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**OBITUARIES**

## **Walter B. LaBerge, 80; Scientist Held Positions in NATO and at the Pentagon**

By Dennis McLellan  
Times Staff Writer

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Walter B. LaBerge, an aerospace research scientist and former undersecretary of the Army, assistant secretary of the Air Force and assistant secretary general of NATO, has died. He was 80.

LaBerge died of complications from pneumonia Friday in Aptos, near Santa Cruz.

His first presidential appointment came in 1974 as assistant secretary of the Air Force for research and development. In 1976, he served in Brussels as assistant secretary general of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Returning to the Pentagon in 1977, he became undersecretary of the Army.

His last government appointment was as acting undersecretary of Defense for research and engineering in 1980.

Born in Chicago in 1924, LaBerge graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1944 with a degree in naval science. He served aboard a U.S. minesweeper in the Palau Islands, east of the Philippines, and was promoted to captain in 1946.

After receiving his PhD in physics in 1950, LaBerge became a member of the original Sidewinder air-to-air missile development team at the Naval Ordnance Test Station in China Lake, Calif.

In 1956, the California Chamber of Commerce named him one of the five Outstanding Young Men of California.

In 1962, with Philco-Ford Corp., LaBerge headed the team that designed and installed the instrumentation at the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston. He returned to government service in 1971 as technical director of the China Lake facility.

LaBerge, who joined Lockheed Corp. in Sunnyvale, Calif. in 1981, retired as vice president for advanced planning in 1989.

He later served as chairman of the Army Science Board and held various academic appointments, including senior research scientist for the Institute of Advanced Technology at the University of Texas and visiting professor of physics at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., where he was active until just before his death.

He is survived by his children by his late first wife, Patricia: Peter LaBerge, Stephen LaBerge, Jeanne LaBerge, Philip LaBerge and Jacqueline LaBerge Gunn; his stepchildren from his late second wife, Elizabeth: Deborah Pharris, Pamela Alexander, Richard Baughman and Kurt Baughman; and his siblings, Helene Holroyd, Ed LaBerge and Pierre LaBerge.

A memorial service will be held at 10 a.m. Aug. 14 at Holy Cross Church, 126 High St., Santa Cruz. Contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society.

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