

ARMY BOARD HAS DICKENS CASE FOR FULL INVESTIGATION

Decision On Matter Is Expected Soon

The rejection of Irving Dickens, native of this city, playing with a Wilson baseball club, as unfit to be drafted for military service, has become a matter of investigation by a special Army board at Fort Bragg, and the decision of the three ranking medical officers comprising the board is expected late today or early Friday.

Members of Wilson County Draft Board No. 2 resigned in a body on Thursday of last week after making the flat charge that the Star Wilson baseball player, found fully fit for Army service by their board, was rejected at Fort Bragg solely because of the alleged intervention of a Wilson physician, who is a director of the club for which the athlete plays. Resignation of the board was sent to Brigadier General J. Van B. Metts of Raleigh, State Selective Service director, and he immediately promised a thorough investigation. He asked the board to withdraw the resignations, but the members declined but suggested acceptance could be held in abeyance pending the probe.

The Wilson draft board, headed by W. L. Trevathan, alleged that Dr. M. A. Pittman, a director of the Wilson club of the Coastal Plain League, its medical examiner and also physician for Wilson County's other draft board, had intervened personally with Captain R. A. Gilreath of Fort Bragg head of the corps of examining doctors for selectees there, and had thus procured the "rejection" of the club's field captain and second baseman, Dickens.

DICKENS CLEARED

The draft officials stressed, however, that Dickens himself had made no move to escape Army service, but on the contrary had cooperated fully with the board and had nothing to do with his "rejection" at the hands of Army doctors at Fort Bragg after he was found to be fit by Dr. R. H. Putney of Elm City, Physician for Board No. 2.

The Wilson board made the charge that Captain Gilreath, when he met with draft board doctors in the Wilson area about three weeks earlier, had been approached by Dr. Pittman about Dickens' case. Captain Gilreath has made a positive denial that he rejected Dickens because "I had promised to" and said the rejection was on the basis of a medical examination at Fort Bragg which showed the player had varicose veins. Capt. Gilreath said he pointed this out to Dr. Putney, who accompanied Dickens and 39 other selectees to Fort Bragg for induction.

Dickens, a school teacher from Roanoke Rapids, was first deferred when his number came up several months ago, but when school closed, he joined the Wilson ball team. He was then reclassified by the board and when his turn came again, he was examined and passed by Dr. Putney, and ordered to report Monday, July 21, to Fort Bragg. The ball player's stay at Fort Bragg was brief. He had one meal there and was back in the Wilson line-up Monday night when the team met in Rocky Mount. It was then the draft board took up the matter again and decided to resign in protest.

DENIES CHARGE

Dr. Pittman denied emphatically that he had "pulled strings" to get Dickens released from the Army. He declared that the ball player definitely was afflicted with varicose veins, the condition being especially pronounced after he had exercised vigorously. Dr. Putney, asserted Dr. Pittman, had agreed to re-examine Dickens, but did not do so before the player was

sent to Bragg.

Dr. Pittman said that, in his opinion, Dickens should not only go to the Army, but should not play baseball there either. He also denied he was meddling with affairs of the draft board, but was acting as "personal physician of Mr. Dickens and in good faith."

Yesterday the board at Fort Bragg charged with investigating the rejection of Dickens for military service spent the morning listening to often contradictory testimony, stripped the young athlete to the skin yesterday afternoon and examined him, especially for his controversial veins, from head to heels, dismissed him and retired to think over what they had seen and heard.

Late yesterday they arrived at what would be a sealed verdict in civil procedure, which will be incorporated in a report to the commanding general when the stenographers have finished transcribing the wordy testimony. All of it was expected to reach Colonel Charles Elliot late today or early tomorrow morning, and Colonel Elliott will review the case and write the final judgment. He may approve or reject the findings of the board.

TESTIMONY

Testifying about the matter yesterday, Capt. Gilreath, examining officer of the induction station at Fort Bragg, admitted when he examined Dickens for vein trouble after a telephone request from Dr. Pittman, he examined only as high up the leg as Dickens could roll his pants. When that happened Dickens had already passed, naked, through the examining machinery and had been judged fit for military service, with nobody noticing his veins. One glance as high as the knees convinced Captain Gilreath that the man was likely to become a charge of the United States Army, he said. This examination was made in the presence of Dr. R. H. Putney and C. M. Winstead, Jr., youthful medical clerk to both draft boards in Wilson County.

Testimony yesterday boiled down to the fact that if Dr. Pittman had not called Captain Gilreath about Dickens' alleged condition, the ball player would have been ten days in the army by now. And if Dr. Putney and the clerk hadn't happened along when he was being examined and rejected by Captain Gilreath no report of it would have got back to Wilson. What part of the investigation board's decision will hinge upon these two boiled-down facts is something that will have to wait for the final consideration of the report by headquarters when the report is made.

Local Girls Seek Festival Queen Title

Estelle Braswell was the winner of a \$5 prize given the girl turning in the most money last Saturday night for sale of advance tickets to the mid-summer Lions Festival which will be held here next week, August 4-9.

Miss Braswell was leading the other dozen contestants in the race for the title as Queen of the Festival today with 2,800 points, which were given her for the number of tickets she sold.

Mildred Fulghum was second today with 2,500 points, and all other contestants have 1,000 points each. They are Geraldine Butler, Lee Baird, Lucille Butler, Evelyn Eldridge, Virgil Mae Whitby, Helen Pope, Margaret Tucker, "Madam X", Fannie Stephenson, Dorothea White and "Mary Alice".

Another \$5 prize will be given the girl turning in the most cash

for sale of tickets Saturday night of this week, it was announced by the Lions Club today.

The Festival Queen will be crowned on Saturday night, August 9, according to tentative plans of the Lions committee directing the event. It will be the final night of the festival, and the Queen will be honored at appropriate ceremonies.

Headquarters of the festival are at the Smith Hotel and Mrs. W. Bernard Allsbrook, who is directing sale of tickets, will be found there each afternoon from 3 until 5 o'clock, and at night from 7 to 8 p.m.

BUILDING CONTRACT PLACED

Contract for the construction of textile building at the Roanoke Rapids high school was let this week, and work on the new building was to start immediately.

The contract went to Fred Forrest and Company, which submitted a bid of \$13,672 for construction of the shop and a general repair shop to be used for tools and some instruction work.

Superintendent C. W. Davis of the local schools stated that 90 days is allowed for completing the building, but it is hoped that it will be finished in 60 days.

The building will be a practical workshop where students will be instructed in the various phases of textile manufacturing, and the course will be part of the vocational education work being done in the city schools.

It was first thought that the textile building would be constructed with the aid of the WPA, but since a vocational building at the John Armstrong Chaloner School has not yet been let, and negotiations apparently have been allowed to drag with the WPA which

must give its approval before the work begins. In letting the contract for the textile building to a private contractor, school officials thought it would expedite getting the WPA started on the building at the Negro school, which is badly needed for a work shop and home economics department.

Cost of the building at the Negro school is estimated at \$5,000.

Girl Is Hurt In Accident

Marlene Edwards, eight-year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Edwards of 522 Jackson Street, was struck by an automobile driven by Overton Cook, about 18, yesterday morning.

The girl, whose arm and shoulder were badly lacerated and bruised,

was carried to the local hospital for treatment of her injuries but did not require hospitalization.

It was reported that the accident happened when the girl ran between the car operated by Cook and another vehicle.

Milton Beale has returned from Rich Square where he visited his aunt, Mrs. Lucy Bryant.



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