

25 U. S. GENERALS ORDERED TO RETIRE

SEP 8 1972

**Nixon Names 2-Star Officer
as Army Vice Chief—Goal
Is Young, Innovative Men**

NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 7—The Army moved today to open its top posts to younger men by notifying 25 generals that they must resign short of the normal retirement time.

Meanwhile, President Nixon, as expected, nominated a relatively junior two-star general for the second highest military post in the Army.

Nominated for four-star rank and the job of Vice Chief of Staff of the Army was Maj. Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., 47-year-old deputy assistant to the President for national security affairs. He was selected ahead of 240 more senior Army generals for the post.

As the nomination was announced at the White House, Pentagon officials disclosed the forced retirements, although no public announcement has been made of the fact.

Both moves, senior Pentagon officials said, are aimed in part at opening top command assignments in the Army to younger, more innovative men.

Called Highly Qualified

General Haig, whose elevation to four-star rank needs approval by the Senate, will succeed Gen. Bruce Palmer Jr. Pentagon officials aid that General Palmer would be given another assignment, which had not yet been determined. He is currently serving as Acting Chief of Staff.

Ronald L. Ziegler, White House press secretary, announced the promotion. General Haig is a highly qualified man, a young man who will do a very fine job as Vice Chief of Staff," he said.

General Haig is to serve under Gen. Creighton W. Abrams,

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57, who was nominated as Army Chief of Staff earlier.

General Abrams's confirmation has been deferred until the Senate can clear up the confusion over whether, when acting as over-all commander of American forces in Vietnam, he was aware that his Air Force chief, Gen. John D. Lavelle, had sanctioned falsified reports in order to conduct unauthorized air raids in North Vietnam.

The move to elevate General Haig and to weed out 25 generals, well-informed Pentagon sources said, came at the initiative of Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird and Secretary of the Army Robert F. Froehlke, rather than the White House.

The Army was scheduled to lose about 10 slots for generals anyway because the size of the service has been cut by more than 650,000 men with the disengagement from Vietnam.

All 30-year Men

But the Pentagon's civilian leaders wanted to cut the force of about 500 Army generals still further to make room for younger men to move up, both within the ranks of the generals and from colonel to general.

Starting in the spring, Pentagon sources said, the top two Army civilians and the top two military leaders started culling the list of generals to come up with a list of 25 to be ordered out early.

Once a general has served 30 years, he serves at the pleasure of the Secretary of the Army. All those being asked to retire are two-star, three-star and four-star generals with at least 30 years of service, the sources said.

When a list was finally worked up, the sources said, Secretary Froehlke reviewed it



Maj. Gen. A. M. Haig Jr.

with General Abrams. It could not be ascertained whether General Abrams urged any changes in the original list.

Many additional retirements, beyond the 25 generals are expected, Army officials said. Some will leave because they have reached the mandatory retirement age or have been offered jobs in industry that they regard too good to pass up.

Others, however, are expected to leave because of the feeling that with the elevation of so junior an officer to top rank—General Haig has been a general less than three years—their own military futures do not look bright.

"The whole thing has been designed to avoid stagnation, to promote upward mobility," one Army source said. "We want to avoid a situation in which some of our best young lieutenant colonels feel there's scant chance to rise and that in their late 30's there still would be time for a second career on the outside. We want to keep these young, experienced, innovative guys in the Army."