

New Air Chief in Vietnam

John William Vogt Jr.

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WASHINGTON, April 17— Gen. John William Vogt Jr., who is directing the intensified bombardment of North Vietnamese forces in South and North Vietnam, is holding down his first command since he led a fighter squadron over the beaches of Normandy in World War II. In

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the ensuing years, his Air Force career has been entirely in staff work, primarily in plans and operations. Before he went to Saigon last week as commander of the Seventh Air Force, General Vogt was director of the joint staff for the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Pentagon, where he supervised the major planning for American operations in Vietnam. General Vogt (pronounced vote) is a short, erect, baldish officer who was described as "an exceptional purple-suiter"—Pentagon talk for someone who works well with all the services rather than being a partisan of his own.

General Vogt steps in for Gen. John D. Lavelle, whose replacement, for reasons of "ill health," was suddenly announced by the Pentagon last week.

An officer who had worked closely with him said that General Vogt knew "who was involved and what was involved in every issue that came up." The officer said that the general tended to go directly to a subordinate who had the information he wanted rather than to wait for the information to come through the system.

General Vogt, who is 52 years old, was also described as "a man who grasped all of the essentials," who knew the details of the latest intelligence and could apply them quickly to a larger and changing context.

Another Pentagon official said that a "very helpful" factor in the general's new assignment "is that Johnny

Vogt has seen the big picture from this end." He is no stranger to Vietnam, having been the chief plans-and-operations officer for the Pacific Air Forces, with headquarters in Hawaii, from 1965 to 1968, the period when the Indochina air war built up.

'Takes Time' to Know Him

Several officers who know him said that General Vogt was a quiet, mild-mannered no-nonsense man. He is not given to small talk; he impresses some people as a bit stiff. An officer who says he is a close friend of General Vogt's said that "it takes a period of time to break through that defense and get on a friendly basis with him."

General Vogt was born on March 18, 1920, in Elizabeth, N. J., and graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School there in 1938. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1941 as an aviation cadet and was made a pilot in 1942. He served two combat tours in World War II as a fighter pilot, based in England, and was a squadron commander for the invasion of Normandy and the drive across Europe.

After the war, he took the time to finish his education at Yale, from which he was graduated in 1947. General Vogt also earned a master's degree at Columbia in 1951 and was a fellow at the Harvard School of International Affairs during 1958-1959. Few senior officers in the military services today come from so pure an Ivy-League background.

Besides his work on planning and operations staffs in Washington, Hawaii, and at the headquarters of the Far East Air Force in Japan, General Vogt has worked extensively in political military affairs. He was involved in assignments for the National Security Council from 1951 to 1955 and later headed a staff of political and military planners within the Defense De-



United Press International

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partment's Office of International Security Affairs—sometimes called the Pentagon's State Department.

Several officers were asked whether General Vogt's lack of senior command experience would be a shortcoming in Saigon. To a man, they replied in the negative, arguing that his long career in operations was a first-rate preparation for commanding the Seventh Air Force.

"Being in plans and operations," said one officer, "keeps you updated on how the forces are doing and what they are doing it with. That's much better, in the broader picture, than being in some isolated command post someplace."

General Vogt and the former Doris Adams, were married on April 27, 1946. They have a daughter, Leslie Anne. Mrs. Vogt left with her husband last week; she will live in Bangkok while he is on duty in Saigon.

The general's favorite pastime is sailing and he has a reputation as a first-class racer. He owned a sailboat while on duty in Hawaii and sailed in races there. A friend here said he hadn't had much time for that recently: "He's just too damned hard-working."