



The

FIGHTING CLAN

Chronicle

Autumn 2016

Newsletter of HMS Sutherland



Message from the Commanding Officer

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Fighting Clan. Over the last few months the Ship's Company have been extremely busy, conducting weapons systems trials, port visits, multi national exercises and a prolonged period of extremely important National Tasking. While it has been a demanding programme, I can assure you that my crew have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to practice a variety of skills and get involved in operations around the UK. HMS SUTHERLAND will continue to operate in the vicinity of UK waters for the remainder of the year, ready to support further National Tasking.



Spectacular Scilly Isles

They say every run ashore has two stories - HMS SUTHERLAND's brief time in the Scilly Isles during their Inaugural Maritime Regatta was no different. After an intense week of system and personnel testing in anticipation for yet another stint of operational tasking, HMS SUTHERLAND was glad for the respite of a few days in the Scilly Isles.



But as many of the ship's company will tell you, it wasn't all plain sailing from there. Indeed, after a week of hard work out in the South Coast Exercise Areas, it didn't stop for many of the Ship's Company once they touched down in the unspoilt South Western idyll. Instead a program of gun salutes and ship tours kept many at work over the weekend. Regardless, face timing it with the public and proving to the small island community the enormous capability of their unit proved to be no big hassle and indeed SUTHERLAND attracted many supporters over the weekend.

For the Ship's Company, the opportunity to amble the streets of this little known and not often visited Island Parish was a welcome treat. As can be imagined, many were also

impressed with the nautical skills of the regattas competitors; including the 'The Spirit of Falmouth', a graceful pleasant sea craft, far removed from the sleek, but tough grey lines of our own Pusser's Grey. With a memorable and still much-discussed run ashore at an end HMS SUTHERLAND looked northward, ready to resume her tasking as the UK's Fleet Ready Escort, prepared to react to imminent maritime threats to the UK.

Return of the Rugby Team

During a busy 4 day period alongside in Amsterdam, HMS SUTHERLAND's Rugby Union team managed to get ashore in order to play two fixtures against the local Dutch sides, ASCRUM (Amsterdam Student rugby) and AAC Amsterdam, at the Dutch National training stadium. The SUTH team, though containing experienced players and coached by veteran Rugby coach PO 'Taff' Steadman, were starting fresh as a Ship's club after a 8 month hiatus and were looking to build on their first training session with some much-anticipated game time in a premier Rugby club.

The first game against ASCRUM saw SUTH get off to a strong start both defensively and offensively, with Fly-Half Ben Massey making significant breaks through the Dutch line and Prop 'Ollie' Reed scoring through the



SUTH pack's drive. The second half however saw SUTH's pace begin to slow as the more experienced Dutch side started to take advantage of the team's rustiness. The final score of 17-7 highlights a close fought game that by the end of the second half had developed into a tenacious defensive game by the Ship's side. SUTH only received a 10 minute respite before playing AAC Amsterdam, a match that would be



characterised by strong defensive work by the team (in particular a powerful try-saving tackle by 'Shiner' Wright directly beneath the posts) in order to contain the fresher and better drilled Dutch side. Despite these efforts, SUTH was unable to put points on the board and struggled to contain the explosive Dutch backline. Unfortunately SUTH was unable to accept the kind offer of being hosted by the Dutch sides after the game due to transport demands, but the team came away feeling encouraged by their performance and looking forward to the prospect of more games in the months to come.

The Order of the Blue Nose

Sailors of HMS SUTHERLAND recently became members of 'The Order of the Blue Nose' by crossing the line into the Arctic Circle on 24 Oct 16. After several weeks at sea, the Ship's Company crossed over the threshold of 66°33'46.4"N and entered into the Arctic Circle (or to put it in simple terms: some where blinking cold!). In so doing they joined a relatively small group of sailors who have ventured so far north. In order for the ship to mark their achievement they were presented with signed certificates from Neptune's representative herself: Commander P Kohn Royal Navy. To add to the spectacle, the ship's company received their certificates by the kings of the north themselves; polar bears. Fortunately, it wasn't quite the planet's biggest land-based carnivores, just a few of the ship's newest Young Officers instead. After creating costumes which mirrored the mighty carnivores, the Young Officers set on their way to offer their congratulations to members of the ship's company, along with painting their nose blue as is tradition.



Northern Delight

As October's curtain call beckoned, HMS SUTHERLAND found herself creeping ever northwards up the arched, spiny back of the Norwegian coastline. With its northern journey came shorter days (as little as 5 hours of sun light), but surreal auroras and the evergreen Northern Lights as night closed up. It also brought storms.



So whilst Captain Ahab of Moby Dick may have been content with the thought of sailing through a 'Norwegian Maelstrom' on the hunt for a murderous whale; HMS SUTHERLAND was content with whale

spotting migrating Killer Whales in the shelter of Tromsø's placid and peaceful harbour.

Tromsø, the most northerly city in the world, was to become the Ship's Companies' home for an extended weekend break. Whether it was trudging up the local fjords (or taking the far easier gondola), surveying the local delicacies (whale and reindeer being just two of the more unusual menu items) or partaking in a 'few', HMS SUTHERLAND made the most of her brief stopover in the Arctic Circle. Re-energised, she returned to sea ready to take on, and continue to surpass, the expectations put on her by a very busy operational tempo and schedule.



Note from the Editor: If you would like to input or request any articles in to this Chronicle, please do get in touch with me, Lieutenant Daniel Wardle, at hmssuth-war-oww1@mod.uk