



USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81)
Public Affairs Release

Churchill Sailors visit Albania

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Aaron Chase, USS Winston S. Churchill Public Affairs

DURRES, Albania [July 11, 2012] – The guided-missile destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81) pulled into Durres, Albania, July 11. This port visit serves to continue U.S. 6th Fleet efforts to build Global Maritime Partnerships with European nations and improve maritime safety and security.

During the visit, Churchill Sailors will be conducting mock maritime interdiction operations (MIO) with the Albanian military in order to improve cooperation and exchange tactics and strategies with their naval forces.

“These are the type of things that you look forward to. A chance to learn from what they (Albanian military) do and practice what we do during MIO benefits everyone, establishes good relations, and helps us become a better Sailor.” Said Lt j.g. Edward R. Kellum, boarding officer for the visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) team on board Churchill.

Churchill Sailors will be conducting this port visit as part of a scheduled deployment to the U.S. 6th and 5th fleet area of responsibility. “We are happy to visiting Durres and our strong ally in Albania,” said Cmdr. Michael E. Hutchens, commanding officer of Churchill. “Albania is a member of NATO, so we are committed to peace in the Balkan region and hope to strengthen our relationship here. After our successful visit to Montenegro, we also look forward to experiencing the culture of Albania and showing them the best America has to offer.”

Churchill has tours of the country scheduled for Sailors, through the ship’s Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) committee, set to enhance Sailors understanding of the local culture of the nation of three million along the Adriatic Sea. The tours will take Sailors though the over 500 year-old Petrela and Lezhe Castles, along with scenic Lake Shkoder. “I really look forward to exploring medieval castles and exploring a culture so different than my own,” said Gas Turbine System Technician (Mechanical) 1st Class (SW) Steven C. Chambley. “It’ll be nice to pick up some local things for my daughter so she gets a piece of what I saw.”

Sailors will also have the ability to personally due their part for Albanian-American relations by volunteering to help paint and beautify an orphanage in the Albanian capital of Tirana.

“The winning of hearts and minds begins with ‘do unto others as you would have them do unto you,’” said Destroyer Squadron 28 chaplain Lt. Cary C. Shinn. “What better way to than to share some sweat equity and have fun in the service of these people?”

Churchill is deployed as part of the Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group (CSG), supporting maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility. The Eisenhower CSG includes aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), CSG 8, guided-missile cruiser USS Hue City (CG 66), guided-missile destroyers USS Farragut (DDG 99), USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81) and USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109), as well as the seven squadrons of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 7 and Destroyer Squadron 28.