



107th SIGNAL COMPANY

“I AM SIGNAL”



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GENTLEMEN,

I AM FORWARDING THIS LETTER TO YOU FOR YOUR INFORMATION, AND AS A BASIS FOR TAKING WHATEVER ACTION YOU DEEM AS APPROPRIATE. THE LETTER WAS WRITTEN BY MYSELF, IN RESPONSE TO AN ARTICLE IN THE "NATIONAL GUARD" MAGAZINE. IT IS ENTITLED, "SPLIT APART" AND WAS WRITTEN BY AN INDIVIDUAL BY THE NAME OF BOB HASKELL. IT APPEARS IN THE MAY, 2012 EDITION. THAT MAGAZINE IS THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF "THE NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES". AS SUCH, IT REFLECTS UPON THE IMAGE OF THE NATIONAL GUARD AS A WHOLE, HENCE I FELT YOU WOULD HAVE AN INTEREST IN THE INFORMATION IT DISSEMINATES. THE MEN OF THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY SERVED WITH HONOR AND DISTINCTION DURING THE WAR IN VIETNAM. WE FOUND THIS ARTICLE TO BE OFFENSIVE AND SLANDEROUS. MY LETTER TO MR. HASKELL IS SELF EXPLANATORY. I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS MATTER.

SINCERELY,

SSG. JOSEPH CASTALDI

107TH SIGNAL COMPANY VIETNAM

1968--1969

MR. HASKELL, HOW DARE YOU ATTEMPT TO STEAL THE VALOR OF OR IMPUGN THE INTEGRITY OF THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY THAT SERVED WITH DISTINCTION IN THE VIETNAM WAR ??? YOUR REVISIONIST DEPICTION OF EVENTS DURING OUR ACTIVATION AS A UNIT IN MAY OF 1968, AND OUR 19 MONTHS OF FEDERAL SERVICE INCLUDING 12 MONTHS IN VIETNAM, IS FULL OF HALF TRUTHS AND MIS-INFORMATION, SOME OF WHICH ARE OUTRIGHT LIES THAT BORDER ON SLANDER !!! AS YOU HAVE SEEN FIT TO RE-INVENT THE FACTS OF OUR ACTIVATION AND SERVICE IN VIETNAM FOR YOUR OWN PURPOSE, I WILL NOW TAKE STEPS TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT AND DISPEL YOUR SELF AGGRANDIZING DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVATION OF THE 115TH MILITARY POLICE UNIT, THE GREAT HARDSHIPS THEY ALL ENDURED, AND WHAT GREAT HEROES THEY ALL ARE, VIS-A-VIS THE SOLDIERS OF THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY.

