

THE THIRTY FIRST M.S. FLOTILLA

Great yarns are told of squadrons bold,
Of actions fought at sea.
The River Plate, the Scharnhorst's fate,
Revenge and the Fifty Three.
And I propose to add to these
Exploits on the bounding billow,
So lend an ear, and you shall hear
Of the Thirty First M/S Flotilla.

They're a Sweeper Fleet of Bangors neat,
And on each funnel band,
An emblem brief, the Maple Leaf,
Denotes their native land.
The S.O. is met on the "CARAQUET",
Commanding Tony Storrs.
Virile-lean, zealous - keen,
Skilled in all sweeping chores.

Intimately I know the second S.O.
"FORT WILLIAM'S" Scottish Skipper,
The only food that does Hugh good,
Is Haggis, Scotch, and Kipper.
The tall "old man" of the "COWICHAN",
Is Kenneth William Hall,
At work or play, by night, by day,
He's always "on the ball".

The "MULGRAVE'S" next, and she is fixed,
To dan the laps, or sweep,
And I have heard, Ralph keeps his beard
In curlers, while asleep.
Astern is seen John Henry Green,
"WASAGA'S" lucky Captain.
He'll shoot a seven, and then eleven,
And fade you in a crap game.

The next to know, is "BLAIRMORE'S" Joe,
Collected, cool and calm;
While Ed Maguire is full of fire,
He's "MILLTOWN'S" fine "old man".
Then, cheek to cheek, we find "MALPEQUE"
With "MINAS" in a parley,
For Don and James oft change their names,
To that of "Tail-End-Charley".

Now to complete this potent fleet,
Three danners make it square.
The "BAYFIELD'S" first, how Stan has cursed
The winch that put him there.
The other twain is right as rain,
The "Gunner" and "Green Howard";
Norwegians both, who gave their oath
To fight the Quisling Coward.

They had their chance, for off to France,
The whole Flotilla sailed,
One day in June, before the moon,
'Gainst morning's light had failed;
And far behind, came every kind
Of craft that man could build,
To take the ranks, the guns and tanks,
And every craft was filled.

For now at last - all waiting past,
This was the great occasion,
And the Thirty First, had been entrust
To spearhead the Invasion.
That day, in light, and through the night
They swept the channel clear,
And with the dawn, they still swept on.
The Norman coast was near.

They cleared the front, kept up the hunt
For mines, right to the beach;
Ignoring shell that often fell
Within their easy reach.
And as the groups of ships with troops,
Were landing on the shore,
They paused to greet that gallant feat,
And carried on their chore.

And week by week, they hunt and seek
Those Horned Globes of Hate;
With little rest, they give their best,
To keep an open gate.
And every time they sink a mine,
Another Victory's won;
The Nazi's grace, the Nazi's race
Is that much nearer ruin.

So Thirty First, come slake your thirst,
And drink a happy toast,
For all we've done, and all the fun
We've had off this French Coast,
And let us pray, there'll dawn a day,
When Nazi might is dead.
The Port lookout will raise a shout,
"There's Sambre right ahead"!!

Hugh Campbell,
Baie de la Seine,
July 15, 1944.