

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Suriname military leaders visit South Dakota

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RAPID CITY, S.D. – The South Dakota National Guard and the South American Republic of Suriname made great progress in their partnership this summer with many projects, exchanges and visits that included a visit to South Dakota from Suriname’s top military leaders.

When Suriname dignitaries visited this summer they were not only able to look into how the National Guard trains and operates but they were able to see it all happen in full-swing.

The visit took place in June during the annual Golden Coyote training exercise, an event that drew more than 1,820 servicemembers to the Black Hills to conduct combat support and service support mission training exercises.

Suriname dignitaries, that included Mr. John Nay, U.S. Ambassador to Suriname, Mr. Lamure Latour, Suriname Minister of Defense, Col. Hedwig Gilaard, Suriname Chief of Armed Forces and Lt. Col. Johnny Antonius, Suriname Strategic Planning and Education, were brought to South Dakota to see the various military training associated with Golden Coyote.

However, coinciding with the South Dakota National Guard’s annual training event this year was severe flooding that was impacting a number of communities along the Missouri River.

As a result, Suriname’s dignitaries were given glimpses into both training and operating environments as they witnessed the various training scenarios going on in the Black Hills and Army and Air Guard members working side-by-side supporting flooding operations in the Pierre and Dakota Dunes communities.

“One of Suriname’s major disasters that they deal with is flooding,” said Lt. Col. John Weber, South Dakota-Suriname State Partnership Program director. “This trip was able to show them real time examples of how other agencies deal with similar situations.

One key take away according to Weber was their ability to see the South Dakota National Guard’s Joint Operations Center (JOC), an operations centers on Camp Rapid with the capability to receive and respond to classified messages, execute command and control operations, and provide situational awareness on National Guard activities and operations within the state.

“Suriname is looking into setting up a similar operations center that will allow their various agencies to communicate more efficiently in emergency situations,” Weber said. “As a result of being here when they were, it allowed their leadership to look at our JOC up-and-running, fully-manned.

Dignitaries not only visited the JOC, but sat in on a Battle Update Brief, a daily update discussing the significant activities, operations and intelligence.

“They were able to see all of the tracking mechanisms we use, the different representatives we use, what information we feel is most important to track, and see how all of the working parts move through the JOC. Then they were able to travel to Pierre and see the state’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in action. They saw how our Guard members work out of that operation and coordinate with our JOC at Camp Rapid. It gave them an overall perspective at several different levels, that they were able to take home and is something they would like to move forward in developing that in Suriname.”

“It was their opportunity to come and really get a chance to look at what South Dakota has to offer in terms of the partnership and working together,” said Weber.

They were also introduced to Governor Dennis Daugaard and shown ongoing missions by South Dakota's Soldiers and Airmen conducting flood relief related missions in Pierre.

“The meeting with the governor was tremendous,” said Weber. “At a really busy time, in middle of the flood fight, he took the time to really get to know each dignitary, ask each one of them about themselves and really welcomed them to South Dakota.”

“They also got the opportunity to meet many more of our Soldiers and Airmen as well as members of the Sioux Falls and Rapid City communities which allowed them to experience the genuine friendliness that South Dakotans are known for,” said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, South Dakota National Guard’s adjutant general.

During the past several years, key leaders from Suriname and South Dakota representing military, government, education, private business and community sectors have participated in various information exchanges.

Information sharing through such exchanges continues and on Sept. 11, the South Dakota National Guard sent five noncommissioned officers (NCO) to Suriname for a subject matter expert exchange where they will discuss the role of the NCO in the U.S. military and compare that to the role of Suriname’s NCO.

The South Dakota-Suriname Partnership was formally established in 2006 to develop mutually beneficial partnerships between the two entities.

To date, more than 800 individuals who have directly interacted through the South Dakota-Suriname State Partnership Program (SPP).

“This partnership is as equally beneficial to the S.D. National Guard as it is to Suriname,” said Reisch. “The ability for our Soldiers and Airmen to travel abroad and work in a partnership like this is personally very fulfilling and professionally it enhances skills that can benefit our Guardsmen and women both in their military and civilian careers.”

“We have really accelerated the development of our relationship with Suriname’s new government,” Weber said. “I’ve never seen the relationship between the South Dakota National Guard and the Suriname government stronger.”



110615-A-FO377-106: (Left to right) South Dakota National Guard's Maj. Shelby Dreyer, intelligence operations specialist, briefs Mr. John Nay, U.S. Ambassador to Suriname, Mr. Lamure Latour, Suriname Minister of Defense, Cdr. Hiram Johnson, Military Liaison Officer at the U.S. Embassy, Lt. Col. Johnny Antonius, Suriname Strategic Planning and Education and Col. Hedwig Gilaard, Suriname Chief of Armed Forces, on the South Dakota National Guard's Joint Operations Center at Camp Rapid June 15, 2011. (SDNG photo by 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson) (RELEASED)



110615-A-FO377-006: Governor Dennis Daugaard (right), discusses South Dakota's State Partnership Program with Mr. Lamure Latour (center), Suriname Minister of Defense and Mr. John Nay, U.S. Ambassador to Suriname, at the Capitol, June 17, 2011. The South Dakota National Guard hosted dignitaries from the Republic of Suriname for a week in June. (SDNG photo by 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson)



110615-A-FO377-152: Maj. Martin Yost (right), 147th Task Force operations officer, shows dignitaries from Suriname a levee along the Missouri River in Pierre, June 18, 2011. The South Dakota National Guard hosted dignitaries from the Republic of Suriname for a week in June. Dignitaries were shown various military training associated with the annual Golden Coyote training exercise, which brought 2,100 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen from across the U.S. to the Black Hills for the two-week training event. (SDNG photo by 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson)

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