LET ME BEGIN WITH SOME BASIC FACTS ABOUT THE 115TH MP UNIT. FIRST OFF, THE MEN OF THE 115TH MP COMPANY SERVED 6 TO 9 MONTHS --AS YOU WROTE. THE MEN OF THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY SERVED 19 MONTHS, INCLUDING A FULL YEAR IN VIET NAM. THE 115TH MP COMPANY WAS A UNIT OF APPROXIMATELY 125 MEN. EACH OF THESE MEN WERE TRAINED FOR THEIR MILITARY POLICE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY. NO TROOPS WERE TRANSFERRED INTO THAT UNIT THAT WERE NOT TRAINED AS AN MP. THE DUTIES OF AN MP DO NOT INVOLVE THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED, TOP SECRET, CRYPTO EQUIPMENT UPON WHICH THE LIVES OF GREAT NUMBERS OF MEN DEPEND. THE BASIC TOOLS OF THE MP ARE A SIDEARM, A RIFLE, A BILLY CLUB, A SET OF HANDCUFFS, A POLICE WHISTLE, A FLASHLIGHT AND A PAIR OF WHITE GLOVES WITH WHICH TO DIRECT TRAFFIC. NOT MUCH TECHNOLOGY OR SOPHISTICATION THERE. OF THE 125 MEN ACTIVATED, ONLY 49 OF THE MP COMPANY ACTUALLY SET FOOT IN VIET NAM. THE REST STAYED AT WEST POINT, NEW YORK. THE ONLY PIECES OF BASIC EQUIPMENT THEY NEEDED AT WEST POINT WAS THEIR WHITE GLOVES AND WHISTLES TO DIRECT TRAFFIC WITH. THE 49 MEN WHO ACTUALLY SERVED IN-COUNTRY WERE ASSIGNED TO VARIOUS UNITS TO FILL VACANCIES AS NEEDED--IN THE SAME FASHION AS ANY INDIVIDUAL SOLDIER WOULD BE ASSIGNED UPON ARRIVAL. ONCE ASSIMILATED INTO THEIR RESPECTIVE UNITS, I AM SURE THAT THEY TRIED TO PERFORM THEIR ASSIGNED DUTIES TO THE BEST OF THEIR ABILITIES. SOME OF THESE MEN EARNED MEDALS AND AWARDS AS INDIVIDUAL SOLDIERS, AS MIGHT ANY THAT SERVE THROUGHOUT THE ARMY, AND ALL BRANCHES OF THE MILITARY. FOR THIS I COMMEND THEM. THE MEN OF THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY COUNT THOSE 49 AS BROTHERS, AS WE DO ALL THAT ACTUALLY SERVED IN VIETNAM NO MATTER WHAT THEIR UNIT OR BRANCH OF SERVICE. YOUR FALSE ASSERTIONS THAT IN SOME WAY THE **"115TH MP COMPANY WAS NOT AWARDED BATTLE STREAMERS OR UNIT CITATIONS THAT THEY DESERVED" IS TOTALLY UNFOUNDED**, AND CAN ONLY HAVE ROOTS IN SIMPLE ENVY. HOW CAN THE 115TH POSSIBLY BE QUALIFIED FOR ANY UNIT CITATIONS OR BATTLE STREAMERS WHEN ONLY 49 OF THE COMPANY SERVED IN VIET NAM AS INDIVIDUALS? A COMPANY GUIDON IDENTIFIES THE LOCATION OF A UNIT, WHETHER IN BATTLE OR IN CAMP. THE GUIDON OF THE 115TH MP COMPANY WAS POSTED AT WEST POINT, NY THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRETY OF THEIR ACTIVATION. THAT IS WHERE THEY SERVED!!!. SHOULD THE 115TH BE AWARDED UNIT CITATIONS AND CAMPAIGN RIBBONS BECAUSE A FEW OF THEIR NUMBER HAD BOOTS ON THE GROUND FOR 6 TO 10 MONTHS IN VIET NAM --AS YOU ARGUE SO LAMELY IN YOUR "HERE'S THE RUB" PARAGRAPH ??? I THINK NOT, MR. HASKELL !!! THE 115TH MPS AS A UNIT AND AS INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED EXACTLY WHAT THEY DESERVED BY WAY OF AWARDS FROM THE UNITED STATES ARMY. THE 115TH RECEIVED A COMMENDATION FROM THE "SUPERINTENDENT OF WEST POINT" FOR "EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE OF DUTY". THE 107TH DID NOT GET SUCH AN AWARD, BECAUSE OUR UNIT WAS NOT THERE!!! BY THE WAY, WE ARE NOT ANGRY ABOUT THAT, AND ON A SIDE NOTE THERE WAS NEVER A "BATTLE OF WEST POINT", NOT EVEN IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR !!! HENCE--NO BATTLE STREAMER FOR THE 115TH MP UNIT THAT WAS HEADQUARTERED THERE. THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY GUIDON WAS POSTED AT FORT DEVENS, MASS. FOR 7 MONTHS AND AT OUR BASE CAMP AT LONG BINH VIETNAM FOR 12 MONTHS. MANY OF THE MEN OF THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY WERE INFUSED INTO OTHER UNITS THROUGHOUT VIETNAM. THE PROUD GUIDON OF THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY WAS THE ONLY GUIDON OF THE RI ARMY NATIONAL GUARD TO EVER TOUCH GROUND IN VIETNAM. YOU'RE DESPICABLE EFFORTS TO DENIGRATE THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY'S SERVICE AS A MEANS OF BRINGING SOME UNDESERVED GLORY TO THE 115TH MP COMPANY IS A TACTIC THAT MOST ABANDON WHEN THEY REACH THE AGE OF 12.

