

For Posterity's Sake

A Royal Canadian Navy Historical Project

HMCS PROVIDER 508

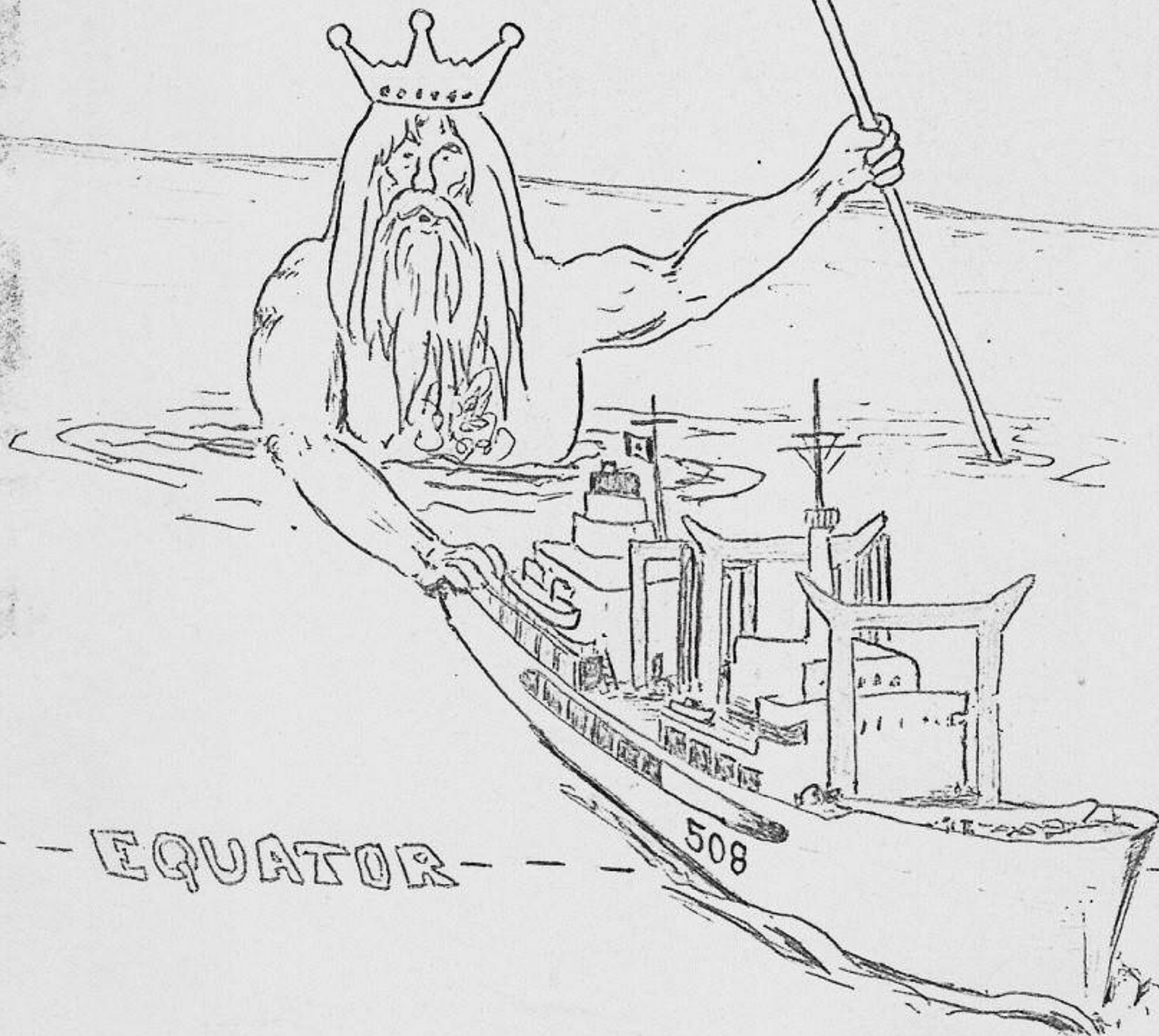
Crossing the Line (Equator) Booklet

05 Feb 1978

Courtesy of Steve Hutchings

HMCS

PROVIDER



CROSSING THE LINE

CEREMONY

5 FEB 78'



THE HISTORY BEHIND THE CROSSING THE LINE CEREMONY

According to Greek Mythology, the original God of the Seas was a certain deity called Poseidon. During his reign, Greek sailors were accustomed to burning incense and singing such appropriate odes as "Eternal Father" to intercede for his good offices and therefore bring on smooth sailing.

