

To all:

I am officially a SHELL BACK now as I have been “Cleansed” of the slimy Wog that I once was. I can’t really go too much in to detail as to what went on since it is a time honored naval tradition, but I will tell you that I was up at 0415 this morning to begin the ceremony and did not finish until 0930. There was a ton of water, we all got soaked, and at times it reminded me of boot camp with the singing and the marching. It was a BLAST though! They did a good job, even though a lot of the old traditions with the ceremony no longer are here, with the newer Shell Back Ceremony. We have a Steel beach picnic later on as well to celebrate the cleansing of the ship. Thank you all so much for everything and for the e-mails.

For those of you who do not know I also took my ESWS board on Friday February 23 and I passed without a problem. I was very over prepared for the Oral Board and only missed a question or two. I am just waiting for my paperwork to come back and then I will be able to receive my pin and call myself an Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist. I am getting pinned outside of SSES so that I can have pictures to send back to all of you. I wish you all the best and thank you again for everything that you have done for me while I have been out here.

Respectfully,

**CTR3 Jeffrey M. Graham**  
**USS BATAAN HITS TRAINER**  
**HITS OPERATOR**