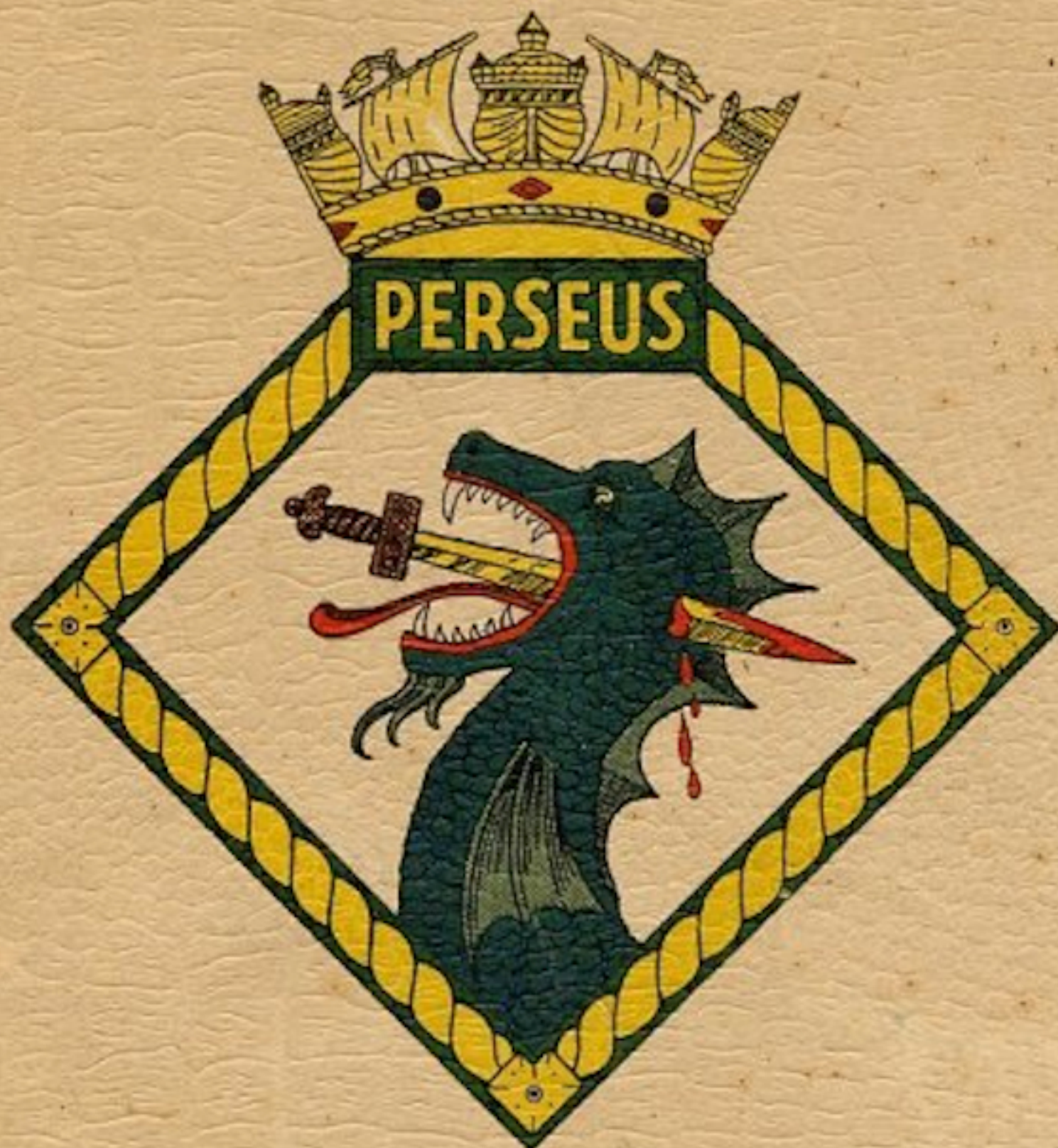


CROSSING THE LINE



H.M.S. 'PERSEUS'
Dec. 10th, 1945.

"Crossing the Line"



CEREMONY

HELD ON BOARD

H.M.S. "PERSEUS"

CAPTAIN G. R. DEVERELL, R.N.



Ship on Passage from
Southampton to Sydney, Australia
December 10th, 1945



H.M.S. "PERSEUS" IN SYDNEY HARBOUR.

