



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 25, 2011

I send greetings to all those honoring the legacy of the Montford Point Marines on their 69th anniversary.

Almost seven decades ago, as our Nation was at war, more than 20,000 African American men enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. After completing arduous and segregated basic training at Montford Point Camp, many of these Marines served with distinction during a number of World War II's bloodiest struggles. Some made the ultimate sacrifice in these battles; others continued their service in Korea and Vietnam.

Despite being denied many basic rights, the Montford Point Marines committed to serve our country with selfless patriotism. Choosing to put their lives on the line, these men helped advance civil rights and influenced President Harry Truman's decision to desegregate the Armed Forces in 1948. Embodying the Marine Corps motto of *Semper Fidelis, Always Faithful*, these heroes paved the way for future generations of warriors, regardless of background, to serve in the finest military the world has ever known.

On behalf of a grateful Nation, I thank you for your service and for your contributions to the cause of freedom at home and around the world. May God bless our men and women in uniform, and may God bless the United States of America.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barack Obama", written in a cursive style.