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SF Chronicle
Quiet, Respected Officer

Chile's Man in Charge

New York

Before he became the new Chilean strongman last Thursday, General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte scrupulously avoided politics.

His silence was in keeping with the tradition of Chile's military, which had stayed out of politics for 46 years until a four-man junta deposed President Salvador Allende last Tuesday.

But even among officers who had upheld that tradition, Pinochet was regarded as singularly nonaligned.

The tall, powerfully built infantry officer became commander-in-chief of the army last month after General Carlos Prats resigned.

ROLE

Allende, who was facing strong opposition to his Marxist policies, apparently hoped Pinochet would keep the military in its non-

political role.

It was the third time in a year that Pinochet had assumed the post. He had succeeded Prats when the general left to head the ministries of defense and of the interior.

Pinochet is known to military people who have observed his career as intelligent, ambitious and competent. They describe him as quiet and businesslike, but also as an experienced infantry officer with a great deal of initiative. Fellow officers respect him, they say.

TOUGH

An officer who studied with the 58-year-old general when he taught artillery and military geography in the 1950's recalls him as "very energetic and very disciplined," with a sense of humor as well as a certain "toughness."

Probably the most unusual aspect of his apparently tra-

ditional military career is the general's interest in geography. He has written three geography books, including a secondary school text. He has taught the subject at the army colleges in Quito and Santiago and he is a member of the Geographical Society of Chile.

Pinochet was born Nov. 25, 1915, in Valparaiso, the port city that was also the birthplace of Allende. He was commissioned to the infantry after graduating from the military academy in Santiago in 1936.

ATTACHE

In 1956, Pinochet served as military attache to the Chilean embassy in Washington. He also visited the U.S. southern command at the Panama Canal Zone in 1965, 1968 and 1972, and made an official tour of the U.S. in 1968.

Promoted from colonel to brigadier general in 1968 —

a year before Allende's election — Pinochet was named army chief of staff in 1972, a post he held until his third appointment as commander-in-chief.

The general has received several decorations, including the Colombia Order of Merit and Chilean Star of Military Merit. He studied law and social sciences at the University of Chile in Santiago for two years, and speaks some English and French.

FAMILY

Pinochet is married to the former Lucia Hierarte Rodriguez. The couple are both Roman Catholic. They have two sons and three daughters.

The general first received public attention last fall when Allende declared Santiago a military zone and put it under the general's command to control riots and strikes.



AP Wirephoto

GENERAL PINOCHET
Intelligent and ambitious

Pinochet said he hoped his men would not have to go into the streets because "The army, unlike the police, goes out to kill."

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