

Marine Corps Mourns the Passing of Medal of Honor Recipient Hershel 'Woody' Williams



Hershel "Woody" Williams salutes as he is introduced to the stage along with other members of a ship commissioning committee, March 7, 2020 in Norfolk, Virginia. Williams died on June 29. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Fernando Moreno*
ARLINGTON, Va. – The Marine Corps mourns the passing of Hershel "Woody" Williams, the Corps said in a June 29 release.

Woody exemplified the warfighting spirit of all Marines – a combat-proven leader whose lifelong dedication to all service members and Gold Star families began with his heroic actions at the Battle of Iwo Jima. His legacy as a warrior and an advocate for veterans will live on among all Marines, and he will be deeply missed, the Corps said.

Marine Corps retired Chief Warrant Officer 4 Hershel Woodrow "Woody" Williams, the last living World War II Medal of Honor recipient, passed away early on June 29. Williams was surrounded by his family at the VA Medical Center in Huntington, West Virginia.

Born on Oct. 2, 1923, in Quiet Dell, West Virginia, Williams enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve May 26, 1943, and advanced to the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 4 before his retirement in 1969 after 17 years of service. During WWII, Woody served in New Caledonia, Guadalcanal and Guam before landing in Iwo Jima where his actions earned him the Medal of Honor.

From Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. David H. Berger and

Sgt. Maj. Troy E. Black:

“On behalf of all Marines, Sgt. Maj. Black and I are heartbroken to learn of Woody’s passing. From his actions on Iwo Jima to his lifelong service to our Gold Star Families, Woody has left an indelible mark on the legacy of our Corps. As the last of America’s “greatest generation” to receive the Medal of Honor, we will forever carry with us the memory of his selfless dedication to those who made the ultimate sacrifice to our great nation. The Marine Corps is fortunate to have many heroes, but there is only one Woody Williams. Semper Fidelis, Marine.”

Williams is remembered through the naming of several locations throughout his native West Virginia. Most recently, on March 7, 2020, the Lewis B. Puller-class expeditionary mobile base USS Hershel Woody Williams (ESB 4) was commissioned in Norfolk, Virginia, commemorating Williams’ legacy.

Williams’ Medal of Honor citation can be found here:
<https://www.usmcu.edu/Research/Marine-Corps-History-Division/Information-for-Units/Medal-of-Honor-Recipients-By-Unit/Cpl-Hershel-Woodrow-Williams/>