

Barrett's Privateers

Music and Lyrics
by STAN ROGERS

Arranged by RON SMAIL

$\text{♩} = 86$ verse one

Solo 

Oh, the year was sev-en-teen sev-en-ty - eight (How I wish I was in

4 

Sher-brooke now!) A let-ter of marque came from the King to the scum-mi-est ves-sel I've

8 

ev - er seen... God* damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas for A -

12 

mer - i - can gold; we'd fire no guns! Shed no tears! But I'm a bro - ken man on a

16 

Hal - i - fax pier, the last of Bar - rett's Pri - va - teers Oh,

verse two

20 

El - cid Bar - ret cried the town (How I wish I was in Sherbrooke now!) For



(How I wish I was in Sherbrooke now!)



(How I wish I was in Sherbrooke now!)

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24

twen - ty brave men, all fish - er - men, who would make for him the

27

An - te - lope's crew. God damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas for A -

God damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas for A -

God damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas for A -

31

mer - i - can gold; we'd fire no guns! Shed no tears! But I'm a bro - ken man on a

mer - i - can gold; fire no guns! Shed no tears! bro - ken man on a

mer - i - can gold; fire no guns! Shed no tears! bro - ken man on a

verse nine

35

Hal - i - fax pier, the last of Bar - rett's Pri - va - teers. So

Hal - i - fax pier, the last of Bar - rett's Pri - va - teers.

Hal - i - fax pier, the last of Bar - rett's Pri - va - teers.

choir repeats

verse nine - last verse

39

here I lay in my twen-ty- third_ year. (How I wish I was in Sher-brooke now!) It's
 (How I wish I was in Sher-brooke now!)
 (How I wish I was in Sher-brooke now!)

43

been six years since we sailed a - way, and I just made Hal - i - fax

46

yes - ter - day. God damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas for A -
 God damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas for A -
 God damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas for A -

50

mer - i - can gold; we'd_ fire_ no_ guns! Shed no tears! But I'm a bro - ken man on a
 mer - i - can gold; fire no guns! Shed no tears! bro - ken man on a
 mer - i - can gold; fire no guns! Shed no tears! bro - ken man on a

54 rit. FIN 5

Hal - i - fax pier, the last of Bar - rett's Pri - va - teers.

Hal - i - fax pier, the last of Bar - rett's Pri - va - teers.

Hal - i - fax pier, the last of Bar - rett's Pri - va - teers.

Performance notes:

*option: "Gall darn them all"

The choir can sing through eight verses of the song without turning a page.

The verses can be sung by a soloist, solocists taking turns or a small group. Barrett's Privateers is all about the story. The text is crucial, so soloists are encouraged to be very expressive and dramatic.



Stan Rogers
1949 - 1983

Historically, the distinction between a "privateer" and a "pirate" has been vague. A **privateer** is a private person or ship authorized by a government by letters of marque to attack foreign shipping during wartime. Privateering was a way of mobilizing armed ships and sailors without having to spend public money or commit naval officers. They were of great benefit to a smaller naval power or one facing an enemy dependent on trade: they disrupted commerce and pressured the enemy to deploy warships to protect merchant trade against commerce raiders. The cost was borne by investors hoping to profit from prize money earned from captured cargo and vessels. The proceeds would be distributed among the privateer's investors, officers and crew. It has been argued that privateering was a less destructive and wasteful form of warfare, because the goal was to capture ships rather than to sink them.

Barrett's Privateers is a modern folk song in the style of a sea shanty, written and performed in 1976 by Canadian musician, Stan Rogers. The song is full of many authentic details of privateering in the late 18th century. It is regarded as one of the Canadian Navy's unofficial anthems and has gained popularity as a drinking song.

Barrett's Privateers is sung from the point of view of a young fisherman who enlisted on Elcid Barrett's ill-fated *Antelope*. The *Antelope* is described as the "scummiest vessel he'd ever seen", and the song describes the many faults of the decrepit sloop.

After describing the initial voyage to Jamaica seeking American merchantmen and the problems with the *Antelope*, the unnamed narrator sings about how he finally found one, loaded down with gold. Unfortunately, the *Antelope's* main-mast is knocked down with one volley from the American vessel and Barrett is killed. The remainder of the song conveys the narrator's disillusionment with privateering and how he's a "broken man on a Halifax pier, the last of Barrett's privateers". The last two stanzas reveal that he is only 23 three years old and has lost both his legs in the battle six years earlier. It has taken all six years to beg his way home.

solo lyrics

verse one

choir joins

Oh, the year was sev-en-teen sev-en-ty - eight (How I wish I was in
Sher-brooke now!) A let-ter of mar-que came from the King to the scum-mi-est ves-sel I've
Chorus
ev - er seen. God* damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas for A -
mer-i-can gold; we'd fire no guns! Shed no tears! But I'm a bro-ken man on a
Hal - i - fax pier, the last of Bar - rett's Pri - va - teers. Oh,

verse two

choir joins

El - cid Bar - rett cried the town (How I wish I was in
Sherbrooke now!) For twen-ty brave men, all fish-er-men, who would make for him the
Chorus
An - te-lope's crew. God damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas (etc.)

verse three

choir joins

The An - te-lope sloop was a sick-en-ing sight (How I wish I was in
Sher-brooke now!) She'd a list to the port and her sails in rags, and the cook in the scup-pers with the
Chorus
stag-gers and jags. God damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas (etc.)

verse four

choir joins

On the King's birth - day we__ put to sea (How I wish I was in

Sher-brooke now!) We were Nine - ty - one days to Mon - te - go__ Bay, pump

Chorus

- ing like mad-men all__ the way. God damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas (*etc.*)

verse five

choir joins

On the nine-ty-sixth day we__ sailed a - gain (How I wish I was in

Sher-brooke now!) When a blood - y great Yan - kee__ hove in__ sight; with our

Chorus

cracked four pounders we made__ to fight. God damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas (*etc.*)

verse six

choir joins

The Yan - kee lay low down with gold (How I wish I was in

Sher brooke now!) She was broad and fat and loose in__ stays; but to catch her took the An - te-lope

Chorus

two whole days. God damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas (*etc.*)

verse seven

choir joins



Then at length we stood two cab-les a - way (How I wish I was in



Sher-brooke now!) Our cracked four-pound-ers made an aw - ful__ din, but with

Chorus



one fat ball the Yank stove us in__ God damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas (*etc.*)



verse eight

choir joins



The An - te - lope shook and pitched on her side (How I wish I was in



Sher-brooke now!) Bar - rett was smashed like a bowl of__ eggs and the

Chorus



main truck car-ried off both me legs__ God damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas (*etc.*)

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verse nine

choir joins



So here I lay in my Twen-ty - third_ year (How I wish I was in



Sher - brooke now!) It's been six years since we sailed a - way and I

Chorus

to the conclusion



just made Ha - li - fax yes - ter - day. God damn them all? I was told we'd cruise the seas (*etc.*)