

have it easy. The donations are not coming in. We don't have the sphere of influence we once had, " Stokes-Parry said. # Historic photos that line the walls of the building have been damaged by a leaking roof. Annie Costabile/Sun-Times # For Stokes-Parry and the group's other members, the battle for their home is similar to ones the veterans fought both overseas and when they returned back home. Their contributions to the military are long-forgotten, even ignored. # " This is a part of Marine history I had never heard of, " said Stokes-Parry, 52, a Marine from 1985 to 1995 who lives on the South Side. " Their struggle predates the civil rights movement. They had to fight for the right to fight. " # Four of the men who served in the first group of black Marines, known as the " Original 400, " are active in the Chicago chapter. # " We couldn't go to certain areas unless we were given an escort, " recalled Frank Thrasher, 97, who served in the Marines from 1943 to 1946 and now lives on the West Side. " We had to fight white Marines who tried to push past us. It was horrible. " # One of the other original Marines, David Dinkins, went on to become the first black mayor of New York City. # In 2011, President Barack Obama signed a proclamation awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to every member of the Montford Point Marines, both living and deceased. # James Reynolds, 91, who served in the Army and the Marine Corps, recalled that moment. # " I had so many tears in my eyes, so many of us will