WHILE I AM ON THE SUBJECT OF THE 115TH AT WEST POINT, I FIND YOUR ATTEMPTS AT DEPICTING THAT DUTY AS BEING IN SOME WAY VERY STRESSFUL IS TRULY LAUGHABLE. TO THINK THAT MEN WOULD GO AROUND ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON WITH THEIR KNEES KNOCKING, WAITING TO SEE IF "THE BULLET MISSED ME" OR THE COMPANY COMMANDER WOULD CALL THEM INTO THE ORDERLY ROOM TO TELL THEY WERE GOING TO VIETNAM, DOES NOT PORTRAY THEM IN A VERY HEROIC OR PATRIOTIC LIGHT, BUT A RATHER PATHETIC ONE. THE COMPANY COMMANDER VOLUNTEERED TO GO, AS DID THEN SGT, COL. STEWART. COLONEL MELIA BEMOANS THE FACT THAT THE UNIT DIDN'T GO AS A WHOLE, YET I SEE THAT HE DIDN'T VOLUNTEER TO GO WITH THE MEN THAT DID. (HE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN TOO ANGRY, OR DETERMINED TO SEE COMBAT) THE 49 MEN OF THE 115TH THAT ACTUALLY SERVED IN VIET NAM, AND THE 350 MEN OF THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY FACED THE CONSTANT STRESS OF WAR EACH AND EVERY DAY --NOT JUST THE THREAT OF IT ON FRIDAY AFTERNOONS!!! AS A PERSON WHO HAS ACTUALLY HEARD THE BUZZ AND FELT THE BREEZE OF A SNIPER ROUND GO PAST MY EAR, I TRULY UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF "THE BULLET MISSED ME". YOUR STATEMENT DEPICTING WHAT YOU ATTEMPT TO PORTRAY AS A UNIQUE EXTREME HARDSHIP OF TRAVELING FROM THE PLEASANT CLIMATE OF NY STATE TO THE 100 DEGREE HEAT OF VIET NAM THAT YOU SEEM TO IMPLY WAS INFLICTED SOLELY UPON THE 49 UNLUCKY MEN OF THE 115TH MP COMPANY IS PERHAPS YOUR MOST MORONIC STATEMENT OF YOUR ENTIRE ARTICLE.

