

# News and stories

## New Antoine Gaujot marker dedicated at Williamson cemetery

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Kyle Lovern | [Herald Dispatch](#)

WEST WILLIAMSON, W.Va. - Saturday started with heavy rains leading up to the 1 p.m. dedication of the new grave marker for Medal of Honor recipient Antoine Gaujot. But it seemed like God placed an umbrella over the historic hillside Fairview Cemetery in West Williamson, as the rain stopped just in time for the ceremony.

A large contingent attended the event organized by fellow Medal of Honor recipient Woody Williams of Huntington.

Tents had been set up because of the rain that was forecast, however they were no longer needed by the time of the dedication and the U.S. Marine Corps Honor Guard salute to conclude the ceremony.

Williams welcomed those in attendance, including a local Boy Scout troop, veterans and several local citizens, including Nancy "Bunky" Smith, who is a relative of Gaujot.

"Thank you for coming to honor one of Williamson's favorite sons," Williams said. "Today we dedicate a marker that tells who he (Antoine Gaujot) is and his service above and beyond the call of duty."

"In America's history, there have been 3,600 medals awarded out of some 42 million who have served this country," Williams added.

Gaujot was awarded the Medal of Honor after entering the service at Williamson. Cpl. Antoine A. Gaujot (27th U.S. Infantry) swam to obtain a canoe under heavy fire at San Mateo in the Philippines on Dec. 19, 1899, during the Philippine-American War.

His brother Julien, who is buried in Arlington Cemetery, also was awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery. After entering the service at Williamson, Capt. Julien E. Gaujot (1st U.S. Cavalry) crossed a field under gunfire to receive the surrender of Mexican Federals at Aqua Prieta, Mexico, on April 13, 1911.

Williamson Mayor Charlie Hatfield also spoke at the dedication.

"I would like to extend sincere greetings from the citizens of the City of Williamson to Hershel 'Woody' Williams, himself a Medal of Honor recipient," Hatfield said. "On behalf of the city, our community and nation, I extend a sincere thank you for making today's event possible. Also, we wish to acknowledge the National Medal of Honor Foundation for the purchase of this special marker we are here to dedicate."

Hatfield noted how Williams' bravery at Iwo Jima in World War II was the reason he was awarded the Medal of Honor.

Williams, a native of Quiet Dell, W.Va. (3rd Marine Corps), continually attacked Japanese machine gun batteries on Iwo Jima in the Volcano Islands with a flamethrower on Feb. 23, 1945. A bridge in Barboursville is named in his honor.

Williams now has a naval Expeditionary Sea Base ship named after him and the VA hospital in Huntington was recently named the Hershel "Woody" Williams VA Medical Center.

The U.S. Marine Honor Guard from Huntington performed a final salute at ceremony, followed by "Taps."