for the 150th Anniversary of General Sir Isaac Brock's death at the Battle of Queenston Heights. Hugh Franks and Peter Jones (UNTD University of Toronto 1952-57), both serving officers at HMCS YORK, were assigned to the weekend exercise. Hugh was foc'sle officer on one of the Gate Vessels. At a formal dinner held in the old courthouse after their arrival, the officers heard how an American flag had appeared the night before at the top of Brock's monument.

Fortified by several libations after dinner, Hugh declared the need to redeem the nation's honour and the two former cadets organized a response in "UNTD style". Scrounging a large Union Jack from the regalia lining the next day's parade route, they blackened their faces and donned dark clothing. At 0230, with the aid of a hacksaw, they commandeered a rowboat at the marina and set out to cross the international border to Fort Niagara. As with the American invasion 150 years earlier (to the hour), the river crossing proved to be a much greater challenge than expected. The strong current carried their small boat with only an 8-inch freeboard, towards Lake Ontario. With a supreme effort, the "raiders" in what almost became the "lost ark", arrived under the high riverbank and massive walls of Fort Niagara. It looked impregnable. Scouting up stream they found what they were looking for, an eighty-foot flag pole. Unfortunately, it was in front of a brightly-lit U.S. Coast Guard Station. A decidedly unsafe place for drunken illegal aliens about to perform a criminal act.

However, the situation just added to the excitement for our would-be commandos. They rowed gingerly into the quiet basin and climbed ashore onto an exposed apron under glaring lights - giant Union Jack in hand. It was a warm autumn evening and all the windows of the Coast Guard Station were open. The flag was clipped on by the head but not by the foot and hauled up with the loose end of the halyard gathering at their feet. The pulley at the top of the 80-foot pole, unaccustomed to such free wheeling action, began to squeal vehemently. The raiders froze and looked at the gaping windows, waiting for someone to investigate the disturbance but no one did.

With muffled excitement the raiders returned to whence they had come and the next day as the Gate Vessels were leaving harbour, the giant Union Jack fluttered by its head from the top of the U.S. Coast Guard flagpole. As they passed, Hugh Franks called his foc'sle party to attention, faced starboard and in typical UNTD fashion saluted the transgressing flag of the "Fort Niagara Coast Guard Station Caper".

IN MEMORIAM

THE LAST UNTD STAFF OFFICER
LCDR NOEL LANGHAM (1920-2002)

The UNTD as we knew it came to an end in the late 1960s with the re-organization of the Canadian Armed Forces by Minister of Defense Paul Hellyer. The position of Staff Officer UNTD Cadets was terminated and university campus recruiting offices all across the country closed. A modified officer-training program eventually called NROC (Naval Reserve Officer Cadet), evolved from the chaos.

Noel Langham held the LAST position of Staff Officer UNTD Cadets from 1957 to 1965. On November 28, 2002 he passed away at Wentworth Lodge in Dundas, ON where he had spent most of his time since suffering a stroke in 1996. In the history of the UNTD, his tenure and dedication to officer training holds a place beside the revered Commanders, Baker and Little.

Noel D. Langham
Revitalized the UNTD
1957 - 1965

When interviewed for UNTiDy Tales at his home in Ancaster, Ontario, on September 1, 1992, he still maintained the slim, athletic build, wavy hair and handsome angular features that many of us would remember from his frequent visits to our home divisions. His quick sense of humour and keen eye for efficiency were always as sharp as the press in his immaculate, well-tailored uniform. He believed in the officer-like qualities that could be developed in the young men who joined the UNTD.

His naval career began when he joined the Naval Reserve as an Ordinary Seaman in 1938, working his way up through the lower deck during the war. He had

been the Assistant Training Officer at *HMCS Cornwallis* before being given command of *HMCS Resolute* in 1955. This appointment elevated him to the senior officer afloat in the East Coast mine-sweeping squadron. When appointed to his staff job at COND (Commanding Officer Naval Divisions) in 1957, Langham immediately started a national tour of inspections that became his trademark. A few UNTD Commanding Officers were clearly token appointments and not effective builders of their UNT Divisions. New appointments were made. One Commanding Officer refused to organize a Gunroom for his cadet division claiming that the navy had to get their priorities straight. He needed a staff car before he needed a Gunroom. Langham sent a black "dinky" toy limousine by return mail. The cadets got their Gunroom.

