

# Woody Williams, America's last World War II Medal of Honor recipient, dies

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Hershel "Woody" Williams, America's last surviving World War II veteran to have received a Medal of Honor, passed away surrounded by family on Wednesday morning.

Williams, 98, was the last of the 473 American service members who received a Medal of Honor in WWII. Williams spent his final days with family at a hospital in his home state of West Virginia.

Family members called on Americans to pray for him on Tuesday.

"As he lives out his last days, we welcome and appreciate any additional prayers lifted up on behalf of Woody and his family," his family said in a statement on his condition at the time.

America's 63 living Medal of Honor recipients honored Williams in a statement to Fox News Digital.

"Friends and family of Woody Williams knew him as a West Virginia farmer's son and the youngest of 11 children who dutifully supported his family after his father died," they wrote in a statement through the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. "Fellow Marines knew him as the corporal who volunteered for a mission on Iwo Jima to clear a lane through enemy pillboxes that were destroying American tanks."

"Veterans in West Virginia knew him as their advocate through his work as a Veterans Service Representative. Gold Star families knew Woody through his work raising money for scholarships and other programs through the Woody Williams Foundation," they continued. "We, his fellow Medal of Honor Recipients, knew him as our friend and one of our heroes. We will miss him greatly."

Williams, a U.S. Marine, received his medal from President Harry Truman for heroism during the battle of Iwo Jima in 1945.



Hershel "Woody" Williams is the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II.

Williams served as a flamethrower operator on Iwo Jima and is credited with destroying multiple Japanese pillboxes and other gun emplacements while virtually unaided and at great danger to himself.

Williams wiped out position after position over the course of four hours, returning to American lines only to refuel his weapon.

Williams last appeared in public on Memorial Day, where he participated in a veterans' event in Huntington, West Virginia. He remarked to local media at the time that the event gave him hope for a resurgence of patriotism in the U.S.

"I've been at this probably 25 to 30 times, but I believe today we had more honor wreaths than we've ever had before, and that's encouraging," Williams told WSAZ. "It gives me encouragement that we're coming back and that we will again be that United States of America that had so much patriotism and love of country."