

Pilot Record Clean, Says McGovern

Washington

Senator George McGovern (Dem-S.D.), frontrunner for the Democratic presidential nomination, yesterday denounced as a hoax and a "total fraud" claims he was reprimanded for cowardice while serving as a U.S. bomber pilot in World War II.

"There is no such representation in my record — it's a total hoax," McGovern told newsmen.

He later produced a thick stack of records, which only hours before had been in storage in a military warehouse in St. Louis, showing him to have been judged a hero in the war.

AWARDS

McGovern was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and other high decorations for his war service.

A report on McGovern was published in "Review of the News," a publication of the John Birch Society.

The publication said there is a letter in McGovern's permanent military record formally citing him for cowardice.

No such letter could be found among the records shown newsmen. Army spokesmen said they had forwarded McGovern's complete file at his request.

Three men who flew with McGovern denounced the

accusation as a lie.

"Whoever said that is a flat Goddamn liar," said Isadore Seigel, an Omaha salesman who was tailgunner in McGovern's bomber during World War II. "I was there, I'd stand up and fight whoever said that."

"It makes me so damned angry, it's a scurrilous lie," said Bill Ashlock, a San Jose, Calif., carpenter who was waist gunner on McGovern's plane, and flew on the crew's last mission, a bombing run over Linz, Austria, on April 25, 1945, shortly be-

fore the end of the war in Europe.

A third crew member, Bill McAfee, McGovern's ball turret gunner, now a businessman in Port Huron, Mich., also denounced the story.

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