The Court and Officials

Master of Ceremonies : Mr. J. D. Phair, W.A.O., R.N.

Neptune : Mr. C. S. Simpson, C'd Bosun, R.N.

Queen Amphitrite : P. O. Tel. F. Martell.

Clerk of the Court : P. O. J. A. Marsh, T.G.M.

Chiefs of Police : Mr. H. McDonald, C'd Gunner, R.N.

Mr. W. A. Cordin, C'd A. O., R.N.

Dolphinius : St. P. O. Coupland.

Surgeon :

Commander (E) R. Harris, R.N.

Physician :

P.O. A.M. (A) Eldritt.

Nurses :

Lt. (A) F. Cocking

P.O. A.M. (O) Jones.

Chief Bears :

Commander (S) Jackson, D.S.C., R.N.

P.O. P. Meech.

P.O. S. Townsend.

P.O. B. Jones.

Ch. Shpwt. G. Grant.

Court Jesters :

Mr. Anderson, Wt. Eng., R.N.

A.B. R. H. Davis.

Court Photographer :

Lt. Cdr. Brister, R.N.

Chief Barbers :

Ch. E. A. S. Ward.

L/Sto. W. Trotman.

Court :

C.P.O. Wtr. R. Beamish.

P.O. A.M. D. Daplin.

P.O. A.M. D. Thompson.

Sto. Davis, W.

P.O. A.M. D. Chance.

L/Wtr. R. Stokes.

Nymphs :

Lt. Wilson, R.N.

P.O. A.M. W. Golding.

L/Sea. H. Butterfield.

L/Sea. R. Hill, P.T.I.

A.B. H. Hindmarch.

P.O. A.M. E. Edmondson.

Royal Bugler :

A.B. Wm. McKinnon.

Honorary Temporary Acting Unpaid Court Costumier :

Mr. R. J. Tyler, C'd Elect., R.N.

Make-up :

Lt. (E) Tracy, R.N.

H.M.S. "PERSEUS"



The Crossing of the Line

December 10th, 1945

H.M.S. "PERSEUS" while en voyage to Sydney, Australia, via Gibraltar, Port Said, Colombo, Singapore, and Fremantle, approached the "Line" from Singapore on December 9th, 1945.

The following signal was received from Equator Hydro Telegraphic Station :—
To His Majesty's Ship "Perseus." From His Majesty King Neptune.

My China Sea Porpoise Patrol reports that His Majesty's Ship "Perseus" is proposing to enter my domain for the **first** time.

Queen Amphitrite and I are very much looking forward to your visit and My Bears are delighted to hear of the large number of Uninitiated.

We shall come on board at 0930 Monday, 10th December, for the ceremony of Initiation in accordance with the Custom of the Seas.

Please make adequate preparations.

The following signal was sent in reply to H.M. King Neptune through Equator H/T Station.

To : H.M. King Neptune. From H.M.S. "Perseus."

We thank your Majesty for your gracious Message and all who have been initiated into the solemn rites of your Kingdom send their best wishes to you and your Queen.

All preparations are being made for the many uninitiated to become true sons of your realm in accordance with Ancient Custom.

Arrival of King Neptune's Ambassador

At about 2000 on 9th December was heard the low measured tones of the Chief Herald and Ambassador of King Neptune who Hailed the Ship after which the following dialogue ensued.

Dolphinius : " Ship ahoy. Ship ahoy. What ship are you and whither are you bound."

Captain : " His Britannic Majesty's Ship ' Perseus ' from Southampton bound for the Southern Seas with Maritime Mail. Who are you ? "

Dolphinius : " I am Dolphinius, Chief Herald and Ambassador of His Maritime Majesty King Neptune, Father of the Seas, Lord of all Oceans."

Captain : " By what right do you challenge me on the High Seas ? "

Dolphinius : " By the powers invested in my noble Master King Neptune. By the grace of mythology, Lord of the Waters, Sovereign of all Oceans and Lord High Admiral of the Bath, whose Dominions you are about to enter."

