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Press Release

HALL OF FAME

2020

Mr. Henry N. Wilcots

Sergeant (Sgt) Henry N. Wilcots, completed recruit training at Montford Point Camp in October 1946 and had various duty assignments to include guard duty at Earle Naval Base, serving under legendary Montford Pointer Gilbert "Hashmark" Johnson. Sergeant Wilcots served a combat tour in Korea and is widely recognized by an official USMC Picture as being one of the first, if not the very first, Montford Point Marine to celebrate the Marine Corps birthday with his white counterparts as he was called down from the front lines in Korea on November 10th 1951, to cut the official Marine Corps Birthday Cake with his bayonet.

After his return from Korea, Sergeant Wilcots pursued an education in Architecture and worked with world renowned Architect Louis I. Kahn. Sergeant Wilcots used his considerable skills to evaluate the structure that served as the Philadelphia Clubhouse since the early 1970s and determined that it was best to divest that property for the good of the chapter.

Sergeant Wilcots joined the Philadelphia Chapter approximately 10 years ago and immediately contributed to the mission of the National Montford Point Marine Association Inc. by telling the Montford Point story to the masses. Sergeant Wilcots was the featured speaker at a Marine Corps Reserve Birthday Ball in Wilmington, Delaware, was featured on Fox 29 News in Philadelphia, has appeared on local radio stations, and was on the front-page of the Philadelphia Inquirer Newspaper, whose daily circulation is near 160,000 and available online worldwide. This coverage generated multiple inquiries that led to Congressional Gold Medals being awarded to families and Montford Pointers in the greater Philadelphia area.

Sergeant Wilcots has also volunteered to tell the story of the Montford Pointers to the "Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge" a renowned nonprofit group in the Valley Forge area whose stated mission is to "educate about American rights and responsibilities, honor acts of civic virtue, and challenge all to serve a cause greater than themselves".

Sergeant Wilcots has been the featured presenter for five years to approximately 50 educators from across the country that gather at the Foundation site, near the Valley Forge National Park, to hear firsthand stories of military personnel who have shaped our country.

In February 2020 Sergeant Wilcots attended and presented the Montford Point Story at 4 locations in the greater Philadelphia. One was at Bensalem High School to approximately 300 American History Students. This presentation alone generated numerous news and newspaper media segments and the Chapter received over a dozen personal hand written letters from the students thanking him for his presentation.

Sergeant Wilcots has rarely missed a chapter meeting in ten years and often brings with him precious artifacts from his days at Montford Point Camp to include a very rare November 1947 edition of Leatherneck Magazine which exclusively featured the Montford Point Marine story.

At nearly 92, Sergeant Wilcots is one of the "Younger" Montford Pointers in the Philadelphia Chapter and is ambulatory enough to travel with the Chapter President on his many travels to tell the story of the Montford Pointers, often "the closer" at these presentations.

Through his travels throughout the region, Sergeant Wilcots has reconnected with Marines that he has served with like the late Gunnery Sergeant Reuben McNair, who was Sergeant Wilcots' Platoon Sergeant in the late 1940s. Sergeant Wilcots also has befriended Montford Pointers from Quantico Chapter #32, Master Gunnery Sergeant Carrol Braxton and From Washington DC Chapter #6 Sergeant Ivor Griffin. Through these friendships, Sergeant Wilcots has added value to each event he presents and attends.

Because of his commitment to service, Henry N. Wilcots was inducted into the NMPMA Inc. Hall of Fame.

