

MY WINDEWARD BOUND EXPERIENCE

By Emily

My experience on the Windeward Bound was so fantastic and adventurous that I could write a whole novel on it. I set foot on the tall ship on the 30th of May, so excited I was practically shaking. With strange new faces all around, it was a little daunting as well. However, after I was chosen into Blue Watch, the six in our group, plus our watch leader, Greg, introduced ourselves and we had a mini tour of the ship, I felt myself begin to relax.

We were underway within an hour and our brains were already full of new things. For one, we were shown how to use what they call the head. The head is the toilet, which is a bit of tricky mechanism to get used to. We were told the names of the different parts of the ship; the aft deck (the back of the ship), the foredeck (the front of the ship), the galley (the kitchen), the deck house and the main accommodation. Down in the main accommodation, there were the cabins. Mine held four, two of the girls I already knew from my school. My bunk was a nightmare to begin with, as I was right up the top, my face just centimetres away from the ceiling. That night was our first watch, after a dinner of pumpkin soup, made by the amazing chef, James, who cooked the most amazing meals every day. The watches were most certainly interesting, going from 8pm – 12am, 12am – 4am, 4am – 8am and so on. My favourites were the 12am – 4am one, as at that time, the sky was lit up by the stars, and the 4am – 8am, because we got to see the sunrise.

We had been in Macquarie Harbour for just two days, and I had already begun to make friends. Everyone in my watch worked together well, and we all got along. We had already learnt how to be the lookout (this was thing I didn't like doing at first, as I don't like talking loudly in front of people, however I grew more confident after actually doing it), how to tie a few knots, and even learnt a couple of songs. Every morning we had morning muster, where the first mate, Susie, would tell us what we were doing that day and sometimes remind us of little things, like shutting the blue valve in the head. If you didn't do that, it would overflow, so we were restricted to 'buddy peeing' for 24 hours. We left the harbour that second day, and began our voyage out of Hell's Gates. The result was that everyone, except for a few, got seasick. The waves seemed huge, but in reality, they weren't really. People were throwing up over the side of the deck every five minutes, and we also had to wear harnesses. Sao's were our saviours, and after a day everyone's stomachs became used to the rocking of the boat. I eventually grew my sea legs, and learnt quickly how cold the watches were. We slowly moved toward the top of Tassie, which was pretty cool, and one of the crew, Chloe, even mentioned that we were technically sailing along the waters from Antarctica. Every day we learnt something new; how to brace the yards, set and strike sails and steer the ship. We passed Stanley, and the wind turbines. Stopping at a few islands, the weather held up for us and we even got a few climbs of the mast out of it.

I loved the climbing, reaching to the t'gallant and even touching the top when we reached Devonport. One night at anchor, it was a little wavy as another fellow Blue Watch sailor and I climbed the mast and I admit to being scared. However, once I got back down after doing what we had to do, I had the little family we'd created to cheer me up and reassure me. I figured that that was just all part of the experience. I struggled to get up some mornings for watch, one time Greg came in to wake up a friend and I, then she tried to wake me up three times, then Greg again before I finally rolled out of bed for watch. I don't even remember this happening! Even though we were working for a lot of it, we got a lot of down time to listen to stories about Jimmy and his little red balls, sing songs, play chess and just have fun. Plenty of photos were taken on my camera by many people, 457 photos, to be exact, so I walked away with some great memories.

2 days before the end of our trip, it was announced that it was Command Day. We were to sail the ship ourselves, and we elected Johnny as captain. Challenges were set for us, and we got few done, but we had fun doing ones such as building a hammock big and strong enough to hold all 18 of us and just getting Devonport by ourselves. By the last day, the day after we had reached Devonport, I really didn't want to leave. I had made good friends, most of which live in Hobart, so I knew I probably wouldn't see them ever again. The same with the crew, I'm gonna miss Chloe and I's little chats on

watch and Greg and Susie and everyone. And the ship itself, she is a really lovely ship, almost like a second home now. The last day, as it was time for everyone to say goodbye, I cried like a baby, in sadness to leave everything. I don't regret going one bit, I learnt many things such as leadership skills, giving everything a go and how to sail a ship!

I would like to give a huge thanks to the crew of the Windeward Bound for taking me under their care and just as big of a thanks to the Australian Mariners Welfare Society for awarding me with a bursary for the trip. If it weren't for the AMWS, I'm not sure I would have been able to go on this once in a lifetime adventure.

I would gladly go back to the sea once more. I like to say that I'm seasick; homesick for the sea.

