

HMCS ATHABASKAN
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This is a little story
That I wish to tell
Of the last time we left Plymouth
For the unknown waiting Hell

It was early in the Springtime
Just a couple of days before
We had returned to our welcome haven
Feeling proud, having boasted our score

We slipped slowly away in the evening
Heading straight for the old French coast
And little was thought that in the morning
T'would be Hitler's turn to boast

The boys never thought or worried
Of the "runs" we were doing of late
But little we knew of this one
Was shrouded and guided by fate

There was no mistaking the orders
"Attack enemy shipping ahead"
So through these cold Channel waters
At thirty-five knots we sped

The enemy shipping was sighted
Destroyers, but that wasn't all
For Crazy and mad as Hitler may seem
He had more than that on the ball

Behind some nearby Islands
Lay E-Boats quite unseen
Which the Radar Operator
Could not see upon the screen

The star shell found our target
The Destroyers not far away
And at this Crucial Moment
The E-Boats made their play

From behind their protecting Islands
These E-Boats made their dash
Firing their torpedoes
Which hit us with a Crash

Just aft of the torpedo tubes
The first one found its mark
Exploded with a muffled roar
And flames broke through the dark

“X” and “Y” guns were no more
Destroyed just like their crew
The Pom-Pom was a crumpled wreck
And it was also through

Just after the break of morning
The second “fish” hit true
Finding one of the boiler rooms
And immediately it blew

The shower of sparks and shrap that flew
Through the early morning air
Found a resting place in many a man
Told the rest of us “BEWARE”

We crouched in any protected spot
With a prayer upon our lips
And when the din was over
We’re forced to leave the ship

Some were badly injured
Others terribly burned
And as we hit the water
Our attention to them was turned

Some wanted to give up the fight
To sleep forever more
We did our best to give them strength
Till we hit the distant shore

They seemed to die all around us
It was pitiful to see
How can others calmly say
“Tis the price of VICTORY”

A few got back to England
About forty-six in all
While those who hadn’t perished
Went behind the Atlantic Wall

Now we are “gerfangeners”
In a German prison camp
And as we think of loved ones
Sometimes our eyes are damp

We feel that in the battle
His life our skipper lost
A finer man I never knew
It was a hellish cost

So please do not forget those boys
Who dressed in NAVY BLUE
And fought on the “ATHABASKAN”
And gave their all for you