Poseidon's wife, Amphitrite, was the daughter of Oceanus, a very powerful Greek God in his own right.

When the Romans ousted the Greeks and became the primary power in the area, they installed Neptunus as their ruler of the Seas. Adding insult to injury, Neptunus adopted Amphitrite, thus becoming Poseidon's father-in-law. Poseidon was so depressed by this event that he committed suicide by drowning himself in his ocean leaving Neptunus as King of all the Seas with the right to extoll fees or homage from all who enter his domain.

The origins of the ceremony have been difficult to trace. One source of information claims that during the 17th century when entering the Straits of Gibraltar, all those who were entering for the first time had to pay their fee or else be dunked from the yardarm. The enactment of this ceremony was transferred to the Tropics, and eventually, to the Equator. Why the Equator was the final choice and not the International Date Line or the Arctic Circle is anyone's guess.

Another source of information has it that the ceremony was initiated in the Royal Navy's East Indian Fleet during the tenure of Admiral Horatio Nelson. Since most of our more peculiar customs seem to be dear old Horatio's fault, this source may very well be true.

The ceremony is mentioned in an old B.R. called "Sports and Recreation in the Royal Navy." The authors admit that it originated from some form of "pagan religious rite".

A lengthy description is given of the ceremony held by the crew of H.M.S. NEW ZEALAND when she crossed the Equator in 1919 with Viscount Jellicoe aboard. This was a revival of a ceremony which had obviously been abandoned. We are, however, indebted to them for their contribution to the handbook which points out "it is hoped that the ceremony and text may prove helpful to future generations of those who occupy their business in great waters"

When comparing the two ceremonies mentioned in the B.R., we notice that although the general pattern is unchanged, the text is altogether different. This illustrates how the script must be adapted to the local scene: that is, the Captain may or may not be a SHELLBACK, and all charges made against the defaulters must be original.

There has always been a great reluctance on the part of the TADPOLES to being initiated--and their fears are well founded. --however, it must be realized that this ceremony should be

taken in fun, otherwise the whole spirit will die.

NOTE: SHELLBACK - one who has been initiated in the Realm
(the good guys)

TADPOLE - uninitiated, UNCLEAN.

The following pages contain the script for the "Crossing the Line" ceremony as enacted by the "PROVIDER PLAYERS" on the occasion of their passage from Esquimalt, B.C., to Suva, Fiji, at Longitude 166' W, Latitude 000, on the th day of February 1978.

The ceremony is broken down into three phases:

The first phase begins the previous night when the Herald of His Oceanic Majesty comes aboard in order to inspect H.M.C.S. PROVIDER and decide upon her worthiness to receive onboard NEPTUNUS REX, in all his glory.

The second phase begins when NEPTUNE, after receiving a favourable report from his Herald, arrives on board the following day, accompanied by all of his court. His first act is to present Orders and Awards to Trusty Shellbacks, and to see any defaulters that have incurred his wrath.

The third and final phase takes place when KING NEPTUNE supervises the initiation of the TADPOLES...