Many university staff officers had been appointed from sea duty and didn't like the paper work involved in running their cadet divisions. Langham sent them all a memo in their first Christmas cards. It said, "When all else fails, follow directions." For those staff officers who didn't get the point, he sent them back to the Coast. In effect there was a general house cleaning.

Langham felt that the UNTD had to be more aggressive in their recruiting. "After all," he said, "what have the Air Force to offer but a leather jacket and a coke."

In general, Langham found that winter training and deportment were pretty slack. During one inspection he saw a cadet with a very green cap badge. (This generally was an indication that a cadet had spent some time at sea where the salt spray had corroded the metal. Such badges were held in high esteem; to the point where some cadets soaked their new badges in a glass of salt water before wearing them.)

Langham said, "Your cap badge is in very poor condition. Can you not get a new one?"

The cadet responded, "Well Sir, I haven't tried because I like this one."

Langham retorted, "If you are fond of it, take it to bed with you but don't wear it on parade."

Drill nights had deteriorated to a social gathering once a week to drink beer. Langham established an evaluation instrument to measure the effectiveness of winter training. Then as a means of improving morale, Langham established a UNTD Proficiency Trophy for the best division in Canada. To meet budget cuts, cadet quotas were lowered and standards raised. General List training was introduced. All cadets would take the same standard program for the first two years on the East Coast. Some specialization was allowed in the third year on the West Coast or at *Hochelaga*. Many of the specialist branches such as Air and Constructor were eliminated.

In 1961, Langham asked to be extended for another term because he was enthusiastic about the new focus of UNTD training at *HMCS Cornwallis*. He was proud of the high standards achieved in most of the UNTD Divisions. However, by 1965 the political situation was deteriorating. With regard to Defence Minister Hellyer's policies, he said, "I saw a lot of hard work and a lot of good people going out with the tide." In 1965, when his appointment as SO(C) was completed, Langham joined the tide and took his retirement from the navy. Conditions were in such a state of flux in the Armed Forces that no new appointment was made and the position of SO(C) disappeared. So Langham will go down in the history books as the LAST STAFF OFFICER UNTD. He is survived by his children, Jim, Joanne and Paul as well as a host of grateful UNTD Cadets.

R. Williamson

Jeepers Creepers

TORONTO JUNE WEEPERS

Here's one across Your Bow!!!!

It is planned to stage the UNTD SPRING WEEPERS on June 12. The proposed program was to include a boat tour of the Toronto Harbour since the Hamilton Harbour tour last June was so successful. Alas, after much investigation, the cheapest cruise in Toronto rents for $3,000.00, (minimum four hours) not including food and bar. That cost would be prohibitive unless we were expecting three hundred guests. We even considered the use of Whalers with a possible competition between Hamilton and Toronto but whalers are no longer a part of the navy's inventory.

Plan B. Conyers Baker, who was to assist me in this endeavour, announced that after much deliberation, he would not be available because he planned to attend Rear Admiral Debby Piers 90th birthday, to be staged at the admiral's residence in Chester, Nova Scotia.

We are now considering the possibility of flying down for the party if we can find two UNTD corporate jets that are available. We could muster in Chester, fall in on the lawn, a march past to ensue with Debby taking the salute from his front porch. We might even get Conyers to arrange for the Stadacona Band. There would be much sipping to follow as well as a sumptuous repast I'm sure. After bidding our farewells we could fly back to Toronto by midnight. Considering the cost of a Toronto Harbour cruise, this might be a reasonable alternative. ($5.00 Cdn. extra for bottled water.)

