

# News and stories

## Gold Star Families Memorial Monument dedicated in California

Dec 21, 2017

[The American Legion](#)

On Saturday, Dec. 2, the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument at Lone Tree Cemetery in Hayward, Calif., was dedicated. This memorial was designed by and the vision of Medal of Honor recipient Hershel Woodrow "Woody" Williams, a life member of The American Legion. Williams is a 94-year-old U.S. Marine who earned his MOH for combat actions in WWII during the Battle of Iwo Jima.

Williams' goal is to have at least one of these memorials built in all 50 states. The Gold Star Families Memorial Monument in Hayward is the 29th, and the first in California and on the West Coast. Two years ago, American Legion life member and Marine Corps veteran Michael L. Emerson and his team chose to donate their efforts and time to found, collect the needed donations and build this memorial to honor and remember the families of fallen United States military heroes. This was a labor of love for them.

Emerson was the emcee of the event. About 150 people attended the dedication, including Williams himself, U.S. Rep. Eric Swalwell, Mayor of Hayward Barbara Halliday, Gold Star Families representative Kevin Graves, and Lone Tree General Manager Ray Ortner, who all gave speeches. Local members and the honor guard from The American Legion attended and participated in the

dedication.

See more photos from the event [here](#).