Shellback Day!

Welcome to the realm of Davy Jones. To the world which is ruled by Neptunus Rex. In a tradition as old as sailing itself, any sailor who crosses the equator for the first time must endure the sacred ritual of "cleansing" the slime from the uninitiated — the polywogs — so they may become trusty shellbacks.

The day prior to the ceremony, the polywogs stage a beauty pageant for the enjoyment of Neptunus Rex and his royal subjects. The polywogs choose amongst themselves to find the true beauties, who then compete for the honor of being "Queen Polywog," and the chance to sit on the dais with Neptunus Rex during the line-crossing festivities.

Of course, Neptunus Rex has his royal court. Davy Jones, his scribe; the royal babies, who are only happy when their tummies are being kissed by a slimy polwog; and, of course, the pets of the court: the Royal Dog, the Royal Cat, and the Royal Reveille Rooster, who ensured that all polywogs were up and ready to be initiated into the solemn mysteries of the ancient deep.

By the end of the day, NEW JERSEY was a ship of shellbacks. There were some sore muscles, and everyone was tired — including the initiators. Of the battleship's crew of over 1,400, more than 1,000 sailors finished the day as newly initiated shellbacks, with one thought in mind; "Next time, it's MY turn!"