

## Veterans Say Their Last Goodbye to Fort

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Two Vietnam veterans who enjoyed tours at Fort Monmouth recently returned to see the base one last time before its pending closure in September 2011, “to visit the Fort to relive old memories.”

Frank Walzer of Jamestown, New York and Larry Arnold of Lanham, Maryland, entered the Army in very different ways. Larry enlisted, eager to serve and figuring that he would be drafted eventually anyway. Frank first fought his draft in the court system, then served honorably.

The two met at the U.S. Army Signal School here in 1967. They became fast friends and served together in the 362nd Signal Company in Dalat, Vietnam. According to the First Signal Brigade Association, the 362nd Signal Company at that time was part of the 39th Signal Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Signal Brigade.



Best friends Frank Walzer, left, and Larry Arnold, right, shake hands in front of the Hartmann Gate while visiting the base where they met over 40 years ago.

The 39th Signal Battalion was the first major Signal unit to arrive in Vietnam. The mission of the 39th was to operate the “Back Porch” system: all telephone systems and communications message centers in Vietnam.

The 362nd Signal Company operated all of the long-lines tropo scatter systems throughout Vietnam from their headquarters in Nha Trang.

Walzer and Arnold returned to Fort Monmouth from the theater within a month of each other in 1969, this time acting as instructors.

While taking their windshield tour, sites they recognized visibly delighted the men- specifically in the 1200 area, which would have housed elements of the Signal School during their tours here. They also felt much had changed, noting particularly the absence of the “temporary” WWII-era wooden construction that came down in the 1970s and 80s.

The gentlemen, and Larry’s wife, Samone, visited the U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Museum on post following their tour of the base.