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Pentagon Squabble over Guard Bared

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WASHINGTON — Did Hawaii's 29th Brigade and other National Guard and Army Reserve units called to ac-

tive duty last year perform well enough to earn a \$5.50 Certificate of Appreciation from the Department of Defense?

This scarcely qualifies as one of the great national security questions of all time.

But it was the subject of an intramural memorandum battle at the Pentagon earlier this year.

AND THE House Armed Services Committee saw fit to devote six pages of discussion to the matter during its hearings on military posture held last summer but only recently released.

The testimony gives an indication of Pentagon sensitivity about the reluctant way the reserves responded to their activation.

A series of memorandums reprinted as part of the hearings show that three top-level Defense Department officials opposed awarding the certificates - because of the controversy surrounding the callup.

THE EXCHANGE of memos began when Ernest L. Massad, former deputy assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, proposed that a Certificate of Appreciation "be given to each deserv-ing unit after release from active service."

The last of the National Guard and reserve units are being deactivated this week, Massad estimated each

certificate would cost \$5.50 for a total of \$632.50 for the 115 reserve units activated after the Pueblo crisis.

MASSAD indicated that funds could be made available for the certificates.

But other Defense officials vetoed the idea.

"From a public affairs point of view, there appears to be more minuses than pluses," wrote Pentagon public affairs spokesman Daniel Z. Henkin.

"This is extremely difficult in view of the fact that some units, which have performed outstandingly, have included members who have balked at their services."

HENKIN URGED more study on the specific criteria for the units to be honored.

Jack Stempler of the Office of the Secretary of Defense indicated he also had "substantial reservations about issuing the certificates commending reserve units, many of which served in Vietnam.

Roger T. Kelley, the assistant secretary for reserve and manpower affairs and Massad's immediate superior, decided to defer action on the certificates on the basis of the comments from Henkin and Stempler.

IN TESTIMONY before the House committee, Massad complained that his department's organizational

setup prevented him from taking his request directly to Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, who he felt would approve it.

After turning the entire series of memorandums over to the congressmen, Massad noted: "Didn't get to Laird. Makes me sick to see the reserves treated so shabby (sic)."

Massad's testimony prompted Rep. William Bray, R-Ind., to inquire about who said what about the reserves.

BRAY THEN recalled an unnamed officer "in charge of the reserves who made the most profane, derogatory remarks, not even fit for the gutter," about them.

"And yet he was the man in charge of the reserves," Bray said. "When the Secretary of the Army did find out, he didn't last very long. "He got a promotion."

As for the certificates, the latest report is that the Pentagon is re-evaluating the matter and may issue them after all.