

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Novel Has Fake Card--Governor

'Brigadier General' Not in Louisiana Files

A wallet-sized card designating former New Orleans nightclub owner Gordon Novel as a brigadier general on the staff of Gov. John J. McKeithen has caused a ruckus in Baton Rouge.

Novel, presently in Columbus, Ohio, is fighting extradition to New Orleans on a warrant issued by District Attorney Jim Garrison to testify in the Kennedy assassination investigation.

The 29-year-old Novel showed it to reporters Tuesday, apparently as supporting evidence that he is telling the truth in the probe.

Gov. McKeithen denied giving

Novel the card and added, "I've never heard of him and I didn't sign a brigadier general's card for him."

William Redmann, the governor's chief counsel, said, "It's fantastic that Novel has one if it's genuine."

CALLED FORGERY

The governor declared the card a forgery, and Redmann said a check of the files in Baton Rouge did not turn up Novel's name.

Redmann added that the governor puts a lot of importance on the honorary commissions, similar to a Kentucky colonel's commission, because generalships are reserved for "the highest of high-ranking visitors to the state."

He said the governor approves every one of the commissions personally and only he can sign the certificate.

"About 40 such cards have been issued by the present administration," he said, "and the latest was given to Gen. Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua, who received an honorary admiral's commission."

"You really have to be somebody before we hand those out. We give Louisiana colonel commissions to everybody else."

CARDS DISAPPEAR

Speculating on the forgery possibilities, Redmann said some blank generalship cards disappeared from the old gubernatorial offices about two years ago, and it's possible someone

outside the governor's office could have passed them out.

Novel was arrested in a Columbus suburb last Saturday and released on bond Tuesday. A hearing will be held on May 3 to determine Novel's extradition appeal.

Novel also faces a charge of conspiracy to burglarize a Schlumberger Well Service munitions dump in Houma, La., in 1961.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

SECTION 1

PAGE 20

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