Note: Plan B subject to change.
We welcome any of your suggestions for Plan C through K. Contact Hugh Franks
Bus. # (416) 363-8871
A WEEPERS NOTICE WILL BE MAILED

2003 UNTD SOCIAL EVENTS
MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW

SPRING WEEPERS

THURSDAY JUNE 12TH,
Contact Person Hugh Franks Bus. # (416) 363-8871
A Weepers Notice Will Be Mailed
(See story on page 4)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, September 24, 2003 – Staff College Dining Room
Bar opens 1730. 1800 hours for Dinner, 1900 for AGM
Cost Estimated @ $12.00 per person. Dress Jacket and Tie. Wives & Friends Welcome
Contact Tom Ferens for information, (416) 299-7285 or <evetomfere@rogers.com>

ANNUAL REUNION MESS DINNER

DINE THE LADIES DINNER FORMAT

Wardroom HMCS YORK Saturday, November 15, 2003
Reception on the Quarterdeck 1830 / Roast Beef Dinner with Yorkshire Pudding 1930
Dinner Wines & Port, Tariff $TBA.
Guest Speaker TBA

NOAC ACTIVITIES

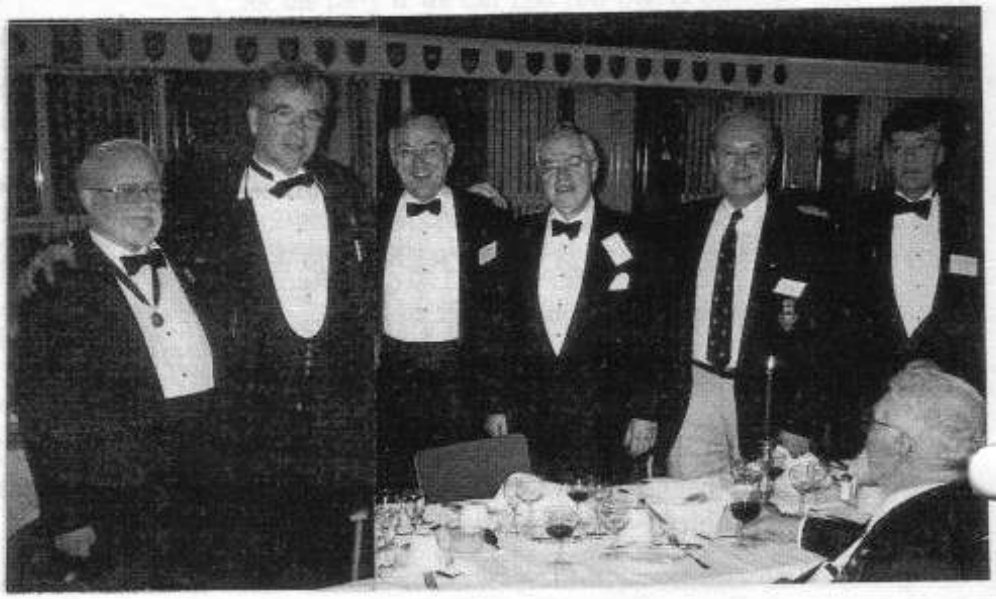
11 APRIL	**PAST PRESIDENTS & AWARDS NIGHT**	**HMCS YORK**	**1800**
30 APRIL	**HAMILTON AREA LUNCHEON** Speaker – Ray Richardson, former XO of HMCS Mimico Subject – From D Day to the Last Convoy	**RHYC**	**NOON**
2 MAY	**BATTLE OF ATLANTIC MESS DINNER**	**HMCS YORK**	**TBA**
8-11 MAY	**NATIONAL CONFERENCE & AGM**	**VANCOUVER**	
24 SEPT.	**HAMILTON AREA LUNCHEON** Speaker & Subject to be announced.	**BURLINGTON NAVAL CLUB**	**NOON**
29 OCT.	**HAMILTON AREA LUNCHEON** Speaker – Ernie Hillrich, served in Fairmiles, an American "4 stacker" & a Frigate Subject – One Man's RCNVR, 1940-45	**BURLINGTON NAVAL CLUB**	**NOON**

