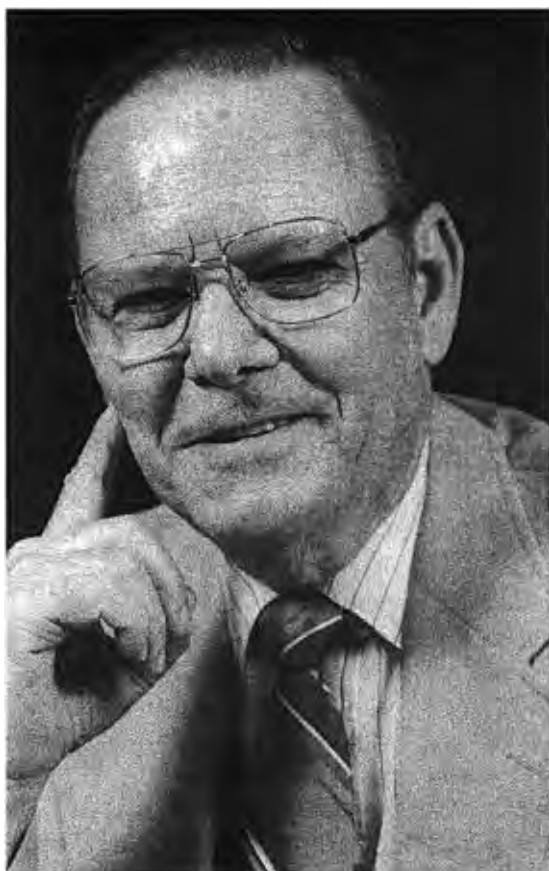


## OBITUARY

### EL PEYTON 1929–1999



EL Peyton, one of the foremost mosquito taxonomists of his generation, passed away at his home in Alexandria, VA, on April 26, 1999, after a valiant struggle with cancer. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

EL (he was quite adamant about no periods) was born in Pine Bluff, AR, on May 1, 1929. After completing high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1948. His 1st assignment was at Fort Clayton, Panama Canal Zone, with the 25th Preventive Medicine Survey Detachment. Within a 3-year period, he rose from a Private to a Sergeant, First Class. During this time he rapidly acquired skills in field techniques, mosquito identification, and taxonomy from his 2 renowned supervisors, Col. Stanley J. Carpenter and Lt. Col. Frank S. Blanton.

Upon returning to the USA in 1953, EL was assigned to various military installations within the continental United States, until 1964; this period was interrupted by a 3-year tour in Germany at a U.S. Army Hospital (1958–61). Most of his assignments were with preventive medicine units, which provided additional training and opportunities for research on mosquito taxonomy. While at Fort Sam Houston, TX (1956–57), he was senior enlisted instructor in entomology and was responsible for classroom and laboratory teaching on the identification and biology of mosquitoes. This was to serve him well in subsequent years.

The highlight of EL's military career was his assignment to the U.S. Army Medical Component, SEATO Medical Research Laboratory, Bangkok, Thailand, from 1964 to 1967, where he was in charge of the mosquito biology and taxonomy section of the Department of Medical Entomology under the supervision of Dr. Douglas J. Gould. He continued studies of the mosquito fauna of Thailand that had been initiated several years earlier by the late Professor John E. Scanlon. The Thai mosquito project persisted for more than 30 years and resulted in an outstanding mosquito collection of several hundred thousand specimens (largely deposited in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC) and more than 300 publications.

EL returned to the USA in 1968 and spent the remaining 2 years of his military career at the Department of Entomology, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR), Washington, DC, with secondment to the Southeast Asia Mosquito Project (SEAMP) at the Smithsonian Institution. While at SEAMP he conducted independent research on the taxonomy, zoogeography, and biology of the mosquito genera *Anopheles* and *Uranotaenia*.

After retiring as a Master Sergeant in 1968, EL accepted a position as a research entomologist on U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command contract projects at the Smithsonian Institution (SEAMP, 1969–74, and the Medical Entomology Project, 1974–84). At the conclusion of these contracts, he received a civil service appointment at WRAIR and was associated with the Walter Reed Biosystematics Unit at the Smithsonian until his death.

For distinguished service in the military, EL received the U.S. Army Commendation Medal in 1967 and a year later was awarded an Oak Leaf

Cluster. He also received many service ribbons. In honor of his research in mosquito systematics, he was designated a Collaborator in the Smithsonian's Department of Entomology in 1973, and in 1993 he was honored as a Research Associate. In 1993 the American Mosquito Control Association presented him with the coveted John N. Belkin Memorial Award for life-time achievement in mosquito systematics.

Individuals who knew EL personally and professionally know that he eminently succeeded in demonstrating what heights can be reached by high intelligence, dedicated performance, keen interest, enthusiasm, and hard work, despite the handicap of never having received a formal college education. He not only reached a scientific level that only a very few of our colleagues have ever attained, but he also served as a model for those who have been disadvantaged by the lack of advanced schooling. Many of EL's closest friends and colleagues will agree that his unique accomplishments and contributions in the field of mosquito systematics are attributable to 4 innate and admirable characteristics. These include his keen insights into problems involving mosquito classification, taxonomic relationships, and identification; his unequaled meticulous attention to detail; his absolute integrity, honesty, and preciseness in recording and reporting scientific data; and his unselfish willingness to share his knowledge with others.

Few individuals realize the full impact of EL's contributions to mosquito systematics research because so much of what he learned from personal observation and study was not published. But those who were fortunate enough to have worked with him know that he possessed a fountain of hidden knowledge and stimulating awareness about taxonomic relationships and the morphologic diversity of mosquitoes. He eagerly revealed his personal observations and insights to individuals who shared his enthusiasm and excited curiosity about the diversity of form and taxonomic characters waiting to be further investigated and used for taxonomic purposes. Unfortunately many of his discoveries and unpublished findings were lost, at least for the time being, with his passing. This is particularly true of the discovery and morphologic characterization of the *Anopheles dirus* complex, information of indispensable value on the biology and identification of principal vectors of malaria in Southeast Asia. In spite of this, EL's contributions to mosquito systematics research are impressive. During his career he was author or coauthor of more than 60 publications (see bibliography below).

In addition to his scientific accomplishments, EL was an authority on the 1st issue of the stamps of the United Nations. During his retirement he was planning to write a definitive monograph on this subject, which unfortunately never came to fruition.

EL is survived by a son, Michael W. Peyton of

Pine Bluff, AR, a daughter, Patricia Bachman of Lamesa, CA, his mother, Mrs. Hallie Peyton also of Pine Bluff, 2 sisters, a brother, 3 grandchildren, and a host of friends, both at home and overseas, who will long have fond memories of EL.

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- In addition to these publications, at least 3 additional papers that were in preparation by EL Peyton at the time of his death are now undergoing completion by colleagues.

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