



State Funeral For World War II Veterans

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www.worldwar2salute.org

Carol Glenn Leland
[Redacted]
Helena, MT 59715
February 12, 2021

Laurie Bishop
Representative, District 60
Montana House of Representatives
P.O. Box 200400
Helena, Montana 59620-0400

STATE ADMINISTRATION

Exhibit No. 4
Date 4.7.21
Bill No. HJ 21

Dear Laurie,

I'm working on behalf of the "State Funeral for WWII Veterans" for the state of Montana. I've attached our mission statement. We're trying to get resolutions from all 50 states. We have a congressional letter from Montana (which I've enclosed) and a gubernatorial proclamation. We just need the State Resolution from a sponsor in the State Senate and House. This is a bipartisan effort. You can go online to: www.worldwar2salute.org to find out more and also view the Montana Congressional letter sign by Tester, Daines and Gianforte. I'd appreciate your help in this matter. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Carol Glenn Leland



State Legislatures & Congressional Delegations Supporting Us:

Texas, Tennessee, Utah, West Virginia, Missouri, Minnesota, Louisiana, Kentucky

Board Includes: James McCloughan (MOH Vietnam), Brett Reistad (Former National Commander For The American Legion), April Box, Don Ballard (MOH Vietnam), Bill McNutt, Ronald Ramseyer, Morris Kahn, John T. Digilio, Jr., Scott B. Mexic, John Albers, Mitch Bell & Others.



Dear Mr. President,

In view of the foregoing, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition you to designate a single state funeral for the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II. And, to provide at this state funeral special recognition to honor all 16 million men and women who wore our nation's uniform from 1941 to 1945.

The time has come for a final salute to the greatest generation. A state funeral would be the perfect vehicle to do so.

464 Medals of Honor were presented to military personnel who served during the war. Only four of them are alive today. Of the 16 million soldiers, sailors, and airmen, only about 500,000 remain.

You hold the sole authority to designate a state funeral. The first non-presidential state funeral was held for Congressman Thaddeus Stevens in 1868. In 1921, President Warren G. Harding designated a state funeral for the Unknown Soldier of World War I. President Harry S. Truman authorized a state funeral in 1948 for General John J. Pershing. President John F. Kennedy designated a state funeral for General Douglas MacArthur, and in 1964 President Lyndon Johnson confirmed President Kennedy's directive.

Today our nation stands divided in numerous ways and yearns for a unifying event. Each American who had a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle who served in World War II would feel immense pride seeing their loved one honored in the ritual of a state funeral for the last Medal of Honor holder. This is especially true for the more than 400,000 Gold Star Families who suffered the ultimate sacrifice.

Proverbs 16:3 says, "Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will succeed." It is in this spirit we submit this petition to you.

Respectfully,

Bill McNutt, III
Co-Founder and Chairman
STATE FUNERAL FOR WORLD WAR II VETERANS

Consider for a moment the men and women,
many of them only teenagers, who years ago
wrote letters from flyspeck Pacific islands to

Hershel W. Williams

Hershel Woodrow "Woody" Williams (born October 2, 1923) is a retired United States Marine Corps warrant officer and United States Department of Veterans Affairs veterans service representative who received the United States military's highest decoration for valor—the Medal of Honor—for heroism above and beyond the call of duty during the Battle of Iwo Jima in World War II. He and Charles H. Coolidge (U.S. Army) are the only living Medal of Honor recipients from that war. In addition, he is the only surviving Marine to have received the Medal of Honor during World War II, and is the only surviving Medal of Honor recipient from the Pacific theater of the war.

