

# Ed Hirsch Retires After Half Century Of Military, Government Service

**Veteran of Three Wars, Spanning 35-Year Army Career • Defense Industry PM • DSMC Executive • Served Seven DSMC Commandants**

GREG CARUTH

**E**d Hirsch has a favorite story about himself. At his swearing-in ceremony as a second lieutenant in February 1942, he was told to raise his right hand and “Repeat after me: I and my name in full.” He dutifully raised his hand and said, “I and my name in full.”

To say his military career got off to a dubious start is an understatement. One month after his swearing-in debacle, while en route to his first duty station, Hirsch was given his first assignment as an officer. He was tasked with removing a lady of ill repute from a train where she had been plying her profession among several soldiers. Hirsch knew his career could only go uphill from there — and did it ever soar.

Whether in military or civilian service, Hirsch has always found a way to rise to the top of his profession. During his 15 years at the Defense Systems Management College, he served in the Research Division, the Executive Institute twice, and as Provost and Deputy Commandant for five years. His most recent assignment has been as advisor to the Acquisition Management Curriculum Enhancement Program.

AT A FORT BELVOIR, VA., RETIREMENT CEREMONY JUNE 24 IN PACKARD HALL, NAVY REAR ADM. LEONARD VINCENT, DSMC COMMANDANT, AWARDED HIRSCH THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE MEDAL FOR MERITORIOUS CIVILIAN SERVICE.

Photo by Army Sgt. Richard Vigue



HIRSCH AND LONG-TIME SECRETARY, JANICE BAKER, ATTENDING A WASHINGTON, D.C., RECEPTION FOR A DSMC COLLEAGUE, 1995.



*Caruth is the director, Visual Arts and Press Department, Division of College Administration and Services, DSMC.*



1970 — A VETERAN OF THREE WARS, COL. HIRSCH IS PICTURED HERE IN THE HIGHLANDS OF SOUTH VIETNAM.

HIRSCH WELCOMES BACK TWO FORMER COMMANDANTS AT DSMC'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, JUNE 25, 1996. FROM LEFT: RETIRED AIR FORCE LT. GEN. WILLIAM E. THURMAN; RETIRED NAVY REAR ADM. ROLAND G. FREEMAN II; HIRSCH.



HIRSCH ENJOYS THE COMPANY OF HIS FRIEND AND LONG-TIME COLLEAGUE, WALTER "WALT" LABERGE, SENIOR RESEARCH SCIENTIST, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN. OF LABERGE, HIRSCH SAID, "HE BRINGS A PERSPECTIVE TO A SITUATION OR PROBLEM THAT IS TWO PLATEAUS ABOVE EVERYONE ELSE."



HIRSCH MEETS WITH DSMC BOARD OF VISITORS MEMBER, DR. JACQUES S. GANSLER, PRIOR TO HIS APPOINTMENT AS UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (ACQUISITION & TECHNOLOGY), 1997. FROM LEFT: DONNA RICHBOURG, [THEN] ACTING DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (ACQUISITION REFORM); GANSLER; HIRSCH.

During his tenure, he initiated the Program Managers Notebook; was the lead author of the DSMC publication on Evolutionary Acquisition; was the Director of the Acquisition Career Enhancement (ACE) Program – the forerunner to the Defense Acquisition University; and authored a number of articles published in Program Manager magazine, Signal magazine, Defense Review, and the Federal Management Review.

He said it was a distinct and unique pleasure serving with seven DSMC commandants. "Each one was a distinguished, honorable, and dedicated leader. Each one brought his own unique experience and talent to the job. Each one was determined to make the products and services offered by the college

## A Lesson in Great Leadership

### “I Was Wrong”

15 April 70

Dear Colonel Hirsh,

*I am indebted to you for letting me see your research efforts on the views of the late Vice Admiral Turner Joy on the POW problem in the pre-Armistice negotiations in Korea.*

*You were absolutely right and I equally wrong.*

*I appreciate your considerate forbearance in not having quoted chapter and verse, as you might have done, to prove me wrong. I can only say my memory was faulty.*

*I would be grateful if you would kindly report to those same officers, if practicable, what I have written here — not for any interests of mine, but in the interests of historical accuracy, as clearly and unequivocally stated in Admiral Joy’s book, exactly as you have it stated.*

Cordially,  
M.B. Ridgway

the best possible to enable the acquisition workforce to perform its difficult and complex mission.” The same can be said of Hirsch.

