

News and stories

Hundreds gather for Gold Star Families' monument dedication

Jul 7 2018

Lori Steineck | [Canton Rep](#)

The monument honors the families whose loved ones have died while serving in the U.S. military.

NORTH CANTON Hundreds of people gathered under clear blue, sunny skies Saturday morning in Price Park for the dedication of the Hershel "Woody" Williams Medal of Honor Gold Star Families Memorial honoring the families of fallen U.S. service men and women.

A parade followed by Hoover High School Band performances of patriotic songs kicked off the ceremony which several Gold Star families attended. Gold Star families are families who have lost a loved one serving in the military.

Akron-based U.S. Marines, the Marine Auxiliary, Blue Star Mothers, the Patriot Guard Riders, Rolling Thunder, the Masonic Motorcycle Club, Stark County Sheriff's Office, Commander Master Chief Hershel Davis, Williams and others started the parade at Seventh Street, riding to the park through streets lined with onlookers holding flags and taking pictures and video using cell phones.

A pair of skydivers stepped out of a plane that flew overhead,

unfurling the American and Gold Star Family flags as they drifted behind the monument.

North Canton Mayor David Held addressed the crowd, telling them, "There are really no words that can express the lifelong pain of losing a loved one." He reminded the crowd that those who died sacrificed their own lives so that others could live free, that their sacrifice won't be forgotten.

The Marine Corps League's McKinley Detachment No. 277 presented the colors.

Williams is "the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from the Pacific Campaign in World War II," said Dr. Timothy P. Novelli, founder of the Patriot Project. Novelli led the memorial project for the city with City Administrator Patrick DeOrio, according to a Canton Repository article published April 12.

Novelli talked about how Williams had been a cab driver at the age of 19 when it also was Williams' job to break the news of soldiers' death to families.

"He saw firsthand the pain and the agony that these families endured," Novelli said.

The monument "is for the family that have sacrificed one of their own," said Williams, who will turn 95 years old this year.

Williams asked the families to assist in unveiling the monument and then a wreath was placed at it. The American Legion Post No. 44 also conducted a gun salute.

The monument is on display at the park at 1033 Glenwood St. SW.