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Top Army Investigator

Henry Harold Tufts

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 30—When Col. Henry Harold Tufts was mentioned in a newspaper article on riot training some 19 months ago the writer called him “a peppery, middle-aged soldier” who was always chewing a cigar. “People still remember that description,” he said in his office today, smiling as he recalled the quotation. Although “peppery” doesn’t quite allow for the humor in Colonel Tufts, that writer’s description still seemed to fit the colonel today as he was named commanding officer of the newly created United States Army C.I.D. Agency.

The agency, which begins operations tomorrow, is the fruition of a five-year-old idea for a centralized, professional command of the Army’s worldwide network of criminal investigation units.

Colonel Tufts had been working on the creation of the agency since last winter. He said the creation of the agency and the Senate investigation into alleged Army club irregularities were “coincidental.” But he conceded that the start of Senate hearings “accelerated” the final decision on when to act.

The 5 foot 11½ inch, 210-pound lawyer was chosen for the job because of the Army’s demonstrated belief that he can get a job done, especially in the formation days.

Service in Pacific

He was selected to be provost marshal of the Pacific in 1963 when the Vietnam buildup was beginning. He helped build up a huge network of investigators and military policemen and ran the organization in the Pacific for four years.

When he returned to the United States he was first director of instruction, then assistant commandant, then commandant of the military police school at Fort Gordon, Ga.; and he was chosen to create and teach a weekly course in riot control for guardsmen and civilian law officers.



The New York Times (by Mike Lien)

“I believe in the letter of the law. People are either right or wrong.”

Now, he will head the Army’s criminal investigations at a time when the Army is being accused of not being able to keep its house clean of criminals.

One colonel who has known Colonel Tufts since his Pacific tour, described him as follows: “Extremely intelligent, fair and objective. Being a lawyer, he always assesses both sides of the problem. He’s extremely honest. New England honest. His honesty and morals are above reproach. He makes decisions based on facts. And he reports the facts as they are without coloring them.”

Colonel Tufts, who studied law at Suffolk University, Mass., appraises his own qualities as being part idealistic and part practical. He believes there’s good in everyone, but emphasizes “I believe in the letter of the law. People are either right or wrong.”

Colonel Tufts was born in

Salem, Mass., on Sept. 13, 1917. He married Margaret Lawrence on Dec. 6, 1942, three days after he received his commission as an Army artillery officer.

After the war he became a civilian “because I didn’t know I could stay in,” he explained. In 1946 he took exams to join the regular Army and he and his wife decided to try out Army life during peacetime.

An Enjoyable Life

Today they’re still trying it out and enjoying it, by both accounts. They have three children and one 2-year-old grandchild, Sabrina.

Mrs. Tufts has been with her husband on every assignment except to Korea in 1962. “It’s been good living and it’s provided the children with a wonderful experience,” she said over the phone.

Their youngest child lives with them in their Virginia townhouse and answers the phone, “Colonel Tufts’s headquarters, Monica speaking.”

The oldest son is married and working on a Ph.D. in education at Boston University. The middle child, another son, is seeking a masters degree in business at the University of Santa Clara in California.

Colonel Tufts, called “Hank” by his closest friends, likes to work in his yard, although the present townhouse does not have one, and to grow things.

He also likes to read, almost as much as he likes to chew and puff on the short, fat cigars his wife says are “in his mouth first thing in the morning and last thing at night.”

His favorite reading is about the law and law enforcement. In addition, he enjoys histories and biographies. When he reads fiction it is almost always a mystery.

His interests cover many subjects, but he got most idealistic when he talked about the need for older people to understand young people. “We’ve got to see things through their eyes,” he said, “I think all kids are good.”