ANNUAL REUNION MESS DINNER All photos by Terry Doran

Starboard Table, left side: John Sherin,Conyers Baker, Ron McKinlay, unidentified, unidentified, Hal Wilkinson
Right side: Terry Doran, Jim Roberts, Ben Lamb, Tom Ferrens, unidentifird

Above: Guest Speaker, Wayne Abbot, Television Producer of "Unlucky Lady"

Port Table, left side: Vice – Bob Williamson, Darrell Beninger, Iain Munro Ross Connell, Richard Baker, Bill Milne.
Right side: Doug Hain, Phil Westbrook, Paul Costello, & Bill Brown.



Right: Many of the original members of the UNTD Association were in attendance, including six of the founding members shown here: Gil Huton, Alex Wright, Bill Brown, Richard Baker, Reg Kowalchuk & Mark Llewellyn. Missing: Doug Broad

ATHABASKAN
Subject of the
ANNUAL MESS DINNER

Once again, dinner-chairman, Bob Willson organized a great dinner and an exciting guest speaker. The fine turnout, as illustrated on the adjoining photo page, is a complement to his efforts. At last years Reunion Dinner we heard about **Haida's** departure from Toronto. This year the subject was her sister ship, **HMCS Athabaskan**. Based on the book, "Unlucky Lady", T.V. Producer, Wayne Abbot has created a documentary that is in his words, "testimonial driven". The program has four parts. Act I gives an account of the sinking as described by survivors. Act II features the experience of the men in the water and the riveting moment when Captain DeWolf in **Haida**, terminated his rescue efforts. The remaining two acts recount the story of the 85 men who were picked up by the Germans to become prisoners of war and the impact made by the 91 bodies that washed ashore on the coast of Brittany.

When the film crew studied the well-tended graves of Canadian sailors on the Ile de Bas, the local inhabitants became concerned and implored, "Please don't take them away". The French have adopted the Canadian casualties. On the other hand, the story gave closure to many of the families of the Canadians killed in the sinking. They had until now no clear understanding of what had happened to their loved ones.

However, there is not yet any closure on what exactly caused the second fatal explosion some twelve minutes after the **Athabaskan** was stopped in the water by a torpedo strike on her stern. Wayne Abbot revealed that the wreck of the Athabaskan has been found and this summer, divers will investigate the site to find the answer to this long-standing question. Was it a mine, a second torpedo fired by an E Boat or one of the Elbing destroyers, friendly fire from an MTB or an internal explosion?

Coincidentally, this was the subject of a recent article in the Canadian Military History Magazine, Summer Edition 2002, Vol. 11, No.3. Written by Michael Whitby, the story is well illustrated and gives the following summation.

There is no question that events on the night of 28/29 April 1944 were confused. But we know through the examination of German records that the German destroyers T-24 and T-27 did not fire any additional torpedoes after their initial salvo. That same record tells us that no other German vessels were in the immediate vicinity of the action. That eliminates a second German torpedo as the cause of the massive explosion at 0427.

Searching further for the source of a second torpedo, Peter Dixon chose to blame MTB-677, but when his case is examined closely, it is clear that there is much evidence against it. That leaves an internal explosion as the likely cause of the second explosion. Here again the German records describe a "column of fire 200 metres high with a big mushroom of heavy smoke and burning oil, characteristic of an internal explosion". After the initial torpedo hit, a fire burning out of control for over twelve minutes in the vicinity of the after four inch magazine would have provided the elements for the catastrophic explosion that devastated the "Unlucky Lady".

Editor's Note. A copy of Canadian Military History can be obtained by writing to:

Canadian Military History, Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, ON. N2L 3C5 or
Email: mbechtho@wlu.ca
Phone (519) 884-0710 ext. 4594
Fax (519) 886-5057
www.canadianmilitaryhistory.com

The same issue of the magazine also contains a naval article written by your Newsletter Editor, entitled,

The First Encounter,

the story of the first meeting of Commodore Yeo RN and Commodore Chauncey USN in their fight for naval supremacy on Lake Ontario 7-10 August 1813.

