

News and stories

Medal of Honor recipient speaks at Iwo Jima reunion

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Marivel Santiago | [Texoma's homepage](#)

WICHITA FALLS - A few of our greatest American heroes, who fought to save our freedoms, are in Wichita Falls this weekend.

World War II veterans and their families are in from across the nation for the annual Iwo Jima Reunion, so that the sacrifices made on that island 73 years ago will never be forgotten.

Since the 90's, it's been a remarkable gathering.

"It's always a great thrill to be here and associate with these individuals and it's always very uplifting," Medal of Honor recipient and Marine veteran Hershel "Woody" Williams.

The Iwo Jima-World War II Reunion brings veterans and the community together.

"That's always rewarding, to have the community participate and take part in these things," Williams said.

The weekend kicked off with an opening ceremony, with remarks from Medal of Honor recipient Cpl. Hershel "Woody" Williams, a man whose efforts were recently recognized at the Super Bowl.

"I get the privilege and the honor of speaking to young folks at Sheppard," Williams said. "That's always been such a thrill."

Williams did one more coin toss for the road, where veterans got the opportunity to hear the gratitude from students like sixth grader Sophia Concepcion Serrano.

"It's so nice that they go out there every time and they fight for us and they leave their families just to go fight for us," Serrano said. "It means a lot because they fought for us and they did so much to us and it's nice to give something back to them."

"It was really, really nice to come back and see all the kids they appreciate all of this and we do, USS Saratoga veteran Joe Aviles said.

Aviles has been coming from California to the Wichita Falls reunion for 20 years. Aviles and his wife Jane say the reunion never fails to be something memorable.

"We really appreciate their dedication and devotion to these survivors they've been wonderful," Jane Aviles said.

"They treat us real nice, I got treated real nice," Aviles said.

For more on the Iwo Jima reunion, please click [here](#).

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