

Hack '72 Retires

*Fellow Alumnus and Ordnance Officer,
Solovey '96, Pays Tribute*

Editor's note: This article about Lt. Gen. **Richard A. Hack '72, USA (Ret)** appeared in the Belvoir Eagle on Sept. 1, 2005. We reprint it with permission of the AMC Public Affairs Office.

Top Ordnance Officer Retires After 33 Years of Service

*by Tesia Williams
AMC public communications*

At first glance, one would think he was born with boots on his feet and jumped immediately into formation. However, Lt. Gen. Richard Hack didn't always want to be an officer in the U.S. Army. As a matter of fact, he wasn't sure how he was going to make his mark on this world.

It was 1972, the tail end of the Vietnam era. Hack was graduating from Virginia Military Institute and looking for a job. He was put into the only branch that was opened at the time – ordnance.

"I didn't know what it was, but I was brought on active duty as an ordnance officer," he said.

He originally signed up for three months of active duty and six and one-half years in the Reserve. At the last minute, through the help of Virginia Military Institute leadership, he signed on for two years of active duty and four years in the Reserve.

"And then, when I got on active duty, after I got trained a little bit, I realized that I was actually pretty good," he added. "I went voluntary indefinite, which meant that I could stay on active duty longer than two years."

Fast-forward 33 years. The man who describes himself as a bad second lieutenant (not a bad person) trying to make it to first lieutenant, is now retiring from one of the most important, most complex positions in the Army as Army Materiel Command's deputy commanding general.

Hack says his upbringing as a second generation Army officer and his time at VMI prepared him for the road he traveled: platoon leader, shop officer, materiel and support operations officer, commander, commanding general and AMC chief of staff.

He moved 28 times during his career taking him to places throughout the United States and Europe. As a child, he moved 25 times with his mother and father, also an Army officer, learning a lot about discipline, morals and values, and encountering people from all walks of life.

"My parents taught me to accept people for

who they are, not what they look like or how much money they have," Hack said. "And the Army is all about people, and coming from an upbringing where clearly no prejudices had manifested themselves really helped me. It was a wonderful thing."

Though he has been recognized for excellence often during his career with awards and decorations, it's the lives and people Hack has touched that this man of great modesty is most proud.

"There have been thousands of great soldiers, civilians, dependents who have done enormous things for the Army, our nation. And probably the thing that I'm most proud of is that I was able to serve by their side," he said.

Hack never thought that at the pinnacle of his career, he would be sitting with three stars on his shoulders, pulling all-nighters and making critical decisions that affect war fighters all over the world.

However, he had several people in his life who helped him blossom and grow: a noncommis-

sioned officer who initially took Hack under his wing, his company and battalion commanders, and his mother and father, both of whom he admires and credits for his success.

"I most admire my dad who was part of 'the greatest generation.' He is truly a giant. And my mom, in her own right, is a giant as well," he said.

His wife, Rosanne, also made a tremendous impact on his life and the Army. She sacrificed a career in teaching and has since touched the lives – through volunteerism – of many at each post, camp and station where they have been assigned.

"I will tell you the biggest loss to the Army is probably not me; it's my wife as an active duty spouse," Hack said.

Over the course of 12,000 days in the military, Hack has taken on numerous jobs and become proficient at every one of them, which is what he often advises young soldiers and officers, like his son who is currently serving in Iraq, to do. He has stood by many heroes and heroines doing the heavy lifting for the Army and executed many missions with a lot of sweat and tears. Those are the things he will miss the most.

Much like 33 years ago, he isn't sure what he is going to do this time in his civilian life. One thing Hack does know: he will be putting on a suit and tie, working around lots of people, helping to achieve a goal.



Prior to Gen. Hack's retirement, Capt. Joe Suddith, assistant executive officer of the Army Materiel Command (Deputy Commanding General), commissioned Capt. Michael Solovey '96 to create a watercolor painting for the general and his wife as a retirement gift. The painting is of the Hack's Fort Belvoir, Virginia, home. Although Solovey and Hack did not know each other, Hack was the senior Ordnance officer in the Army at the time, and Solovey is both an ordnance officer and a fellow VMI alumnus. Therefore, all cards were stacked in favor of Solovey as the artist for this gift. In the painting, the Ordnance Regimental Crest as well as a VMI flag appear on the façade of the Hack's home, explained Solovey. In the photo above are, from left, Jackie Cowdrey, Lt. Col. Brent Bolander, Cynthia Romeo, Lt. Gen. Hack and his wife, Rosanne (who is holding Solovey's painting), Col. (P) Patricia McQuiston, Donna Reid, Maj. Robert Law and Capt. Joe Suddith, who provided this photo and accompanying article about Hack's retirement. (See the spring 2005 *Alumni Review*, page 135, for more about Solovey's artwork.)