He will be remembered in his retirement as a consummate officer and a gentleman, a caring and thoughtful leader, and a firm negotiator with strong opinions based on his wide experience, great in-

tegrity, and his fierce love of the military he so proudly served. Hirsch, who spent 35 years in the Army and retired as a brigadier general, commanded at every level from platoon to brigade; served in the Infantry, Armored Force, Coast Artillery, Field Artillery, and Air Defense Artillery. He also served on the Army General Staff and Staff of the Office of the Secretary of Defense. His overseas service includes 27 months in the Aleutian Islands during World War II; three years in the Far East during the Korean conflict; one year on the Arctic Ice Cap in Thule, Greenland; three years in Germany; and one year in Vietnam. Following his retirement from the Army, Hirsch spent eight years working in defense industry as a deputy program manager.

However, the most significant event in his life was meeting his wife Marciene on a blind date, followed eight days later

by her accepting his marriage proposal. She was 19 and he was 26. They both confessed, after their first date, to their families that they had met the person they were going to marry. Three months later they were joined in matrimony. Fifty years and 28 moves later, they have finally settled down in a showcase house designed and built on the Potomac River by their youngest son, Larry. Their eldest son, Ken, is a commander in the Navy, and holds a Ph.D. in Psychology and, in addition, is a psychiatrist.

Hirsch insists that he never would have progressed beyond the rank of captain without the support he received from Marciene. As a captain in 1949, he applied for a regular Army commission, but was denied. Feeling discouraged, Hirsch considered leaving the Army, but his wife encouraged him and gave him the confidence to continue. Three years later, when he was not selected for major, Hirsch almost called it quits again, but Marciene was there by his side urging him to keep going. It paid off, because the following year he made major. Another stepping stone occurred in 1958, when Hirsch realized his dream of being selected as a regular Army officer.

In 1960, as a lieutenant colonel, Hirsch was assigned to his first of four tours in the Pentagon. At this time, he had only three credit hours toward a bachelor’s degree. Realizing the importance of education and despite a heavy workload, Hirsch started attending classes three to five nights a week — with Marciene’s support. After four tough years, with her constant encouragement, Hirsch earned not only a bachelor’s but also a master’s degree.

That same year, 1964, Hirsch was selected to be the military attachè to Switzerland — an extremely desirable assignment that demanded the spouse as well as the military member be acceptable to the host country, which they were. But, as Hirsch was preparing for his assignment, an opportunity to command a HAWK battalion in Germany arose. Hirsch and his wife sat down and thought it would be better for his career to go the command route.

Hirsch, whose favorite quote — “Blessed are the control freaks for they shall inhibit the earth” — from the comic strip Kudzu, has sometimes been misclassified as a control freak. In actuality, he is much the opposite, and has enjoyed the happy acci-

idents that life has offered him. He recognized early that life was full of serendipity, luck, and coincidence — to include events that led him to the rank of brigadier general at, what now seems to him, the young age of 50.

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That decision required giving up a plush, diplomatic assignment for a high-risk, extremely challenging “muddy boots” job. Again, Marciene was willing to support her husband, forego the opportunity to live in a mansion in Bern, and instead live in a small apartment in a tenement-like structure in Germany.

Hirsch insists that these are just a few examples of why he knows that Marciene was key, if not the key to his achieving the level of success he has enjoyed throughout his entire career.

Looking back, Hirsch said the person who left the biggest impression on him was Army Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway. While a student at the Naval War College, Hirsch co-wrote a volume of work with other students that required research involving Ridgway. Seeking an audience with Ridgway, Hirsch was pleased when the retired general not only agreed to an interview, but consented to come

to the Naval War College for two days to confer with the students.

During a forum, Ridgway related a story that was in his book. Hirsch had recently studied that book and knew Ridgway had misquoted his own excerpt. Hirsch commented on it but did not press the issue during the forum. Ridgway assured Hirsch in front of his classmates that Hirsch was wrong, but later after reviewing his own book, he realized Hirsch was correct.

Ridgway later made a full apology to Hirsch and his peers, and emphasized that he wanted everyone to know that Hirsch had been right, and that he appreciated Hirsch not pressing the issue when he could have.

Hirsch considered this public and full apology, by a superior, to be an inspiration and the very epitome of integrity, humility, and honesty. Hirsch has used

that episode as an inspiration in his own career.