.../4

THE PLAYERS

KING NEPTUNE.....P1 RUSSELL

QUEEN AMPHITRITE.....P2 McCARTHY

HERALD.....C1 STILBORN

SECRETARY.....CMDO DOWSLING

DAVEY JONES.....C2 BENDALL

SCRIBE.....LS KNOX

JUDGE.....C2 FAST

DOCTORS.....LS MOORE
P1 LAYMAN

BARBERS.....LCDR RICHARDS
P1 GUENTHER

TRIDENT STAMPER.....C1 GOOD

MERMAIDS.....P1 THOMPSON
C2 BONE

HONORARY CHIEF OF POLICE.....CAPT(N) YOUNG

CHIEF OF POLICE.....C2 RILEY

DEPUTY.....C2 BERNAYS

NEPTUNES STEWARD.....LS JOHNSON

HEAD BEAR.....P2 DAY/AT1 ROBERTSON

BUGLER.....LT LITTLE

COURT POLICE.....MS RANKIN MR. CUMMINGS
LS ALLEN P1 BOSSOM

ROYAL BEARS	LT DICKIE	P1 FENNER
	C2 O'DONNELL	P2 PERO
QUEEN BEARERS	AW2 BOLSTER	EWC BLACKSTONE
	MS MCHUTCHEON	LT LEBLANC
MERMAID BEARERS	P2 BEDARD	LT GODBEHERE
	P1 BROWN	CPO LAINCHBURY

BEARS

P2 BEDARD	P2 WILLIAMSON
LCDR KING	
P2 LITTLE	LS BEATTIE
LT LAMBERT	AB McDONALD
MS STERLING	P1 SAWATSKY
P1 VERHUEL	AMS2 GARCIA

POLICE

CHIEF.....C2 RILEY	
DEPUTY.....C2 BERNAYS	
P2 WINDER	MS ALLARD
P2 FRANDSEN	MS PEAKER
	LS SCHINNERS
MS DESJARDINS	LS WILKINS
MS MONDOUX	LCDR SMITH
LS POLKEY	LCDR LARSEN
AX2 ORTEGA	LT KARBOUSKY

GUARD

SLT MacGillivray

CAPT Brown

SLT Harrisson

LT Leblanc

LT Lorimer

LT McFayden

SLT McReynolds

LCDR Townsend

LT Watt

LT Tilley

MAJ MCNish

CDR Steele

Time: 2000 Feb 78

The following dialogue is heard over the ships

Broadcast.

- BRIDGE - Capt - OOW Sir have contact on radar bearing red 45° range 2000 yds.
- CAPT - Capt - very well plot
- LOOKOUT - Lookout - OOW Sir that contact at red 45° is closing
- CAPT - Very good. That will probably be King Neptune's Herald. Alter course towards.
- BOSN MATE - Make a Pipe. Clear lower decks to the forecastle, Guard to muster on the forecastle.

The ship alters towards the alleged contact and nothing further is heard until Ship's Company is assembled on the forecastle. Both Captain and Herald speak through loud hailers. (The Herald on the forecastle, Captain on the bridge)

- HERALD - (from behind spray) Ship Ahoy
- CAPT - PROVIDER
- HERALD - I am the Herald of the Court of His Oceanic Majesty, King Neptune. I heard your ship was around, now tell me whither bound.
- CAPT - From Hawaii shores to the Fiji Isles. Altering course every 30 miles. Now I've lot to do, tell me stranger who are you?

.... / 8

- HERALD - (Stepping through the spray waving his sword menacingly) I am no stranger and uphold the right to board your ship this very night. As Neptunes Herald, I mean to find out if this ship is clean.
- CAPTAIN - You'll find it clean, I have no doubt. We are Ship Shape in and out and now without further ado inspect the Guard I've mustered for you.
- HERALD - Very well Captain. I'll do your will, faithful Bugler, sound the still - Blow it hard - Davey Jones Inspect the Guard.
- (Davey Jones, with a cortege of a Bugler and 4 Bears, advances through the spray. Bugler sounds every off key alert. Davey Jones receives the report of the Guard Officer and then proceeds with the inspection, using lots of slapstick with a dead fish, i.e... haircut, shoes, etc....
- DAVEY JONES - So this is the Guard you mustered for me. A more horrible sight I've ever did see, I've inspected many, and I can tell they look unclean and smell like Hell.
- BEARS - Shriek "UNCLEAN" "UNCLEAN" Bears growl and shout
...../9

SCRIBE - I was the spy who scanned the papers to learn what I could of numerous capers that have been pulled by this ships crew, now listen closely while I tell you from this unclean and notely mess one hundred ninety persons more of less will learn tomorrow of this horrible fate from the Royal Court of Neptune the Great and furthermore, I must report I'll plead no mercy from this Court.

THE BEARS ONCE MORE SHRIEK "UNCLEAN" "UNCLEAN".

