

29th's petition committee disbands

By Judy Chase
Star-Bulletin Writer

The Committee for the Deactivation of the 29th Brigade has disbanded itself.

Spokesmen for the group said they are hopeful the called-up reservists and Guardsmen can be civilians again early in 1969.

"We were s u p p o s e d l y called up because of the Pueblo crisis," said Spec. 4 Dave Schutter of Phoenix, Ariz., who with Sgt. Henry A. Peters of Nanakuli engineered the petition drive at Schofield Barracks to deactivate the 29th Infantry Brigade.

"SINCE THE Pueblo crew has been r e l e a s e d, we ought to be released at the same time," said Schutter, a lawyer in civilian life.

"I'm hopeful we'll be out by February at the latest."

The Department of the Army announced earlier this month that it will release all activated reservists not later than Dec. 15, 1969, and earlier, if conditions permit.

The Committee for the Deactivation of the 29th announced yesterday it had counted 1,392 signatures on the petitions, representing more than one-third of the enlisted men in the brigade, but short of the 1,500 estimat-

ed last month.

IN A FINAL NEWS release, timed to coincide with the release of the Pueblo crew, the committee called upon Brig. Gen. Frederick A. Schaefer III, commanding general of the 29th, to release additional signatures.

The statement said the signatures "have been confiscated or destroyed by Schaefer and persons under his command."

The committee claimed that petitions containing well over 1,000 signatures had been confiscated, burned or destroyed by various unit commanders, executive officers and sergeants.

"In many instances, second and third petitions circulated within units were also confiscated or destroyed," the committee's statement said.

"In other units, open

threats of loss of Christmas leave, extra duty including KP and disciplinary action kept many from signing."

PETERS SAID the committee has voted to file the original signatures with the Attorney General of the State of Hawaii, Bert Kobayashi stating they "will then be a matter of public record, available to anyone who wishes to look at them."

The lost signatures are needed so a complete count can be announced.

Peters said the plan to mail the original signatures to Sen. Hiram L. Fong, an early proponent of the 29th's deactivation, was modified because of Gen. Schaefer's challenges to the number and validity of the signatures.

Copies of the petitions, Schaefer's response, the committee's final resolution

and the signatures will be mailed to each of Hawaii's elected representatives.

THE COMMITTEE SAID it felt it has done all it could in the face of Army opposition and that the continuation of the campaign for the deactivation of the 29th would have to be carried forward by the citizens of Hawaii and their elected representatives.

The Citizens Committee for the 29th Brigade announced it will hold a public meeting Sunday at the McKinley High School Auditorium.

Fong, Hiro Higuuchi, World War II chaplain with the 442nd Infantry Regiment, Max Rotfman of the United Public Workers, and Bob Sevey, news director of KGMB-TV will be among the speakers.

Jim Becker of the Star-Bulletin will be the moder-