As an aside, Ridgway led the 82nd Airborne Division when it jumped into France on D-Day, replaced Gen. Douglas MacArthur in Korea, and personally prevented U.S. military intervention in the use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam when the Joint Chiefs wanted to assist the French during the siege of Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

When asked to summarize his feelings for, and about the college, Hirsch was quick to say, “The Defense Systems Management College has become this country’s premier educational entity dedicated to systems acquisition because of its outstanding professional staff and faculty. College leadership, including myself, has come and gone; we are transients. What has made the college great, and will continue to do so in the future, is the one, unchanging constant – the excellence of the staff and faculty.”

## A DISTINGUISHED MILITARY CAREER

From March 1942 until his retirement from active military service Jan. 31, 1977, Army Brig. Gen. Edward Hirsch served in a variety of assignments worldwide. From January 1974 until his retirement, he was Director of the Air Defense Directorate and Deputy Director of the Requirements Directorate on the Department of the Army (DA) Staff. He was the Chief of Staff’s advisor and spokesman for all air defense matters and represented him during presentations to congressional committees; directed actions required to establish priorities for the research, development, and acquisition of Army materiel, and planned for the prioritization of the budget and the allocation of resources; and was responsible for the development of the Army electronic warfare long-range plan and its coordination with the Navy and the Air Force. He was the representative of the user community during deliberations of the Army Systems Acquisition Review Council.

As Deputy Chief of Personnel Operations on the DA Staff in 1972, he directed the study group whose efforts resulted in the establishment of the Army Military Personnel Center. In 1971, he was the Deputy Plans, Programs and Budget Officer responsible for support to the development and execution of the rehabilitation effort countrywide in Vietnam.

In 1970, he attended and was a distinguished graduate of the Naval War College, Newport, R.I., where he headed a study group that produced a report on civil-military relations, which was selected for dissemination to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, military services, and senior service colleges. As staff planning officer with the Army Staff and Weapon System Evaluation Group, Hirsch worked with all military services, DoD, major civilian contractors, and research organizations to develop an improved command and control simulation capability. He prepared plans and procurement programs for equipment for Army forces worldwide, and served as DA staff project manager for the forerunner of the PATRIOT program as well as the REDEYE program. Hirsch also headed the study effort that resulted in the development and employment of the CHAPARRAL/VULCAN air defense weapon systems.

During his military service, which included World War II, the Korean conflict, and Vietnam, he commanded organizations from small unit to brigade level in armor, field artillery, and air defense artillery assignments. Earlier active military service also included command and staff planning responsibilities with the Army, Navy, Air Force, and civilian organizations in the United States; Aleutian Islands; Japan; Thule, Greenland; and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

# An Officer and a Gentleman

Being the managing editor of *Program Manager* has its good moments. Sometimes when I editorialize, my senior managers look the other way. In this case, I think they'll let me get away with it.

What can I say about retired Army Brig. Gen. Ed Hirsch that you haven't already read in the preceding pages? I could start by telling you up front that besides being one of the finest acquisition professionals in the business, he's also "quite a guy."

I could tell you how he always makes time for people — "Come on in, I'm so glad you stopped by ..." (and you know he means it); I could tell you about the razor-sharp memory of a career soldier who fought in three wars, and makes history come alive for those who take the time to mine his memories; I could tell you about the man who works behind the scenes to advance the careers and

quality of life for others, never asking for or expecting thanks or recognition; or I could tell you about his honesty, his wit, his keen mind, and his lack of pretension that endear him to me and many others at DSMC.

In previous pages, you read about Ed Hirsch, the acquisition professional. In this photo spread, we feature the young man, the soldier, and the woman who, according to Hirsch, "was the biggest influence behind any success I may have enjoyed. In every sense of the word, she has always been a full partner in my life and military career."

In my office, we call him "Mr. Hirsch"; others at the college call him "Ed"; but there's one thing we all call him — *friend*.

—Collie Johnson  
Managing Editor



1935 — ENTERING MIDDLE SCHOOL, PHILADELPHIA, PA.



1943 — 1ST LT. HIRSCH, DISPLAYING 3" ANTI-AIRCRAFT SHELL, ALEUTIAN ISLANDS.



1959 — MAJ. HIRSCH (3RD FROM RIGHT) RECEIVES THE ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL ON A "WARM" SPRING DAY IN THULE, GREENLAND.



1960 — MAJ. HIRSCH IS PROMOTED TO LT. COL. AT THE U.S. ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE, FORT LEAVENWORTH, KAN. FROM LEFT: WIFE, MARCIENE; HIRSCH; ARMY MAJ. GEN. HAROLD K. JOHNSON (WHO LATER BECAME ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF).