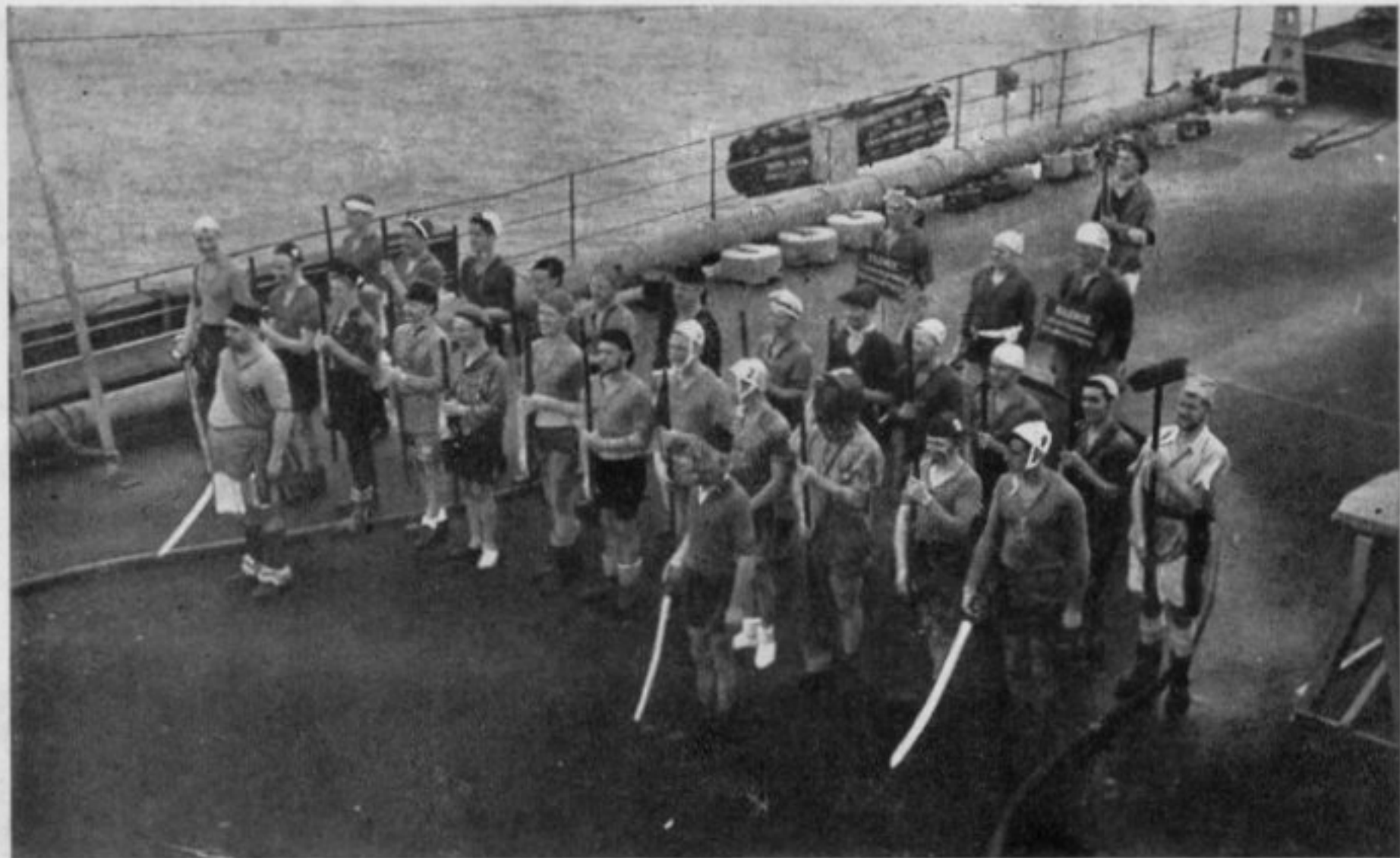
Captain : " I crave His Oceanic Majesty's pardon and request permission to enter his Equatorial Domain."

Dolphinius : " His Majesty is well acquainted with your wishes and bids me read His Royal Message :
Whichever of you would enter our Dominions,
We care not what his rank or his opinions,
We cannot him respect, however bold,
Unless our Royal Document he hold,
Our State is founded on time honoured laws,
And ye must learn each paragraph and clause,
For you must know that any craft who'd fain,
Enter the Great Sea Lord's own Domain,
Must pay the tribute that King Neptune wishes,
And be received by mermaids, bears and fishes,
Our Herald has been sent to warn you all,
That on the morrow we ourselves will call,
And then let those who are not of our order
Come well prepared to cross the Royal Border,
And here is a warning to those who skulk,
They'll get it in the neck, whate'er their bulk,
At nine to-morrow when the sun is high,
To this ship instate we both shall hie,
To see the gentle ceremonies due,
Are executed by our retinue."

