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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 59

Offered January 11, 2012

Prefiled January 10, 2012

Commending the Montford Point Marine Association Tidewater, Virginia Chapter #14.

Patron—Locke

WHEREAS, on June 25, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 8802, establishing the fair employment practice that began to erase discrimination in the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, a board was organized to study the integration of African Americans being assigned to the Composite Defense Battalion, which included coastal artillery, antiaircraft, infantry, and tanks; and

WHEREAS, in 1942, President Roosevelt established a presidential directive giving African Americans an opportunity to be recruited into the Marine Corps; and

WHEREAS, African Americans, from all states, were not sent to the traditional boot camps of Parris Island, South Carolina, and San Diego, California; instead, they were segregated-experiencing basic training at Montford Point—a facility at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the African American Marines trained at Montford Point became known as the Montford Point Marines; and

WHEREAS, the African American volunteers who enlisted in the United States Marine Corps during World War II joined the United States Marine Corps to demonstrate their commitment to the United States despite the practice of segregation, served the United States in a most honorable fashion, defied unwarranted stereotypes, and achieved distinction through brave and honorable service; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, African American Marine Corps units fought and served in the Pacific theatre, participating in the liberation of the Ellice Islands, the Eniwetok Atoll, the Marshall Islands, the Kwajalein Atoll, Iwo Jima, Peleliu, the Marianas Islands, Saipan, Tinian, Guam, and Okinawa; and

WHEREAS, the heroism, commitment, and valor demonstrated by the Montford Point Marines changed the negative attitudes of the military leadership toward African Americans and inspired the untiring service of future generations of African Americans in the United States Marine Corps; and

WHEREAS, in July 1948, President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order No. 9981, which ended segregation in the military; and

WHEREAS, in September 1949, the Montford Marine Camp was deactivated, ending seven years of segregation in the Marine Corps; and

WHEREAS, in September 1965, over 400 former and active-duty Marines met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, at a reunion to honor the Montford Point Marines, leading to the establishment of the Montford Point Marine Association; and

WHEREAS, approximately 20,000 African American Marines received basic training at Montford Point between 1942 and 1949; six of the original Montford Pointers currently reside in the City of Hampton and the Hampton Roads region and are active in the Montford Point Marine Association, Tidewater, Virginia Chapter #14; and

WHEREAS, the sacrifices, dedication to country, and perseverance of the African American Marines trained at Montford Point Camp are duly honored and should never be forgotten; and

WHEREAS, the Montford Point Marines who served during World War II helped to shape the United States Marine Corps, which provides an excellent opportunity for the advancement of persons of all races; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Montford Point Marine Association, Tidewater, Virginia Chapter #14, for honoring the legacy and the history of the United States Marine Corps and ensuring that the sense of duty shared by the Montford Point Marines is passed along to future generations; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Montford Point Marine Association, Tidewater, Virginia Chapter #14 as an expression of the General Assembly's appreciation for the Chapter's work to preserve an important part of our nation's history.

INTRODUCED

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