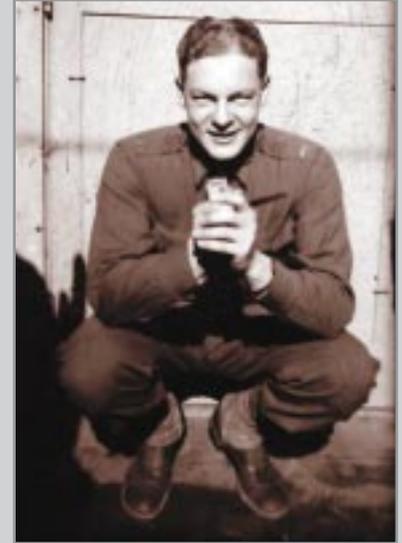
Photos courtesy Marciene Hirsch



1938 — PVT. HIRSCH, AGE 16 (LEFT) AND BEST BUDDY, PVT. JACK ORITT (RIGHT) WITH "COOKIE," THE CAMP COOK, AT A CIVILIAN MILITARY TRAINING CAMP. NOTICE HIRSCH'S WRAP LEGGING.



1940 — HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION



1942 — 2ND LT. HIRSCH, AGE 19, COLD BAY, ALEUTIAN ISLANDS. HIRSCH IS WEARING BROWN SHOES AND CANVAS LEGGINGS.



1947 — CAPT. HIRSCH (LEFT) REUNITES WITH BUDDY, JACK ORITT, AFTER THE END OF WWII.



1950 — CAPT. HIRSCH, 37TH COAST ARTILLERY (ANTI-AIRCRAFT) BATTALION, JAPAN.



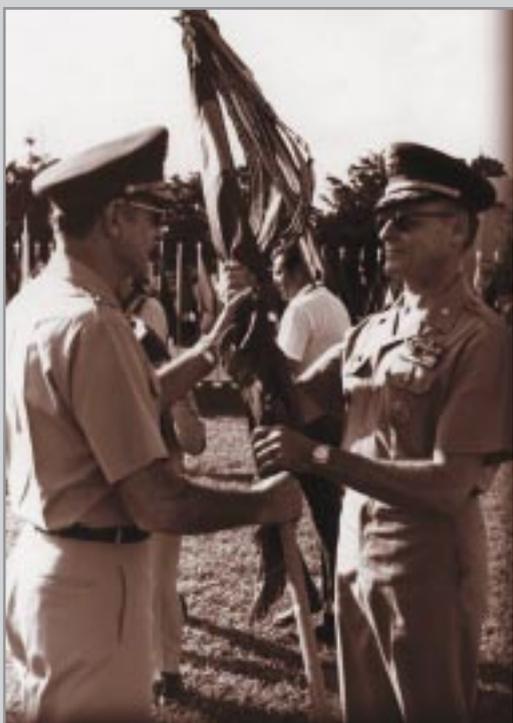
1965 — LT. COL. HIRSCH (FACING LEFT), COMMANDER, 6/562ND HAWK BATTALION, BRIEFS ARMY MAJ. GEN. UNDERWOOD (FACING RIGHT) DURING FIELD TRAINING MANEUVERS, BUTZBACH, GERMANY.



1966 — LT. COL. HIRSCH (CENTER) IS PROMOTED TO COL. HIRSCH.



1967 — COL. HIRSCH (RIGHT) "TROOPING THE LINE" AFTER ASSUMING COMMAND OF THE 548TH ARTILLERY GROUP (NATO), FRANKFURT, GERMANY.



1972 — BRIG. GEN. HIRSCH (RIGHT) ASSUMES HIS FIRST FLAG OFFICER ASSIGNMENT AS COMMANDER, 31ST AD BRIGADE, HOMESTEAD AFB, FLA.



1972 — COL. HIRSCH (RIGHT) IS "FROCKED" TO BRIG. GEN. AND AWARDED THE LEGION OF MERIT (3RD AWARD) BY ARMY MAJ. GEN. SIDNEY BERRY, CHIEF OF PERSONNEL OPERATIONS, IN A CEREMONY AT THE PENTAGON, WASHINGTON, D.C.



1972 — BRIG. GEN. HIRSCH AND WIFE, MARCIENE ATTENDING ONE OF MANY SOCIAL OCCASIONS THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER.



JAN. 31, 1977 — BRIG. GEN. HIRSCH RETIRES FROM ACTIVE DUTY FOLLOWING AN ASSIGNMENT AT ARMY DCSOPS, PENTAGON. FROM LEFT: ARMY LT. GEN. "SHY" MEYER; HIRSCH; WIFE, MARCIENE; MOTHER-IN-LAW, CECILIA OLDER.