HERALD - At four bells of the forenoon watch to-morrow come what may - his Oceanic Majesty King Neptune will sway and by the ancient laws laid down by custom will ordain - that all you Tadpoles young and old be initiated in our name.

SCRIBE - All hail - King Neptune.
(the Bears in a fit of fanatic fervous shriek)

"BLOOD" ""BLOOD""

CAPTAIN - Keep silence

We shall be ready for your King and glad to meet his Queen now, will she bring her Daughters fair to beautify the scene. (Bears emit HOWLS and WOLF calls)

.../10

HERALD - It cannot be a seanymphs form would take each
sailors heart by storm. Our good Queen spares them from
such woes because they haven't any clothes.

MORE WOLF CALLS FROM THE BEARS

(The company starts retiring through the spray, the
Herald goes last and pauses to say in a loud voice,

HERALD - I recommend you all rest with sorrow -- the fittest
only will survive to-morrow.

Fx. lights are turned out, and a hinenous, sub human
laugh is heard from the eyes of the ship.

Many lights of various colours are shot off from Fx,
The scene shifts to the cargo deck the following
morning . Lower Decks have been cleared

to the Cargo Deck. King Neptunes Court in full regalia
has assembled in the R.A.S. stores and flats. The Bears
and Police have placed themselves around the Royal Throne
awaiting the grant entrance. The Herald comes to the
Cargo Deck.

HERALD - "Hear ye, Hear ye. Make way for his Glorious Majesty
Neptunus Rex, Rules of all who sail upon the sea.
Hear ye, Hear ye.

...../11

- King Neptune enters - followed by the Queen, Mermaids and the remainder of the Royal Court.
- HERALD - "All Hail King Neptune"
- The Bears and Police repeat "All Hail King Neptune", The Police make sure there is room for the King and Court to be seated. After all have taken their positions on the thrones, the Captain steps forward to address King Neptune.
- CAPTAIN - "As Captain of this Ship
In humblest duty, sire I bring
to you our Oceanic King
All here on Board. May we submit to
what in ancient Laws is writ".
- NEPTUNE - Good Morning Provider, you've come a long way, and I've waited months for this glorious day. You all know full well what I've come to do. For I hear there are Tadpoles among your crew. My barbers are good and widely renowned, (the barbers step forward and wave tools of their trade).
Their razors are sharper than have ever been ground,
My doctors are butchers and as for their pills, they're better than Ex-lax for curing your ills.
-/12

CAPTAIN - "Before you punish our crimes with that terrible
fork, I present for your favour, my crew to your court.

NEPTUNE - "Sir I am honoured to meet you and my Bears in salt
water will handsomely greet you. Since you first crossed
our line was it 64?

Your rank is greater so is your weight, your loyalty
and trust is something great, a loyal Shellback we
appreciate, you move around on many a ship, a racing
quinchy you never tip, as a veteran member of a ships
crew.

Honourary Police Chief's rank, is awarded to you.

(Captain kneels, pause while star is awarded)

I give you this star, so after you cross the Ships
Company will know Keith is the boss.

HERALD - "Awarded the rank of temporary acting honourary Chief
of Police second class"

Carry on.

The Captain rises and moves to the background as Neptunes
address the crowd.

NEPTUNE - "From my courtly Herald I've been told that some in
your crew so brave and bold as to warrant my favour
there may be some missed, so Herald bring forward my
Honour list. The Herald calls out the names as
follows:

CDR STEELE

HERALD - "As Executive Officer and number one wheel, before our great KING we must ask you to kneel.

NEPTUNE - While you kneel before me illustrious X.O., we have here an honour on you to bestow. Although a short-timer, it's quite plain to see soon 19 years of service will it be. You're old fashion ways and kipper accent are in tune with the times so do not repent, for service so loyal, we bestow this award directly from Gieves, this small golden sword.

NEPTUNE THEN SAYS

NO wrong you have done, but a promise we ask, its really quite simple and hardly a task, an extra beer all around is easily done, to round this day of mischief and fun.

What say you??

X.O. "It shall be done."