Wayne Abbot's next T.V. project will be about War Letters and Diaries of World War II. For more information about his UNTD Reunion Dinner speech or T.V. projects, contact him at (416) 604-1178 or write to him at: - 508 Riverside Drive, Toronto, ON M6S 4B5

Editor

AUBREY'S ODYSSEY
UPDATE

The story of Aubrey and Judy Millard appeared in the March 2002 Newsletter. He joined the UNTD in 1956 at **HMCS Star** and retired from the RCNR at **HMCS York** in 1993. They have just returned to the Mediterranean after a two-month visit and speaking tour in the Toronto-Hamilton area

This past year they went on an Eastern Mediterranean Yacht Rally visiting Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Egypt. They also spent two months cruising in the Greek Aegean before returning to their home base at Kemer Marina, a liveaboard community in Turkey.

They plan to be in Istanbul by June this year to begin a counter clockwise circumnavigation of the Black Sea. They expect to be in Sevastopol by late July for the Russian Fleet Review, then returning via Romania to winter in Crete. You can follow their adventures by reading his journals on the internet, www.searoom.com, or contact them directly at veleda@superonline.com. They would love to hear from you. Transcribed from Millard's email.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
A New and Successful Venue
September 25, 2002

The Armour Heights Officers Mess of the Canadian Forces Staff College and an entertaining program proved to be a very successful format for the 2002 AGM. In recent years, attendance has been flagging at the AGM but this year over 30 members and their wives / guests gathered for a sumptuous but reasonably priced buffet dinner in the Senior Officer's Private Dining Room. Gil Hutton presided over the dinner and had all members introduce them selves with a little UNTD preamble and the usual spirited repartee around the table. One notable guest was Ben Lamb's daughter who was visiting from England and thoroughly enjoyed herself.

After dinner, members stayed in the dining room for the AGM, ably presided over by Past President Doug Hain who stood in for President Jack Kilgour. Jack was unable to attend because his wife, Norma had recently fallen and broken her hip. The main agenda of the meeting was the National Reunion in Halifax in 2004. Video excerpts prepared by Doug Hain of some Halifax reunion sites were shown later.

Prior to the meeting wives / guests adjourned to an adjacent lounge where Eileen Williamson, dressed as Miss Susan Shaw of York, gave a mini fashion show of costumes from the period 1812. Eileen's dressmaking hobby has branched into researching and making costumes for herself and husband Commander Bob from the War of 1812 (see photo illustration). Eileen has a charming way of turning any presentation into an entertaining exchange.

With the business meeting efficiently expedited, everyone gathered in the King George VI Lounge to see and hear our guest speaker, Bob Williamson, a.k.a. our Newsletter Editor, masquerading as Commodore Sir James Yeo RN. Yeo was a zealous and enterprising officer whose daring was unequalled in the annals of the Royal Navy. Yet for almost two hundred years, Canadian historians have been spurious of his actions on Lake Ontario in 1813. For the benefit of our UNTD AGM, the Commodore or his reincarnation in period naval uniform did successfully uphold the Royal Navy's reputation with visual illustrations and never before disclosed facts about Yeo's naval operations. This evidence came to light only recently when Bob Williamson got an opportunity to read and interpret the long lost log of Yeo's flag ship, **HMS Wolfe**. His presentation was based on two magazine articles that he has written for Canadian Military History, (Autumn 1999 & Summer 2002). For further details see the Athabaskan article on page 7 of this newsletter.

Gil Hutton

Eileen and Bob Williamson vividly recreated the naval war of 1812 at the AGM and generated additional interest with their period costumes.
Photo courtesy E. Williamson

The UNTD Association of 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; Phone (905) 383-6084 or e-mail cdrbob@worldchat.com

VISIT THE UNTD WEB SITE
http:www.untd.org/

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