

## **Maj. Gen. Richard M. Wells, U.S. Army**

Director  
Defense Mapping Agency  
August 1981 – June 1983



Maj. Gen. Richard M. Wells graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1951 and received an MS from Iowa State University in 1956. In 1964 he completed the Naval War College, simultaneously earning an MA in international affairs from The George Washington University. He graduated from the National War College in 1969.

After one year in Korea, Major General Wells taught engineering at the U.S. Naval Academy for three years, served in the Office of the Chief of Engineers, and commanded the 84th Engineer Battalion (Construction) in the Republic of Vietnam. Beginning in September 1970, he served in Washington, DC, as chief of the Strategic Mobility and Readiness Team in the Planning and Programming Analysis Directorate of the Office of the Assistant Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army. He moved to Chicago in August 1971, where he served for two years as district engineer in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Chicago District. He then became chief of the Engineer Branch of the Office of Personnel Directorate for the U.S. Army. He commanded the 4th Advanced Individual Training Brigade in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, prior to his appointment as division engineer of the U.S. Army Engineer Division, Middle East, in Saudi Arabia, a position he held until July 1978. From 1978 to 1981, he served as division engineer of the U.S. Army Engineer Division, North Pacific, in Portland, Oregon.

As director of the Defense Mapping Agency (DMA), Major General Wells provided critical leadership during the dynamic transition of the national intelligence and mapping program from a film-based program to a flexible, digital-based satellite imaging system. The transition required the agency to embark on a \$2.6 billion modernization program. Major General Wells presented the technical and funding plan through Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD) to Congress and successfully achieved the plan's approval and funding.

In July 1983, after his tour as director of DMA, Major General Wells became deputy chief of engineers, Office of the Chief of Engineers, in Washington, DC. He retired in 1984.

Major General Wells's military decorations include the Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, a bronze star medal in Korea, and two Air Medals in Vietnam.