

NEWSMEN HAILED OVER WATERGATE

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Journalism Society Hears

Praise for Coverage

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ALBANY, April 30 (AP) — Newsmen gathered here over the weekend for the northeastern regional conference of Sigma Delta Chi, national journalistic society, hailed the achievements of Washington reporters sifting through evidence surrounding the Watergate scandal.

Peter Arnett, Pulitzer Prize-winning correspondent for The Associated Press and a guest speaker at the conference, described Watergate as "one of the darkest chapters in American history, but a glorious one in American journalism."

Mr. Arnett, who has covered the Vietnam conflict for nearly a decade, drew parallels between the news coverage of Watergate and the reporting of correspondents covering Vietnam.

"Watergate is to Nixon what the Tet offensive was to Lyndon Johnson," Mr. Arnett said.

While he was covering Vietnam, Mr. Arnett said, he and his colleagues had to combat "official lies" with investigative digging that eventually turned up "true facts."

Helen Thomas, political writer for United Press International, addressing 100 newsmen and college journalism students Saturday night, said Watergate could be President Nixon's "Waterloo," because his power to act "may be undermined once the truth about the scandal is known."

She said Mr. Nixon knew "too little much too late" about

Watergate, but that now he must "share the responsibility of it."

Among other participants in the two-day conference were Peter Bridge, a Newark newsman who was jailed for 20 days last October for having refused to divulge the source of a story dealing with legal proceedings, and Joseph Spear, an associate of Jack Anderson, the columnist.