



Hall of Fame



***Posthumous Nomination for O'ther Lee (Special) Givens;
MPMA Founding Member, Past National President and Past Chicago
Chapter President for inclusion into the***

Montford Point Marine Association Hall of Fame

O'ther Lee (Special) Givens was a MPMA pioneer. He was a founding member of the MPMA, who stood proudly amongst that initial group of 400 African American men, rallied by MPMA founder Brooks Gray, to meet at the Adelphia Hotel of Philadelphia Pennsylvania in August of 1965 to launch what went on to become the organization that is known today as the Montford Point Marine Association.

In addition to being one of the first African American men allowed to join the United States Marine Corps in the summer of 1942, he is credited by many as being one of those responsible for African Americans being allowed to enlist in the Marine Corps at all.

Several years prior to O'ther being admitted into the Marine Corp, he was denied the opportunity. Prior to 1942 African Americans were not allowed to enlist in the United States Marine Corps.

There are many accounts stating that this inspired O'ther to engage other prospective Black Marines in the same situation, to start a letter writing campaign. These men lobbied Mary McCloud Bethune, and then First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt to assist them in their efforts. Needless to say, their efforts were successful, and in 1942, Franklin D. Roosevelt made it possible for African American men to enlist in the Marine Corps.

O'ther is also applauded by many of those that served with him for organizing NAACP membership drives among those stationed at Montford Point. He is credited for signing up his entire platoon in 1942, and received a letter of praise from of the NAACP that his family still has today.

During the formative years of the MPMA, O'ther was committed to doing everything he could to assist in making MPMA a solid organization. He helped organize the Chicago Chapter, holding many of the initial meetings in his home and at his place of business (The Chicago Lounge), in the late 60's.

He went on to become the Chicago Chapter President for two years, served as Senior Regional Vice President from 1968-1971, and National President from 1971-1973.

O'ther was a Veterans Commission board member for three years. He also worked closely with the federal government on behalf of the MPMA to assist Vietnam Veterans with less than Honorable discharges, in some instances get reinstated, and in others, gain employment. He continued to work diligently on behalf of the Chicago Chapter until 1979.

In 1979, O'ther left Chicago and moved to Des Moines Iowa, where he spent the last 20 years of his life. While living in Iowa, he continued to assist Veterans, and to be a dedicated member of the organization until his last day on earth, March 15, 2000. He lived up to his nickname; he was truly "Special."

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Mr. O'ther Givens for the Montford Point Marine Hall of Fame.

Joseph H. Geeter III
Master Gunnery Sergeant retired
United States Marine Corps
National Vice President
Montford Point Marine Association