Captain : " Assure King Neptune that we all are honoured at the meeting ;
And will you convey to the depths below our loyal greeting."



KING NEPTUNE ARRIVES ON BOARD.



THE ROYAL GUARD.

Dolphinius : " And now, Sir, please see that you prepare,
The bath, the platform and the Barber's chair,
The whole of the ship's company so brave,
Shall greet the ruler of the Ocean Wave,
And to him homage must be paid,
Of their own free will, or they will be made,
All are to give him his rightful due,
With the exception of the chosen few,
On whom that honour has been conferred,
The Bond of Neptune, his solemn word,
Until to-morrow at the hour of nine,
I'll do my best to see that it is fine,
Good-night, good Captain, we'll be with you in the morn,
And anyone who shirks will wish he'd not been born,
Good-night."

Captain: " Good-night."

On the morning of December 10th, 1945, the " Still " and a fanfare of trumpets heralded the arrival of the Royal Party on the A/c Deck by way of the after lift. His Majesty was piped and the " Carry on " sounded.

The Commander advanced and greeted the Royal Party :—

" Our humblest duty, Sire, I bring,
To you, the Ocean's greatest King,
All here on board submit to-day,
To your most just but dreadful sway."

Their Majesties then (left their chariot) inspect the Royal Guard and accompanied by their retinue proceeded to the dais where the Captain was waiting to greet them supported by the Commander and Commander (S).

Captain : " Your Majesty is very kind,
Such humble folk as we to mind,
This day we will present to you,
About nine hundred of the crew,
Who have had not the honour great,
To meet you and your gracious Mate."

Neptune : " Captain Deverell, Officers and Crew,
We're very glad to welcome you ;
For " Perseus " has long sailed the seas,
And is very dear to me.
My log reveals that to this day,
Few of your class have passed this way,
We note with great and royal glee
That many novices in the ship there be.
My bears are getting very grumpy
To get at 'em before we return to Pompey,
Honoured we that they cross our path,
And may they all enjoy the bath,
My bears, I know, will treat'm rough,
They're a hungry lot and very tough."

Now down to business ; we have much to do,
Before this royal court is through.
Clerk of the Court, hand me the orders,
For those who cross our royal borders."

Clerk : " The first is for Captain George Robert Deverall,
Commanding His Britannic Majesty's Ship " Perseus."

Neptune : " Captain Deverell, it is our desire to honour you, Sir, in recognition
of many years faithful service upon the Seven Seas. I therefore
bestow on you the Order of the Flying Fish."

Clerk : " The next is for Commander Robert Eric Gunston, second in com-
mand of His Britannic Majesty's Ship " Perseus."

Neptune : " Order of the British Restaurant with a Green Card."

Clerk : " The last order, your Majesty, is for Commander (S) Arthur Roosevelt
Jackson, Distinguished Service Cross."

Neptune : " If I can be heard above this din,
I think the crew are rather thin,
But still, no doubt, it's through the heat,
I'm sure you give them lots to eat,
Receive this order, it is a ripper—
The Order of the Golden Kipper."

Queen (Getting restless at such long speechifying, broke in)

Amphitrite: " Now to the bath, let's have some sport.
Come Neppy, open up the Court."

Neptune : " O.K., Sweetie, let's go."

Clerk : " Pray, silence for the King."

Neptune : " King Neptune, I, Lord of the Sea,
Welcome you all, who e'er you be,
My laws are strict but have no fear,
If only you will persevere,
To attain the freedom of the seas,
As recognised by our decrees.
Here are the bears, the soap, the bath,
This the only certain path,
For all who wish to cross the line,
And be enrolled as sons of mine.
My surgeons here will do their part,
They'll feel your pulse and sound your heart,
My police are strong and will not spare,
Those who avoid the ducking chair,
My bears have had no food for hours,
Beware then all their mighty powers,
Of mauling novices they will not stint,
When to their chief I give the hint,
In order, then, as we command,
Before us then let each novice stand.
Test the waters, chief barber, and report thereon."



KING NEPTUNE HOLDS AN INVESTITURE.



THE ORDER OF THE BATH.

Chief Barber : "Your Majesty's orders have been obeyed,
The bath is over-proof, the soap cream laid,
The pills and tonic strong and undiluted,
The razor keen, the water well poluted."

Neptune : "Now see that none do take offence,
Let loose the bears, sound the "Commence."

