

Double Battle

treatment of black servicemen and women. According to Department of Defense statistics for 1987, blacks are tried and court-martialed twice as often as whites. Blacks also receive harsher penalties that lead to dishonorable discharges three times more often than whites. Blacks are also 1.5 more times likely to receive a general discharge from the service than whites. The general discharge is a watered-down version of the dishonorable discharge and is given when a person has been a faithful soldier but has bad conduct in the service. African-American women receive a general discharge at twice the rate of white women Blacks

are lured into the military only to find that it is the epitome of the institutionalized racism that exist in society.

The Persian Gulf Crisis is another example of a conflict involving disproportionate numbers of African-Americans. Even though the war has officially ended, African-Americans will not rest until all their troops are home because there are still large numbers of blacks deployed in Desert Storm. Blacks are well aware of the effect that a war could have upon the masses of African-Americans because surveys show that only about 30 percent of them supported the Gulf War. One-fourth of the troops sent to Saudi Arabia are African-American. With the addition of reserve units and the

National Guard, that number is about 30 percent. Some people argue that race has nothing to do with the war because the country has an all-volunteer army. But why in the world do so many people of African descent volunteer to fight for their county, when their country has not done anything for them? In 1991, blacks on the ground in the Middle East face the same double battle that earlier generations of blacks faced during the World Wars and in Vietnam and

Blacks were sent to liberate Kuwait even though they are not free in their own country. Why should they fight to free Kuwait, when the U.S. is in turmoil? They were deployed to spread democracy in the Middle East, when true democracy does not exist in the U.S. America is a land for some people, by some people and about some people, and characteristically blacks have been shut out of the democratic process and the American dream. African-American soldiers crossed the seas to free a people in bondage when the masses of their people continue to live in economic, social and political bondage. African-American soldiers have shackles on their feet, and while they are freeing Kuwait, the federal government is not looking out for their best interests. As black soldiers return home over the next few months, they will find that the United States of America is still not a place where AfricanAmericans can be free.

African-American soldiers who return from Desert Shield can see that they have fought in a war filled with contradictions. When they get on the shores of America, they ought to question the President's commitment to helping people overseas and his neglect of black people in the United States. There is no need to go to Kuwait to see a battleground or to free people because there are black people all over the country who need to be free. Kuwait is not the only place that a battleground exists, all you have to do is walk through any drug-infested inner city on a given day. African-Americans ought to ask Congress would they be so willing to commit troops to fight if they had relatives in the military. Blacks sent to fight are not the sons and daughters of Congressmen because only a few blacks sit in Congress. When black soldiers return from their tours of duty, they ought to question a President who sent them to liberate Kuwait, but he could not lift his finger to sign a civil rights bill to secure their rights if and when they returned home.

African-Americans as citizens of the U.S. should volunteer to fight if they wish. However, blacks should join the military after they weigh their other options, and when blacks weigh their options, the armed forces is the best way to overcome economic and social hardships. They should not be

forced into the military to finance their college education because many blacks are choosing to join the reserves or enter the military under the GI Bill. They should not be forced into the military to receive health benefits during a time when blacks are dying prematurely of diseases such as hypertension and asthma because they cannot afford medical care. The U.S. government must develop economic and social programs to help the masses of black people so that African-Americans don't have to join the service to better their lives.

African-Americans involved in Desert Storm should be commended for their efforts to serve their country. It takes special people to fight to free another country, when their people have historically been denied their civil

As African-American soldiers and their families are reunited, they can be glad that the war ended fairly quickly. For those families who lost loved ones, may God be with them through their trying times. Black servicemen and women look forward to that day when the war against poverty and racism will become a priority in their country.

But until the U.S. government is willing to help its own people, African-American soldiers will continue to wage a double battle in the armed services.

The Office for Student Counseling provides free academic counseling to students on both North and South Campus. Scholastic Advancement Sessions (SAS) are held weekly throughout the end of the semester. Please refer to schedule for location of sessions.

Scholastic Advancement Sessions are held three nights per week and provide academic assistance in the following areas: natural sciences, math, English, social sciences and foreign languages.

Office for Student Counseling SAS Spring 1991

Monday 6:30-8:00 p.m.

James Dorm Coffee House Biology, Chemistry, Biochemistry with Thomas Maynor

Greenlaw Hall 314, 316, 321 Math, Statistics, Economics with Sherry Fields

Tuesday 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Morrison Dorm Library English, French, Spanish, Political Science, with Anita Brown

Greenlaw Hall 314, 316, 321 Biology, Chemistry, Math with Adriene King

Wednesday 6:30-8:00 p.m.

James Dorm Collee House Math, Statistics, Economics with James Lindsay

Greenlaw Hall 314, 316, 321 English, French, Spanish with Helena Woodard

Don't Forget!

The 1991 UNC-CH Juried Art Event

Will be held April 7-27

Information is available at the Union front desk. Hanes Art Center and the Art Lab

The Gallery Committee encourages innovative and non-traditional art forms as entries.

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