Emily

MY WINDEWARD BOUND EXPERIENCE by Johnny

Hi my name is Johnny I am 18 years old and am joining the navy in two and a half months as a Marine technician. This Voyage further opened my eyes at life at sea, and how important working as a team really is. I can safely speak for most people when I say that we were pushed too, and even passed our normal boundaries. I personally kept a small journal on the journey to Devonport, and this is my experience on the Windeward Bound.

Day one

We started our journey in Hobart at 10 o'clock with Georgia, her friend Alicia, and Georgia's father. Three and a half hours later we arrived in Strahan, tired and cold from the drive. When we boarded the Windeward bound we were given a funny introduction from the first mate Suzie, then split into groups of 3, white, red, and blue. Then everyone met their watch leader, learnt a safety on board, and a little bit more about the boat. Once everyone settled down everyone was told when their watch was ours was tonight at 8 till 12.

Day two

Because we were still at anchor, when we were on watch we spent most of it indoors but still had to check the anchor, the wind direction and speed, the Radars, and cloud coverage every 15 minutes, while checking the bilge every 30 minutes in case of flooding. We also climbed the mast today, some people struggled to climb in it, but I only struggled with the climb down. It was the best feeling ever, I felt invincible. But when we climbed down we organised one person from each group to help out in the kitchen, and this changed as the days went on. I was chosen from the group first and it was amazing to work with the chef James.

Day three

I struggled to get out of bed I was so tired, but today we left hell's gate and we set sail. It was a slow way out we couldn't sail out, but instead motored. It was nice to have everyone on the aft deck as we started our voyage. Then when we passed hell's gate one by one people were hanging over the side throwing up everything. Then came my turn, I lost all colour in my face and ran to the side of the boat. I have to say, those motion sickness bands don't work, not at all. The only time I felt ok was when I was lying down so when our watch finished we went off to bed.

Day four

When I woke up it was calm waters, at least it felt calm. I was totally cured and gained my sea legs. Everyone was so hungry from the day before and we ate so much of James' delicious food. And then it was my day to do rope races, standing up with a little bit of a struggle. But I still had to get up and I'm glad I did. I won by 2 points pushing out into the lead. Then we spent the rest of the day getting to know each other better we were on watch. I

became close friends with the people in my watch. And being that I recently moved to Tasmania it was nice to have friends.

Day five

Not much really happened, we were on watch and just relax the entire day. Until night, when we climbed to the upper topside and watched the sun set from the second highest sail. Then we proceeded to climb to the lower tops or to tie off the sail. It felt like we were 30 meters off the ground, with only our feet on a small rope and a safety harness to the sail. It was scary, but being able to see everyone else so calm about it, made me feel better, like everything was okay.

Day six

PANCAKES!!! James always cooked the best food. Then he showed us his talent of the uke and taught some people how to play. So we spent most of the day singing as loud as we could, and I had one of the best times ever.

Day seven

We have sailed all the way to sister Island, but we have now been given the opportunity to run the ship. Everything went to a vote, I became Captain, 3 others became officer of the watch, 3 more became Watch leaders and three deckhands. We were also given challenges to complete, which gained points towards the mystery prize. My job was to work out, how and when we're going to get to Devonport. The tide, the wind, and the rest of the crew were my factors we weren't able to arrive early or late. But me and the officers of the watch agreed that we would leave at 9 o'clock that night.

Day eight

We arrived in perfect time, everyone from the watch work together communicated and push themselves. We then handed the ship back over to the old crew and then celebrated by playing chess, singing songs and dancing hilarious dances.

It was sad to say good bye to everyone that you've gotten to know so well. I still keep in contact with some of the others just because they've become close friends to me. Everyone on the boat was so welcoming and inviting, if I could do it again I would in a heartbeat. This was without a doubt the best thing that I have ever done and I'm so glad that I had the opportunity to do this.

MY WINDEWARD BOUND EXPERIENCE by Georgia

My journey on the Windeward bound was one I will not forget, I met some amazing people and grew close to many of them. Thanks to the Mariners Welfare Society I got to experience the southern ocean and sail on a tall ship with an amazing crew. Most got seas sick for the first time even though we thought we wouldn't, but we did it together. The knots, ropes and lines we learnt whilst sailing proved challenging to remember but by the command day we were ready to navigate the ship to Devonport by ourselves using the knowledge learnt in the previous days. Knowledge were tested and unexpected leaders rose to the challenge. We all were brought together and used everyone's knowledge to make sure command dah went smoothly. Overall, we succeed and I'm so proud of everyone. Big thanks again to the amazing people and crew that made this experience a possibility! –

Georgia