

Barrett's Privateers

Music and Lyrics
by STAN ROGERS

Arranged by RON SMAIL

♩ = 86

verse one

Solo

Oh, the year was sev-en-teen sev-en-ty - eight (How I was in
 Sher-brooke now!) A let-ter of marque came from the_ e scum-mi-est ves-sel I've
 ev - er seen... God* damn them all! I we'd cruise the seas for A -
 mer - i - can gold; we'd_ fire_ no_ guns! o tears! But I'm a bro - ken man on a
 Hal - i - fax pier, the last - rett's Pri - va - teers._____ Oh,

verse two

El - cid Bar - 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 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; 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

choir repeats

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.

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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 Shro-brooke now!)
 (How I wish I was in Sher-brooke now!)

43

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

46

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

50

mer - i - can gold; 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

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 -

Hal - i - fax pier, the last of Bar - rett's Pri - 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, soloists 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 engage in foreign shipping during wartime. Privateering was a way of mobilizing armed ships and sailors without having to spend the money or commit naval officers. They were of great benefit to a smaller naval power or one facing an enemy dependent on commerce. They disrupted commerce and pressured the enemy to deploy warships to protect merchant trade against commerce raiding. The cost was borne by investors hoping to profit from prize money earned from captured cargo and vessels. Prizes would be distributed among the privateer's investors, officers and crew. It has been argued that privateering was a more constructive and wasteful form of warfare, because the goal was to capture ships rather than to sink them.

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

Barrett's Privateers is told 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 the ship's initial voyage to Jamaica seeking American merchantmen and the problems with the *Antelope*, the unnamed narrator finally found one, loaded down with gold. Unfortunately, the *Antelope*'s main-mast is knocked down with a cannon shot from the American vessel and Barrett is killed. The remainder of the song conveys the narrator's disillusionment with the voyage and how he's a "broken man on a Halifax pier, the last of Barrett's privateers". The last two stanzas reveal that the narrator is now 33 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 st ves-sel I've



Chorus

ev - er seen... God* damn them all! I was told to see the seas for A -



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



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

verse two

choir joins



El - cid Bar - rett cried (How I wish I was in



Sherbrooke now!) For tw men, all fish-er-men, who would make for him the



Chorus

An - te-lope's crew. in them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas (etc.)

verse three

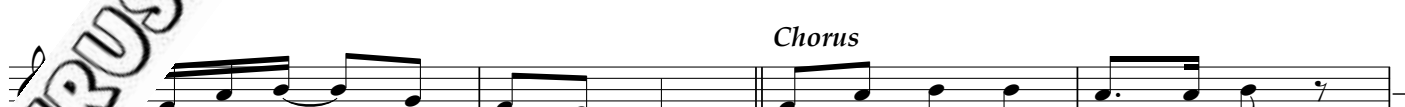
choir joins



An - te-lope sloop was a sick-en-ing sight (How I wish I was in



now!) She'd a list to the port and her sails in rags, and the cook in the scup-pers with the



Chorus

ag-gers and jags. God damn them all! I was told we'd cruise the seas (etc.)

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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 - Bay, pump

Chorus

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

verse five

choir joins

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

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

Chorus

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

verse six

choir joins

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

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

Chorus

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

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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 - ain, but with

Chorus

one fat ball the Yank stove us in. — God damn them all! I we'd cruise the seas (etc.)

verse eight

choir joins

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

Sher-brooke now!) Bar smashed like a bowl of eggs and the

Chorus

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

verse nine

choir joins

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

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

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