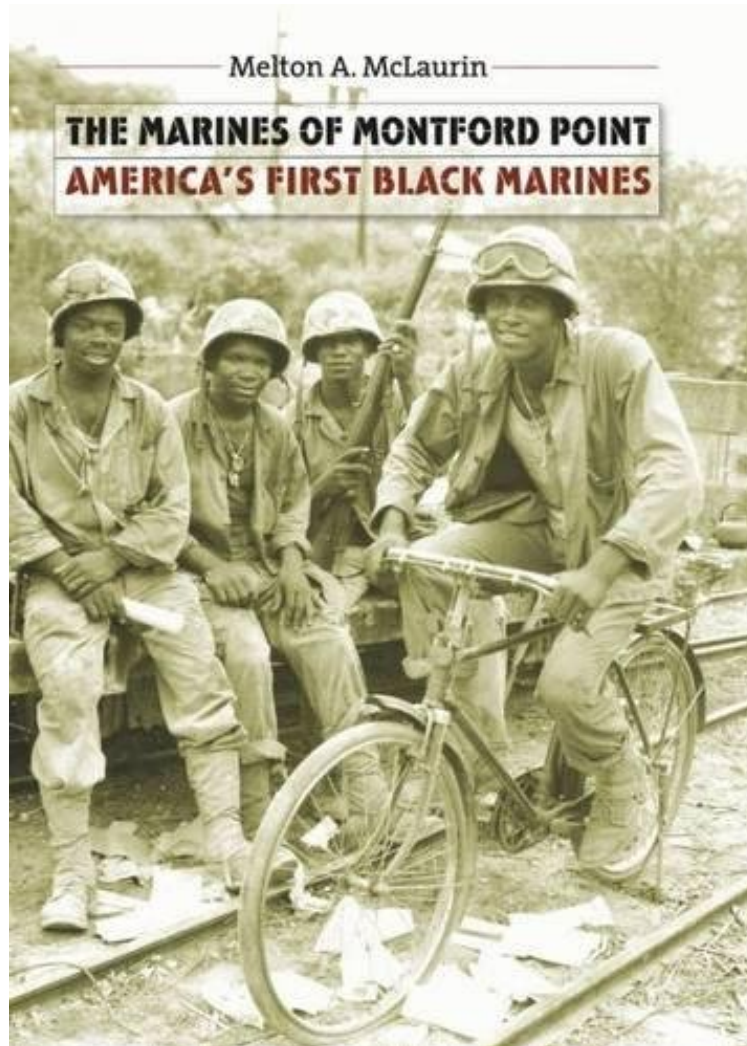


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The Marines of Montford Point: America's First Black Marines

Melton A. McLaurin

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Melton A. McLaurin : The Marines of Montford Point: America's First Black Marines before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Marines of Montford Point: America's First Black Marines:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Important StoryBy JAGMANThe stories in this book are hard to believe but all too real. Sad to think how ignorant our country was and how so many great Americans were treated so bad. The book is a must read for anyone who has a sincere desire to understand the history of our military - specifically the Marine Corps. Not only does it reveal the truth about race relations in our Marine Corps, but the Esprit de Corps maintained by the Montford Point Marines through out their lives after the Marine Corps speaks volumes of

what it takes to be a Marine and what it means to any person - regardless of race - that has earned the title - "Marine." I gave the book only 4 stars because I feel the format and organization undermines the story and unintentionally misses the mark on an extremely important point: you can be born into a life of ignorance and prejudice - or you can live a life of being kept "separate but equal" - but when the bullets and bombs start - we are all brothers-in-arms - and we will all look out for each other. In war - the human race is the only race that matters and you either band together as brothers or we all go down together. If you have no military in your blood - this is the one book on military history you should read. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Book to read By Customer Great Book to read, especially when I served with someone of them and one lived across the street from me and was my first role model, I ran errands for his mother as a little boy age 5 up and would see his picture in his Marine uniform and later drink Jack Daniels with one as a grown man. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. The style of the book is disjointed, but it is great for people who enjoy first person accounts of history. By Carrie This book contains a lot of interesting and eye-opening anecdotes (presented verbatim) about the Marines, race relations in the armed services, prevailing societal attitudes about race when the Montford Point Marines enlisted, and the experiences of black Marines in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. So in that regard, it is a five-star book. But unfortunately, the style of the book is not my favorite. It is presented as a series of anecdotes from different Montford Point Marines. There is some general historical narrative, but the bulk of the text is first-person accounts, so it skips around from person to person. The anecdotes are roughly in chronological order, so they start with each man's account of his youth and how he came to enlist in the Marines. Then the anecdotes switch to each man's experience in boot camp, then his experiences in WWII, then Korea, etc. So you might read an anecdote from Person A on page 25 and then again on page 75. It became hard to remember each person's back story. If you like first-person accounts of history, this is definitely a great book. If you are particularly interested in one man's anecdotes, I recommend bookmarking the pages where he appears so that you can reference his background information later on in the book. Follow-up: Several readers have complained that the stories are difficult to read because some of the speakers have bad grammar and the grammar is not edited. I did not find this to be the case. The only time I had trouble following an anecdote was when someone made too many references to battalion numbers, since I couldn't keep them straight.

