

"Chemicals Gone Bad: The Specter of Chemical Warfare – Will it Ever Go Away?"



Dr. Gordon Gribble

Professor of Chemistry
Dartmouth College, Department of Chemistry

Date: September 19, 2014

Time: 12 - 1pm

Venue: AHC4 101

Biography

Gordon W. Gribble is a native of San Francisco, California, and completed his undergraduate education at the University of California at Berkeley in 1963. He earned a Ph.D. in organic chemistry at the University of Oregon in 1967. After a National Cancer Institute Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of California, Los Angeles, he joined the faculty of Dartmouth College in 1968 where he has been Full Professor of Chemistry since 1980. He served as Department Chair from 1988-1991. In 2005, he was named to the inaugural endowed Chair as "The Dartmouth Professor of Chemistry." Dr. Gribble has published 360 papers in natural product synthesis, synthetic methodology, heterocyclic chemistry, natural organohalogen compounds, and synthetic triterpenoids, one of which completed Phase 3 clinical trials for the treatment of chronic kidney disease in Stage 4 diabetes patients. Since 1995 he has co-edited the annual series "Progress in Heterocyclic Chemistry", and the 2nd edition of "Palladium in Heterocyclic Chemistry", co-authored with Jack Li, was published in 2007. He has also written two monographs documenting more than 5,000 naturally occurring organohalogen compounds. As a home winemaker for the past 36 years, he has a strong interest in the chemistry of wine and winemaking. In his spare time he is a tournament chess player and enjoys scuba diving.

Abstract

This seminar will present a history of chemical warfare, with a focus on the discovery, evolution, and employment of chemical weapons over the past 100 years, from chlorine, phosgene, and mustard gas in World War I to the more recent uses of nerve agents in Tokyo, Iraq, and Syria. Other incidents involving these chemicals, such as (1) the WWII mustard gas disaster in Bari, Italy, (2) the unsuccessful nerve gas assassination attempt of Adolph Hitler, (3) the VX sheep disaster in Utah, (4) the use of Agent Orange and vomit agents in Vietnam, and (5) the methyl isocyanate catastrophe in Bhopal, India, will all be discussed.