

RESEARCH NOTE: 4-5-Star Generals/Admirals

General of the Army (5 stars)¹

George Marshall	(16 Dec 1944)
Douglas MacArthur	(18 Dec 1944)
Dwight Eisenhower	(20 Dec 1944)
Henry Arnold	(21 Dec 1944)
Omar Bradley	(20 Sep 1950)

Fleet Admiral (5 stars)

William Leahy	(15 Dec 1944)
Ernest King	(17 Dec 1944)
Chester Nimitz	(19 Dec 1944)
William Halsey	(11 Dec 1945)

General (Temporary, 1940 -) (4 stars)²

General (Chief of Staff, 1929 -) (4 stars)³

General of the Armies of the U.S. (4 stars)³

John J. Pershing	(3 Sep 1919-48)
------------------	-----------------

General (Emergency, 1917-20) (4 stars)⁴

Admiral of the Navy (4 stars)³

George Dewey	(1899-1917)
--------------	-------------

General of the Army of the U.S. (4 stars)³

Ulysses S. Grant	(1866-69)
William T. Sherman	(1869-84)
Philip H. Sheridan	(Jun - Aug 1888)

¹ Structural grade level equivalent to British field marshal. A permanent category to which none has been appointed in the Army since 1950.

² Structural grade level for WWII and permanent since.

³ Personal honor, title, and office/position of sole command.

⁴ Wartime grade.

General of the Armies of the U.S. (4 stars) ⁵
Office created in 1799 but never filled

General and Commander in Chief of the Army of the United Colonies/States (3 stars) ³
George Washington (15 Jun 1775-1783)

SOURCES:

Bell, William G. Commanding Generals and Chiefs of Staff, 1775-1783. Wash, DC: CMH, 1983.
pp. 164-65. E181.B532.
See especially note 2 on p.165.

Henry, Stephen M. "General of the Army--Admiral of the Fleet." Military Collector & Historian
(Winter 1954): pp. 164-65. Per.
On the five-star insignia.

Kleber, Brooks E. "The Story Behind a Promotion." Army (Jun 1978): pp. 14-15. Per.
On 1976 "promotion" of George Washington by Joint Congressional resolution.

Lintelmann, Susan & Aimone, Alan. "Five Star Admirals and Generals." Appendix II of USMA
Library Bulletin No 14C, West Point, NY, 1987. pp. 126-27. BibFile: Gens.

U.S. Army. CMH. "Highest Rank in United States Army: Five Star." Fact sheet, Oct 1967. 2 p.
BibFile-Generals.

U.S. Army War College. Historical Section. "List of Generals." Repro typescript/mimeo, 1 Jan 1945.
5 p. BibFile-Generals.

Wiener, Frederick B. "Five is Higher than Six When fact and Legend Clash." Army (Jan 1971):
pp. 42-48. Per.
Capsule account on p. 48.

_____. "How Many Stars for Pershing?" Army (Dec 1970): pp. 28-33. Per.

_____. "Three Stars and Up." 5 pts. Infantry Journal (Jul 1945): pp. 52-54; (Aug 1945): pp.33-37;
(Sep 1945): pp. 37-40; (Oct 1945): pp. 41-45 and (Nov 1945): pp. 51-55. Per.

⁵ George Washington, who was a Lt-Gen (3 star) when he died in 1799, never received this appointment. During the Bicentennial he was posthumously promoted to grade of General of the Armies of the U.S. and given rank & precedence over all other past and present.

END NOTE: GRADE OR RANK?

The two terms are generally used synonymously but have shades of technical differences.

Grade: Permanent structural position in the hierarchy, e.g., SGT(E5), COL(O6). A pay category.

Rank/Seniority: Synonymous terms for relative position of superiority, e.g., the ranking captain in the battalion, the senior lieutenant. A status rangement.

Title: Mere terminology or sometimes a personal honor designating sole occupancy of a specific position or office.

Insignia (of Grade): Symbol of grade, usually official.

Brevet/Frock: Grade of temporary or permanent nature. But don't even think about these complications now. Later, see notes & bibliographies in Officer-Promotion BibFile.