

Men Behind The Guns

Phil Ochs

Let's drink a toast to the admiral
And here's to the captain bold
And glory more for the commodore
When the deeds of might are told

They stand to the deck with the battle's wreck
When the great shells roar and pound
And never they fear when the foe is near
To lay their orders down

But off with your hats and three times three
For every sailor's son
For the men below who fight the foe
The men behind the guns
Oh, the men behind the guns

Their hearts a-pounding heavy
When they swing to port once more
With never enough of the greenback stuff
They start for the leave ashore

And you'd think perhaps the blue-blouse chaps
Had better clothes to wear
For the uniforms of officers
Could hardly be compared

Warriors bold with straps of gold
That dazzle like the sun
Outshine the common sailor boys
The lads who serve the guns
Oh, the men behind the guns

But say not a word till the shot is heard
That tells the fight is on
And the angry sound of another round
Says there must be gone

Over the deep and the deadly sweep
Oh, the fire and the bursting shell
Where the very air is a mad despair
The throes of a living hell

But down and deep in a mighty ship
Unseen by the midday sun
Oh, you'll find the boys who make the noise
The lads who serve the guns
Oh, the men behind the guns

And well, they know the cyclone blow
Loose from the cannon's steel
And they know the hull of the enemy ship
Will quiver with the peal

And the decks will rock with the lightning shock
And shake with the great recoil
While the sea grows red with the blood of the dead
And swallows up her spoil

But not until the final ship
Has made her final run
Can we give their rest to the very best:
The lads who serve the guns
Oh, the men behind the guns

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