



## **MINISTER OF DEFENSE** **Republic of Suriname**

*Ronni Comelis Benschop*

Minister Benschop was born in Paramaribo, Suriname on November 19, 1955.

In January 1975, he graduated from the Royal Netherlands Air Force Air Traffic Control School in the rank of Air Traffic Controller third class. Until November 1975, he served at the Naval Air Base de Kooy in Holland in the rank of Air Traffic Controller second class.

On November 11, 1975, he joined the Suriname Armed Forces where he entered into different duties. In 1979, he graduated from the correspondence course Psychology from the Koninklijke Succes Instituut (Royal Success Institute).

In 1981, he completed an Industrial electronic course at the Telecommunications Company of Suriname under the auspices of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

In 1984 and 1986, he attended radio electronic courses at Srteltra S.A., Sao Paulo - Brazil, Sun air electronics, Inc. Fort Lauderdale - USA, Motorola Inc., Fort Lauderdale - USA, Southcom International Inc., California - USA and Motorola Inc. Arizona - USA.

In 1989, he graduated from the Advanced Officers Course (ESAO) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and was promoted to major in 1990. In 1998, he was appointed Head of the Cabinet of Military Affairs of the Ministry of Defense.

In April 2000, he completed the International Defense Management Course at the Defense

Resources Management Institute of the Naval Postgraduate School. Monterey-California, USA.

On July 9, 2001, he was appointed Head of the Office of Defense Strategic Planning and Education.

In April 2002, he completed the Netherlands Defense Orientation Course in the sphere of Defense Diplomacy at the Netherlands Defense College in The Hague,

the Netherlands.

In December 2002, he graduated from the Special Course for Higher Political Strategic Studies at Escola Superior de Guerra, the War College in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

From December 2002, till January 2011, he advised the Minister of Defense on several issues related to Defense and Security. He has also been involved in various committees dealing with these issues.

On February 1, 2011, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Simultaneously he was effectively appointed in the position of Chief of Staff of the Suriname Armed Forces.

On July 10, 2013, he was commissioned as Acting Commander of the Suriname Armed Forces and was consecutively promoted to Colonel on October 25, 2013.

On February 4, 2014, he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General as the first military officer in the Suriname Armed Forces. As of the same date he was also commissioned Commander of the Suriname Armed Forces.

As of August 12, 2015, Brigadier General Benschop is the first active Commander of the Suriname Armed Forces ever to be sworn in as Minister of Defense. This event marked the first civilian position in his professional career.

Minister of Defense, Brigadier General (Ret.) Benschop is married to Mrs. Lahta Sewnath.