

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY -- NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER
805 KIDDER BREESE SE -- WASHINGTON NAVY YARD
WASHINGTON DC 20374-5060

List of Unofficial US Navy Certificates

Through the years, the wish to mark other seagoing milestones has given birth to certificates for all kinds of distinctions. Most of them are variations on the shellback theme; they document, typically in salty language, passing certain places for the first time. Some of these time-honored traditions that have come to light include:

Antarctic Circle

Crossing of the Antarctic Circle (66-32 South latitude). Also known as the "Royal Domain of the Penguin" or "Blue Nose."

Arctic Circle

Crossing of the Arctic Circle (66-32 North latitude). Also known as the "Northern Domain of the Polar Bear" or "Blue Nose."

Blue Nose

Crossing of the Arctic Circle (66-32 North latitude). See also "Arctic Circle," "Frozen Stiff," and "Northern Domain of the Polar Bear."

Caterpillar Club

Anyone who had made an unscheduled parachute jump from a disabled plane. *Caterpillar* denotes use of a silkworm's product in parachute construction. Club members wear a gold caterpillar on civies only, the color of the caterpillar's jeweled eyes is determined by the circumstances, i.e. ruby eyes show that the wearer has survived a midair collision.

Century Club

Pilots who have completed their 100th carrier landing. Also applicable to hurricane hunters who have flown through winds of 100 miles per hour or more.

Deep Dive Diploma

Presented to crew members for first dives, last dives, etc.

Decommissioning

Decommissioning of a ship, land unit, or squadron.

Deep Dive Diploma

Issued to crew of USS *Nautilus* (SSN-571) during the boat's first dive.

Double Centurions

Pilots who have completed their 200th carrier landing.

Emerald Shellback

Crossing of the Equator at the Greenwich Meridian.

Frozen Stiff

Members who have crossed the Arctic Circle and are entitled to all privileges of this frozen realm of blizzards, including freezing, shivering, starving and any other privileged miseries that can possibly be bestowed.

Golden Dragon

Crossing of the 180th Meridian (International Date Line).

Golden Shellback

Crossing of the Equator at the 180th Meridian.

Goldfish Club

Pilots who ditch and have to take to a life raft. If they spend more than 24 hours on the raft, they become "Sea Squatters."

Great Lakes

Cruising the St. Lawrence Seaway and Great Lakes.

Icelandic Domain

Commemorating service in Iceland.

Mossback

Traversing around Cape Horn.

Neutron Owners Certificate

Plank owner certificate issued to crew of USS *Nautilus* (SSN-571) on 17 Jan. 1955 at latitude 40 20' 46.

Northern Domain of the Polar Bear

Crossing the Arctic Circle (66- 32 North latitude). See also "Arctic Circle" and "Frozen Stiff."

Order of Magellan

Going around the World.

Order of the Ditch

Transiting the Panama Canal. See also "Panama Canal."

Order of the Nuclear Navy

Designates the bearer of this wallet-sized card as an honorary member of the USS *Nautilus*' ships company. It was issued to personnel outside of the crew who had "performed feats underwater" while aboard the vessel for a visit.

Order of the Rock

Transit through the Straits of Gibraltar.

Order of the Square Rigger

Service on any square rigger ship.

Panama Canal

Transit through the Panama Canal. Also "Order of the Ditch."

Persian Excursion

Persian Gulf service

Plank Owner

Commissioning a Ship or Shore Command Special Honorary title for those certificates requiring it.

Pollywog

Member who has not previously "crossed the Line" (Equator).

Realm of the Czars

Cruising the Black Sea.

Red Nose

Member who has crossed the Antarctic Circle (66-32 South latitude).

Royal Domain of the Emperor Penguin

Crossing the Antarctic Circle (66-32 South latitude). Also "Antarctic Circle" and "Red Nose."

Royal Experiment of Guinea Pigs at Bikini Atoll

Operation Crossroads, 1946

Royal Order of Whale Bangers

Crew members who accidentally fired at a whale, unfortunately mistaking it for a submarine.

Safari to Suez

Transiting the Suez Canal.

Sea Squatters

Member who takes to the water and spend more than 24 hours on a life raft.

Shellback

Crossing the Equator. Special Gold Shellback title for crossing at the International Date Line, special Emerald Shellback title for crossing at the Greenwich Meridian.

Spanish Main

Cruising the Caribbean.

Suez Canal

Transit through the Suez Canal. Also "Safari to Suez."

Note: If you are a Navy veteran who has received a certificate not listed above, and would like the certificate considered for inclusion in this list, send a photocopy of the certificate with a brief explanation concerning its issuance to:

Web Site Committee
Naval Historical Center
805 Kidder Breesse Street
Washington Navy Yard
Washington DC 20374-5060