PUT AWAY YOUR VIOLIN, MR. HASKELL ! ! ! EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THE 2.7 MILLION US TROOPS THAT SERVED IN VIET NAM, WALKED INTO A WALL OF 100 DEGREE AIR THAT STUNK OF ROTTING GARBAGE, AND BURNING DIESEL FUEL MIXED WITH HUMAN FECES AS THEY EXITED THE PLANE THAT BROUGHT THEM TO THE WAR ZONE. THAT WAS NOT A CIRCUMSTANCE ONLY FACED BY THOSE POOR, SUFFERING 49 MEN OF THE 115TH MP COMPANY. MR. HASKELL, YOU SHOULD GIVE UP THIS CAREER AS A JOURNALIST--AN ENDEAVOR YOU OBVIOUSLY SUCK AT ! ! ! YOU SHOULD SEEK EMPLOYMENT AS A TV COMEDY WRITER, OR A STAND UP COMIC, OR EVEN BETTER--A MIME,(HOPEFULLY ON RADIO). ON SECOND THOUGHT YOU COULD BECOME AN AGENT FOR ASPIRING CELEBRITIES. IT APPEARS THAT YOU MAY ALREADY BE IN THE EMPLOY OF AN ACTOR WHO GOES BY THE NAME OF "*BILL CORSAIR*". YOU DEFINITELY EARNED YOUR 10% AGENT'S FEE IN THIS ARTICLE BY TOUTING HIS SCREEN ACCOMPLISHMENTS. ALL OF THIS DRIVEL HAS ABSOLUTELY NO RELEVANCE TO THE MANNER IN WHICH THE MEN OF THE 115TH WERE LEVIED INTO VIETNAM. NEITHER DO THE THE ACTIONS OF THE MEN OF THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY DURING THEIR 19 MONTHS OF FEDERALIZED DUTY, WHICH YOU CAST ASPERSIONS UPON. IN SHORT, YOU HAD NO LEGITIMATE REASON TO DELVE INTO EITHER. WHAT OUR FEELINGS ABOUT THE WAR WERE, AND OUR EFFORT TO SUE THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NO BEARING ON THE LEVY SYSTEM OR THE 115TH MP COMPANY. IT IS IRRELEVANT ! ! ! SO WHY WOULD A "JOURNALIST" SUCH AS YOURSELF, BE WRITING ABOUT THIS ? ? ? THE ANSWER IS THAT YOU WISH TO PAINT THE 115TH MP COMPANY AS HEROES AND THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY AS DUTY SHIRKERS OR COWARDS. PURE JEALOUSY OF OUR STELLAR PERFORMANCE AS A UNIT, OUR BATTLE STREAMERS AND THE AWARDS WE EARNED AS INDIVIDUALS, CAN BE THE ONLY MOTIVATOR FOR SUCH BEHAVIOR TO SURFACE 44 YEARS LATER. I WOULD HATE TO BE YOU, AND HAVE THIS RENTING SPACE IN MY HEAD ALL OF THESE YEARS. I SUGGEST YOU SEEK MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING.....

