

# Press



# Release

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### Va. Beach Marine who trained at Montford Point dies

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Retired Master Gunnery Sgt. Jimmy Mills Hargrove, one of the Montford Point Marines, has died. He was 84 years old.

Hargrove died Tuesday, according to his obituary. A celebration of his life is scheduled for Saturday, and he will be buried later at Arlington National Cemetery.

He went to Montford Point, N.C., in 1948 to begin training as a Marine. He didn't know the Marines were segregated, he said in an interview with The Pilot in 2012.

"The best thing you could do was make the best of it," he said. "I was going to be a Marine, and be the best that I could be."

He was African American and his grandfather was Cherokee.

In June 2012, Hargrove was among 400 Montford Point Marines to be awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest civilian honor.

Born in Detroit, Hargrove went to school in Birmingham, Ala. A proud teenager who never picked fights, but never lost them, either, he said he was inspired to join the Marines when one visited his school.

"Marines were sharp," he recalled in 2012 with a nod. "That red, white and blue."

In training, the leaders pushed their recruits hard, jostling to produce the best bunch. Hargrove left ready to fight.

In 1953 he went to Korea where his job was to protect an air base, he said, so when sirens screamed in the middle of the night, he was among those grabbing a gun and running to a foxhole, making sure no enemy destroyed the airfield.

He went to Vietnam in 1970 as a master gunnery sergeant. He said in 2012 that he still had flashbacks from the two conflicts – reminders that post-traumatic stress disorder can last a lifetime.

After 30 years, he retired and took jobs in circulation and security at The Virginian-Pilot. He retired for good in 1993.

For years his life has revolved around Rock Church, his wife, their five sons and their four grandchildren.

