

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Dakota senior leaders visit partner-nation, Suriname

By 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson
SDNG Public Affairs

PARAMARIBO, Suriname – Senior leaders from the South Dakota National Guard traveled to the South American country of Suriname, Thursday, Aug. 23 for a series of meetings with government and military leaders as part of its State Partnership Program.

The National Guard's 65-nation State Partnership Program provides unique partnership capacity-building capabilities to combatant commanders through partnerships between U.S. states, territories, and the District of Columbia and foreign countries.

The SPP supports U.S. national interests and security cooperation goals by engaging partner nations through military, social, political and economic conduits at the local, state and national level.

The South Dakota and Suriname partnership was formally established in August of 2006. Since then, numerous exchanges have taken place where South Dakota service members travel to Suriname and vice versa to complete in various military training.

“South Dakota National Guard Soldiers and Airmen are able to come over and work within their military specialties, providing them with hands-on training and return to South Dakota with a great deal of personal satisfaction, knowing they helped make life better for the people of Suriname,” said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard.

Some of examples of recent training projects South Dakota Guardsmen and women took part in include building a clinic, refurbishing clinics and schools and conducting medical exercises.

“I also hope our Guardsmen and women leave with a deeper appreciation for the things they take for granted living in South Dakota and the United States,” Reisch said.

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In addition to the adjutant general, the South Dakota National Guard's senior leader visit included: Brig. Gen. Ted Johnson, director of the Joint Staff; Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Zimmerman, state command sergeant major; and Chief Warrant Officer 5 Darla Crown, command chief warrant officer.

"It sends a message to Suriname's officials that this partnership is important to the South Dakota National Guard," Reisch said. "We see it as a priority; it is one of my top priorities."

South Dakota's senior leaders were able to make several stops in Suriname that included the U.S. Embassy, the Ministry of Defense, the Chief of Defense Office, the Brazilian Defense Attaché Lt. Col. Angelo Brait Junior, where the Suriname military was recognized at the Brazilian Soldier Day, as well as the residence of U.S. Ambassador John Nay.

"Ambassador Nay is in his final eight days of service in his role as ambassador to Suriname and I wanted to make sure I was able to personally thank him for his support of the State Partnership Program and the way he was able to enhance that during his tenure here," said Reisch.

Reisch and members of his staff were able to not only thank the ambassador but also read an executive proclamation from Governor Dennis Daugaard declaring Aug. 24, 2012, as John R. Nay Day in South Dakota.

"Together, we've made significant impacts on humanitarian assistance, disaster relief preparedness, security and military police training, communications and logistics," Nay said to service members from Suriname and South Dakota attending an appreciation event at his home. "Building clinics, helping with educational institutions, among other things, and it's something we can be proud of because we worked on these things together."

Nay said that he had heard of the success of Suriname's State Partnership Program before arriving in Suriname in 2009.

"We are partnered with a state that is really committed, and active, and cares, and really goes the extra mile to make sure this program works," Nay said. "They've established a relationship with the host government, with Suriname, such that Suriname is happy to cooperate with South Dakota. We want to continue this relationship and continue to strengthen it and I want to thank everyone from South Dakota for traveling here to be with us today."

Reisch said spending time with Suriname's Minister of Defense Lamure Latour and Chief of Defense Col. Hedwig Gilaard was also an important part of the trip down here.

"Since Mr. Latour and Col. Gilaard were appointed, the state partnership with Suriname has been taken to new heights," said Reisch. "They both acknowledge the partnership is a good thing for Suriname and the defense forces here."

In a July meeting with Latour in South Dakota, Reisch said areas were identified that Suriname would like to focus on, areas that were priorities for the new leadership team.

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“He made it a point to tell me that they really felt the partnership is a two-way street and in addition to the South Dakota National Guard helping them in the areas that they identified, they intended to also have a benefit back to the South Dakota National Guard,” Reisch said. “And without question that has happened.

“Col. Gilaard told me he feels very much a sense of warmth and friendship with the South Dakota National Guard, and I feel the same way about the people of Suriname that we’ve worked with,” Reisch said. “The partnership is very healthy and it continues to impress me that each year we are able to take this partnership to a new level.”

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120824-A-FO377-139: Soldiers of the South Dakota National Guard join Suriname service members and key leaders at an appreciation event held at U.S. Ambassador John Nay’s residence in Paramaribo, Suriname, as part of senior leader’s visit Friday, Aug. 24, 2012. Suriname, located in South America, is South Dakota’s partner-nation in the National Guard’s State Partnership Program. (SDNG photo by 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson) (RELEASED)



120824-A-FO377-028: South Dakota National Guard’s Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch presents Suriname’s Minister of Defense Lamure Latour with a plaque in appreciation of his continued support of the National Guard’s State Partnership Program Friday, Aug. 24, 2012, at the Ministry of Defense in Paramaribo, Suriname. (SDNG photo by 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson) (RELEASED)



120824-A-FO377-048: Senior leaders from the South Dakota Army National Guard, including the Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch (left, center) met with Suriname’s Chief of Defense Col. Hedwig Gilaard (right, center) and members of his staff during a senior leader’s visit to Paramaribo, Suriname Friday, Aug. 24, 2012. (SDNG photo by 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson) (RELEASED)



120824-A-FO377-118: South Dakota Army National Guard’s Lt. Col John Weber, left, State Partnership Program director and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general, read an executive proclamation from S.D. Gov. Dennis Daugaard proclaiming Aug. 24, 2012, as John R. Nay Day in South Dakota. Ambassador Nay (right) was honored for his dedication and support of the State Partnership Program while he serving as the U.S. Ambassador. (SDNG photo by 2nd Lt. Chad Carlson) (RELEASED)

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