

## Eugene Jordan Gerberg, 1919-2011

Dr. Eugene J. "Gene" Gerberg, 92, passed away in Gainesville, Florida, on the morning of Monday, December 19, 2011. Born June 1, 1919 in Brooklyn, New York, of immigrant Russian Jewish parents, he received his B.S. degree from Cornell University, Ithaca, New York and in 1941 was commissioned a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Public Health Service (Gerberg, 1992). His first assignment was to the Malaria Control in War Areas (MCWA) unit at New Smyrna Beach, Florida, established to control malaria around military training bases in areas where mosquitoes were abundant. The mission of MCWA, a forerunner of the CDC, was to prevent reintroduction of malaria into the civilian population by mosquitoes that would have fed on malaria-infected soldiers in training or returning from endemic areas. During its activities, MCWA also trained state and local health department officials in malaria control techniques and strategies. In 1943 he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Sanitary Corps and assigned as Assistant Camp Medical Inspector for Camp Lee, Virginia, charged with ridding the barracks of an infestation of bed bugs that had reached epic proportions.



Photo: Eugene J. Gerberg (center) as a 2nd Lieutenant, U.S. Army Sanitary Corps, Fort Lee, Virginia, 1943, demonstrating bedbug infestation control (Gerberg, 2008)

After the war, Gene transferred to the U.S. Army Reserves, and continued his military service. In 1946, he co-founded Insect Control & Research (ICR) in Baltimore, Maryland, a business venture that became highly successful for him and his partners. He completed his M.S. degree at Cornell and his Ph.D. at the University of Maryland, College Park. His notable achievements are many and varied and include several seminal publications. He authored the first U.S. Public

Health Service pictorial key as a guide to the identification of anopheline mosquito larvae for the national malaria control program (1943), a revision of the New World species of powder-post beetles belonging to the family Lyctidae (1957), a manual for mosquito rearing and experimental techniques (1970), a manual of Florida butterflies (1989), and a bibliography of publications dealing with repellents effective against blood-feeding arthropods and leeches (2001). For many years, he updated and published the *World Directory of Arthropod Vector Research & Control Specialists* on an annual basis. He retired as a Colonel from the U.S. Army Medical Services Corps and an Adjunct Professor of Entomology at the University of Florida. Gene traveled the world during his professional career, but he was most proud of his service in the MCWA from 1941 through 1945.

Gene's wife Josephine Elizabeth "Jo" (née Vick), also a Cornell graduate, preceded him in death on May 14, 1998. Jo ran the family business while Gene travelled. Together they raised five children, three of whom survive them. Gene's and Jo's ashes will be inurned together in the Florida National Cemetery at Bushnell, Florida.

#### References

Gerberg, Eugene J. 2008. Entomologists in World War II. In: *Evolution of Military Medical Entomology*, Proceedings of a Symposium at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Entomological Society of America, 16 November 2008, pp. 23-28; <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA506261>.

Gerberg, Eugene J. 1992. Commercial Entomology for Fun and Profit. In: *Insect Potpourri: Adventures in Entomology*, Jean Ruth Adams, ed., Gainesville, Fla.: Sandhill Crane Press, Inc., pp. 243-251.

-- Compiled by Terry L. Carpenter and Graham B. White, 19 Dec 2011.