

Clerical Error on Dates Cited

Army Confused Haig Viet Medals

Associated Press

The Army says an administrative error was responsible for Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr. receiving two decorations for heroism in Vietnam in separate commands at the same time and in the same battle.

Haig, former White House chief of staff who was recently named supreme allied commander in Europe, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) for heroism as a battalion commander during the battle of Ap gu on March 31 and April 1, 1967.

He also was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) for actions as a brigade commander during the same battle.

In a statement Sunday night, Lt. Gen. James Hollingsworth said he was responsible for recommending both awards. At the time, he said, he was assistant division com-

mander of the 1st Infantry and the senior eyewitness.

"The DFC was for the air mobile assault and the action pertaining to Gen. Haig's acts in his attempts to save the life of his reconnaissance platoon leader and subsequent action in the extraction of his dead lieutenant and wounded enlisted men," Hollingsworth said, adding that this occurred the afternoon of March 31.

He recommended Haig for the DSC "as a result of his extraordinary heroism in command of the first 26th Infantry" on the morning of April 1, Hollingsworth said.

When he submitted the recommendation, Hollingsworth said, "I most likely lumped the times together, i.e., 31 March through 1 April . . . Most of the recommendations in the field are written by hand, as was the case here, and I can see wherein the rear

area clerk could very well confuse the dates."

The Daily Oklahoman reported the conflicting decorations in its Sunday editions.

It said Haig was awarded the DFC for actions as a brigade commander although he did not become brigade commander until afterward. An Army spokesman said Haig's command changed from battalion commander to brigade commander at 10 a.m. April 1.

Hollingsworth's statement said Haig was airborne over the battle most of the afternoon of March 31 and that his helicopter was shot and crash-landed in the middle of the fight. Haig then joined his battalion on the ground and organized its defense, the statement said.

"Action is under way to correct the administrative error in the wording of the citation of the DFC," the statement said.