

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1695

To authorize the award of a Congressional gold medal to the Montford
Point Marines of World War II.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 23, 2009

Mr. BURRIS introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred
to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To authorize the award of a Congressional gold medal to
the Montford Point Marines of World War II.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds that—

5 (1) on June 25, 1941, President Franklin D.
6 Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 8802, estab-
7 lishing the Fair Employment Practices Commission
8 and opening the doors for Black individuals to enlist
9 in the United States Marine Corps for the first time;

1 (2) the first Black Marine recruits were trained
2 at Camp Montford Point, near the New River in
3 Jacksonville, North Carolina;

4 (3) on August 26, 1942, Howard P. Perry of
5 Charlotte, North Carolina, was the first Black pri-
6 vate to set foot on Montford Point;

7 (4) during April 1943, the first Black Marine
8 drill instructors took over as the senior drill instruc-
9 tors of the 8 platoons then in training, including—

10 (A) Edgar R. Huff, 16th Platoon;

11 (B) Thomas Brokaw, 17th Platoon;

12 (C) Charles E. Allen, 18th Platoon;

13 (D) Gilbert H. Johnson, 19th Platoon;

14 (E) Arnold R. Bostic, 20th Platoon;

15 (F) Mortimer A. Cox, 21st Platoon;

16 (G) Edgar R. Davis, Jr., 22nd Platoon;

17 and

18 (H) George A. Jackson, 23rd Platoon;

19 (5) Black Marines of the 8th Ammunition Com-
20 pany and the 36th Depot Company landed on the Is-
21 land of Iwo Jima on D-Day, February 19, 1945;

22 (6) the largest number of Black Marines to
23 serve in combat during World War II took part in
24 the seizure of Okinawa in the Ryuku Islands, with

1 some 2,000 Black Marines seeing action during the
2 campaign;

3 (7) on November 10, 1945, Frederick C.
4 Branch, the was the first Black Marine to be com-
5 missioned as a Second Lieutenant, at the Marine
6 Base in Quantico, Virginia;

7 (8) overall, 19,168 Black Americans served in
8 the Marine Corps in World War II;

9 (9) 16 years after the closure of Montford Point
10 as a training facility for Black recruits, an enter-
11 prising group of men, including original Montford
12 Point Master Sergeant Brooks E. Gray, planned a
13 reunion of the “Men of Montford Point”, and on
14 September 15, 1965, approximately 400 Montford
15 Point Marines gathered at the Adelphi Hotel in
16 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and laid the foundation
17 for the Montford Point Marine Association Inc.;

18 (10) organized as a nonmilitary, nonprofit enti-
19 ty, the Montford Point Marine Association has as its
20 main mission to preserve the legacy of the first
21 Black Marines, and today the Association has 36
22 chapters throughout the United States;

23 (11) many of the first Black Marines stayed in
24 the Marine Corps for a career, including Sergeant

1 Major Edgar R. Huff, 1 of the very first recruits at
2 Montford Point;

3 (12) Sergeant Major Huff was the first Black
4 Sergeant Major and the first Black Marine to retire
5 with 30 years of service, which included combat in
6 3 major conflicts, World War II, the Korean Con-
7 flict, and the Vietnam War;

8 (13) Sergeant Major Huff was awarded the
9 Bronze Star medal with a combat “V” for valor for
10 saving the life of his radio operator during the Tet
11 Offensive in Vietnam;

12 (14) another original Montford Point Marine
13 who saw extensive combat action in both the Korean
14 Conflict and the Vietnam War was Sergeant Major
15 Louis Roundtree, who was awarded the Silver Star,
16 4 Bronze Stars, 3 Purple Hearts, and numerous
17 other personal and unit awards for his service dur-
18 ing those conflicts;

19 (15) on April 19, 1974, Montford Point was re-
20 named “Camp Johnson”, after legendary Montford
21 Point Marine Sergeant Major Gilbert “Hashmark”
22 Johnson; and

23 (16) the Montford Point Marine Association
24 has several memorials in place to perpetuate the

1 memory of who they were and what they accom-
2 plished, including—

3 (A) the Montford Point Marine Association
4 Edgar R. Huff Memorial Scholarship, which is
5 offered annually through the Marine Corps
6 Scholarship Foundation;

7 (B) the Montford Point Museum located at
8 Camp Johnson in Jacksonville, North Carolina;

9 (C) the Brooks Elbert Gray, Jr. Consoli-
10 dated Academic Instruction Facility, named in
11 honor of original Montford Point Marine and
12 Montford Point Marine Corps Association
13 founder Master Gunnery Sergeant Gray (dedi-
14 cated on April 15, 2005, at Camp Johnson,
15 North Carolina); and

16 (D) Branch Hall, a building within the Of-
17 ficers Candidate School in Quantico, Virginia,
18 which was named in honor of Captain Frederick
19 Branch during July of 1997.

20 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

21 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
22 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
23 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
24 award, on behalf of the Congress, of a single gold medal
25 of appropriate design to the Montford Point Marines,

1 United States Marine Corps, collectively, in recognition of
2 their dedicated service during World War II.

3 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
4 award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the
5 Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Sec-
6 retary”) shall strike the gold medal with suitable emblems,
7 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-
8 retary.

9 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
11 gold medal in honor of the Montford Point Marines,
12 United States Marine Corps, under subsection (a),
13 the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian In-
14 stitution, where it will be displayed as appropriate
15 and made available for research.

16 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
17 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should
18 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)
19 available for display elsewhere, particularly at other
20 appropriate locations associated with the Montford
21 Point Marines, United States Marine Corps.

22 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

23 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-
24 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
25 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 2, at a price

1 sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor,
2 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

3 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.**

4 Medals struck pursuant to this Act are national med-
5 als for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States
6 Code.

7 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; PROCEEDS**
8 **OF SALE.**

9 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
10 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint
11 Public Enterprise Fund, an amount not to exceed \$30,000
12 to pay for the cost of the medal authorized under section
13 2.

14 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
15 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be
16 deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise
17 Fund.

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