(Trumpeters sounded the commence.)

The Court took their places, seated around their Majesties, and the initiations commenced.

A number of offenders with serious charges were dealt with first. Charges were read by the clerk of the court from a voluminous scroll ; His Majesty King Neptune pondered over each charge carefully and delivered an appropriate judgment on each case.

The first of the many was the Chaplain, the Rev. D. Manning, R.N.V.R., who was followed by six other officers who had not previously crossed the line. Owing to the large number of Officers and Ratings who had not crossed the line before, an afternoon session was necessary. P.O. Elliff, a conscientious objector, was the first to enter in the afternoon. He had his objections removed by the Surgeon and his conscience cleared by the Barbers and Bears. He was followed by Lieut. (A) Walmsley and two other officers on serious charges. The number of ratings who paid their respects to H.M. King Neptune that day and were initiated into the company of "Shellbacks" was about 900.

Punishments were varied. The Surgeon had very efficient assistants and equally efficient although weird instruments, which they wielded with skill born of practice no doubt. Victims of the operating table in company with others were all cleansed before entering the bath by the vigorous lathering received from the barbers whose brushes and razors were of no mean size. The bears were in good form all day and without doubt their appetite was satisfied.

Few skulkers were to be found in the ship's company. The police staff dealt with such low people. Certainly King Neptune must have been impressed by the keenness with which many of the ship's company rushed to be initiated.

The ceremonies concluded at 1530 when King Neptune with His Court entered the bath and disappeared.

Warrants

The Rev. Dennis Manning, R.N.V.R.

Did nourish a viper in his bosom, the feeding of which did cause great distress to the Messmen as the said viper was not victualled.

Judgment : Shall be fed with appetising pills, shaved, and washed in the bath for his sins.

Surg. Lt. Hannah, R.N.V.R.

Did cause many to be brought to the Bay of Sickness for Vile Potions, Injections and Inspections.

Judgment : To be operated on with special instruments, lathered right royally and flung to the bears.

Lieutenant (S) Wade, R.N.

Did disrespectfully, and in a treasonable manner claim to have crossed the line before His Majesty had shipped.

Judgment : Shall respectfully kiss my Jester on both cheeks, and receive special attention of barbers and bears.

Lieutenant (A) Walmsley, R.N.V.R.

Did fail to produce His Majesty's No. 1 Chariot causing him to drive in state in a bone-shaker.

Judgment : To be thoroughly shaken up by medical staff.

Surg. Lieutenant (D) Cutmore, R.N.V.R.

Did flout His Majesty's Court in that on two previous occasions he Crossed the Line without paying due respect to His Royal Person.

Judgment : Shall salaam humbly before my Majesty three times and be shaved and cleaned.

Mr. Alderton, Schoolmaster, R.N.

Did, with malice aforethought, evil intent and low cunning, gatecrash the initial gathering of Your Majesty's Court to get the lowdown—Thereby proving that he is a Fifteenth Columnist of no mean order.

Judgment : To be shaved and bathed.

Sub-Lieutenant (A) Burnett, R.N.V.R.

Did attempt to grow a beard and failed dismally in the attempt.

Judgment : Shall receive a beard from my apothecary, shaved off by the barber, and improved in the bath.



THE BEARS HAVE FUN.



THE BARBERS AT WORK.

Sub-Lieutenant (S) Cockell, R.N.V.R.

Did fail to pay the Ship's Company often enough nor did he give enough money at any one payment.

Judgment : Shall be branded as a userer, and given a generous supply of lather and water.

Sub-Lieutenant Tunnadine, R.N.V.R.

(a) Once spent ten minutes on watch without sending away for food.

(b) Did eat seventy-four bars of chocolate in one month in time of war.

Judgment : Shall bite upon a stinking fish, be fed with ante chocolate pills and all food stopped for twenty-four hours.

Chief Stoker Rashley.

Whilst at Port Said did cause noxious gases to fill the ship by opening up the drains of the Stoker Petty Officer's bathroom.

Judgment : Shall be sprayed with an adious concoction, and thoroughly shaved and washed.

Engine Room Artificer Goodridge.

Has the distinction of being the smallest Artificer in the ship.

Judgment : Shall be laid upon the operating table and induced to grow.

Air Artificer Hart.

Was heard to say that by way of refreshment he had disposed of more salt water than His Majesty had ever sailed over.

