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To: " Joe Castaldi jcastaldi@cox.net

Sent: Thursday, June 14, 2012 3:58:11 PM

Subject: Fwd: Google Alert - 107th Signal

Joe,

Well done with your appropriate and accurate assessment of the situation (at least as to the part I am familiar with from SRF designation, the ATT at Drum, and the subsequent inactivity, rumors of disbandment and subsequent reversal and activation). I remember your name but to jog your memory, I joined the 107th upon my release from active duty in 1960. (My earlier career included enlistment in the Army Reserves in 1955, commissioned in 1958 and service in the "Corps of Engineers". When I was released from Active duty in 1960, I had a remaining two year reserve obligation. Jack Galligan was a long time friend of mine and as an AST in the 107th and suggested I visit the commander (Capt. Mike Palumbo) and see if they had any openings for a Lt. To make a long story short, I accepted an invitation to join the 107th. I was a platoon leader when we were shipped off to Fort Sill, Oklahoma and I know some of the key folks were still with you when you joined, including Jack himself, Ken Obrien, Bob Burton, Nice Wilcox, Tartaglia , Dick Early, Bart and Mike Sheriden , and others. I rose to CO sometime in 1964 made Capt. shortly thereafter (before Paul Trask) and was CO during the SRF action when 240 new guys showed up one weekend in November 1965 with instructions to train the new arrivals and to take an ATT the following June.

Throughout those months of weekend drills on the WWII and Korean war equipment I constantly advised the 743d HQ of the status of our equipment and the fact that we could not effectively communicate with the active ARMY and their updated equipment. No favorable response was forthcoming.

The unit took the ATT in June and received an Excellent rating. I was disappointed beyond belief that it was not a Superior rating based on the attitude and capabilities of the men. I also pointed out to the BN and to North Street that even the excellent rating must be judged on the way we used the equipment we had and not as a rating against our mission should we have had the full TOE authorized modern communications equipment. I was told it is "in processing." I subsequently learned that "processing", in Army terms is probably a noun (a place) and not a verb an action). I also expressed my frustration to General Holland that in the months that followed the ATT, we had no mission, and no modern equipment to continue training. I asked weekly not only for modern equipment but for some advice on what kind of training we should undertake now that we had "Passed" the required tests on old equipment. No answer. General Holland on one occasion even called me "Fred" and apologized but he added, "I myself don't know what Washington is thinking." Every action I took with the help of 1st/ sgt Parker and Jack Galligan (Supply Sergeant at the time) did not produce any results. I threatened to resign if the modern equipment could not be obtained and was told my resignation would not be accepted. Eventually I was transferred to a major's slot in the 743 ord Bn . I thought that I could have more influence on the scenario from a battalion staff position. I was wrong. Things only go worse when they announced that the unit would be broken up and the guys sent back to their original units. (I'm not sure if that notice ever got to you guys on the lines before they changed their mind in Washington and activated you instead.)

When I again protested and got no action, I attempted to resign my commission but again General Holland said he would not accept it. I tried political influence to get him to accept my resignation and his response was that he would accept it only if I resigned not only my National Guard commission but my "USA Army Reserve" commission as well. But he eventually said that even if I did not resign my reserve commission he would see that I never would be able to find a slot there. So I did give up 13 years service and the pension I had hoped to begin collecting at age 62 (That was the rule for 20 year reservists at the time). From everything you have posted, things only got worse rather than better with the lack of subsequent equipment, support, and training until after activation and in many cases, even after deployment.

I am proud of my association with the 107th and with the men who were in the unit in the early and mid 60's. The passing of that SRF ATT was a significant achievement for all involved at that time. It is a sincere failure of our government to have created the situation that followed.

But then much of what happened in Vietnam was a huge mistake on the part of our political and military leaders and guys like you and your associates paid the price.

Fred Hesketh

PS. I have been to Vietnam three times in the past 15 years and discussed the events of the 1960's with Vietnamese economists, Viet Cong and with a retired RNV colonel. All agreed that both sides made huge mistakes in a war that never had to happen.

If any of the guys in your reunion group were involved in the unit in my time period, give them my best. It was a great unit made up of a great bunch of soldiers. I'm sorry the Army didn't make better use of all of you.