

Reflections of Robert Russell Hammond's Life
May 27, 1922 - May 26, 2016

“To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under the heaven. A time....”
Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

Robert Russell Hammond ***“time to be born”*** occurred on May 27, 1922, in Atlantic City, New Jersey to the late Richard and Rachel Hammond. “Bobby” as he was affectionately known, was the second of four children; Charles and Phillip Hammond (Both Deceased); and Serene Hammond. Bobby gave his life to Christ at an early age while attending St. Augustine Episcopal Church in Atlantic City. He attended Sunday school, participated in various church activities, and joined the Boy Scouts at the Arctic Avenue YMCA.



He received his education in Atlantic City Public Schools. He attended the all-boys Atlantic City Trade School, where in 1940 he graduated as an auto mechanic. Bobby maintained his automotive expertise throughout his adult life in the private sector, military, and federal-civil service.

At the encouragement of his father Richard (a decorated U.S. Army Cavalry “Buffalo Soldier”), Bobby answered his ***“time to serve”*** and traveled to Philadelphia, PA, where enlisted in the United States Marine Corps on March 3, 1943. He was one of nearly 20,000 African-Americans who broke the color barrier during World War II, to be allowed to enter into the Marine Corps. His segregated recruit training (also known as Boot Camp) was at Monfort Point Camp, Jacksonville, North Carolina. By May 1943, Bobby found himself in the middle of the Asiatic Pacific campaign, where he participated in fierce battles on New Caledonia; New Bridges; Guadalcanal; and Okinawa Japan.

Bobby returned to civilian life in December 1945, where he worked as a truck driver. Then on November 29, 1948, Bobby was called back to active duty for United Nations peacekeeping and the Korean War.

In 1949, Bobby’s ***“time to love”*** came at first sight when he came to visit the home of his best friend, Charles Goddard, whose sister Vivian very quietly answered the door. Many believe it was “love at first sight!” After a lengthy courtship, Bobby married the love of his life; Vivian. They enjoyed 54 years of blissful marriage, before she was called to be with her Lord and Savior in 2008.

Bobby continued his military career by performing three-combat tours in Vietnam. After nearly 30-years of honorable service, Bobby retired from active duty in August 1975, as a Master Gunnery Sergeant, (equivalent to Sergeant Major), which is the highest rank of achievement for enlisted Marines. He received numerous commendations, medals, and awards for his unblemished and exemplary military record. This included a citation from the White House for his leadership during a Presidential Inauguration.

Bobby began his second career with the US Government Printing Office, as a printing-plant truck driver and finally ending his civil service career as a federal policeman.

Bobby can best be known as a devoted husband, a loving and compassionate brother; a caring brother-in-law, uncle, cousin, and a loyal friend. He loved traveling—especially driving trips to Atlantic City, New Jersey; New York City, and Nanjemoy, Maryland. His favorite pastime included, talking about automobiles, the Marine Corps, and watching cowboy-westerns. Bobby was a “knowledgeable man” who could hold a conversation on “any” subject. His smile and voice could light up the room!

In June 2012, Master Gunnery Sergeant/Sergeant Major Robert R. Hammond received the Congressional Gold Medal, for being a trail blazer for African-Americans with his historic service in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Montford Point Marine.

In the early morning hours on May 26, 2016 at Washington, DC -Veteran Affairs Medical Center, God decided it was ***“time to pluck up what was planted.”*** Robert Russell Hammond peacefully departed this earthly life to rejoin his parents, brothers and devoted wife Vivian. He leaves to cherish his memory a loving sister, Serene Hammond, numerous cousins, nieces, nephews, in-laws, neighbors, and uncountable friends to include his caregivers William and Gloria Smith; confidants Rev. Roosevelt Bell; Mr. Terry Kinney; and Dr. Arnett Rogiers.