



A NATIONAL FILM BOARD

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THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA, OTTAWA

Camera: Royal Canadian Navy
Cable address: STARK,
CANADAFILM, OTTAWA

Production No. 52-309-4
Cable Code - "EQUATOR"
190' fine grain positive

TARS AT PLAY IN SOUTHERN WATERS

ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY SAILORS OF HMCS "ONTARIO" OBSERVE
EQUATOR CROSSING RITUAL

NAVY CAMERAMAN RECORDS HILARIOUS INITIATION OF "TADPOLES"

Aboard HMCS "Ontario"

October 00, 1952.

HMCS "Ontario", under the command of Captain E.P. Tisdall, C.D, RCN, is now engaged in a training and goodwill cruise to South America. During the passage the ship crossed the Equator and as is the custom of ships at sea, King Neptune and his Court boarded the 10,000 ton cruiser to initiate the "tadpoles" (those who have never crossed the line) into the solemn mysteries of "the Ancient Order of the Deep." This ceremony is witnessed with great glee by the "shellbacks". (the old salts who have made equatorial crossings before).

The evening before the ship is due to cross the line, Davey Jones, King Neptune's Herald, appears on the forecastle with two bodyguards and announces that King Neptune will hold court the following day.

A tank is rigged and all preparations made. Then at the appointed time King Neptune, Queen Amphitrite, the Court Judge, his Clerk, the Royal Surgeon, Royal Barber and his assistants, the Royal Police, bodyguards, messengers and the Bears appear on board and due marks of respect are paid between King Neptune and the Commanding Officer.

Then the order goes out that all "tadpoles" are guilty of invading the realm of King Neptune and that they must answer for their crime. The police go to work rounding up the victims (this is done irrespective of rank) and the fun begins.

The usual procedure is for the "tadpole" to be seated on a stool with his back to the pool, after the charge and sentence of the Court for initiation ceremonies. This usually consists of lathering the man with all sorts of concoctions such as soft soap and corn meal as well as other evil smelling ingredients. The lather is applied with a six inch brush and then he is shaved with an oversize wooden straight razor. Then the Royal Surgeon gives the man some foul tasting "pill".

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Other "tortures" are often devised and when the rites are over the man is thrown back into the pool where the Bears, snarling and snorting, give him a thorough ducking. After that the man has graduated to a "shellback" and is later given a diploma stating that he has been admitted to the realm of King Neptune.

Should the man ever cross the line in another ship the only proof he has that he is a "shellback" is his diploma, and if he can't produce the evidence he is liable to the treatment over again.

S H O T L I S T

HMCS "ONTARIO" CROSSES EQUATOR

190' Fine Grain Pos.

1. Opens with shot of "Ontario" approaching the Equator.
2. Chief Petty Officer with signal log in hand goes to report to Captain of arrival of King Neptune and Court.
3. General scene on quarter-deck of "Ontario"
4. Ship's company await proceedings
5. Camera pans left to Captain Tisdall at PA mike
6. Captain reads out a welcome to King Neptune.. His Queen Amphitrite.. and members of the "Royal" Court.
7. King Neptune reads proclamation held by the Clerk of the Court.
8. The "beautiful" Queen Amphitrite and her Ladies-in-Waiting view the proceedings.
9. The Royal Barber enters.
10. Camera pans left to Royal Surgeon.
11. King Neptune announces to Captain that ceremonies may now begin and instructs his Police to round up all "tadpoles".
12. First "tadpole" is shaved by Barber..
13. Then pushed back into pool where he is given thorough going-over by the Bears.
14. View of ship's company clustered on "Ontario's" superstructure watching the ceremony.
15. Another "tadpole" is dragged by the Police to appear before the Court.
16. The "tadpole" is first shaved and lathered and thrown to the bears. .+.
17. Another "victim" gets the treatment
18. Crowds watch
19. Another "tadpole"
20. General crowd scenes and a succession of "tadpoles" being given their initiation.