

Military Trailblazer

Clifford Alexander, Jr.

Secretary of the United States Army
(1977 – 1981)



Clifford Alexander, Jr. was the first African American to serve as secretary of the United States Army. He was appointed by Jimmy Carter and served from February 14, 1977 to January 20, 1981.

The Secretary of the Army is responsible for all affairs of the Department of the Army including: recruiting; training; mobilizing; demobilizing; and all administration functions.

Prior to serving as Secretary of the Army, Alexander served as Assistant District Attorney in New York City.

He also served on the National Security Council under President John F. Kennedy, and from 1964 to 1967, worked in the Lyndon B. Johnson White House as Deputy Special Assistant to the President, Associate Special Counsel, and Deputy Special Counsel. From 1973 to 1974 he was professor of law at Howard University.

Clifford Alexander, Jr. was born in New York City on September 21, 1933. He attended Harvard University, Yale University and Yale Law School, graduating with an LL.B in 1958.



Clifford Alexander, Jr. served under three presidents.



John F. Kennedy



Lyndon B. Johnson



Jimmy Carter