

Africa Malaria Task Force focuses on new emerging threats from Africa's top killer



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ACCRA, Ghana – U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) Force Surgeon held an operational entomology event in support of the Africa Malaria Task Force (AMTF), July 17-21, in Accra, Ghana.

“This was a fantastic week spent among specialists in the

fight against Malaria across all disciplines: physicians, researchers, medical technologists,” said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Carla Pappalardo, Nurse Corps. “They were able to spend ample time together sharing best practices and lessons learned over the years of study of this particular species, the *Anopheles stephensi*. Its emerging threat is not to be taken lightly, requiring an all hands effort and active involvement from our partner nations in activities such as this.”

Hosted by the Ghanaian Armed Forces (GAF), and co-hosted by NAVEUR-NAVAF and the U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) Office of the Command Surgeon, the five-day event brought together more than 70 representatives from 15 African partner nations to include Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), non-profit organizations (NPOs), and the U.S. government.

“What was gained from this week’s event was not only collaboration, study, and networking, but a reminder that we are truly in this fight together,” stated Pappalardo. “We must continue to leverage each other’s expertise, knowledge and the science in order to stay lock-step in eradicating Malaria.”

The event included facilitated briefings, break-out sessions and field work, which focused on the emerging threat of the invasive malaria causing species, *Anopheles stephensi*, in Africa. Notable facilitators included members from GAF, the World Health Organization (WHO), Navy Entomology Center of Excellence, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“Malaria prevention is one of AFRICOM’s top health priorities,” said Col. Tom Eccles, command surgeon, U.S. Africa Command. “As malaria parasites and their mosquito vectors develop new patterns of resistance, there’s a continual need for us to update our approach to malaria

prevention. AMTF provides a unique forum for exchanging information with our African partners on tools and strategies for protecting our forces and improving population health.”

Since its inception in 2011, the task force has brought together scientists and policy makers with demonstrated interest in malaria programs to share resources, strategies and expertise that would ultimately act as a catalyst for change.

The African Malaria Task Force complements the U.S. President’s Malaria Initiative, focused on malaria prevention in Africa; and the African Partner Outbreak Response Alliance supports global health security objectives for the U.S. and partner nations.

AMTF was designed to strengthen and expand effective malaria programs by providing support for nations, military personnel, their families. NAVEUR-NAVAF and USAFRICOM will continue work with international partners to promote effective military-civilian, country specific and regional African partnerships in infectious disease outbreak detection, prevention and response programs.