

Hershel "Woody" Williams, Medal of Honor Recipient, Papers A&M 4700

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circa 1970s-2020s and undated



Title Statement

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Author: Grace Musgrave

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

A&M 4700

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

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Unit Date

circa 1970s-2020s and undated

Language

English .

source

Woody Williams Foundation

Creator

Williams, Hershel Woodrow, 1923-2022

Extent

12.63 Linear Feet 9 record cartons, 15 in. each; 1 document case, 5 in.; 1 document case, 2.5 in.; 2 flat storage boxes, 4 in. each; 1 flat storage box, 1 in.

Repository

West Virginia and Regional History Center

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is unprocessed but is open for research. Please contact the West Virginia & Regional History Center in advance to request access. Audiovisual recordings must be digitized for research access. Researchers must contact the West Virginia & Regional History Center reference department.

Biographical / Historical

Hershel Woodrow "Woody" Williams (1923-2022) grew up in Fairmont, West Virginia. At age 17, Williams dropped out of high school and joined the Civilian Conservation Corps. He attempted to enlist when he turned 18 but was turned away due to his height of five feet, six inches tall. After the height requirement was changed in 1943, he enlisted in the Marine Corps and was assigned to the Third Marine Division. He fought in Guam in 1944. The following year, Williams demonstrated bravery during the Battle of Iwo Jima, taking out enemy machine gun stands with a flamethrower tank strapped to his back, only being covered by four riflemen. Williams was able to destroy seven Japanese bunkers while crawling on his stomach towards the enemy line. This allowed U.S. to move in behind Japanese bunkers and take the advantage. Unfortunately, Williams was wounded from shrapnel lodged in his left leg; despite this, he stayed with his men to aid in overtaking the airfield. It's stated that Williams refused to leave his fellow marines when he should have been evacuated. His actions earned him a Medal of Honor, the United States' highest military decoration, awarded for acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty. After his discharge in 1945, Williams served in the Marine Corps Reserve until 1969. He worked as a counselor for the Veterans Administration from 1946-1979. Williams served as the national chaplain of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. He also ran a training barn for horses in Cabell County, West Virginia. In 2010, he started the Hershel "Woody" Williams Medal of Honor foundation, dedicated to families of veterans who died in service. Up until he passed, Williams was committed to working with, supporting, and serving veterans like himself. (Biography by Samantha Wade)

Scope and Contents

Papers, newspaper clippings, newspapers, audiovisual recordings, publications, speech materials, and more documenting the life and activism of Hershel "Woody" Williams, a fierce advocate of Gold Star families.

Keywords

Woody Williams Foundation