

# State

## Pair marries in prison where they fell in love

United Press International  
NEW ORLEANS — The wedding cake came from the prison bakery and the altar was a sparse stage illuminated by bare lightbulbs, but the bride and groom said the setting at Jackson Barracks work release center was only fitting.

"We fell in love while I was in here," said Herbert Walton, who married Wilma Barras late Friday.

"She said if she could fall in love with me here, visit me here, go through the trials and tribulations with me in here, we could get married here."

The couple has known each other for several years, but did not fall in love until Walton began visiting his bride-to-be while on pass from the work release center.

"With only 11 months left to serve on a parole violation sent-

ence, Walton said he and Barras decided to get married while he was still in prison.

"He's going to be the same person," she explained. "I'm going to be the same person. If I can share his good, I can share his bad."

The guests and the wedding party celebrated after the ceremony by eating a cake prepared in the prison bakery and listening to music played on a portable stereo.

The couple then took an abbreviated honeymoon before Walton had to return to Jackson Barracks on Monday.

Walton, who was transferred to the work release center from Hunt Correctional Center in Jackson, La., works in the Louisiana National Guard's re-production center.

Walton said he hoped to find

a similar job when released from the center.

The bride said her parents bestowed their blessings on the couple and did not oppose the marriage.

"My family believes you don't judge a person from the past," she said. "You judge from what they are now — and I don't judge anybody."

"Everybody needs somebody," said Lovetta Dejan, mother of the bride. "He needs strength. She needs strength. They feel they find it in each other."

The bride's father, Everard Mahon, said he had known Walton for 19 years.

"They always had an infatuation for each other, but it didn't surface until recently," he said. "I think it's a beautiful thing that happened."

## Louisiana stops building prisons

United Press International  
NEW ORLEANS — In a radical departure from recent policy, the state will stop prison construction for the next two years to determine the feasibility of increasing inmate capacity within existing structures.

The state will opt to meet an influx of prisoners by hiring additional guards rather than building more prisons, Corrections Secretary John King said Saturday.

"We have a net gain of 500 to 600 prisoners a year," King said. "At this time, the Department of Corrections has the space to house inmates for the next two years without double bunking, which places bunk beds in dormitories or two-man cells."

The state previously had planned to construct one new 500-bed prison every 18 months to house a growing inmate population. But the new program aims instead at curbing rapidly increasing prison costs, King said.

King recently was appointed by Gov. Dave Treen to replace C. Paul Phelps, the architect of the prison expansion plans.

The state corrections budget grew from \$25 million in 1975 to more than \$100 million in 1980. Three new 500-bed prisons were built, extensive renovations were made at the state penitentiary at Angola and security staffs were bolstered.

At the time of his dismissal, Phelps agreed the prison con-

struction program was proving costly and ineffective. He split with Treen, however, on the solution.

The former secretary proposed slowing the influx of prisoners by releasing minor offenders into

community restitution programs. Treen and King hope to increase the prison population within existing facilities.

Louisiana ranks 7th nationally in the number of guards, with one officer for every 3.1 inmates.

## Jury discounts testimony from 'admitted perjurer'

United Press International  
NEW ORLEANS — Attorneys for two men acquitted of bankrolling a conspiracy to topple a Caribbean island government blasted the prosecution's use of "an admitted perjurer" as its star witness.

"It was a case which shouldn't have been prosecuted," said lawyer G. Brockett Irwin. "It was an abuse of justice to base a case on an admitted perjurer."

The jury, deliberating late Friday, found L.E. Matthews of Florence, Miss., and James White, of Lakeland, La., innocent of financing an aborted assault on Dominica.

The panel discounted the testimony of the prosecution's star witness, Michael Perdue, the admitted leader of the abortive coup, who described himself in court as

a "professional liar."

The charges carried a maximum penalty of eight years in prison and \$13,000 in fines.

"I'm very thankful," White said upon hearing the verdict.

He said he was not surprised it took the jury three hours to reach its decision.

"We expected by the time they deliberated on both counts for both people, it would take this long," White said.

Defense attorneys criticized prosecutors for basing their case on the testimony of Perdue. "We always felt this case was a potential embarrassment to the government which it has proved to be," he said.

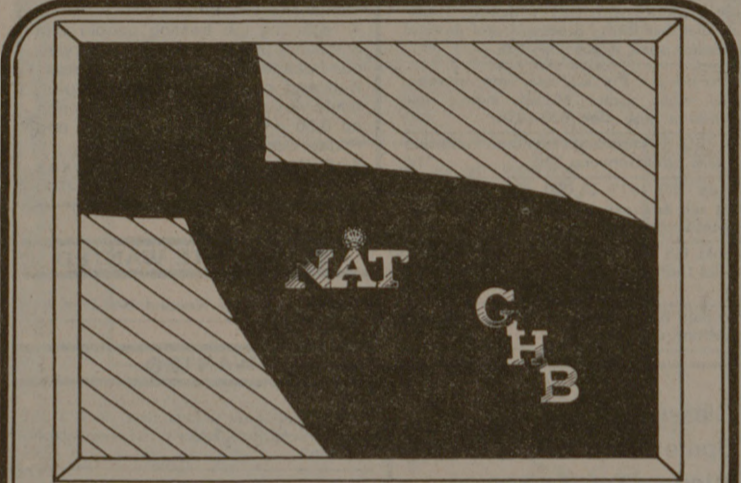
The defense attorneys questioned Perdue's credibility in final

arguments, characterizing him as a calculating liar trying to reduce his own sentence by making a case against others.

Perdue admitted lying to gather a band of 10 self-styled soldiers around him and arming them with automatic rifles and dynamite to use in the aborted coup attempt.

Defense attorneys claimed Perdue tricked Matthews and White into unwittingly financing the operation by telling them the funds would be used for legitimate antiques transactions.

The expedition was interrupted when federal agents arrested the would-be mercenaries at a marina near New Orleans where they were preparing to embark on the voyage to Dominica.



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## Vietnam vet says stress caused him to kill relative

United Press International  
SHREVEPORT, La. — The attorney for a Vietnam veteran found innocent of murder due to post-combat stress syndrome said Sunday the verdict was a landmark decision but such a defense will rarely be successful.

Jurors deliberated for about six hours Saturday before accepting Charles Heads' story he believed he was back in Vietnam when he gunned down his brother-in-law.

Heads, who had been charged with first-degree murder, was found innocent by reason of insanity in the slaying of Roy Lejay.

The verdict was the first time post-traumatic stress syndrome was used successfully as a defense for a violent crime, said attorney Wellborn Jack, Jr.

"I believe the defense was true," he said. "Charles is a good man and the jury got to know him as a good man who gave a great deal for his country."

The defense team reassembled five members of a Marine reconnaissance squad led by Heads and allowed them to graphically detail their combat experiences.

"We proved to the jurors what it was like to be 19-years-old and surviving the stress of Vietnam," Jacks said.

Heads admitted following his wife from Houston to Lejay's

house and gunning him down in a barrage of bullets.

He now hopes to receive treatment for the nightmares and flashbacks plaguing him for 15 years. Heads will remain in Caddo Parish Jail until officials find a mental health facility where he can undergo treatment.

"Heads wants to understand and the jurors are giving him a chance," Jacks said.

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