

Marine

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He said that his medical problems resulted from the pressure and isolation he felt. "It (problems) just didn't start one day," he said. "The school was just the climax. I had been through discrimination the whole 10 1/2 years."

He said that the military at first would not acknowledge his medical problems and he had to go off base to receive help.

An event in August 1980 in which a marijuana cigarette was found in his car while he was on a neighboring naval base, led to Watson's eventual discharge.

Watson has appealed to several people for help while he was in and when he got of the marines.

His latest appeal was to Rep. Stephen L. Neal, D-N.C. whom he met with about two weeks ago.

He had also sought Neal's help earlier. In a letter dated Feb. 28, 1985, then Secretary of the Navy, John F. Lehman Jr., Neal expressed concern over Watson's situation.

"In 1979, Mr. Watson was reviewed for reenlistment and accepted," Neal states in the letter. "In February 1981, he was recommended for discharge. My concern is that during this time a career Marine was having a very difficult time, was attempting to seek relief and not being helped."

The end of the letter states: "...after reading more than 3 inches of support material including military records, medical records, court proceedings, I feel Mr. Watson has been dealt a severe injustice by the Naval Service. I would hope that you use your good office to see that this man has his day in our great democracy."

Jim Phillips, administrative assistant for Neal's Winston-Salem office, said that he sat in on the meeting between Neal and Watson.

Neal, he said, is trying to arrange Watson an appointment with Secretary of the Navy James H. Webb Jr.

Phillips said Monday that he had been in contact with Neal's Washington office. He said he understood from a spokesman at the office that the secretary would see Watson but no appointment had been set yet.

Watson, he said, was in Washington awaiting the appointment.

Phillips said that after Neal wrote the 1985 letter requesting an open hearing for Watson, they had assumed things had been taken care of.

"Until about a week ago, we had not seen him since then," Phillips said in a recent telephone interview. "I made the assumption that he had been dealt with

fully and partially."

NAACP President Walter Marshall said that the NAACP is also looking into Watson's situation. He said that depending upon the recommendation of the Veteran Affairs Committee, the local NAACP's Executive Committee could vote to seek the help of the national office.

Meanwhile, Watson said that he has been wrongfully denied a career in the Marines.

"I have spent 10 years of my life protecting the Constitution of America and when it comes time for my constitutional rights, I didn't have any," he said. "I hold the the United States of America financially liable for the

pain and suffering my family has had."

Watson has a wife and three children.

He said that he has been determined by both the Veterans Administration and Social Security Administration as being disabled.

But after being discharged from the military, he was not able

to receive any kind of medical compensation.

"For two years he had no compensation," Phillips said. "He was relieved of his military contract and placed out here with no help."

Watson does now however receive compensation from the VA and Social Security.

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Awards

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"Best Special Edition," "Best Circulation Promotion," "Best Women's Section" and "Best Sports Section."

Second place awards were: "Best Church Page," "Best News Pictures"(James Parker) and "Best Feature Story (Robin Barksdale)."

Chronicle Publisher Ernest H. Pitt said that the awards are an indication of the newspaper's continued commitment to journalistic excellence.

"I'm proud of the people who care so much about the craft of newspapering," he said.

The awards also emphasize the Chronicle's commitment to the community, Pitt said.

"We draw from the community as our source of being," he said, "and these awards reflect this."

Pitt also praised individual staff members, James Parker, photographer and Robin Barksdale, community news editor for their awards.

"James Parker continues to be one of the finest photographers in the country and Robin Barksdale has proven to be an excellent community news editor."

Managing Editor Dennis C. Schatzman, who joined the Chronicle two weeks ago, said that he hopes to continue the Chronicle's winning tradition.

"Winning the nine awards appears, in my short time here, to be consistent with the performance of the staff I have inherited," Schatzman said. "Allen Johnson, my predecessor, deserves a tremendous pat on the back. I can only hope to maintain the level of superiority this newspaper holds in the world of journalism."

The Chronicle has won more than 64 state and national awards since 1982.

It won 10 awards from last year's NNPA convention. In 1984, the NNPA named the Chronicle the best black newspaper in the country.

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