With an executive order from President Franklin Roosevelt in 1941, the United States Marine Corps--the last all-white branch of the U.S. military--was forced to begin recruiting and enlisting African Americans. The first black recruits received basic training at the segregated Camp Montford Point, adjacent to Camp Lejeune, near Jacksonville, North Carolina. Between 1942 and 1949 (when the base was closed as a result of President Truman's 1948 order fully desegregating all military forces) more than 20,000 men trained at Montford Point, most of them going on to serve in the Pacific Theatre in World War II as members of support units. This book, in conjunction with the documentary film of the same name, tells the story of these Marines for the first time. Drawing from interviews with 60 veterans, *The Marines of Montford Point* relates the experiences of these pioneers in their own words. From their stories, we learn about their reasons for enlisting; their arrival at Montford Point and the training they received there; their lives in a segregated military and in the Jim Crow South; their experiences of combat and service in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam; and their legacy. The Marines speak with flashes of anger and humor, sometimes with sorrow, sometimes with great wisdom, and always with a pride fostered by incredible accomplishment in the face of adversity. This book serves to recognize and to honor the men who desegregated the Marine Corps and loyally served their country in three major wars.

From Booklist On June 25, 1941, FDR's executive order 8802 allowed, among other things, black men to become U.S. Marines for the first time in American history. The U.S. was then rigidly segregated, particularly in the South and in southerner-heavy institutions, including the military, especially the Marine Corps. The marine commander established training for blacks at Montford Point, North Carolina, and from 1942 to 1949, when the camp closed after President Truman desegregated all the armed forces, it trained more than 20,000 men, most for the Pacific theater. McLaurin interviewed 61 veterans of Montford Point and relays their words on who they were, why they joined, how they trained, and the combat they saw (many served in Korea and Vietnam, too). They reflect never-ending struggles with the deliberate and unconscious bigotry of the time and place. The Marine Corps is fully integrated now, and the marines of Montford Point aren't familiar now to the general public. Several Point trainees wrote memoirs, and with them McLaurin adds invaluable to the literature on blacks in the military. Roland Green Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "An important contribution to military and civil rights history. . . . [The Marines of Montford Point: America's First Black Marines"] is a set of excerpts [of interviews] which, in Studs Terkel fashion, create an oral history of this group of Marines." -- Durham "Sunday Herald-Sun" "Eloquent, unedited stories." -- "Our State" "A valuable contribution to our understanding of the black military experience in World War II." -- "North Carolina Historical" "Beautifully collected interviews. . . . Anyone interested in any aspect of the civil rights struggle or the history of race relations in the US must read this book. . . . Essential." -- "CHOICE" "A quick but inspirational read." -- "Journal of America's Military Past" McLaurin adds invaluable to the literature on blacks in the military.--

Booklist An important contribution to military and civil rights history. . . . [The Marines of Montford Point: America's First Black Marines] is a set of excerpts [of interviews] which, in Studs Terkel fashion, create an oral history of this group of Marines.--Durham Sunday Herald-Sun Through their own words, we get the true picture of what life was like for these men . . . a gritty and harrowing account. . . . More than a history book . . . a rare treat.--Independent Weekly, Durham, NC This book addresses an important chapter in American history that has never received due attention. The veterans' oral histories are alternately gut-wrenching, soulful, shocking, and humorous, and always informative. This book should be read and treasured and should inspire museums, textbooks, and other media to take seriously the Montford Point story.--David Cecelski, author of *The Waterman's Song: Slavery and Freedom in Maritime North Carolina* An important collection. . . . Opens our eyes to a new range of histories to be explored.--Journal of Southern History This wonderful collection of personal narratives captures not only the struggle but also the triumph of the Montford Point Marines' quest to become part of our nation's most elite fighting force, despite overwhelming odds. Their voices will be heard through this book, telling their poignant testimonies. I am truly honored to walk in their footsteps.--Colonel Adele Hodges, USMC Beautifully collected interviews. . . . Anyone interested in any aspect of the civil rights struggle or the history of race relations in the U.S. must read this book. . . . Essential.--Choice A valuable contribution to our understanding of the black military experience in World War II.--North Carolina Historical What emerges beyond question is that these veterans felt themselves to be Americans, and knew themselves to be men, long before they were acknowledged as Marines.--Multicultural Eloquent, unedited stories.--Our State A quick but inspirational read.--Journal of America's Military Past