

The original documents are located in Box C41, folder “Presidential Handwriting, 6/2/1976 (3)” of the Presidential Handwriting File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Dick Cheney -

An explanation of what happened
on the Military Promotion List is
attached at TAB A.

Jim Connor
6/2/76

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Dick Cheney

Any info on this?

Common



Jack Anderson

Army Slips False Papers Past President

THE ARMY SLIPPED a military promotion list past President Ford last year without telling him it was engineered by cantankerous old Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., as part of a personal vendetta.

There is evidence that the President was the victim of some sleight-of-hand, involving fancy razor-blade work by the Army on presidential documents and an erased date on the promotion papers. Indeed, White House records may actually have been faked.

The events that led to the document tampering began as an exercise in Pentagon politics. A brilliant young lieutenant colonel, Wilfred Ebel, became a leading contender to head the 100,000-strong Reserve Officers Association.

Stern old Strom, a past president of the association, looked upon it as his private preserve. He fully intended to install his own protegee, a lackluster World War II crony, Maj. Gen. Milnor Roberts, as the new president.

But the 44-year-old Ebel had an awesome record, complete with medals and citations for "tremendous service" and "personal integrity." His name was also one of the 405 on a promotion list that had been drawn up by the Army's most respected officers. It had been approved by the Pentagon and, on Jan. 14, 1975, had been signed by President Ford.

But a funny-thing happened to Ebel's name on the way from the President's desk to Capitol Hill.

First, Ebel's rivals in the reserves, Thurmond and Roberts, got together for a little chat. Thurmond forthwith directed an aide to call the Army and request, as a classified Army document attests, that Ebel's "nomination ... be held in abeyance."

Although the President already had signed Ebel's promotion and had readied it for the Senate, the Army's irrepressible political boss, then-Secretary Howard "Bo" Callaway, suddenly tried to recall Ebel's nomination.

It appeared that Callaway was too late, that the nomination was out of his hands. Nevertheless, he had his special assistant, Col. Peter Kempf, write to the White House asking that Ebel's name be stricken.

Nowhere in this memo, which we have obtained from White House sources, does Callaway's office warn the President that the vengeful Strom was behind the eleventh-hour move.

Instead, Callaway simply sent Ford a new promotion list. Incredibly, Ebel's name had been cut out with a razor blade. Then the sheet had been Xeroxed to make it look like Ebel's name had never been on the list at all.

The new list was then sent to the White House, which forwarded it to the Senate. But our investigation has raised still other questions about the case, with Watergate overtones.

For instance, the documents sent to the Senate are highly unorthodox. The final page of the new list is fine bond paper, with Gerald Ford's signature. But the sheets on top, one of which contains the Xerox sheet with Ebel's name razored out, are all Xerox paper. No other Army nomination papers are this mix of good bond and crude paper.

The possibility that Ford never actually signed the final promotion list but that his signature was simply attached to it is heightened by the fact that the bond-paper nominations are prepared in St. Louis on a special typewriter. It is difficult to see how a new last page could have been typed up in three days in St. Louis and sent to the White House.

The Grand Rapids Press

EDITORIAL PAGE

THURSDAY, MAY 27, 1976

14-A

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 27, 1976

MEMORANDUM TO:

JIM CONNOR

FROM:

BARRY ROTH *BR*

On January 13, 1975, the President signed a promotion list containing the names of 405 persons, including that of USAR Lt. Colonel Wilfred Ebel. Subsequent to the President's signature, but prior to the submission of the promotion list to the Senate, DOD asked the White House to return the list. The list was returned to DOD on January 15, 1975. DOD then resubmitted the list to the White House with a covering memorandum stating that Colonel Ebel's name was not on the list, because of allegations that had been made. This revised list, containing 404 names, was signed by the President on January 17, and was sent to the Senate on January 21, 1975. Although Colonel Ebel's attorney insists that the President only signed one promotion list, Bob Linder's logs indicate that the list was signed twice and the first signature was destroyed prior to return of the first list to DOD.