

Straightening Out

Washington

Responding to reports that General Alexander M. Haig received conflicting awards for heroism, the Army yesterday corrected an "administrative error" in one of the citations and denied that Haig won a flying medal for combat action on the ground in Vietnam.

A story in the Sunday edition of the daily Oklahoman of Oklahoma City said that Haig, named recently as supreme allied commander in

Europe, received the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism as a brigade commander for acts on March 31 and April 1, 1967, although he never left the ground.

The newspaper said Haig also received a Distinguished

Service Cross — second only to the Medal of Honor — for heroism as a battalion commander on the exact same days.

The Army released a statement from lieutenant

General James Hollingsworth, now the corps commander in Korea who had recommended Haig for both awards. Hollingsworth said the citations resulted from different incidents on separate days and "I was the senior eyewitness on both occasions."

The Army said Haig, then a lieutenant colonel, "was airborne over the battle most of the afternoon" of March 31 until "his helicopter was shot down and the

Haig's Medals

pilot crash-landed in the middle of the fight."

Hollingsworth said he recommended the Distinguished Flying Cross for Haig's attempts while directing an assault from his helicopter on that day to save a platoon leader and then to extract his dead lieutenant and some wounded enlisted men.

He said he then recommended Haig for the Distinguished Service Cross for action on the ground the fol-

lowing day, April 1, when his battalion came under attack from a joint Viet Cong and North Vietnamese force.

"When I submitted the recommendations," Hollingsworth said, "as I recall, I most likely lumped the times together, that is, March 31 through April 1." He added that he was reassigned before the final typed version of the citation came back to the unit.

"Action is underway to correct the administrative

error in the wording of the citation," the Army said, adding that both awards should also state that Haig was battalion commander since he did not become brigade commander until 10 a.m. April 1, after the fighting mentioned in the citations had ended.

The Army said its published policies "permit separate awards for separate acts . . . which may occur within a short period of time during a sustained action."

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