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WASHINGTON AP - "Physical disability" has been cited by the Defense Department as the reason for New Orleans Dist. Atty. James C. Garrison's discharge from the Army in 1951.

The Pentagon said Friday it has been bombarded by newsmen for information about the military background of Garrison, the prosecutor who says the Warren Commission erred in its conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, was the assassin of President John F. Kennedy four years ago.

The inquiries resulted from a copyright story by the Chicago Tribune which said military records showed Garrison was under the care of a psychiatrist for 4 1/2 years from the fall of 1950 to the spring of 1955.

In New Orleans, Garrison could not be reached directly for comment, but his assistant, Charles Ward, said:

"I don't know exactly what has been going around. But I have heard there was supposed to be some board that alleged Garrison was physically unfit for duty due to a psychoneurosis. This is untrue. He is a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve right now. All this supposedly happened in 1950, some 17 years ago. Would it take 17 years for them to find out he is unsuited for military service? It is a lot of hogwash."

Ward recalled that the issue of Garrison's discharge came up during his 1965 campaign for district attorney, when an opponent said Garrison's discharge was based on an "anxiety reaction."

At that time, Ward recalled, Garrison said he had volunteered for combat duty in Korea but "I had contracted amoebic dysentery in Europe during World War II which resulted in exhaustion and intestinal trouble. The Army diagnosed this as an anxiety reaction. They subsequently concluded that if it was there, it's gone now. I still serve on active duty as a lieutenant colonel."

Ward said Garrison resigned from the National Guard and became a reservist because National Guard requirements, including summer camp, were "taking up too much of his time."

The Pentagon said an inquiry is under way to determine if confidential material from Garrison's service files has been released without authorization.

Garrison continues to issue subpoenas in his attempt to prove that instead of a solo crime the Kennedy assassination was the work of a band of conspirators.

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