NOW LET ME GET ON TO THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY. BACK IN 1967, THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY WAS A UNIT OF APPROXIMATELY 125 MEN LIKE THE 115TH (THE USUAL SIZE OF A NATIONAL GUARD COMPANY IN RI). EACH ONE OF THOSE MEN OF THE 107TH ATTENDED SIGNAL SCHOOL AFTER BASIC TRAINING, AND BECAME PROFICIENT IN A SIGNAL MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY (M O S). THEY FORMED THE CORE OF THE UNIT WHEN THE "SPECIAL RESERVE FORCE" (SRF) WAS FORMED AND THE UNIT GREW TO A STRENGTH OF OVER 400 MEN. THESE NEW MEN CAME FROM OTHER NATIONAL GUARD UNITS WITHIN THE STATE. I WAS TRAINED AS A "LIGHT VEHICLE DRIVER" BY THE ARMY AT FT. DIX, NJ, AND WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY INVOLUNTARILY FROM THE 43RD QUARTERMASTER COMPANY THAT I HAD ENLISTED IN. THE BULK OF THE TRANSFEREES CAME FROM THE VARIOUS ARTILLERY COMPANIES THAT DOMINANTLY EXISTED IN RI AT THAT TIME. THE ONLY COMMON DENOMINATOR THAT WE NEW MEN SHARED WAS THAT WE HAD NOT ONE SINGLE IOTA OF KNOWLEDGE OR TRAINING ABOUT THE JOB WE WERE GOING TO BE ASKED TO DO. AS A MEMBER OF THE SRF, THE NORMAL MEETING SCHEDULE WAS INCREASED TO AN OVERNIGHT 2 DAY DRILL, ON EVERY OTHER WEEKEND. OSTENSIBLY, THE PLAN WAS THAT THE CORE 125 TRAINED SIGNALMEN WOULD BRING THE TRANSFEREES TO PROFICIENCY IN THEIR NEWLY ASSIGNED SIGNAL JOBS. THE LEVEL OF EQUIPMENT THAT WAS IN USE IN THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY (AND IN THE RI NATIONAL GUARD IN GENERAL) WAS OBSOLETE HAND-ME-DOWNS FROM WWII AND THE KOREAN WAR., IN VARIOUS STATES OF REPAIR, AND IN TOO SHORT SUPPLY TO MEANINGFULLY TRAIN OVER 350 MEN. NEEDLESS TO SAY, WHEN OUR FEDERALIZATION CAME ON MAY 13,1968 WE WERE NO BETTER PREPARED TO GO TO WAR AND OPERATE SIGNAL EQUIPMENT THAN WE WERE WHEN WE FIRST BECAME MEMBERS OF THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY. ONE THING HAD CHANGED GREATLY, HOWEVER. WE WERE NOW "A BAND OF BROTHERS" IN EVERY SENSE OF THE TERM. ATTACK OR OFFEND ONE OF US, AND SUFFER THE WRATH OF US ALL ! ! ! THE COMMAND STRUCTURE OF THE 107TH AT THE TIME CAN ATTEST TO THAT FACT, AS CAN THE COMMANDING OFFICER AND THE PERSONNEL OF THE PERMANENT PARTY MP COMPANY STATIONED AT FORT DEVENS DURING OUR STAY. THAT MAN WAS MR. VINCENT "BUDDY" CIANCI, WHO WENT ON TO BE THE 3 TERM EX-MAYOR OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE, RI. BUDDY, A CAREER POLITICIAN, WOULD ATTEND THE OPENING OF A LETTER. WHEN WE EXTENDED TO HIM AN INVITATION TO OUR 40TH REUNION, HE WOULD NOT ACCEPT. I BELIEVE THAT HE FEARED WE WERE SETTING HIM UP TO BE ROASTED WITH TALES OF OUR UNCONTROLLABLE BEHAVIOR AT "HIS POST". HE AND HIS MP COMPANY WERE GREATLY RELIEVED WHEN WE DEPARTED. WE MONKEYS HAVE A HABIT OF TAKING OVER AND RUNNING THE ZOO OUR OWN WAY, WITH VERY LITTLE REGARD FOR RULES, RANK OR AUTHORITY. EVEN GENERAL HOLLAND WOULD ATTEST TO THAT. YOU, MR. HASKELL, HAVE AWAKENED A SLEEPING GIANT ! ! ! BUT, I DIGRESS---

WE DEPLOYED TO FT. DEVENS, MASS. FOR TRAINING. **YOUR STATEMENT, "FROM THE START, MOST MEMBERS OF THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY DID NOT WANT TO GO TO VIETNAM" IS TOTALLY UNFOUNDED.** WHAT GIVES YOU THE AUTHORITY OR LICENSE TO MAKE A STATEMENT LIKE THAT ? ? ? I DIDN'T SEE YOU AT FORT DEVENS WITH A CLIPBOARD TAKING A SURVEY ! ! ! IN FACT, NO MEMBER OF THE PRESS, THE MILITARY, OR THE STATE OR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EVER ASKED US IF WE WANTED TO GO TO VIETNAM OR NOT. YOUR STATEMENT IS MADE IN A WAY TO QUESTION OUR LOVE OF COUNTRY, LOYALTY, AND WILLINGNESS TO DO OUR DUTY IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM, AS OUR FOREFATHERS HAD AND ATTEMPTS TO PAINT US IN AN UNFAVORABLE LIGHT ! ! ! DID ANY MEMBERS OF THE 107TH CALL YOU, OR WRITE TO YOU WHEN WE ARRIVED AT FORT DEVENS TO SAY, "MR HASKELL, I JUST WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT I DO NOT WANT TO GO TO VIETNAM" ? ? ? SO WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF YOUR SLANDEROUS, ILL INTENTIONED STATEMENT ? ? ? IT DOES NOT APPEAR THROUGH YOUR TELLING OF THE FRIDAY AFTERNOONS AT THE 115TH MP COMPANY AT WEST POINT THAT ANYONE OF THEM WANTED TO GO TO VIETNAM. AS YOU HAVE WRITTEN, IN 1968 THERE WERE ANTI-WAR RALLIES / RIOTS WITH DRAFT CARD BURNINGS, AND PEOPLE FLEEING TO CANADA. IT DOESN'T APPEAR THAT ANY OF THEM WANTED TO GO TO VIETNAM EITHER!!! MANY OF OUR BROTHERS, INCLUDING MYSELF, WERE OPPOSED TO THE WAR BUT SAW MILITARY SERVICE AS OUR DUTY, OR WE NEVER WOULD HAVE JOINED THE NATIONAL GUARD. OUR FEELING WAS, EITHER RIDE FOR THE BRAND OR GET OFF THE RANCH. AMERICA, LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT ! ! !

