



5 April 2011

Dear Congresswoman Brown,

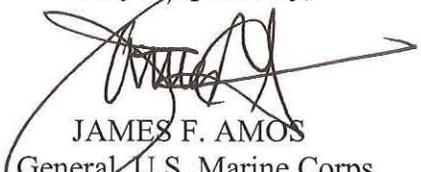
On behalf of the Marine Corps, I respectfully request your support of legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Montford Point Marines for their service during World War II.

At a time when the Services were resistant to integration, approximately 20,000 African-Americans enlisted in the Marine Corps, choosing to put their lives on the line in order to be accepted and recognized as fully fledged citizens by this great Nation. Subsequent to undergoing segregated basic training at Montford Point Camp, North Carolina, many of these Marines fought and died for their Country in the Pacific during World War II. Montford Point Marines served with distinction in three of the bloodiest battles in the Pacific — Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. The Montford Point Marines fought with such tenacity, valor, and distinction that the Commandant at the time was moved to declare, “The Negro Marines are no longer on trial. They are Marines, period!” Their actions reflected the finest attributes of the “leatherneck” fighting spirit and blazed the trail for generations of African-Americans in the Marine Corps.

We believe the service, sacrifice and patriotism of the Montford Point Marines is due the same special recognition that Congress has already afforded the first African-American servicemen of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Like them, the Montford Point Marines enlisted in the military and defended a society that enjoyed freedoms they did not share. The combat service of these Americans advanced the cause of civil rights and contributed, in large measure, to President Truman’s decision to order the desegregation of the Armed Forces in 1948.

Given their meritorious service and patriotism in a society that was slow to accept their value, the time is now to award the Congressional Gold Medal.

Very Respectfully,


JAMES F. AMOS
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

The Honorable Corrine Brown
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515