

Attached is the story behind the Shellback for those who have requested it.

Jeff

THE STORY BEHIND KING NEPTUNUS REX'S TRUSTY SHELLBACKS

To all Ye "Slimy Pollywogs" ... heed the story of King Neptunus Rex's Trusty Shellbacks!

Down through the years, navies of the world have had traditions that have held fast to present times. Indoctrinating new sailors into the realm of King Neptunus Rex as they cross the equator is one such tradition. No one knows the exact origin of this ceremony but it is said to go back to the Vikings who initiated young seaman while on long voyages across the oceans to pillage other lands. Some early Mediterranean seamen have had initiations in passing thru the Straits of Gibraltar which is probably where the "Mysteries of the Deep" stem from.

The traditions of the US Navy have its roots in the Royal Navy of Great Britain and so too does our equator crossing ceremony. Those who have crossed before and been indoctrinated and accepted into the realm of King Neptunus Rex and his Royal Court are called "Trusty Shellbacks". Members of his party normally include Davy Jones –the Royal Scribe, Royal Doctor, Royal Baby, Royal Navigator, Royal Judge, Attorneys, and other names that suit the party. Those who have yet to cross are known as "Slimy Pollywogs." Pollywog is a fitting name since it is a baby frog which has yet to sprout its legs. The Pollywog is the lowest creature in the sea.

The indoctrination takes most of the day with the Pollywogs woken early in the morning. Their fate beforehand is unknown and never divulged so that they may wallow in angst in anticipation of hopefully becoming a Trusty Shellback,

Once a Pollywog is baptized in seawater and accepted by King Neptunus Rex and his Royal Court, the Pollywog will forever be a Trusty Shellback; a prestige honor that rarely presents itself. Some Pollywogs never get the satisfaction of becoming a distinct member of King Neptune's realm and some have to wait as long as 28 years ... the "pathetic fools." There are a chosen few that become "Golden Shellbacks" by crossing the equator at the 180th meridian, also known as the International Date Line.

On Shellback day, all Officers, Sailors and Marines are equal as respective Shellbacks or Pollywogs. This also includes our Civil Service civilians/contractors who have come forth with courage in support of the mission at hand. Everyone from the Captain down who are Pollywogs will have to go through the course. Those are the rules set down by King Neptune and carried out by Davey Jones.

Davey Jones

Neptunus Rex

His Royal Scribe

Ruler of the Raging Main