



PRESS RELEASE

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State Recognizes World War II Veteran for Military Service; Proclaims *DeLoyce McMurray Day in Illinois*

Longtime Illinois resident is recipient of Congressional Gold Medal

SPRINGFIELD - November 26, 2013. The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) Director John K. Holton, Ph.D., has recognized World War II veteran DeLoyce McMurray for service to his country. The recognition for this 87 year old state resident, which includes a proclamation from Governor Pat Quinn, takes place this month when the nation honors people who have served in armed service. (See the full proclamation on the next page).

"It is not often I have the chance to meet someone who has served their country with such courage and integrity. DeLoyce McMurray is a true hero. His story is our history. And he is part of the extended Department on Aging family, which makes him even more precious to us," said Director John K. Holton. "As we gather this week on the day of Thanksgiving, let us remember to give thanks for him and all the veterans who have contributed so much for all of us."

Mr. McMurray was born in Edwardsville, the youngest of five children to Lillard and Ruth McMurray. After his service in the military he returned home to Illinois, met his (now deceased) wife Alleen and settled in Alton where they raised their children Dru and Neyna. Daughter, Neyna Johnson, who is a staffer at the Illinois Department on Aging, says the family is so proud of her father who was only 18 when he enlisted in the United States Marine Corp.

"Daddy enlisted in 1944 and served in the Pacific, primarily in Guam, Wake Island, and Saipan. He helped move wounded troops to safety during the battle of Iwo Jima. I am so humbled when I think of how he fought for his country, especially during a time when black soldiers faced racism," said Johnson.

Mr. McMurray, a corporal, was part of the Second Division and received military training at Montford Point, a segregated camp for black Marines in North Carolina.

Earlier this year, surviving members of Montford Point Marines were awarded for their service the Congressional Gold Medal the nation's highest civilian honor and expression of appreciation. Mr. McMurray was unable to attend the ceremony in Washington, D.C., so a hometown ceremony was held in July where U. S. Senator Dick Durbin presented the award.

Even on the day of his hometown celebration, Mr. McMurray's thoughts were of others which was apparent during his reported remarks.

"I can't accept this medal without thinking of all those that we lost...I accept this medal for them."

After his discharge, this future grandfather of six and great-grandfather of five attended college on the GI Bill and became a computer specialist. He worked as a civilian employee for 36 years with the United States Department of Defense where his job took him to locations in Illinois, Missouri and Bangkok, Thailand. DeLoyce McMurray now calls Springfield home, where he is with family.

The text of the Governor's proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, *DeLoyce McMurray*, a World War II veteran, has been a lifelong resident of Illinois; He was born in Edwardsville, met Alleen, his now deceased wife of 64 years, and raised their family in Alton. In 2010, the father of two, grandfather of six, and great- grandfather of five decided to move to Springfield; and,

WHEREAS, *DeLoyce McMurray* enlisted in 1944 as part of the Second Division of the United States Marine Corps, and received military training at Montford Point, a camp in North Carolina for black Marines during segregation; and,

WHEREAS, *DeLoyce McMurray* served in the Pacific primarily on Guam, Wake Island, and Saipan; he helped evacuate wounded troops during the battle of Iwo Jima; and,

WHEREAS, *DeLoyce McMurray* was discharged from the service in 1946, returned home to Illinois, married and had a family, went to college on the GI Bill, and worked for 36 years with the United States Department of Defense; and,

WHEREAS, *DeLoyce McMurray* demonstrated courage serving his country during World War II, he is owed a debt of gratitude; and,

WHEREAS, *DeLoyce McMurray* was recognized in 2013 for his valor and awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest civilian honor and expression of appreciation:

THEREFORE, I, Pat Quinn, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim November 27, 2013 as ***DeLoyce McMurray Day*** in Illinois.