

# The 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.

Say not a word till the shot is heard  
That tells the fight is on,  
And the angry sound of another round  
That says there must be God

Over the deep and the deadly sweep,  
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  
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.  
The 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:  
To the lads who serve the guns --  
Oh, the men behind the guns.

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