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CAMBODIAN LEADERS VISIT IDAHO FOR SENIOR LEADERSHIP EXCHANGE

PHOTO AND STORY BY TSGT. SARAH POKORNEY,
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(GOWEN FIELD)—Senior leaders of the Idaho National Guard's official military partner—the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces—visited Idaho the week of Sept. 18, 2017 as part of the State Partnership Program.

Since the partnership was formally established in 2009, the partners have conducted several subject matter expert exchanges but this visit was the first of its kind—a senior leadership exchange. The four Cambodian leaders on this exchange included representatives of the Institute of Health Science, the National Defense University, Military Institute of Technology and Material, and Department of International Affairs.

“The purpose of the senior leader development engagement is to give us the opportunity to interface with RCAF senior leaders and it gives them an opportunity to see all of the various capabilities we have in the Idaho Guard,” said Lt. Col. Daniel Lister, Idaho State Partnership Program Director.



Royal Cambodian Armed Forces senior leaders tour the Dworshak Reservoir in Orofino, Idaho on a senior leadership exchange on Sept. 22, 2016. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. Sarah Pokorney)

The mission of the State Partnership Program is to exchange best practices for Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Response. The RCAF benefits from an exchange of best practices and the Idaho National Guard, in turn, receives experience working with a foreign military and engaging with our foreign partners.

At the beginning of their visit, the RCAF

leaders met with a panel of key leaders from both the Idaho Army and Air National Guard. Then the RCAF representatives broke out with the leaders in their functional areas where Idaho Soldiers and Airmen spent a significant amount of time demonstrating capabilities

pertaining to emergency management and emergency response. They also discussed professional development for both officers and enlisted personnel. The Idaho National Guard Commanding General and Commanders of the Brigade and Wing met with the RCAF leaders to demonstrate that we are here for the long term, reinforcing the commitment to the partnership.

“We want the relationship to grow and there's no shortage of Soldiers and Airman who would volunteer at a moment's notice to assist Cambodia,” said Lister.

After the RCAF leaders saw opportunities in the guard they also visited state, local and federal agencies. They toured the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Lucky Peak reservoir in Boise and Dworshak reservoir in Orofino, both operated by the Army Corp of Engineers. Tours also included the Forest Service Smoke jumpers in McCall and Bureau of Land Management Hotshots in Pocatello. While flying over the

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agriculturally rich valleys that use the Snake River and Boise River systems to irrigate, they discussed management of water systems and how they could apply principles and technologies that we use here in Idaho to sustain our agriculture and protect our natural resources in Cambodia.

They also visited Boise State University and met with the Commander of the ROTC program and the Security Operations Manager in charge of planning and preparation in cooperation with Idaho's 101st Civil Support Team and other law enforcement agencies ensuring BSU is secure. BSU maintains plans in the event of a natural disaster, in addition to securing and clearing venues.

Earlier in September a group of Idaho military chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear Subject Matter Experts as well as civil engineers visited Cambodia on a SME Information Exchange. The six CBRN SMEs included Army and Air National Guard, Army Reserve, and Marine Reserve personnel. They shared best practices with Cambodians about chemical hazards and identification, chemical mask cleaning and maintenance, response planning, CBRN equipment and personal protective equipment with hands-on demonstrations and a field exercise.

"The information exchange was a great opportunity to build strong relationships with the Cambodian military personnel while exchanging information that makes all of us better at what we do," said Capt. Heidi Caye, 124th Fighter Wing Environmental Manager. "On our visit, we saw that the information we had shared previously had been incorporated into what they teach their troops, which was very validating."

"The intent of the SME engagements is to exchange information and build relationships that are time tested and

(Right) RCAF senior leaders looking at an M113 Armored Personnel Carrier. (Photo by Idaho National Guard Public Affairs)

(Below) Airman 1st Class Kelsie Medrano, 124th Emergency Management Flight, demonstrates mask cleaning techniques at the Cambodian Chemical School. (Photo courtesy of Capt. Heidi Caye)



lasting so they can start to institutionalize what works best for Cambodia. We bring our information and expertise that is unique to the guard," said Lister. "We learn from them as well and where it applies we make it part of our practices and benefit from the cultural exchange as well."

The SPP nation-wide has been successfully building relationships for over 20 years that includes 70 unique security partnerships involving 76 nations around the globe. The SPP links a unique component of the Department of Defense – a state's National Guard – with the armed forces or equivalent of a partner country in a cooperative, mutually beneficial relationship.

"We've got great support from our senior leaders and the program has great potential to increase the number and quality of partnership engagements in the future," said Lister.

Though in the conceptual stages, Lister is exploring the possibility of forming a Simultaneous Membership Program that would enable Cambodian military members to visit Idaho, participate in Boise State ROTC while taking leadership classes while drilling with the Army and the Air National Guard. This concept is modeled after a current simultaneous membership program between Alaska and Mongolia.



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