

Haig, Kissinger Aide, Jumps to No. 2 Army Job

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# Haig, Kissinger Aide,

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President Nixon yesterday kipped over some 240 senior army generals and named Maj. Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., currently the top deputy to presidential adviser Henry Kissinger, to the four-star post of Army vice chief of staff.

The President's action continues what has been a meteoric rise for the 47-year-old Haig, whose rapid ascent through the Army's hierarchy recalls that of Gen. George C. Marshall.

As a colonel, Haig joined Kissinger's staff as military assistant in January, 1969. By November of that year he had earned his first star. Within 18 months, he had become deputy assistant to Kissinger, impressing both his boss and the President with his ability to grasp the large and unwieldy policy questions handled by the National Security Council



MAJ. GEN. HAIG  
... rapid rise continues

and to put in long hours of work that kept much of the organizational burden off Kissinger.

In March of this year, Haig

was given his second star. Now, after only six months as a major general and within four years of being a colonel, Haig will vault over the three-star rank entirely and take over the No. 2 military spot in the Army, behind the incoming chief of staff, Gen. Creighton W. Abrams.

Haig's nomination to the four-star rank requires Senate confirmation, which seems assured.

Haig will move into the vice chief of staff job now held by Gen. Bruce Palmer Jr., one of the most highly respected generals in the Army. The changeover, however, is not expected to take place until after the election.

Palmer is expected to take over one of the Army's major operating commands, with

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speculation centered on the Pacific Command in Hawaii.

Haig's nomination by the President in some ways parallels the earlier nomination of Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt to become chief of naval operations. In both cases, the administration has run the risk of causing dissatisfaction among some of its most senior commanders by reaching far down into the ranks to bring young and articulate officers quickly to the top.

Zumwalt, however, was a three-star admiral before he got the top spot over 33 more senior admirals.

Haig's selection also parallels in another way the appointment last December of Lt. Gen. Robert E. Cushman to become commandant of the Marine Corps.

Cushman, like Haig, had a history of personal service to Mr. Nixon as a previous military aide during Mr. Nixon's years as Vice President.

Under questioning yesterday after announcing Haig's appointment, White House press secretary Ronald L. Zeigler said that the jump from two-star to four-star rank was not unprecedented, but Army officials say that Gen. George A. Custer and Gen. Marshall may be the only cases where the rise to the top was quite so fast.

Marshall went on to become chief of staff and Secretary of State, but Custer was killed by Indians in the battle of Little Bighorn in 1876.

The White House has not announced any successor to Haig and there is some specu-

lation that the NSC staff may be organized differently after he leaves.

Haig was also the choice of the Pentagon's top civilians for the No. 2 Army post, and many senior Army officers believe that he and the new chief, Gen. Abrams, will give the service especially strong leadership.

Abrams' confirmation as chief of staff, however, is being held up at least temporarily pending further Senate hearings scheduled to begin next week on the case of Air Force Gen. John D. Lavelle, who carried out unauthorized bombing raids on North Vietnam. The question of whether Abrams, as commander of all U.S. forces in Vietnam, knew of those raids continues to hang over the Lavelle case.