WE LEFT OUR ANTIQUATED EQUIPMENT BEHIND US, AND PREPARED OURSELVES FOR THE WAR IN VIETNAM AT FORT DEVENS, MASS. THERE WAS MUCH PREVENTIVE MEDICAL CARE RENDERED, AND THE ISSUE OF COMBAT GEAR. THERE WAS MUCH JUNGLE WARFARE TRAINING AND ORIENTATION TO STAYING ALIVE IN VIETNAM FROM CADRE WHO HAD RECENTLY RETURNED. AFTER A FEW MONTHS, CONEX CONTAINERS FULL OF ELECTRONIC GEAR, TOP SECRET CRYPTO GEAR, AND 2 1/2 TON TRUCKS WITH ENCLOSED MOBILE COMMUNICATION SITES IN THEIR BEDS STARTED SHOWING UP, ACCOMPANIED BY MANUALS ON HOW TO SET UP AND OPERATE THIS STUFF. THE CORE 125 SIGNAL TRAINED MEN, WHO HAD FAILED IN THEIR MISSION TO TRAIN THE REST OF US, WERE NOW FACED WITH THE DAUNTING TASK OF TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO USE THIS EQUIPMENT THAT WAS LIGHT YEARS AHEAD OF ANYTHING THEY HAD EVER SEEN, AND PASS THAT INFORMATION ON TO THE REST OF US WHO KNEW VERY LITTLE ABOUT SIGNAL. BY THIS TIME IT WAS BECOMING PAINFULLY OBVIOUS THAT THIS WAS NOT WORKING OUT, AND IF WE WENT TO VIETNAM AS ILL PREPARED AS THIS, WE WERE GOING TO PUT OURSELVES, AND ANYONE WHO DEPENDED ON US AT GREAT RISK.