Judgment : Shall receive special salt water treatment at the hands of my bears.

Squadron Leader Robertson, R.A.A.F.

Has crossed the line many times but failed to pay his respects.

Judgment : Shall salaam three times before my Majesty, assisted by Jesters, and pay his respects to barbers and bears.

Leading Air Fitter Griffiths.

(a) Is the smallest THING in the ship.

(b) Did make himself into a pull-through and crawl down the muzzle of a 30 m.m. cannon.

Judgment : Shall be fed with special fattening medicine and thrown to the bears.

Engine Room Artificer Bilsland.

Made " Rabbits " on Make and Mend days thereby disturbing the well earned " ZIZZ " of two Shell-backs on the Warrant Officers' Flat.

Judgment : Shall try to sleep peacefully on the operating table, then waken up in the bath.

Regulating Petty Officer Cant.

Did accuse the Clerk of the Court of not Crossing the Line.

Judgment : Shall salaam three times to my Clerk of the Court, and lathered down to the line, then receive water treatment.

Petty Officer (S) O'Neill.

Did pipe a Slop Issue in the Dog Watches thereby taking away good Sailors' Recreational time.

Judgment : Shall be shown a new form of Physical Exercise by our alchemist.

Petty Officer Eliff.

Did make a false statement to wit, that he had entered His Majesty's Domain on a previous occasion thereby trying to dodge the column.

Judgment : Shall swear never to tell another lie, persuaded by surgical instruments and held on high by my bears.

Able Seaman Wyatt.

Did pipe " Special Sea Dutymen " in the middle of the Indian Ocean, thereby raising the hopes of his messmates for a run ashore.

Judgment : Shall be treated by my doctor and thrown to the bears.

Able Seaman Wood.

Did cause concern and wonderment among the ship's company by piping "Hands to shift into make and mend clothes."

Judgment : Shall be sawn into several pieces, and thrown to the bears.

The Canteen Manager.

Did endeavour to delay the entry of the ship into the Royal Domain by producing 10,000 bags of pickled walnuts at the gangway five minutes before sailing.

Judgment : Shall be liberally slapped by a big fish, specially dieted, the scales removed by barbers and bears.

Able Seaman King.

Showed ignorance in the pastime of the Oceans by asking " What's this game of Tombola ? "

Judgment : Shall be taught to say " full house " and " line " to the satisfaction of my Jester and receive his winnings in the bath.

Air Mechanic Gee.

During a flat calm, the sea just breaking over the bridge, was stricken with a strange malady called sea-sickness.

Judgment : Shall make a vomiting noise, receive ante sea sickness medicine, and tested in salt water.

Writer Ellis.

Did fail on any and every occasion to type a true copy of the original draft.

Judgment : Shall chant out loudly " I am dreaming of my darling love of thee," to the satisfaction of my Queen.

Air Mechanic Gardiner.

Did say at dinner time " Don't bother about the salt—let me breathe on your scran."

Judgment : Shall receive a special mouth treatment, lathered from top to bottom by the barbers and annointed by the bears.

Petty Officer Horn.

Did intimate that he was the son of one " Trader Horn " who had crossed the line more time than His Majesty had hot dinners.

Judgment : Shall receive hot dinner treatment, the soles of his feet toasted and cooled off in the bath.

Air Artificer Leech.

Did attest that he crossed the line with full ceremony in 1922 in a Spitfire, a statement of doubtful veracity.

Judgment : Shall be lifted on high, make a noise like a Spitfire, and thrown to the bears.

Leading Air Fitter Smith.

Being an ex-apprentice did try to make his messmates believe he was group 44 by wearing his cap flat-a-back and grommetless.

Judgment : You shall be branded with your true group number shaved back and front, and make sport for the bears.

Shipwright (3) Bartlett.

Did show disrespect to His Majesty in that he did fail to appreciate the honour of entering His Majesty's Domain and did break his vows of Melancholy by smiling at least once and causing alarm to his messmates.

Judgment : Shall be tickled on the soles of your feet until you laugh loudly, and pursue your melancholy way through the bath.

Petty Officer Martin.

Did write the name of the ship with its wake when passing through His Majesty's Ocean but failed to prefix it with "H.M.S.", thereby causing confusion to His Majesty as whether the ship was a Warship, Steamship, Hardship or the Gosport Ferry.

Judgment : Shall be taught to steer a steady course, dosed with anti-drunk mixture, and write his name in the bath.