

Alfie and Me

Alfie and me on the poop deck jawing about the war,
We didnt see it coming an' we never heard a roar,
Tin fish blew our tanker up, then it wasn't there,
Found ourselves in the 'oggin after flying in the air.
The sea afire and burning an' we were in the clear,
Just me and him went diving an' nobody else was near,
Alfie found some flotsam an' his arm hooked round a spar,
He could hear me swearing, I wasn't away too far.
He flippeder his way towards me and grabbed me by my shirt,
Bent me to the timber an' I told him I was hurt,
"Not a night for swimming" he bellows with a grin,
"No" says I just gasping, wiv arf me ribs stove in.
I feared of what would happen, striving to stay afloat
Atlantic cold near freezing, and oil had reached my throat,
Alfie was out of the stoke hold, a stubborn bugger was he,
(I was one of the deck crowd, he had cottoned on to me).
For hours and hours he held me, almost drowned and body aching,
Without a doubt he saved me, through the dawn a breaking
I was finished with engines, ready to chuck it all in,
Alfie it was that chivvied, with jokes as bad as sin.
I figured we should pray, in case we might survive,
But he didn't think that prayers would keep us both alive,
He said he knew no hymns, because he'd never shipped on liners,
What he reckoned was it's a collection for the miners.
Alfie weren't religious an' he didn't have to be,
Just a Merchant Seaman living his life at sea,
One of them that wont give in, a fighting till the end,
Lucky for me an' I'm proud to be his mucker and a friend.
By and by a ship came up with a Navy navigator,
He'd steamed away to chase a sub but marked our spot for later,
There's only me and Alfie came through that mighty blast,
I spoke a silent prayer for the mate who held me fast.
(From a true yarn told to me by Alfie's mate some fifteen years after the event).

by Joe Earl