AT THAT POINT IN TIME, A THOUGHT BEGAN TO CIRCULATE THAT IT WAS A BREACH OF CONTRACT TO FEDERALIZE US AT ALL. AS YOU CORRECTLY QUOTED MR. HASKELL (ONE OF THE FEW TRUE STATEMENTS YOU MADE REGARDING THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY) WE AGREED TO BE ACTIVATED IF CONGRESS DECLARED WAR, OR THE PRESIDENT DECLARED A NATIONAL EMERGENCY. MORE THAN 200 MEMBERS HIRED A LAWYER AND FILED A CLASS ACTION SUIT DEMANDING CONGRESS DECLARE WAR, OR THE PRESIDENT DECLARE A NATIONAL EMERGENCY, OR THE ARMY RELEASE US FROM ACTIVE DUTY. ABOUT THIS LAWSUIT---MEMBERS OF THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY ARE NOT SHEEP OR MICE, MR. HASKEL, WE ARE MEN ! ! ! CITIZENS IN THIS COUNTRY HAVE THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO SEEK REMEDY FROM THE COURT IF THEY FEEL VIOLATED. YOUR STATEMENT THAT THE 115TH DIDN'T SUE BECAUSE "DELSESTO WOULDN'T TOLERATE IT' CAUSED ME TO LAUGH MYSELF TO TEARS ! ! ! (I TOLD YOU THAT YOU SHOULD BE A COMEDY WRITER, OR A STAND-UP COMIC). THESE ARE MILITARY POLICE THAT ARE SUPPOSED TO UPHOLD THE LAW AND HAVE POWERS OF ARREST ? ? ? THEY ROLL OVER FOR A COMPANY COMMANDER THAT THINKS HE'S NAPOLEON, OR ADOLF HITLER ? ? ? HOW CAN THEY LOOK IN THE MIRROR AND FACE THEMSELVES WHEN THEY SHAVE IN THE MORNING ? ? ? PATHETIC ! ! ! OUR SUIT WAS HEARD IN FEDERAL COURT IN MASS AND DECLARED TO LACK MERIT. THE COURT OF APPEAL REFUSED TO HEAR THE CASE (YOU NEED THE GOVERNMENTS PERMISSION TO SUE THE GOVERNMENT. IF WE HAD PREVAILED, THE ENTIRE RESERVE SYSTEM WOULD HAVE COLLAPSED), WHILE ALL THIS WAS GOING ON, REGULAR ARMY SIGNAL CADRE AND COMMAND STAFF WERE ASSIGNED TO THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY IN AN EFFORT TO ACHIEVE MISSION READINESS. I WAS ASSIGNED THE MOS "COM CENTER SPECIALIST ". I WAS A SPECIALIST 4TH CLASS. THE COMCENTER'S MAIN PIECE OF EQUIPMENT WAS ELECTRONIC TELETYPE THAT WAS USED TO TRANSMIT MESSAGES. TO THIS DAY, I TYPE USING JUST MY LEFT INDEX FINGER. SOOOO MUCH FOR TRAINING. WE WERE DECLARED FIT FOR DUTY IN VIETNAM, AND DEPLOYED THERE.

I VOLUNTEERED TO GO ON THE ADVANCE PARTY ON OCTOBER 11, 1968. THE REST OF THE UNIT ARRIVED IN OUR BASE CAMP 2 WEEKS LATER. WHILE I AM ON THE SUBJECT OF VOLUNTEERS, WE HAD A HANDFUL OF SETS OF BROTHERS IN THE UNIT. BROTHERS WERE NOT REQUIRED TO SERVE IN THE VIETNAM WAR CONCURRENTLY. ALL SETS OF BROTHERS VOLUNTEERED TO SERVE TOGETHER. AS I MENTIONED, WE WERE INFUSED INTO UNITS THROUGHOUT III CORPS AND THE DELTA. WE WERE MEMBERS OF THE 1ST SIGNAL BRIGADE, THE LARGEST BRIGADE TO EVER BE FORMED. WE WORE THE 1ST SIGNAL BRIGADE PATCH. I WAS TDY TO THE II FIELD FORCE IN III CORPS. THERE I LEARNED--O J T-- HOW TO OPERATE HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED, TOP SECRET TROPO-SCATTER GEAR, AS PART OF A WORLD WIDE MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK. THIS GEAR WOULD BOUNCE AN ENCRYPTED MESSAGE OF THE TROPOSPHERE (LIKE THE BANK SHOT OF A BILLIARD BALL) TO A RECEIVING STATION FAR AWAY. THIS HIGHLY CLASSIFIED TRAFFIC WOULD GO TO ARMY HEADQUARTERS, GUAM, THE PENTAGON, ETC AS WELL AS IN-COUNTRY. IT WOULD INCLUDE REQUESTS FOR ARC-LIGHT MISSIONS ORIGINATING ON GUAM, SITREPS, BODY COUNTS, ENEMY TROOP MOVEMENTS, AND OPS ON THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL OR OVER THE FENCE (INTO LAOS AND CAMBODIA--PLACES WHERE WE NEVER WERE), ETC. THIS EQUIPMENT WAS NOT LIKE ANYTHING I HAD EVER SEEN, AND WAS MAINTAINED BY CIVILIAN CONTRACTORS ON 24 HOUR CALL IF INOPERABLE. (A LITTLE MORE COMPLICATED THAN A POLICE WHISTLE OR A BILLY CLUB TO OPERATE) WE ALL DID OUR SHARE ON PERIMETER DEFENSE OR CONVOYS WHEREVER WE WERE STATIONED, AND ENDURED ROCKET, MORTAR AND SAPPER ATTACKS. I WAS PROMOTED TO SGT E-5, AND SSG E-6 IN VIETNAM. AT THE END OF MY TOUR, I WAS OFFERED A PROMOTION TO E-7 AND A MONETARY BONUS IF I CHOSE TO EXTEND. I RESPECTFULLY DECLINED. I EARNED AN ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL, AND THE USUAL AWARDS INCLUDING 2 OVERSEAS STRIPES SIGNIFYING 12 MONTHS OF SERVICE IN-COUNTRY. NOT BAD FOR A YOUNG MAN WHO ONLY ATTENDED LIGHT VEHICLE DRIVER'S SCHOOL, AND CAN ONLY TYPE WITH ONE FINGER.

