

# Gen. Polk Takes Post As Commander Of U.S. Troops In Isolated Berlin

BERLIN (AP)— U.S. troops in Berlin are getting a new commander with a reputation as a firm, no-nonsense soldier.

Maj. Gen. James Hilliard Polk—tall, lean, 51, a West Point graduate—will head one of the most exposed and sensitive U.S. military outposts. His 6,500 troops are isolated, along with 6,000 French and British soldiers, deep inside the territory of Communist East Germany.

Polk, as America's top military man on the Berlin hotspot, will also be military governor of the American sector of West Berlin. This is still technically under post-war occupation although the government of Mayor Willy Brandt handles most day-to-day matters.

**DIPLOMATIC FLAVOR**

There is a strong diplomatic flavor to the job. Polk must work in concert with British and French colleagues. He will make crucial decisions if the Soviets and East German Communists decide to heat up the Berlin crisis again.

The job is far different from the mainly military task of commanding the 4th Armored Division in West Germany, the post Polk left to come to Berlin.

During the Korean War he was the U.S. 10th Corps' assistant chief of staff for intelligence. He spent two years from 1957 to 1959 at Fontainebleau, France, working for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization under German Gen. Hans Speidel. This was followed



**MAJ. GEN. POLK**  
New Berlin Leader

by two years at the Pentagon in Washington.

The general's wife, the former Josephine Leavell, commented his whole life and career have pointed toward the Berlin assignment.

Polk's style of command left

a strong impression at 4th Armored headquarters on Goepplingen, West Germany.

One of his first acts was to abolish the swagger sticks fondly carried by many tank officers. They were a useless symbol that got in the way inside the cramped tanks, he maintained.

Another Polk action was to have name tags removed from uniforms.

"For Gen. Polk, the name tags were just a crutch for poor memories," a former assistant said. He wanted you to look into a man's face and not at his name tag."

## COMBAT TRAINING

Polk concentrated on combat training.

Polk ordered that high brass stay away from tank crews on the range.

"He knew the men are often thrown off and can't do their best with some VIP looking over their shoulder. Tank gunners don't have that in combat and he saw no reason for it during training," a staff officer recalls.

Gen. Polk's son, a student at Vanderbilt University, has not yet decided on a career. His daughter, Mrs. Jonathan D. Schwarz, lives in El Paso, Tex., her mother's home town.

His predecessor in Berlin, Maj. Gen. Albert Watson II, is taking command of the 3rd Army at Ft. McPherson, Ga., next week.