



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

Churchill VBSS team trains with Montenegrin forces

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

BAR, Montenegro [July 9, 2012] – Visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) team members of the guided-missile destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81) displayed maritime interdiction tactics with the Montenegrin military during a joint training exercise and military exchange July 9.

The VBSS team and the maritime squadron of Montenegro's Special Forces each performed a simulated maritime interdiction operation, or MIO, in order to compare strategies and further cooperation between the two allied militaries. "Every military has different ways of solving problems. To observe a diversity of well-trained boarding teams interjects new ideas and keeps what you're doing fresh," said Lt. j.g. Edward R. Kellum, boarding officer of the Winston Churchill team. "To see what the Montenegrin Navy is capable of and analyze the differences only adds another layer of competency to my team's ability to perform their mission."

In each boarding event, VBSS teams boarded vessels belonging to their respective countries, the Churchill for the U.S. Sailors and a salvage tug for the Montenegrin Special Forces. Both teams executed boarding techniques to include crew members and sweeping the ship for contraband. Military representatives observed both sets of boardings. "This was an excellent opportunity for us to see and compare our levels of tactics and equipment," said Cmdr. Darko Vukovic, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Montenegro.

While the Montenegrin Navy does not have VBSS teams, the navy utilizes the maritime squadron to perform anti-piracy and combat against smuggling and terrorism. "It's a good feeling to get a direct comparison with a special forces squadron," said Gunner's Mate 3rd Class (SW) Devon Dusseault, a VBSS team member, "and it's great to what they're capable of for such a small force and integrate those tactics into our own."

The Montenegrin Navy consists of 341 personnel, according Vukovic. He said he believes close training like this will pay even great dividends for Montenegro in the future.

The teams had a hands-on equipment comparison as military members on both sides examined, shouldered, and wore each other's weapons, armor and diving equipment. An extensive question-and-answer session combined with individual equipment tutorials allowed everyone to get a personal feel for the equipment held.

"I have never seen an HK MP5 submachine gun before, and for most of them it was the first time they had seen a .50-caliber gun" said Gunner's Mate 3rd Class (SW) Devon Dusseault, a member of the Churchill boarding team. "To show each other how they work and see it click- such a great moment."

Winston S. Churchill is on a regularly scheduled deployment in support of Maritime Security Operations (MSO) and theater Security Cooperation (TSC) efforts in the U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet areas of responsibility. Hue City is deployed as part of Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group (CSG), which includes CSG 8, USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), guided-missile destroyers USS Farragut (DDG 99), USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81), and USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109), the seven squadrons of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 7, and Destroyer Squadron 28.