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Woody's saviors mystery

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Early life

Williams, the youngest of eleven children, was born and raised on a dairy farm in Quiet Dell, West Virginia, on October 2, 1923.^{[1][2]} At birth, Williams weighed 3 1/2 pounds and was not expected to live. His mother, Lurenna, decided to name him after the doctor who arrived at their farm several days after his birth. By the time he was 11, his father had died of a heart attack and several of his siblings had died of a flu pandemic.^[3] Williams worked a series of odd jobs in the area, including as a truck driver for W.S. Harr Construction

Hershel W. Williams



Williams as a corporal in 1945

Nickname(s)	"Woody"
Born	October 2, 1923 Quiet Dell, West Virginia, U.S.
Allegiance	United States
Service/branch	United States Marine Corps
Years of service	1943–1945 1948–1949 1954–1969
Rank	Chief warrant officer 4
Unit	1st Battalion, 21st Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division
Battles/wars	World War II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battle of Guam Battle of Iwo Jima
Awards	Medal of Honor Purple Heart
Other work	Veterans

Company of Fairmont, West Virginia and as a taxi driver. When Pearl Harbor was attacked, he was working in Montana as a Civilian Conservation Corps enrollee.^{[4][3]}

Administration
Hershel Woody
Williams Medal of
Honor Foundation

Career

Website

www.hwwmohf.org
(<http://www.hwwmohf.org/>)

Williams was drawn to the Marines by their dress blue uniforms that he had seen several men in his community wear. He disliked the Army's brown wool uniform that he considered "... the ugliest thing in town ... I decided I did not want to be in that thing. I want to be in those dress blues." Aside from the appearance of the uniform, Williams knew nothing of the Marines.^[3] Standing 5-foot-6, when Williams tried to enlist in the Marine Corps in 1942, but was told he was too short for service. After the height regulations were changed in early 1943, he successfully enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve in Charleston, West Virginia, on May 26.^{[5][6][3]}



Williams in March 2020

Williams received his recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, California. Upon completion, he was sent to the Camp Elliott training center in San Diego, where he joined the tank training battalion on August 21, 1943. The following month he was transferred to the training center's infantry battalion for instruction as a demolition man and in the use of flamethrowers.^[5] The training, Williams said, was technical and focused on the flamethrower's design: three tanks, two of which held a mix of diesel and aviation gas and a third tank that held compressed air. There was little training on the operational use of the weapon, "We had to learn that ourselves."^[3]

Williams was assigned to the 32nd Replacement Battalion on October 30, 1943, and left for New Caledonia in the southwest Pacific on December 3 aboard the M.S. *Weltey Reden*.^[7] In January 1944, he joined Company C, 1st Battalion, 21st Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division at Guadalcanal.^{[7][5]} In July and August 1944, he was attached to Headquarters Company and participated in action against the Japanese during the Battle of Guam. In October, he rejoined Company C.^{[5][7]}

Medal of Honor action

Williams' next and final campaign was at the Battle of Iwo Jima, where he distinguished himself with actions "above and beyond the call of duty" – for which he would be awarded the Medal of Honor. On February 21, 1945, he landed on the beach with the 1st Battalion, 21st Marines. Williams, by then a corporal, distinguished himself two days later when American tanks, trying to open a lane for infantry, encountered a network of reinforced concrete pillboxes.^[5] Pinned down by machine gun fire, his company commander asked one of his men to attach a high explosive charge to a pole and with the support of Williams and his flamethrower and several Marine riflemen, shove the improvised weapon into an opening in the enemy's pillbox. As they fought their way to the pillbox, all of the men, except Williams, became casualties. Undeterred, Williams arrived at the first pillbox, shoved the flamethrower nozzle into the pillbox opening and fired the weapon, killing all of the soldiers inside. He then returned five times to his company area, refueled his weapon, and moved forward to destroy the remaining pillboxes.^{[3][8][5][6]}

Covered by only four riflemen, he fought for four hours under terrific enemy small-arms fire and repeatedly returned to his own lines to prepare demolition charges and obtain serviced flame throwers. He returned to the front, frequently to the rear of hostile emplacements, to wipe out one position after another.^[5] At one point, a wisp of smoke alerted him to the air vent of a Japanese bunker, and he approached close enough to put the nozzle of his flamethrower through the hole, killing the occupants.^[6] On another occasion, he was charged by enemy riflemen who attempted to stop him with bayonets and he killed them with a burst of flame from his weapon.^{[8][5]} Williams has said that much of the action "is just a blank. I have no memory."^[9]



