

See also Lieut. Gen. John D. Lavelle,  
filed Lavelle 11 Aug 72.

## Disability Retirement

# General's Tax Break

### Washington

General Earle G. Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will be excused payment of Federal income tax on \$25,200 on his annual retirement pay on grounds of disability.

Formal Army orders say Wheeler has been "determined to be permanently unfit for duty by reason of physical disability of 70 per cent."

Wheeler, 62, will retire early in July after a record six years in the Nation's highest military post.

Although he suffered a heart attack in September, 1967, Presidents Johnson and Nixon each later extended him in the Joint Chief chairmanship for an extra year.

### RECORDS

When asked for specific information on Wheeler's disabilities, the Army replied



EARLE G. WHEELER  
Joint Chiefs chairman

that "information contained in medical records is privileged and therefore exempt from public release."

The Army said 70 per cent disability means that \$2100 a month of Wheeler's retire-

ment pay will be income tax exempt. Such exemption percentages are based on active duty salary. Wheeler now draws \$3000 a month as chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

The \$25,000 income tax exemption accounts for all but \$1800 of his yearly retirement pay. The remainder also will be free of Federal income tax because of the general's contributions to a retirement plan.

### DETERMINATION

The Army said the determination of disability in Wheeler's case was made by Major General Kenneth Wickham, its adjutant general, on behalf of Secretary of the Army Stanley Resor.

The adjutant general acted on the recommendation of an Army medical board, a physical evaluation board and the Army Physical Review Council, it said.

How, if Wheeler was so disabled, did he perform his function as chairman of the Joint Chiefs? The Army was asked. It replied:

"Your question should be referred for answer to the secretaries of Defense who recommended him and to the presidents who appointed General Wheeler to serve as chairman . . . and at whose pleasure he continues to serve; and to the Senate which advised and consented to the appointments."

In his 38-year military career, Wheeler has made a reputation more as a brilliant staff officer than on the battlefield.

He impressed President John F. Kennedy, who appointed him Army chief of Staff in 1962, Mr. Johnson who appointed him JCS chairman in 1964, and Mr. Nixon who kept him on.

Associated Press