IN CLOSING, MR. HASKELL, I MUST SAY THAT I COULD NOT CARE LESS WHAT YOU DO OR SAY TO FURTHER YOUR CAUSE IN BEHALF OF THE INDIVIDUALS YOU FEEL WERE SLIGHTED BY THE ARMY OR TO CHANGE THE LEVY SYSTEM, AS LONG AS YOU DO NOT MENTION OR ATTEMPT TO TARNISH THE IMAGE OR REPUTATION OF THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY IN THE PROCESS!!! IF YOU DO SO AGAIN WE MAY SUE YOU ! ! ! (AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE A HISTORY OF DOING THAT) WE DO NOT ROLL OVER WHEN WRONGED LIKE THE SHEEP OF THE 115TH MP UNIT !!! IF THE 115TH MP COMPANY HAD THE TESTICULAR FORTITUDE THAT THE MEN OF THE 107TH SIGNAL COMPANY DISPLAYED, THEY MIGHT HAVE SUED THE US ARMY, USING THE LAMENT OF RETIRED COLONEL JOHN MELIA, "WE HAD JOINED TOGETHER, SERVED TOGETHER, AND FELT THAT WE SHOULD GO TO COMBAT TOGETHER. AND THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN". WELL COLONEL, YOUR WHINING COMPLAINT COMES ABOUT 44 YEARS TOO LATE TO HELP THE 115TH MP COMPANY. IT APPEARS THAT MELIA AND DELSESTO MAY HAVE SACRIFICED THE WELLBEING OF THE MEN BY SUBDUING THEM IN ORDER TO FURTHER THEIR OWN CAREERS, BY NOT LETTING THEM ROCK THE BOAT--ESPECIALLY ON THE GRAND STAGE OF WEST POINT. IT HAPPENS FREQUENTLY IN THE MILITARY AMONGST CAREER OFFICERS WHO PUT PERSONAL GAIN ABOVE THE WELFARE OF THEIR MEN. IN A COMBAT ZONE, THEY MIGHT BE FRAGGED!!! BY THE WAY, I SUGGEST THAT YOU TAKE A COURSE IN, "THE ETHICS OF JOURNALISM" BEFORE YOU SCRIBE ANOTHER ARTICLE. IT IS PAINFULLY OBVIOUS THAT YOU ARE LACKING IN THIS AREA.....

SSG. JOSEPH CASTALDI
107TH SIGNAL COMPANY
VIETNAM 1968-1969