Harry Truman congratulates Hershel Williams on being awarded the Medal of Honor, October 5, 1945

These actions occurred on the same day that two flags were raised on Mount Suribachi, and Williams, about one thousand yards away from the volcano, was able to witness the event.^{[10][6]} He fought through the remainder of the five-week-long battle even though he was wounded on March 6 in the leg by shrapnel, for which he was awarded the Purple Heart.^[5]

In September 1945, he returned to the United States, and on October 1 he joined Marine Corps Headquarters in Washington, D.C. He and thirteen other servicemen were presented the Medal of Honor by President Harry S. Truman on October 5, 1945, at the White House.^[5]

On October 22, 1945, he was transferred to the Marine Barracks, Naval Training Center Bainbridge, Maryland, for discharge. He was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps Reserve on November 6, 1945.

Post-war service

In March 1948, he reenlisted in the inactive Marine Corps Reserve, but was again discharged on August 4, 1949.^[5]

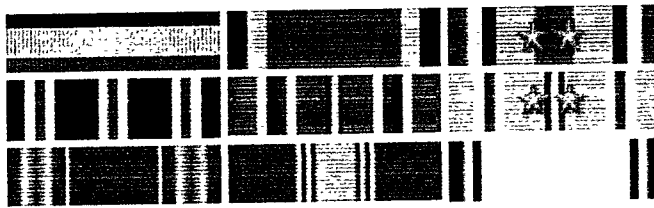
On October 20, 1954, he joined the Organized Marine Reserve when the 98th Special Infantry Company was authorized by Headquarters Marine Corps to be located at Clarksburg, West Virginia. He transferred to the Marine Corps Reserve's 25th Infantry Company in Huntington, West Virginia on June 9, 1957, later becoming the (Interim) Commanding Officer of that unit as a warrant officer on June 6, 1960. He was designated the Mobilization Officer for the 25th Infantry Company and surrounding Huntington area on June 11, 1963.^[5]

He was advanced through the warrant officer ranks during his time in the Marine Corps Reserve until reaching his final rank of Chief Warrant Officer 4 (CWO4). Although CWO4 Williams technically did not meet retirement requirements, he was honorarily retired from the Marine Corps Reserve in 1969 after approximately 17 years of service.^[5]

Awards and decorations

Williams' military decorations and awards include:

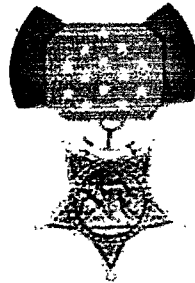




1st row	Medal of Honor		Purple Heart
2nd row	Navy Presidential Unit Citation	Navy Unit Commendation	Selected Marine Corps Reserve Medal with two service stars
3rd row	Vietnam Civilian Service Award	American Campaign Medal	Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with two 3/16" bronze stars
4th row	World War II Victory Medal	National Defense Service Medal	West Virginia Distinguished Service Medal

Medal of Honor citation

Williams' Medal of Honor citation reads:



The President of the United States in the name of The Congress takes pleasure in presenting the

MEDAL OF HONOR
to

CORPORAL HERSHEL W. WILLIAMS
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE

for service as set forth in the following
CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as Demolition Sergeant serving with the First Battalion, Twenty-First Marines, Third Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces on Iwo Jima, Volcano Island, 23 February 1945. Quick to volunteer his services when our tanks were maneuvering vainly to open a lane for the infantry through the network of reinforced concrete pillboxes, buried mines and black, volcanic sands, Corporal Williams daringly went forward alone to attempt the reduction of devastating machine-gun fire from the unyielding positions. Covered only by four riflemen, he fought desperately for four hours under terrific enemy small-arms fire and repeatedly returned to his own lines to prepare demolition charges and obtain serviced flame throwers, struggling back, frequently to the rear of hostile emplacements, to wipe out one