

# South Dakota National Guard

## Public Affairs Office

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **SD Guard, Suriname engineers partner together to renovate school**

PARAMARIBO, Suriname – Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard and the Suriname Defense Force partnered together to renovate portions of the O.S. Majosteeg 3 School in Paramaribo, Aug. 13-24.

The renovation project, part of the Suriname and South Dakota State Partnership Program, provided an annual training opportunity for SDARNG engineer units and further developed partnerships with the SDF, while simultaneously assisting with a community need.

“The South Dakota National Guard has been the backbone for U.S. Department of Defense engagement in Suriname for more than 11 years,” said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Paolo Carcavallo, U.S. Navy deputy chief, Security Cooperation Office Suriname. “This second school renovation they’ve done shoulder-to-shoulder with Suriname’s military engineers and is just another manifestation of the partnership between the State of South Dakota and the Suriname Defense Force.”

Working together was a team of 10 Soldiers from the 155th Engineer Company, one from the 211th Engineer Company, and about a dozen engineers with the Suriname Defense Force. The service members focused on restroom improvements and the addition of a teacher’s office.

The service members spent nine days on the renovations, which included panel construction, electrical, plumbing, tiling and painting.

“You get to learn how the Suriname engineers do things compared to how we do things,” said Sgt. Zach Heesch, 155th Engineer Company. “I got the opportunity to learn how to do stuff I’ve never done before - like tiling.”

Since 2006, Soldiers from both countries have conducted over 100 subject matter exchanges through the program, which have benefitted men and women from both organizations to gain knowledge and experience in both military operations and civilian culture.

“It feels great to be able to help so the kids have a better facility to use when they get back to school,” said Heesch, who hopes he can return to Suriname someday. “You get to experience a whole new culture. It’s an awesome experience.”

“This will mean so much for the school and the students,” said Mrs. Gail Burluson, school director. “When they return from summer break, they will get to come back to all new bathrooms. On behalf of myself, the school, and the students, we greatly thank you.”

Throughout any particular year, about 20-30 service members from either South Dakota or from Suriname, travel to each other’s respective countries and engage in about 10 subject matter exchanges covering a wide spectrum of topics.

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“Engagements like these school renovations where soldiers from both countries work together to improve the quality of life for children really drive home what the partnership is about,” Paolo said. “We look forward to continue working with the Ministry of Defense and other government organizations to find more opportunities like this where we can directly impact for the better the lives of our friends in Suriname.”

Funding for the project was provided by U.S. Southern Command and all materials and supplies were purchased in Suriname.

For the past 10 years, the SDNG and SDF have successfully partnered together to established a security cooperation relationship in coordination with USSOUTHCOM under the National Guard Bureau’s State Partnership Program. The partnership has flourished during the past decade becoming a model for mutual security cooperation.

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High resolution photos are available at [www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard](http://www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard)



**170815-Z-ZZ999-0001:** U.S. Army Spc. Joshua Shoop, a plumber with the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 155th Engineer Company, gets help from local schoolchildren during a renovation of the O.S. Majosteeg 3 School in Paramaribo, Suriname, Aug. 13-24, 2017. The renovation project, part of the Suriname and South Dakota State Partnership Program, provided an annual training opportunity for SDARNG engineer units and further developed partnerships with Suriname Defense Forces, while simultaneously assisting with a community need. (U.S. Army National Guard courtesy photo)



**170815-Z-ZZ999-0002:** Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard and members of the Suriname Defense Force repair a concrete foundation while renovating portions of the O.S. Majosteeg 3 School in Paramaribo, Aug. 13-24. The renovation project, part of the Suriname and South Dakota State Partnership Program, provided an annual training opportunity for SDARNG engineer units and further developed partnerships with Suriname Defense Forces, while simultaneously assisting with a community need. (U.S. Army National Guard courtesy photo)



**170815-Z-ZZ999-0003:** Schoolchildren of the O.S. Majosteeg 3 School in Paramaribo, Suriname, witness a school renovation project, Aug. 13-24, 2017. The renovation, part of the Suriname and South Dakota State Partnership Program, provided an annual training opportunity for SDARNG engineer units and further developed partnerships with Suriname Defense Forces, while simultaneously assisting with a community need. (U.S. Army National Guard courtesy photo)



**170815-Z-ZZ999-0004:** Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard and members of the Suriname Defense Force work together to install plumbing lines while renovating portions of the O.S. Majosteeg 3 School in Paramaribo, Aug. 13-24. The renovation project, part of the Suriname and South Dakota State Partnership Program, provided an annual training opportunity for SDARNG engineer units and further developed partnerships with Suriname Defense Forces, while simultaneously assisting with a community need. (U.S. Army National Guard courtesy photo)



**170815-Z-ZZ999-0005:** Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard and members of the Suriname Defense Forces partnered together to renovate portions of the O.S. Majosteeg 3 School in Paramaribo, Aug. 13-24. The renovation project, part of the Suriname and South Dakota State Partnership Program, provided an annual training opportunity for SDARNG engineer units and further developed partnerships with Suriname Defense Forces, while simultaneously assisting with a community need. (U.S. Army National Guard courtesy photo)



**170815-Z-ZZ999-0006:** U.S. Army Spc. Christian Cap, a carpentry and masonry specialist with the South Dakota Army National Guard's 155th Engineer Company, finishes a doorframe during a renovation of the O.S. Majosteeg 3 School in Paramaribo, Suriname, Aug. 13-24, 2017. The renovation project, part of the Suriname and South Dakota State Partnership Program, provided an annual training opportunity for SDARNG engineer units and further developed partnerships with Suriname Defense Forces, while simultaneously assisting with a community need. (U.S. Army National Guard courtesy photo)



**170815-Z-ZZ999-0007:** Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard and the Suriname Defense Force work together to cut tile while renovating portions of the O.S. Majosteeg 3 School in Paramaribo, Aug. 13-24. The renovation project, part of the Suriname and South Dakota State Partnership Program, provided an annual training opportunity for SDARNG engineer units and further developed partnerships with Suriname Defense Forces, while simultaneously assisting with a community need. (U.S. Army National Guard courtesy photo)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** contact the SDNG Public Affairs Office at (605)737-6721 or email [ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil](mailto:ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil)