

Haig: The Newest Nixon Defender

By Vera Glaser

Washington

Handsome, fast-talking General Al Haig is the newest Republican stump artist, fund-raiser and Nixon front-line defender.

The White House chief of staff, after a lifetime in the army, has tossed aside his nonpartisan cloak. In recent months Haig has wowed 'em at GOP political events in Chicago, Philadelphia and points east.

He touted Nixon's achievements at a packed meeting of the Republican Women's Forum in Washington the other day, stressing how "cooperative" the boss had been with Watergate investigators.

Although members of the military are required to steer clear of politics, GOP sources say Haig's involve-

ment began while he was still in uniform, on assignment as Henry Kissinger's deputy in the White House.

In November, he turned up in Chicago as featured speaker at a fund-raiser for Illinois Congressman Samuel Young.

"He only did it as a favor for Jerry Ford," an aide said.

"I don't think he realized it was for Congressman Young," Haig's secretary said.

An official of the GOP con-

gressional committee groused that the cost of the jet which sped Haig to Chicago that night cut deeply into the dinner profits. He termed Haig, "impressive personally, but without political background. We just have to hope he'll assimilate it very fast."

In February, a crowd of almost 500 in the Philadelphia suburbs paid \$20 a head



Both President Nixon and Vice President Ford have nothing but praise for the new front-line defender

He calls himself "the first general to leave military service to enter combat"



to hear Haig address the annual Lincoln Day dinner of the lower Merion-Narberth Republican Committee.

In March, Haig accompanied Nixon to a Young Republican meeting in the capital, joining the applause as the youthful partisans chanted, "Three more years . . . three more years."

Haig's speech to the GOP women last week was again down-played by an aide as "just helping out Anne Armstrong," who is, among other things, a political adviser to the President.

"From the outset," he told the women, "the President has said any individual is free to testify (on Watergate) totally and without executive inhibition as to matters involved with criminal activity."

Unmentioned was the



Adviser Armstrong

President's opposition to granting immunity, which would tend to discourage

those wishing to talk.

Jocularly describing himself as "the first retired general to enter combat," Haig cited an example of his lack of political acumen.

During the Korean war, he recalled, he bought ten chamber pots, thinking they were art objects, and used them to decorate a reception room for President and Mrs. Rhee.

Haig's army career has been dazzling. In four years, while working for Kissinger, he shot from colonel to four-star general. Now Haig is branching out into such domestic areas as energy and health.

Vice President Ford is said to regard him so highly that he'd keep Haig around, should impeachment hatch a new administration.