HERALD -- Arise Sir Knight Commander of the golden sword.
Double smartly away and organize the beer.

Lt McFADYEN

HERALD - Kneel.
Smiley McFadyen is our head cargo man
He tries to be obliging as he possibly can,
He tries to be helpful to our friends in Athabee
But ships run on oil, not water from the sea.
Awarded the Order of the Fuel Sampler.

HERALD -- Rise LCO with the smile on your face
If you give all the water to east coasters
We'll be down to trace.

HERALD - If your majesty finds it convenient, we had time enough to be lenient. It's just about time for that tank of brine, to make some new shellbacks "Crossing the line", and if you will see defaulters first, we'll save till last the best... and worst.

NEPTUNE SAYS "So be it"

HERALD - "Hear ye - Hear ye - Hear ye -" The local shellback court of His Oceanic Majesty Neptunis Rex is now in session - "Judge Samual J. Seaweed presiding."

Judge rapping gavel first case

The defaulters are held in any order.

P1 DRIER

HERALD - For many years he's bided his time, and sailed up north avoiding our line, This is no crime as you can see, but to terrorize young lads is a felony. So here in this court, the Judge will agree, he's tried fair and square and is guilty. So take him oh bears and of this I trust, dunking 4 or 5 times is a definite must.

JUDGE - "Guilty of terrorizing grimeys - dunk him."

P2 STEWART

HERALD - "While scanning the books, your Honour I find, a crime's been committed of a different kind. He handles the money and juggles the books, but has his excuses like most other crooks. His reasons and excuses though somewhat absurd, about changing money he speaks not a word. And this your Honour strikes me funny, he certainly should change Ship's Company money."

JUDGE - "This crime though it's small, like you hear of in school, I'll let you off lightly because you're no fool. Can't just dismiss it, I'll go by the rule, dunk him you bears, 4 times in the pool. Take him away".

AB MARINELLI OS MORRIS
(Brought forward by police)

HERALD - "Here stand two Bos'n tadpoles small and short, About to face King Neptune's Court. It has been observed by one and all that in the heads they're not too tall. The bowls are past their ruddy knee -- so squat they must, therefore, to pee. Before we hear their moans and lament, I offer them to the Court, for punishment."

JUDGE - "You are small and you are short, but remember as Judge of the Court, with the charge I must agree, you're just not allowed to squat to pee. Guilty as charged, you tadpole scrubs, I order you into the Royal Tub."

MWO MITCHELL

HERALD - "Since you're not the one who sweats and cooks, And stands abuse and ugly looks. Trying to keep things hot for noon, We feel you are entitled to the greasy spoon."

JUDGE - "I could not agree anymore,
Dunk him at least 2 or 4."
LS BENNETT LS DAVIS

HERALD - Two tadpoles before you with growth on their face, I think this your Honour, is a terrible disgrace. The Royal Doctors and Barbers, without being mean, should cleanse them and shave them and declare them clean, when they become shellbacks, -- but not until

then, their whiskers and haircuts can start once again.

JUDGE - Barbers and Doctors I'll give them to you,
to cleanse them and dunk them in front of the crew,
to make them true shellbacks, you bears I do trust,
to dunk 4 times is a definite must.

AWC JOHNSON

HERALD - Before you King Neptune we have to impune
AWC JOHNSON, a definite loon.

His mates and his bunkies are all aghast,
that he'd bring to your realm 10 tons of gash.

NEPTUNE - The 10 ton of gash has been plain to see,
This tool brought everything, but a colour TV.

JUDGE I give you now my Royal Decree,
Into the tank 2 times, NO make it three.

Lt BROWN

HERALD - HARK.. purveyors of the half-dead germ
Tadpole it is now time for you to squirm.
Needles, pill, enemas and such
We can take just so much..

(Doc Brown and his nurse BIRDIE led forward in chains)

JUDGE - With needles bent and tips so dull, you have done the
jabbing, But now the tables are turned and we'll do the
stabbing. So be prepared to suffer more, into the tank
with 3 or more.

Lt McFADYEN

HERALD - For special charges..
The LCO is the boss of the few
Who Davey Jones thinks is the cream of the crew,
For all their days off he's put in the bank
Shipwrights agree 4 dunks in the tank.

