

## **HMS *Enterprise* returns home**

### **Three years at sea saving lives across the globe**

On 18 April HMS *Enterprise* (H88) returned home after an epic 35-month deployment. In almost three years she steamed 150,000 nautical miles, visited 20 countries while conducting maritime security operations, protecting Britain's economy and rescuing those in danger.

With a 78-strong ship's company the specialist survey ship *Enterprise* was at the heart of operations to prevent people-smuggling in the Mediterranean. She evacuated more than 200 British citizens from Libya, rescued 9,180 people attempting to undertake deadly crossings of the Mediterranean and destroyed 117 unseaworthy vessels used by people traffickers.

Minister of State for the Armed Forces Mike Penning commented: *'During her three years deployed away from the UK, HMS Enterprise and her ship's company have helped make the world a safer place. From disrupting people-smuggling in the Mediterranean to assisting in the free flow of trade in the Gulf, and from providing reassurance to our overseas territories to surveying the world's oceans, she has epitomised how the Royal Navy is protecting the UK's global interests.'*

Commander Philip Harper, the ship's Commanding Officer commented: *'The crew of HMS Enterprise are justly proud of the work they have done since deploying, and the wide variety of operations will be hard to match in the rest of our careers. At the same time, we are all really looking forward to coming home. The results of our deployment speak for themselves and we are all eager to spend some time with our families before the ship deploys again later this year.'*

Deployment of *Enterprise* began in June 2014, when she headed to the Mediterranean on maritime security operations. At the time, growing unrest in Libya led to the UK government encouraging British citizens to evacuate and *Enterprise* was tasked with rescuing more than 200 people from Tripoli.

She was then tasked with conducting survey operations in the Persian Gulf and southern Red Sea, joining the continuous Royal Navy presence in the region which works to secure some of the most vital shipping lanes in the world and protect Britain's economy.

Those on board had opportunities to visit 33 ports, including Goa in India and Port Victoria in the Seychelles. But there was still work to be done – teams from the ship volunteered to visit an orphanage in Goa, helping to refurbish several classrooms, build some swings and even fix a trampoline.

In 2015, *Enterprise* joined the naval force in the Mediterranean which was set up to deal with people-smuggling in the region. Over the course of the following year, the sailors on board destroyed 117 unseaworthy craft and rescued 9,180 people attempting to make deadly crossings – the highest number of people ever rescued by a Royal Navy ship.

She also surveyed some 2,600nm<sup>2</sup> of the ocean floor, was awarded the Firmin Sword of Peace, the Naval Capability Prize and the HM Efficiency Award, as well as receiving a personal commendation from the Chief of the Defence Staff.

The survey ship's work in the Mediterranean also led to 20 suspected smuggling ringleaders being identified and subsequently arrested by the Italian authorities.

Following the heat of the Mediterranean it was time for *Enterprise* to experience the South Atlantic, as she headed south to stand in for Falkland Islands' patrol vessel HMS *Clyde* during her refit in South Africa.

*‘Having successfully mastered integrating with the Italians and other EU partners, the ship now had to operate with the Royal Air Force and the Army,’* said Navigating Officer Lieutenant Kyle O’Regan. He added: *‘A very busy time followed, conducting training with Typhoon aircraft, winching with Chinook helicopters and still managing to fit in some survey operations.’*

That visit also enabled *Enterprise* to make the 800 nm passage to visit Gold Harbour, South Georgia.

At the end of three-year deployment *Enterprise* and her ship's company will have little time for rest as she deploys again in July this year.

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