

General Takemoto gears 29th Brigade for duty

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Brig. Gen. Francis S. Takemoto spent yesterday at his 29th Brigade headquarters on 22nd Avenue at Ft. Ruger wearing a white shirt without a tie.

Normally he would have been at Manoa Elementary School where he is principal.

But this is Easter vacation week so he was free yesterday to talk over the call-up of his 3,300 man force with his staff at the armory on 22nd Avenue.

A month from tomorrow he will be in uniform to lead his men to Schofield Barracks and intensified infantry training.

"Morale is wonderful," Takemoto said.

"In fact, some of the other National Guardsmen not called up want to join us," he said.

"Manoa school will be in good hands but I hate to leave because it is a nice school."

The first Nisei ever to become a general said things were busy at Ft. Ruger yesterday in the wake of the call-up.

"There was no dull time around here," he said.

The 29th will move into Quads B, D and E at Schofield on May 13. These were the barracks used by the 25th Division before it shipped out to Vietnam in 1966.

Takemoto said, "I have no idea how long we'll be there. The call-up could be two years, maybe three years."

Takemoto was on Hawaii and Maui last weekend talking to 29th units stationed there.

Right now Guardsmen who are working fulltime at Ft. Ruger have plenty of administrative paperwork to do.

Some key men may be called up before May 13, a



Francis S. Takemoto

Guard spokesman said yesterday.

He said, "More than 50 Guardsmen in other outfits want to join the 29th."

Otherwise, there is an enlistment freeze for the 29th and the only men who might possibly get in are those with previous military service, he said.

A spokesman said there will be no weapons problems for the 29th when it reaches Schofield.

For the most part the men are armed with up-to-date weapons except for the M-1 rifle, the one used in World War II.

But any conversion to the M-16 used in Vietnam would not take the average infantryman very long, a spokesman said.

The New York Times reported last week that four National Guard brigades on the Mainland were loaded down with obsolete equipment.

A fully-armed combat force should have M-113 armored personnel carriers, M-60 machine guns, M-79 grenade launchers, 106mm recoilless rifles, new radar sets and radios.

The Guard spokesman said the 29th is up-to-date on most of this equipment and he saw the equipment question as "no problem."

Today the average married man in the 29th is talking over with wife and boss the great change that will

come in his routine a month from tomorrow.

Most employers were prepared for the possibility of a call-up.

Some Guardsmen, if they have a legitimate hardship problem, may be given extra time to get their personal affairs in order before a call-up.

But most men wouldn't be in the 29th if they had any such problems, a spokesman said.

The same goes for Army Reservists of the 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry who were just as busy at Ft. DeRussy yesterday as the 29th was at Ft. Ruger.

The infantry arm of both the Guard and the Reserve force were called up.

Takemoto, leader of the 29th, bridges the two forces.

He saw combat as a young officer with the 100th Battalion and was wounded near Rome.

He graduated from McKinley High School and attended the University of Hawaii and Santa Barbara State College.

He has worked in a pineapple field as a field hand. He was commissioned in 1935 and entered the Guard in 1946.

When he made general in 1964, he made history. He was the first Nisei in the U.S. to make brigadier general.

That's pretty good credentials for the leader of the 29th.