



MPMA

Montford Point
Marine Association, Inc.



First Negro Marine Overseas



T-Sgt. Alfred Masters was sworn into the service as the first Negro marine 12:01 a. m. June 1, 1942, in Oklahoma City. Sgt. Masters is the husband of Mrs. Isacell Masters and the proud father of little Shirley Jean and Alfreda Dean, who live with their mother at 511 Rhode Island. He is also the baby son of Mrs. Lettia Masters of Wewoka, Okla.

Sgt. Masters sends greetings to all of his friends and would appreciate hearing from them any time.

How Alfred Became The First Black Marine

February 5, 1916 - June 16, 1975



Alfred Masters



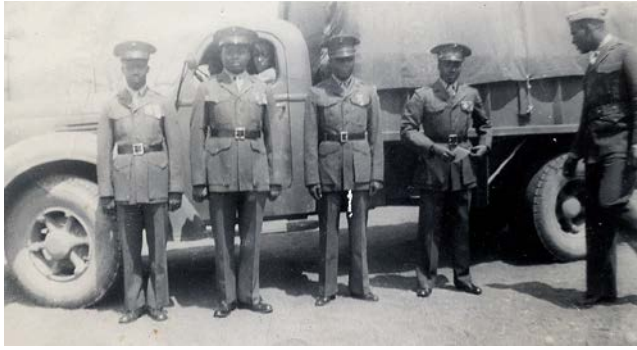
During my third year of college, I met and married Alfred Masters. When I became pregnant with my eldest daughter, Shirley, I dropped out of college. After I became pregnant with my second child, Alfreda, Alfred enlisted as the first black Marine. *Ms. Isabell Masters*

Alfred and I were on the elevator at the post office in Oklahoma City with a Marine recruitment officer who asked Alfred if he wanted to be the first Black Marine. Of course, the answer was yes. Alfred was wearing a Langston University sweater, which prompted the recruiter to accost him. On June 1, 1942, Monday morning, one minute after midnight, Alfred was inducted into the arm services as the *first black marine*. In Texas, however, another young man was inducted one minute after 8 a.m. as the first black marine. However, Alfred's name is always listed first, being a degree of controversy about the situation.



After Alfred began his military service, off to college I returned to complete undergraduate work with two children, Shirley Jean and Alfreda Dean. We went to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina to be near Alfred. I enrolled in Fayetteville North Carolina College where Alfred visited us on his 72-hour leave, which was every two weekends. We rented a room from an elderly conservative woman who cared for the children while I as at school. When I returned from school, Alfreda was in the baby buggy, since she wasn't walking at the time and of course was not being held by her caretaker, and Shirley would be sitting in a child's rocking chair on the front porch. When Shirley would see me coming, she would jump up and down as if she were in jail.

Well, I decided I didn't want them to be in bondage any longer, so I began my search for a more conducive residence. I found a young woman who had a six-year-old son. I was happy for a few days until, behold, I returned home from school one day finding Alfreda in the baby buggy between two houses. Shirley was nowhere to be found. The landlady and her son were also nowhere to be found. Within a few minutes, Shirley appeared. We immediately walked to the grocery store and secured the train schedule to Oklahoma City, bought our lunch for the train, milk for the baby and scheduled a yellow cab to take us to the train station at the proper time. We boarded the train to Oklahoma City that same day.



When we entered the state of South Carolina, I obtained a pencil and paper from my luggage and began to write to Alfred. It went like this: "We're riding somewhere in South Carolina" Alfred said his buddies teased him, saying, "man, your wife is never coming back." But they were wrong. I boarded the bus back to Fayetteville, North Carolina the next day after leaving my children with my mother.

Fayetteville College was very strict about absentees. But they understood and permitted me to reenter school. After a few weeks, my mother took the kids to Beaumont, Texas where my dad was pastoring a Church. I dreamt that Alfred's toe was cut off in my mom's back yard. Immediately I became concerned about the children being so far away from me. I contacted Langston University and asked them if I returned to the University the next semester, would I graduate? The answer was yes. I finished the quarter at Fayetteville Teacher's College and left for Langston University. I stopped by Camp Lejeune North Carolina to inform Alfred that I was on my way out of the state. He was somewhat disappointed but he had to accept the welfare of all concerned. Arriving in Beaumont, Texas by train a few days later, I took a

yellow cab to my mom and dad's address. As I walked up to the door, I heard the sound of a baby's voice and I was elated, thinking, well, that's one baby alive. Mom greeted me at the door holding Alfreda in her arms and Shirley holding her dress tail. When I left Shirley, she was not talking. After three months away from me, she walked into my mom and dad's bathroom where I was and said, "look, see the box." I said, "Oh no!" Mother laughed and said you didn't know she could talk? Shirley slept in her baby bed. Alfreda, my sister, Lillie, and I slept in a full sized bed. I wanted Alfreda to sleep with me at the head of the bed but she cried to sleep with my sister at the foot of the bed. Well, I agreed, but when she fell asleep, I took her back with me.



Beaumont, being 550 miles from Langston University in Oklahoma, was still too far away from my children. I proceeded, therefore, to contact my mother-in-law, Lettia Masters, who lived about 100 miles from Langston University to ask her if she would keep Alfreda. She refused to keep one child, contending that she did not want to separate them. My dad wanted to keep Shirley, but sadly to say, I took Shirley to mom Masters' also. Every other weekend I journeyed to mom Masters' home in Wewoka by bus and from Wewoka we journeyed five miles to her country home in a wagon taking groceries and helping her with the kids weekend. By graduation time in May, I had lost weight but I still made the honor roll.



A special thanks for the personal accounts provided by the family members of TSgt Alfred Masters