

## OBITUARY

## JOHN MENDEL HIRST

1908-1990



John M. Hirst

John Mendel Hirst, known affectionately by his associates as "Mo," died on July 21, 1990, at age 81.

Born on September 8, 1908, at Indiana, Pennsylvania, his early life was passed in that area. Following high school, he attended Bethany College, Bethany, West Virginia, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in 1932. Shortly afterwards, on February 3, 1933, he married Hazel Rogers. After working for several years as a high school teacher of science and director of music at Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, he began graduate studies at the University of Pittsburgh, receiving from there a Master of Science degree in 1938 and a Doctor of Philosophy in 1941, the latter with a major in entomology.

Final graduation occurring shortly before the beginning of World War II, he applied for and received a commission in the United States Navy as a line officer. Reporting for active duty in October 1942, he was sent to Line Officers' Indoctrination School, Columbia University, New York, NY. Upon graduation, he was ordered to the Navy Pier, Chicago, where he served

until early 1945. At that time and because of his entomological background, he was able to transfer to the science specialist section, H-V(S), of the Navy's Medical Department. Thus, fortuitously, began his lengthy and productive naval career as researcher, teacher and administrator in the field of medical entomology.

After receiving specialized training in malarology at the Naval Medical School, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland, and in mosquito control at the Naval Advanced Base Personnel Depot, San Bruno, California, he was sent in July 1945 to Navy Malaria Control Unit #225 G17 in the Philippines. The war having ended shortly after arrival there, he was returned to the United States in December 1945 on orders to the Naval Air Station, Banana River, Florida, for duty in connection with mosquito control, sanitation and research work. In this period he transferred to the Medical Service Corps, Regular Navy, when that corps was activated in 1947.

His next change of duty was to the Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida, where he notably

organized and served as first Officer-in-Charge of the U. S. Navy Malaria and Mosquito Control Unit No. 1 (later renamed Preventive Medicine Unit No. 1 and now known as the Navy Disease Vector Ecology and Control Center). Succeeding duty tours saw him serving as OinC of the Preventive Medicine Unit, Naval Air Station, Alameda, California (1952-57), and afterwards attached to the PMU at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii (1957-59). From 1959 to 1965, he was back at the Naval Medical School, this time with responsibility for the annual Foreign Medical Officer Training Program. Lastly, he served as Chief, Entomology Division, Naval Medical Field Research Laboratory, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina from 1966 until his retirement in 1970, with 28 years of active duty. In the latter portion of his career he accomplished extensive international travel as a consultant for the Commandant of the Marine Corps on disease vector control matters.

During his military career, he was the recipient of many commendations, ribbons and awards and was promoted to the rank of captain in 1962. Following retirement, he and Hazel settled in a permanent home on Golfside Drive, Winter Park, Florida, where she still resides.

Of his many accomplishments, perhaps the one most significant and enduring was his creation of the lineal ancestor of the current prestigious Navy Disease Vector Ecology and Control Center (DVECC) at the Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida. Dr. Hirst is due much credit for the astute political acumen that he demonstrated in getting this valuable unit established, the first of its kind for the U.S. Navy.

During his tour at the Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida, he worked intensively on plane disinsectization and was an important pioneer in that field. Also while there, he initiated work on aerial dispersal of insecticides using workhorse military aircraft for the purpose, and further was responsible for getting assigned to the Unit a civilian entomologist's billet for the development of aerial dispersal equipment.

Throughout his professional life, Dr. Hirst was active in several scientific and professional organizations. In addition to many committee assignments over the years in the American Mosquito Control Association, he served as President of that organization in 1958-59. He was also President of the Florida Anti-Mosquito Association in 1952 and of the North Carolina Mosquito Control Association in 1969; and an emeritus member (Sections C and D) of the Entomological Society of America and the American Registry of Professional Entomologists.

He was active throughout his life in community affairs, including being a member of a number of public service organizations. A polished musician, he served as choir director for the Navy chapels at both Jacksonville and Alameda and as a one-time member of the Bahia Concert Band. Other involvements included a life membership in Marian Lodge 562 F and AM, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania; and being a member of Bahia Shrine, a past Commander of Legion of Honor, and a member of Scottish Rites, all in Orlando. He was a past president of Sojourner's Lodge 373; a life member of the Military Order of World Wars and of the Retired Officers Association; a member of Heroes of 1776, Royal Order of Butterblume, and Disabled American Veterans, all of Orlando; and a member of the Honorary Kentucky Colonels of Central Florida. As an ardent and skilled golfer, he was a member of the Elk's Lodge and Mens' Golf Association, Winter Pines Golf Club, and a former member of the University Club and Chamber of Commerce, all in Winter Park, Florida.

Dr. Hirst is survived by his wife of 57 years; a son, Dr. Robert C. Hirst, DDS, of Laguna Niguel, California; a daughter, Betty Beauchamp of Winter Park, and seven grandchildren. His passing will be noted with deep regret by a host of individuals.

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