

Miho suggests 'quiet' probe

By Lyle Nelson
Star-Bulletin Writer

A Republican legislator who is former president of the 442nd Veterans Club believes that the petition being circulated by 29th Brigade soldiers should be the subject of a quiet investigation by Gov. John A. Burns and Hawaii's congressional delegation.

The suggestion for an investigation was made yesterday by Rep. Katsugo Miho, R-15th Dist. (Manoa-Waikiki).

"Considering the serious-

ness of the protest," Miho said, "it needs to be quietly looked into. It needs investigation."

Reaction to the petition, signed by members of the 29th who seek to be removed from active-duty status, was widespread but varied.

Reached in Washington, D.C., yesterday Rep. Patsy T. Mink expressed sympathy with the petitioners.

SEN. HIRAM I. Fong, here, recalled that he has called for deactivation in the past.

Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, who
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soldiers would sign a petition seeking to get out of their service obligation.

The 442nd and 100th were the Army Reserve units at Ft. DeRussy incorporated into the 29th Brigade last May.

The question of who authorized the petition remained unanswered until today.

Brig. Gen. Frederick A. Schaefer III, said at a press conference Saturday that it

come from among the 1,000 Mainland soldiers in the 29th.

Schaefer's claim of high morale in the brigade was also disputed by one soldier in the ranks.

To support his morale contention Schaefer pointed out that the 29th has had few AWOLs and almost no court marials.

BUT ANOTHER soldier who identified himself only as a petition signer yesterday said that he and others like him felt "insulted" by Schaefer's remarks.

The general's suggestion that perhaps the signers did not know what they signed is "just not true," the soldier said.

Schaefer deliberately misrepresented some of the statements in the petition when he made his criticisms of it, the soldier said.

THE SOLDIER noted that when the brigade was first called, no one complained. The call up was "made during a time of emergency (i.e.

the Pueblo incident)," he said.

Now the Pueblo crisis seems over, but the brigade is still activated, and its men are going instead to Vietnam.

The purpose of the call up seems to have been false, the soldier said, or at least the Army seems to have intended all along to use the men of the 29th for Vietnam duty.

SEN. FONG yesterday said he still thinks the call up is unfair to Hawaii and that he will continue to request that the 29th Brigade be deactivated.

He said on a percentage basis, Hawaii should only have to contribute 89 men to a nationwide call up of reservists. But instead, Hawaii is contributing more than 17 per cent of the total reserve call up.

Fong noted that he asked the Secretary of the Army to release the men of the 29th several weeks ago. He said

had been written by a clever Mainland soldier serving in the unit.

Today, however, Sgt. Henry Peters, 27, a cook from Waianae, identified himself as the man who conceived the idea of the petition.

But Peters denied that it was a petition. He said it was a statement of beliefs addressed to the congressional delegates and the people of the state and not to Gen. Schaefer.

The text being circulated, however, asks urgently for "help" just as many petitions do.

Peters said that he and an 11-man committee of Island soldiers promoted the idea. They sought some legal advice from Spec. 4 David Shutter of Phoenix, Ariz., who was a lawyer in civilian life.

A soldier with the 29th who did not wish to be identified, told the Star-Bulletin yesterday the petition is still making the rounds and "hadn't even reached some units."

he has yet to hear a response from the secretary.

REP. MINK said she had not seen either the petition or Schaefer's rebuttal of it.

But she said, "It would seem the reasons for activation no longer exist."

She added that at the time of the call up there was strong assurance that the 29th's unit integrity would be maintained. Now she said this is no longer so.

"I think the men are fully within their rights" to circulate the petition, she said.

"I sympathize with their reaction" to the troop levies which will send them all to the combat area she said.

MiHO SAID, "Due to the seriousness of the protest I think it needs investigating."

But Miho said "circumstances have changed since the days 10,000 of us volunteered in 1943 and many man- aged to go overseas even though they were not medically fit."

The petition, "makes me

He predicted the total signature count will run well above the 1,500 figure of the 4,600-man force who have reportedly signed.

HE CLAIMED that in some units the petition is getting heavy support from Island troops rather than Mainland fliers.

He also said a few officers reportedly have signed the petition.

The soldier also disputed Schaefer's contention that the majority in the ranks are against the petition.

"I'll bet it is closer to 75 per cent who are sympathetic with the sentiments of the petition even if they don't agree with everything in it," he said.

IN A PRESS conference Saturday Schaefer said he didn't believe the petition accurately reflects the thinking of the majority of the men in the ranks.

He added that most dissidents, or writers of letters of complaint to Congressmen,

wonder," Miho said.

"I hate to see our boys going overseas in their state of mind because morale is important."

LOVELL LIKENED developments to what happened here in 1940.

"We had the same problem with peacetime Guardsmen when we got word in October, 1940, of a call up," he said. "We had a grand exodus of officers who found ways to get out."

"Our Guard was one of four units called up at that time and there were feelings of discrimination then," he said.

"But I am disappointed that these men would come up with something like this petition," Lovell said. "A good many have been swayed and a lot don't know what they signed."

Retired Brig. Gen. Francis S. Takemoto, commander of the 29th until it was activated, declined to comment on the current situation.