JUDGE - Guilty of banking with no interest, you all,
Four deposits into the tank for withdrawal.

OSCAR

HERALD - For many years he's bided his time
Sailing the oceans north, avoiding the line.
But like a sailor and many a mate
Has ~~come~~ come before this court to learn his fate.
During work-ups on the briny main
All we've heard is "Man overboard" "OSCAR's at it again".
You've done a deed which leaves us cold
How a tad like you could be so bold
It's now quite clear we know your aim, twas to give
this ship a horrowing pain.

JUDGE - Dunk him two times and more. What the Hell, make it four.

C O N C L U S I O N

When all or nearly all, tadpoles have been initiated,
the Herald calls for attention for King Neptune's farewell:-

HERALD - "Hear ye - Hear ye - silence for his Oceanic Majesty,
King Neptune."

NEPTUNE - "King Neptune, I, Lord of the Brine, welcome you all,
new subjects of mine. I am the Lord of the Oceans wide,
Lord of the Rivers, Lord of the Tide. My laws are strict
but do not fear, if you will only persevere, to keep the
freedom of the seas, as recognized by our decrees. Here are
the bears, the suds, the bath, they are the only certain
path, for all who wish to cross the line, and be
enrolled as sons of mine. I command you go now, your many
ways, take what you have learned to future days. Teach

others the mysteries of my mighty deep, I go now, below,
my vigil to keep.

"FAREWELL PROVIDER"

HERALD - "MAKE WAY, MAKE WAY, FOR HIS OCEANIC MAJESTY,

MAKE WAY."

RNX001

PP CZCF

DE RENEX 05/1955Z

P-052000Z FEB 78

Priority

From: The Royal High Court of the Raging Main

To: Warship PROVIDER

GREETINGS AND BEWARE

WHEREAS, the good ship PROVIDER, bound for Suva, Fiji, is about to enter our domain, and the aforesaid ship carries a large and slimy cargo of land*lubbers, beachcombers, cargo rats, sea lawyers, lounge lizards, parlor-dunnigans, plow-deserters, park-bench warmers, chicken-chasers, cherry-pluckers, hay-tossers, sand crabs, four-flushers, cross-word puzzle bugs, and all other living creatures of the land, and last but not least, he-vamps, liberty-hounds and drug store cowboys falsely masquerading as Seaman and Men-O-warsmen, of which you are a member, having never appeared before us; and

WHEREAS, The Royal Court of the Raging Main will convene on board the good ship PROVIDER on the 5th day of February, 1978 at Longitude 166'W Lattitude 000'; and INASMUCH as an inspection of our Royal High Roster shows that it is high time your sad and wandering souls appeared before the High Tribunal of NEPTUNE;

THEREFORE, BE IT KNOWN, That we hereby summon and command the following TADPOLES to appear before the Royal High Court and Our August Presence on the aforesaid date at such time as may best suit our pleasure, and to accept most heartily and with a good grace the pains and penalties of the awful tortures that will be inflicted upon you for daring to enter our aqueous and equinoctial regions without due and submissive ceremony to be examined as to fitness to become one of our TRUSTY SHELLBACKS, and a worthy Son of the Sea.

Read in four columns:

Brown LT(N)	Drier P1	Eens OS	Desjardins AB
Harrison SLT	Haldane P2	Ellisten OS	Demay AB
Leblanc LT(N)	Hazel P1	Blending OS	Donnelly OS
Lerimer LT(N)	Holland O2	Boisvert AB	Dugas CPL
McFayden LT(N)	Jolin P2	Brown OS	Eldrige OS
MacGillivray SLT	Mitchell MWG	Brushett OS	Kills PTE
McNish LCDR	Moore SGT	Bulwer OS	Fischer OS
McReynolds SLT	Montford P1	Burns OS	Ford AB
Steele CPL	Nichols P1	Cameron MS	Fuller AB
Talley LT(N)	Nisbett P2	Carter LS	Gosbjorn OS
Townsend LCDR	Polichok P2	Christensen CPL	Gouk LS
Watt LT(N)	Saunders OS	Christie AB	Graham LS
Bobinsky SGT	Shears WO	Cooper MCPL	Grenier OS
BOUEBonnais P2	Stewart P2	Corneliusson AB	Grossmith OS
Bouget WO	Arsenault OS	Juthbertson OS	Harrison AB
Euger P1	A Uger CPL	Darroch MS	Henderson CPL
Coburn P2	Bagley AB	Davis LS	Howe OS
Crockford P2	Bennett LS	Davis PTE	Hutchings LS

