

Life Profile of PFC Phillip B. Herout Jr.



Shortly after the commencement of the World War II, Phillip Beconfield Herout Jr. enlisted into the United States Marine Corps on June 17, 1942, in Miami, Florida. After the induction procedure, he was transported to Montford Point Camp at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, North Carolina. This was a section on the base specifically used for the training of the African-American soldiers. After arriving to Montford Point, Phillip was sworn into the 6th Platoon, 51st Defense Battalion.

During basic training Phillip was trained to man the Brownie 50 caliber machine gun. Although Phillip had received this specialized training, he was placed in the First Marine Depot; as African-American soldiers were not permitted to engage in active combat during WWII.

After completing his basic training, Phillip was then transferred to San Diego Naval Yard where he awaited assignment for his first tour of duty in the United States Marine Corps. Upon arrival at the San Diego Naval Shipyard received orders that he would be assigned to Russell Island, a small island 30 miles northwest of the Guadalcanal. Victory at this small island played a pivotal role for both the 1st Marine Division and its Allies during the war. Used as the ammunition hub for the military in the region, Phillip transported 500 to 1,000 pound bombs, as well as, gasoline supplies to the troops in combat. During WWII, African-American soldiers were not assigned to combat units, and were badly mistreated by their white comrades; and forced to complete menial labor task. Phillip would proudly boast that when time came for African-Americans to engage in battle, they did so with "*courage and conviction*".

Phillip remained at Russell Island for eighteen months. While unloading a 500-lb. gasoline drum he injured his hand, and was hospitalized at the Naval Medical Center at San Diego. After receiving treatment there Phillip returned to Miami, Florida where he received a medical discharge on September 7, 1944.

Phillip B. Herout Jr., became one of the founding members of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Montford Point Marine Association. In 2012 Phillip, received the Congressional Gold Medal along with his fellow Montford Point Marines. The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian honor bestowed by congress for distinguished achievement. The President of the United States, President Barack Obama signed into law, the legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Montford Point Marines on 23 November 2011.

Although his illness caused him to become very weak, Phillip Herout Jr. could still gather strength to chant, "*Semper fi*" – *hooray*" with his daughter Tousha. Phillip died on February 12, 2017 at the Phoenixville Hospital in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania.



"Semper fidelis"