



News Release

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Release No. 20140912-01

September 12, 2014

International medical leaders meet to share information, ideas

By Ed Drohan

Europe Regional Medical Command Public Affairs

MONS, Belgium – Military medical leaders from across Europe and NATO came together in Mons, Belgium Sept. 8 and 9 to share information and ideas in the spirit of international partnership.

Military medical personnel from the U.S., Italy, Poland, Netherlands, Greece, Hungary, Turkey and Canada met at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe for the Multinational Military Medical Engagement. The annual event is hosted by the U.S. Army Europe Regional Medical Command (ERMC).

Topics discussed ran the gamut from medical lessons learned during the last 13 years of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, to infectious disease and eye care issues. Speakers included medical professionals from Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, SHAPE, Hungarian Defense Forces, and a representative from the Tunisian Ministry of Defense who discussed his country's humanitarian response to the Libya crisis.

According to the ERMC commanding general, engagements like this are important for multiple reasons.

“The real value comes not only in sharing information and knowledge but also in networking with military medical professionals from other nations,” Brig. Gen. Norvell V. Coots said. “Through a better understanding of commonalities and differences we can enhance the speed of trust and the speed of interoperability. It shows us we also share a common dream to work through medicine to change our world, even just a little bit.”

In addition to the formal presentations, event participants had the chance to get together in a less formal setting during a luncheon and dinner, opportunities to get to know their counterparts on a more personal level, engagement coordinator Mike Sandoval said.

Participants expressed their approval for the engagement and events like it.

“This is a unique medical conference in that it facilitates the communication of medical lessons across cultural and physical borders,” Lt. Col (Dr.) Levent Varhelyi, Hungarian Defense Forces.

They also said events such as these are important for their country's military medical community. “Living and acting in a multinational environment, these engagements are useful and necessary,” said Capt. (Dr.) Erini Krassa, a member of the Greek Army. “They help the nations to exchange their experiences, to share their knowledge in many fields. Besides, multinational cooperation is promoted and enhanced. Finally it is a means to make communication in multinational military medical communities more effective.”

For Col. (Dr.) Zoltan Verkerdi, Hungarian Defense Forces and European Force medical advisor, conferences like the MMME are all about cooperation and interoperability.

“Our conferences are focused in their topics and provide a framework for scientific discussions, for sharing best promising operational practices, and for building and maintaining professional and social relationships,” Verkerdi said. “All my military achievements have their roots in multinational cooperation activities like MMME. I do my best to support this heritage value activity.”

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Cutlines:

MMME 1

Military medical professionals from nine different countries came together for the Multinational Military Medical Engagement at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Mons, Belgium Sept 8 and 9. Topics discussed ran the gamut from medical lessons learned during the last 13 years of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, to infectious disease and eye care issues, to the Tunisian Ministry of Defense’s humanitarian response to the Libya crisis.

MMME14 Group

Military medical professionals from nine different countries came together for the Multinational Military Medical Engagement at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Mons, Belgium Sept 8 and 9. Topics discussed ran the gamut from medical lessons learned during the last 13 years of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, to infectious disease and eye care issues, to the Tunisian Ministry of Defense’s humanitarian response to the Libya crisis. The conference was hosted by Brig. Gen. Norvell Coots (second from right, bottom row), commanding general of Europe Regional Medical Command.