

# Vietnam Vet seeks recognition for young war hero

By Malik Russell  
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During the early morning hours of Jan. 7th, 1969 in the Quang Nam Province, Pfc. Dan Bullock of Goldsboro, N. C. and Brooklyn, N.Y., hustled through enemy fire to get ammunition for his Marine platoon. As the ammunitions depleted, Dan Bullock once again raced to replenish his unit's stock. Suddenly, a burst of small arms fire cut through the Marine lines and abruptly ended the life of Bullock, approximately 50 minutes after the battle had begun.

At the time, aside from his family and comrades, Dan Bullock's death served the same distinction as many young African-American soldiers killed in Vietnam. As time passed, unbeknownst to Marine brass and the world, Bullock at age 15 would in actuality become the youngest American soldier to be killed during the Vietnam War.

Bringing recognition to Bullock, and indirectly to many of the young African Americans who fought for "freedoms" in Vietnam that they were denied in the nation of their birth has become the mission of one man—Franklin D. McArthur, Jr.

McArthur founded the Dan Bullock Foundation in November of 1999, nearly 30 years after he served with Bullock in Vietnam. His commitment to gaining proper recognition for Bullock stems from his commitment to a long gone friend.

McArthur and Bullock were in Marine boot camp together. They became best friends.

"As a result of him not getting any recognition after being the youngest American servicemen killed in Vietnam, I decided to start a foundation and go on a campaign to try to get him the recognition that I thought he deserved. To eventually build a statue and pass out scholarships to the children of veterans and active duty members of the military providing that the child has a 3.0 GPA and a need for the scholarship and money was available," said McArthur.

Only McArthur and a few other Marines were aware that Bullock had lied about his age to join the Marines. Yet it was his character, not his age, that made him special.

"Dan, he had a fire in his eyes unlike anybody I had ever seen and that's one of the things that made me form an alliance with him. He was a strong guy because he took a lot of crap and he never complained and his only hope was to become a Marine so he could get an education and help support his family," he said.

According to McArthur, he and other African American marines came to the aid of young Bullock, who was struggling through his second attempt at Marine boot camp.

"He was actually in the Marine corps before I was," said McArthur. "He got left back, like they do in



*Pfc. Dan Bullock of Goldsboro, North Carolina and Brooklyn, New York is reported to be the youngest American soldier to die in Viet Nam at age 15. He was killed in action in 1969. Efforts are still underway to commemorate his sacrifice and memory.*

school and they put him in my platoon and he started all over again with me."

McArthur noted that Dan "was big for his age and he looked like a man," but he didn't have the man's strength that you have to have and during most of the forced marches—the long runs we'd have to go through. He was struggling, huffing and puffing and sometimes he was pulling out of the runs."

McArthur says "Bullock's struggle to keep up caused problems for him with some of the other Marines.

"In the Marine Corps a chain is

only as strong as its weakest link. If one guy fails, everybody pays for it. Well, there was a group of White Southern Marines there that were going to give him a blanket party. (Where soldiers hold down another soldier while he is sleeping with his own blanket and literally beat him senseless).

"They felt that because of him we were all getting punished for it. And they wanted him out of the platoon. I over heard them talking about giving him a blanket party, and I took up for him. I was about to fight with those guys when the drill instructor came out and he wanted to know what was going on," said McArthur.

The drill instructor told McArthur, "I don't care if you carry that n— on your back, but if he passes out on another run, then I'm going to kick everybody's a—!" As the drill instructor left, the White Marines once again threatened that McArthur would suffer the same fate as Bullock if Bullock didn't cut the mustard.

"So I used to run beside him and he'd run beside me and we'd run together. When he'd start struggling I'd grab him under one arm and I'd pull him and carrying him arm in arm. And some of the other (Black) Brooklyn Marines found out what was going on and ran with us and they would grab him under one arm taking turns, not knowing that when he graduated on Dec. 10th, it was 11

days before his 15th birthday.

In the two years since he created the Dan Bullock Foundation, McArthur has commissioned a life-sized bronze statue of Bullock, created by former Marine Steve Piscitelli, a good friend of Bullock and a noted war memorial sculptor and gained numerous accolades for his fallen comrade.

He has also successfully petitioned the Marine Corps to officially change Bullock's birth-date to Dec. 21, 1953. Most recently, a Brooklyn, N.Y. Community Board unanimously voted to "rename a portion of Lee Avenue between Wallabout Street and Flushing Avenue" as "Pfc Dan Bullock Way."

Currently, McArthur is discussing the possibility of placing the bronze statue of Bullock somewhere in Brooklyn, and also on Parris Island, one of two places in the country where Marines graduate from boot camp.

"The purpose of this foundation is to elevate Pfc Dan Bullock, the youngest American serviceman killed in action in the Vietnam War, to his rightful place among America's greatest heroes," said McArthur.

The Pfc Dan Bullock Foundation, Inc., is a 501 (c)3 corporation. Contact their website at [www.pfcdanbullockfoundation.org](http://www.pfcdanbullockfoundation.org)

Malik Russell is director of the Black World Today's Black World Radio Network on [tbwt.com](http://tbwt.com).



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