

PRESS RELEASE



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RESOLUTION BY ATLANTA CITY COUNCILMEMBER AARON WATSON CALLS ON THE U.S. CONGRESS TO BESTOW THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ON THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE MONTFORD POINT MARINES

ATLANTA – This month when hundreds of African American heroes from across the United States will be honored in Black History Month celebrations, Atlanta City Councilmember Aaron Watson today introduced a resolution before the Atlanta City Council calling on the U.S. Congress to bestow The Congressional Gold Medal on the surviving members of the Montford Point Marines.

Approximately 20,000 African-American Marines including many local Georgians trained at Montford Point Camp, North Carolina between 1942 and 1949. Currently there are eight surviving, original members of the Montford Point Marines living in Atlanta. Four of them were present at today's Council meeting.

The heroism, commitment, and valor of the Montford Point Marines changed the negative attitudes of the military leadership toward African-Americans forever," said Councilmember Watson."The Montford Point Marines were the first to integrate the Marine Corps and thus helped to change history. I admire their courage and inspiration and ask my Council colleagues to join me in the effort to have these brave men receive this special recognition."

The legislation initiating The Congressional Gold Medal, bills S1695 and HR3927 were introduced in September and October 2009 respectively and sponsored by Senator Roland Burris (D)-IL and Rep. Corrine Brown (D)-FL.

Congresswoman Brown plans to reintroduce the legislation in the 112th Congress in the coming weeks.

The City Council voted unanimously for the resolution, which will be forwarded to the Georgia delegation in the U.S. Congress this week.

The Montford Point Marine Association will host its annual meeting in Atlanta, July 27-31, 2011. For more information, visit www.mpma-atlanta.com or [Montford Point Marines Leatherneck Magazine](#).

A Congressional Gold Medal is an award bestowed by the United States Congress and is, along with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the United States. The decoration is awarded to an individual who performs an outstanding deed or act of service to the security, prosperity, and national interest of the United States. The medal was first awarded in 1776 by the Second Continental Congress to then-General George Washington and John Paul Jones during the American Revolutionary War.

Although the first recipients included citizens who participated in the American Revolution, the War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War, Congress broadened the scope of the medal to include areas of achievement in the fields of science and medicine, humanitarian efforts and public service and more.



Featured in the photo from left to right: Fred Codes; John Hill (Original Montford Point Marine); Charles Gamble; John Baker Brown, Sr. (Original Montford Point Marine); Councilman Aaron Watson; Ambassador Theodore Britton, Jr. (Original Montford Point Marine); Melvin Shoats (Original Montford Point Marine); Linda Sykes (Atlanta Chapter President); Kevin Johnson.