Hutchinson AB	McMurdo LS	Sadowsky OS	Blanchette AD1
Inkinen PTE	McNiff OS	Sauberli OS	Stewart AO1
Isfeld MS	Melanson OS	Scott MS	Martin PR2
Jarrett AB	Menchini OS	Scriver OS	Folberg AT2
Jenkinson OS	Michaud LS	Selder AB	Robinson AMS3
Jones MS	Mierrau MS	Sirios LS	Schmitt ATAN
Jones CPL	Middleman OS	Snetsinger AB	Lipnick AD3
Jones OS	Morris OS	Stark AB	Brown PN3
Lafontaine OS	Mosher AB	St Martin MS	Gill AE3
Langille MS	Myers LS	Stuppiello LS	MacNeil AWAN
Lariviere AB	Newton MS	Swainston-	Fox AXAN
Lelievre AB	O'Byrne CPL	Strangways LS	Jackson LCDR
Lepp AB	Osip OS	Thompson LS	Freeman LCDR
Linehan CPL	Ostapezuk OS	Turner AB	Brown AWC
MacCallum LS	Perron MCPL	Ullock BTE	Elliot AW1
Malmloff OS	Petley MCPL	Vance OS	Johnson AT1
Mann MS	Phillips OS	Vircoe OS	Palmer AE2
Mann OS	Plumb MS	Volek OS	Derham AW3
Marinelli OS	Point AB	Westeroth OS	Hesseltine AW3
Massicotte AB	Powell OS	Yates SEA CADET	Kovally AWAN
Mathews MS	Rapson AB	Malchow SEA CADET	Elenbaas ADAA
MacDonald AB	Reber OS	Powell AMHC	
McHutchion MS	Reid LS	Johnson AWC	
McMillan	Rogers CPL	Marino AE1	

If we have erred, and have included any Trusty Shellbacks in the aforementioned "Roster of the Unclean", said Shellbacks may wage to have their names stricken from this roster by the Regulating Office (Bring Documented Proof)

Disobey this summons under pain of our swift and terrible pleasure. Our vigilance is ever wakeful, our vengeance is just and sure.

Given under our hand and seal,

Attest, for the King;

Davey Jones, Scribe

NEPTUNUS REX

SUPOENA AND SUMMONS EXTRAORDINARY

The Royal Court of the Raging Main

County of Equatis

Vale of Phoenix

Domain of Neptunus Rex

To whom may come these presents:

- - Greetings and Beware - -

Whereas, the good Ship _____ bound for _____ is about to enter our domain, and the aforesaid ship harbours--unlawfully--a number of _____ among her crew, of which you are a member, having never appeared before us: and

Whereas, the Royal High Court of the Raging Main will convene on board the good Ship _____ on the _____ day of _____, 19____, at Longitude _____, and Latitude _____, and an inspection of our Royal High Roster does not reveal your name;

Therefore, be it known, that we hereby summons and command you _____ to appear before the Royal high Court and our February presence on the aforesaid date,

Charges: 1. Has hitherto willfully and maliciously failed to show reverance and allegiance to our Royal Person,

- 2. _____
- _____
- _____

Given under our hand and seal,

Attest, for the King,

Davey Jones, Scribe.

NEPTUNUS REX

SUPOENA AND SUMMONS

EXTRAORDINARY

THE TRUSTY SHELLBACKS

VERSUS

ROYAL HIGH COURT
of the

RAGING MAIN

County of Equatis

Vale of Phoenix

Dom-in of Neptunus Rex

Action on case

check

Ordinary

Serious

To be confined

Awaiting action

Double irons, awaiting
actions

Straight jacket

Double parked

Bailiff