

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Dakota Soldiers train Suriname Special Forces

Story by Staff Sgt. Michael Beck
SDNG Public Affairs Office

REPUBLIC OF SURINAME – Three South Dakota National Guard Soldiers traveled to the Republic of Suriname April 16 –18 to provide refresher and instructor training on the Harris radio system to Surinamese Special Forces soldiers.

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

This is the third subject matter expert exchange between the SDNG and the Suriname military that focused on modernizing and expanding communications capabilities. The first two exchanges consisted of an assessment of the Surinamese communications capabilities and limitations, presenting that assessment and formulating a plan to enhance their communications.

“The goal in this exchange was for the Suriname forces to develop a training plan for their own soldiers,” said Lt. Col. John Weber, Suriname Partnership Program coordinator for the SDNG. “The KST (Suriname Special Forces) was originally trained by United States Special Forces on the use of the Harris radios. We provided them with refresher training, at a slightly higher level, in order to develop better methods to transfer those skills to their people.”

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.

This exchange provided more detailed information on the range and capabilities of the Harris radios and included a field training exercise that allowed the Suriname soldiers to employ the radio in the inland regions of the country, where reception and interference can become an issue.

“Prior to fielding the Harris radios to them, their primary means of communication was cell phones. That only worked where there was reception, which is not good in the interior of the country,” said Weber.

The field exercise was a success according to Staff Sgt. David Goodwin, SDNG’s frequency coordinator and trainer on this mission.

“The field exercise ended with one group proceeding 20 miles south of the city, and another group 20 miles east,” said Goodwin. “We were able to establish secure communications between the two groups and the base much more easily than they had previously.”

Weber said the exchange of ideas and training continues to reinforce the importance of the overall State Partnership Program, which 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.

“It was a very successful event, and it was an opportunity to engage at the soldier level with folks who were interested and committed to using the (Harris) system during operations, said Weber. “It’s these types of exchanges that not only provide a benefit for the Suriname military, but also our own soldiers, as we able to use our training and knowledge in a real-world environment with a partner nation.”

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/southdakotationalguard



130416-Z-AB123-002: Army Staff Sgt. David Goodwin, South Dakota National Guard frequency coordinator and trainer, shows members of Suriname’s Special Forces different features on the Harris radio system during a State Partnership Program subject matter expert exchange in the Republic of Suriname April 16, 2013. The exchange provided more detailed information on the range and capabilities of the Harris radios and included a field training exercise that allowed the Suriname soldiers to employ the radio in the inland regions of the country, where reception and interference can become an issue. (Courtesy Photo/Released)



130416-Z-AB123-003: Suriname Special Forces soldiers create and load secure frequency sets to the Harris radio system as South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers observe during a State Partnership Program subject matter expert exchange in the Republic of Suriname April 16, 2013. The exchange provided more detailed information on the range and capabilities of the Harris radios and included a field training exercise that allowed the Suriname soldiers to employ the radio in the inland regions of the country, where reception and interference can become an issue. (Courtesy Photo/Released)



130416-Z-AB123-004: Army Staff Sgt. David Goodwin, South Dakota National Guard frequency coordinator and trainer, works with a member of Suriname’s Special Forces employing the Harris radio system during a field exercise designed to highlight the capabilities of the Harris radio network during a State Partnership Program subject matter expert exchange in the Republic of Suriname April 16, 2013. The exchange provided more detailed information on the range and capabilities of the Harris radios and included a field training exercise that allowed the Suriname soldiers to employ the radio in the inland regions of the country, where reception and interference can become an issue. (Courtesy Photo/Released)

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