Ft. Monmouth's General Steers a Stormy Course But Likes the Challenge

By ED REITER
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FT. MONMOUTH — Controversy has been almost a way of life for Maj. Gen. Frank W. Moorman since he took charge of the U.S. Army Electronics Command here 18 months ago.

During those 18 months, Gen. Moorman has had to concern himself with several major scandals.

In one case, two civilian employes were convicted of bribery charges in connection with Army contract awards.

In the other, seven civilian employes were suspended on charges of gross negligence in connection with the preparation of contract specifications for radiation detection devices. This case was closed only recently, with the reinstatement of most of the employes.

A U.S. Senate subcommittee

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has been conducting an inquiry into both these matters.

GEN. MOORMAN has had lesser irritations, too.

Earlier this year, for example, he was moved to open indignation by a story in the Asbury Park Press, containing critical comments about the fort by a retired civilian employe. He penned a sharp letter to the editor, criticizing the newspaper and defending Fort employes.

All this controversy has placed a heavy added burden on the general's shoulders, and made great demands on his time.

His hair may be just a trifle grayer, but otherwise he seems none the worse for wear.

"It's been hectic," he admits, "but I expected that when I got this job.

"As for the trouble we've had, you must remember that there are 12,000 people in this command. With anything this big and this complex, you have to expect that something may go wrong.

"On the whole, I think our people do a very fine job."

Gen. Moorman welcomed his own assignment here.

"TO BEGIN with," he observes, "this is a command—and everybody in the Army is always after a command. This

The Electronics Command is responsible for all electronic Army equipment from its development to its disposal. Here, Gen. Moorman inspects a new device which checks out all electronic equipment in an Army aircraft before takeoff. This demonstration, inside an Army helicopter, was conducted by K. C. Johnson (right), of Radio Corporation of America, contractor for the test set.

posed of. Along the way, it oversees procurement, production, distribution and maintenance of the equipment.

As commanding general, Gen. Moorman directs the activities of 10,000 civilian employes and 2,000 military personnel scattered throughout the world. The bulk — about 9,000 — are centered here, but there are small "pockets" of ECOM people at posts from Alaska to the Antarctic.

The general also has charge of an imposing budget. The Electronics Command is the disbursing point for more than $1 billion a year — approximately one per cent of the total national budget.

IT'S ENOUGH to give a man gray hair even without the added controversy — yet Gen. Moorman finds the job not only challenging but, for the most part, enjoyable.

He enjoys the command responsibility. He enjoys being able to live on the post — as he and his family do.

And he enjoys being back

him toward West Point, the general says, "but I might say he didn't interpose any objections."

Gen. Moorman addended West Point, and was graduated in 1934.

His assignments since then have taken him around the world.

He served in Europe with the 82nd Infantry Division during World War II, first as its signal officer and later as asistant chief of staff. And on D-Day he was among the first top echelon officers to parachute down on Normandy.

After the war, he served with the United Nations Military Staff Committee in New York.

During the Korean conflict, he was secretary of the general staff of General Headquarters Far Eastern Command.

MORE RECENTLY, he has had three separate assignments in France — and his family has spent so much

Bob, 24, is a monk with an Oriental cult in Los Angeles.

ELLEN is Gen. Moorman's only daughter.

His wife, Marion, is a real "Army girl," the general says.

Her first husband also was a regular Army officer. He was killed during World War II.

Her father, William Bryden, was a major general — and so was her maternal grandfather.

Gen. Moorman comes from a distinguished Army family himself. His father retired as a lieutenant colonel. His brother and two of his uncles were regular Army officers. And his maternal grandfather and great-grandfather both fought in the Civil War.

"WE'RE a pretty Army-infested group," the general concedes.

Actually, he was "assigned" to an Army post the day he was born. His father was stationed at Camp Jessam in the