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Press Release

OBITUARY ANNOUNCEMENT

SgtMaj Archie Lee Robinson

February 25, 1929 - December 23, 2018



Fellow Marines, it is with deep regret to announce that SgtMaj Archie Lee Robinson has passed on 23 Dec 2018. He was a Montford Point Marine. He also fought in Korea and Vietnam and was wounded twice and is the recipient of the Bronze Star with combat V and the Silver Star.

He was also the SgtMaj at Adams City High School in Colorado in the Marine Corps Junior ROTC and is the reason I joined the Corps. A memorial service in Colorado is being planned and a funeral service with full military honors will be held in California at the Miramar National Cemetery.

Funeral services will be January 4, 2019 at the Harvey Park Christian Church, 3401 South Lowell Blvd Denver, CO 80236, and internment will be at the Ft Logan National Cemetery 3698 S. Sheridan Blvd Denver, CO 80235.

Sgt. Major Archie Robinson, one of the Montford Point Marines, honored at CU-Boulder ceremony

Archie Robinson served in the Marine Corps with distinction for 30 years, serving in the aftermath of World War II and fighting in Korea and Vietnam.

He earned numerous medals and commendations, was twice wounded in action and rose to the rank of sergeant major, the highest rank for an enlisted marine.

Despite his commitment to the country, Robinson was treated differently from many of his peers early in his military career. When he enlisted Oct. 9, 1946, sucked in by "those dress blues," he joined a generation of African-American marines trained at North Carolina's less-than-hospitable, black-only Montford Point.

He was then placed in segregated units and eventually forced to work as a steward, a job he so hated that he intentionally poured hot coffee on officers to get out of doing it.

The son of a schoolteacher mother and a father who dedicated his life to the Army, Robinson dropped out of college to join the Marines, a military branch he chose specifically for its tough stance on accepting African Americans.

"Of course, if you're segregated from something, you always want to be part of it to prove yourself," said Robinson, now 83.

On Thursday, Robinson was honored at a ceremony at the University of Colorado organized by the CU Naval ROTC. He was presented a Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest civilian honor, in recognition of his being part of the "Montford Point Marines."

On Aug. 25, 2011, the 69th anniversary of the opening of the training base at Montford Point, President Barack Obama delivered a proclamation thanking the 20,000 African-American men who trained there, including Robinson, for their service.

"Despite being denied many basic rights, the Montford Point Marines committed to serve our country with selfless patriotism," Obama's proclamation read. "Choosing to put their lives on the line, these men helped advance civil rights and influenced President Harry Truman's decision to desegregate the Armed Forces in 1948."

Robinson, who now lives in Westminster, was invited to attend an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., in June, during which the Montford Point Marines were honored, but he could not travel because of a health condition, leading the Naval ROTC to organize Thursday's event for him.

Robinson makes it a point to stay involved with the CU Naval ROTC, attending commissioning ceremonies and the annual Sea Services Ball, and serving as an inspiration to students who are part of the ROTC program, said Col. Stephen Dinauer, the Marines' commanding officer for the CU Naval ROTC.

"He's a guy that overcame adversity, not just through segregation, but he was twice wounded in combat and he is just kind of the ideal enlisted marine leader. He's like a living history lesson," Dinauer said. "We wanted to do something that was significant."

At Thursday's ceremony, ROTC officials read the presidential proclamation, as well as a statement by Marine Corps Commandant Gen. James F. Amos explaining the significance of the Congressional Gold Medal and the Montford Point Marines.

Robinson remains humble about his role, noting the African-American marines who went to Montford Point before him faced much harsher conditions, sleeping in tents and dealing with wild animals. When he arrived four years after the base opened, he got to sleep in a Quonset hut with running water, he said, though he still had to shower outside.

He speaks with fondness about his service. He was seriously wounded in Korea on his birthday while staging a raid on a hill, and he jokes now that his unit commander should have been buying him a drink instead of leading an attack.

As for the honor bestowed on him Thursday, and the many other medals that hang from the breast of his dress blues, Robinson said he appreciates them, but they do not validate his career as a marine.

"The military has been my life ever since I was 17 years old," he said. "The medals mean nothing to me. I just felt that I was doing my duty as a marine."

By Joe Rubino 10/18/2012 07