

# OBITUARY

Oscar Culp, Jr. was born Wednesday, May 13, 1925, one of three children to Oscar, Sr. and Willie May Culp in Charlotte, North Carolina. His spirit departed this earthly realm Friday evening, May 15, 2015, at Scripps Green Hospital, La Jolla, California. He was 90 years young in heart, spirit and mind.

Oscar was educated in Charlotte, North Carolina, and joined the United States Marine Corps at 16 years old (telling the Marines he was 18) in 1943 at the height of World War II. He was stationed at Camp Lejeune, in Jacksonville, North Carolina and assigned to the Montford Point Marines, an all-black division of the Marine Corps. He remained a career Marine until 1966 when he retired as a Master Gunnery Sergeant. He trained in the snake-infested swamps of North Carolina as one of the first blacks admitted to the Marine Corps. His duties included serving as the Fire Chief on the Island of Guam, Supply Administration Chief, and the Financial Accounting Chief.

When stationed in Barstow, California, he became known for repairing the bicycles of local children. The Navy Times published a front page article, "Marine Master Sgt. Mind Runs in Cycles," about his volunteer civic activities.

After returning to civilian life, MGYSGT Culp opened CMC Furniture Store with two other retired Marines, Roosevelt Campbell and George Mitchell. The store stands in an historic building at 401 Seagaze Drive in downtown Oceanside.

Oscar was active in many civic organizations. He was the first black to serve on the Oceanside Chamber of Commerce; a Vice President of the local Lions Club; a Board Member of the Armed Forces YMCA; President of the Oceanside Human Relations Board; a member of the Oceanside Senior Citizen Commission; a founding member, and President of the Involved Men of Oceanside; a Board member of the San Diego County Ecumenical Center; appointed by the County Supervisory Board to the San Diego Drug Abuse Task Force; appointed by Oceanside's Mayor to the committee to select the architect to build the Civic Center; appointed by Oceanside's Mayor to the committee to determine the acquisition and payment for Downtown Public Parking Facility.



**13 May 1925 - 15 May 2015**  
**MGySgt, USMC Ret**  
**Served from 1943 - 1969**

Oscar was especially proud that over the years, the Involved Men of Oceanside raised more than \$150,000 and given over 300 scholarships.

In 1995 Oscar was the first individual elected by the citizens of Oceanside as the person who most closely exemplified the ideals of the late Martin Luther King, Jr. Oscar has been honored by many other organizations including the Lions of Oceanside, the Involved Men of Oceanside (IMO), and Walker Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

"Brother Culp," as he is fondly referred to at his home church of over 50 years, was a man of faith, practicing his faith in his church, Walker Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, at his job, and in the community. Everyone knew that they could go to Oscar for a helping hand. He lived Matthew 25:35-36, "<sup>35</sup>For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup>I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." He truly loved and saw the best in all people.

On June 27, 2012, the U.S. Congress conferred our nation's highest civilian award, the Congressional Gold Medal on Oscar and more than three hundred other Montford Point Marines.

Oscar is survived by his lovely wife of 65 years, Ruth Everett Culp; three children, Janice Wilson (Andrew) of Santa Ana, Jerry Lewis Culp (Gayle) of Pomona, and Rebecca Cruz (Jose, deceased) of Oceanside; two grandchildren, Jeremy Oscar Culp, and Marissa Christine Culp of Pomona.