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**February 29, 2008  
PAO 02-29B-08**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Ideal exchange – Suriname and S.D. Soldiers build ‘network of trust’**

**By Capt. Anthony Deiss**

FORT MEADE, S.D. – Four Soldiers from the Suriname Army visited the South Dakota National Guard’s 196<sup>th</sup> Regional Training Institute (RTI) on Thursday, Feb. 28, at Fort Meade to exchange ideas and information about how the Guard training institute organizes and manages a professional military education program.

“This is an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas about how each country trains its military forces.” said Lt. Col. Tracy Settle, State Partnership Program director. “Both our Guardsmen and our guests from Suriname are learning new techniques and processes in enhancing military operations and training.”

The Suriname Armed Forces and the South Dakota Guard are both a part of the State Partnership Program (SPP) that links U.S. states and partner nations in support of mutual interests at all levels of society. The National Guard is the catalyzing force and means of support, but it’s the individual exchanges and relationships that bring strength to the program.

“We are working to build a ‘network of trust,’” said Capt. Allen Godsell, traditional commander’s activities coordinator for U.S. SOUTHCOM. “This exchange will be used to help determine future exchanges between South Dakota and Suriname on a military-to-military level.”

Godsell said that he hopes other government entities from South Dakota and Suriname are able to do similar exchanges to build and expand interoperability between the U.S. and Suriname.

The South American Soldiers observed the RTI’s Combat Life Saver Course and shared ideas and information on the program’s organization, management, training techniques and common skills tasks.

“We’re observing the course instruction here so we can explain to our Soldiers in Suriname how the RTI conducts training,” said Sgt. 1st Class Roy Mangalie, Suriname Army combat instructor. “With the U.S. being involved in current conflicts – the knowledge your Army has gained in combat lifesaving techniques has become a specialty. It is beneficial for us to understand the knowledge in this area.”

Likewise, the RTI instructors were able to ask the Suriname Soldiers about their medical program and medical treatment techniques.

“Medical care and techniques are very similar all around the world,” said 1st Lt. Bruce Kyllonen, lead instructor for the Combat Life Saver Course. “The Surinamer’s medical training is very much like ours, but they have a different operating environment and sometimes use different resources available to them to treat patients.”

The exchange opportunity between the SDNG and the Suriname Armed Forces is just one of many to take place. There will be a contingent of Suriname leaders attending this year’s Golden Coyote exercise in June to learn more about how the SDNG conducts its internationally-known, annual training exercise.

Also this summer, the SDNG will participate in “Beyond the Horizons,” a U.S. SOUTHCOM and U.S. Army South joint exercise that allows several hundred Guardsmen to travel to Suriname to assist with engineering projects and medical programs.

“Beyond the Horizons will provide our National Guardsmen with outstanding opportunities to see and experience Surinamese culture and interact with its people and members of the Suriname Armed Forces,” said Settle.

It’s this exchange of ideas and relationship building between people that benefits both the SDNG and the Suriname Army.

“It’s important to have positive international relations and cooperate with one another,” said Mangalie. “Both South Dakota and Suriname have similar objectives and goals, and we can both learn from each other in all areas.”

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**Photo cutline:** Sgt. 1st Class Richard Dostal, lead instructor, prepares 1st Lt. Bruce Kyllonen’s arm for an IV site on Thursday, Feb. 28, as members of the Suriname Army and South Dakota Army National Guard observe during the Combat Life Saver Course at the 196th Regional Training Institute at Fort Meade.

Link to Photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/080228-A-9937D-001.jpg>

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