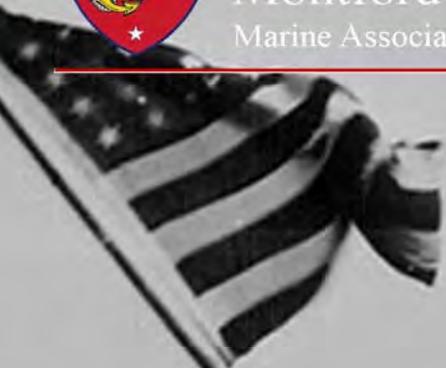




# MPMA

Montford Point  
Marine Association, Inc.



*Linwood Ross Haith  
USMC- Montford Point Marine*



***"I thought the Marines don't take blacks!"  
-the answer, simple, "We do today!"***

## **Linwood Ross Haith**

**USMC – Montford Point Marine**

**By: A.C. Haith and R.M. Trujillo**



**“I thought the Marines don’t take blacks!”**

**– the answer, simple, “We do today!”**

The early summer of 1943 brought more than just heat to the lives of many young men in the Richmond, Virginia area. There were DRAFT NOTICES as well! For Linwood Haith, a handsome, fun-loving sophomore majoring in Chemistry at Virginia Union, a more than three (3) year journey of a lifetime was about to begin...

The youngest son of a well to do Richmond restaurateur and businessman, Haith was used to a very comfortable, semi-urban lifestyle. He'd always had his own car and made his own decisions! But when his draft notice arrived at his home--much to the chagrin of his dotting mother, a young widow whose oldest son was already enlisted in the Air Force -- a whirlwind of change was on the horizon. In a few, short weeks, Linwood would go from student to soldier, and more than a soldier... a Marine!

On the day when he reported for his Comprehensive Draft Examination and Physical, along with hundreds of other young men down at the old tobacco warehouse on the corner of Lombardy and Lee Streets in Richmond, Mr. Haith couldn't have had any idea he would be part of making an Executive Order come to fruition and of eventually making history. By that evening, having been rigorously mentally and physically tested, he was selected to become one of the Few, the Proud, the Brave!

Earlier that day, while standing in line awaiting his first instruction, Linwood heard a new friend say, “I thought the Marines don’t take blacks!” – the answer, simple, “We do today!” He and about 25 others were chosen to be amongst the country's first Black Marines.

The excitement, positivity, and pride of these young men filled the air – these willing warriors. Not having to be cooks and deckhands in the Navy or munitions drivers in the Army was a plus for them, right from the jump. They all knew the Marines were a prestige outfit and that suited their vision of themselves as men and patriots.

With only about two and a half weeks to prepare and very little knowledge of what hazards lay before them, the men had already been given their first assignment: Report back in 22 days, ready to head out for basic training!

Linwood's voyage, which would take him far into the Pacific Theater, began at Main Street Station in Richmond on a bright and cloudless day in July of 1943. By the time the train pulled out of the station, there were six (6) boxcars filled with enthusiastic, intelligent, and fit young Black men from up and down the Eastern Seaboard. Jacksonville, NC was their destination. From there, straight down to Fort Knox Bay and Montford Point, where they would be trained for just over 13 grueling weeks and forged from farmers, students, laborers, and the like into Marines.

It was just after Thanksgiving 1943 and the men had been trained in the basics of the Corps, split into various platoons and were ready to be deployed. It was off to Camp Pendleton in Southern California and then to Hilo, Hawaii for more specific training. Linwood and a few others who were highly skilled in mathematics and science were chosen to be a part of the 51st Battalion as radar operators. This essential job included memorizing and deciphering frequencies of the enemy's air and sea craft. The Pacific Theater of World War II was an optimal place and time for such skills. As the outfit inched closer and closer to Japan-- across Guam, the Philippines, the Marshall Islands and the Northern Mariana Islands, Linwood and his fellow Marines faced serious danger on a daily basis. In late 1945, Victory over Japan came and the world was no longer at war!

May 1946 brought the Haith Family of Richmond the kind of happiness that many families were unable to experience – the return of a treasured son and brother.

Linwood Ross Haith served with great valor, showed that he loved his country more than his country loved him at the time; he staunchly defended a society that enjoyed freedoms he and his family did not share. His heroism and those like him, contributed, in large part, to President Truman's decision to order the desegregation of the Armed Forces in 1948.