

News and stories

Williams helps dedicate Milton's Veterans Memorial Park

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MILTON - For a town that had a population of just over 1,600 in 1940, the list of names on Milton's "Honor Roll" World War II placard in the newly dedicated Veterans Memorial Park fills one whole board, showing the deep connection the town has to military service.

The new veteran memorial in Milton was dedicated Sunday. Surrounding the U.S. Air Force FU-078 jet on Route 60, the memorial includes two boards filled with the names of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice from World War I to the current wars on terrorism in the Middle East.

Two bronze statues, the battle cross and a kneeling soldier, along with a bench were also unveiled during the dedication ceremony.

"I want people who are driving down Route 60 to see this, turn around, stop and take a picture," said Tom Canterbury, mayor of Milton.

Hershel "Woody" Williams, the last living Medal of Honor recipient from World War II and a West Virginia native, was the guest speaker for the event.

Williams grew up in a small farming town in Marion County. Following in the footsteps of his two older brothers, Williams and his dear friend and neighbor both enlisted. His best friend never made it home, part of the reason Williams started his Gold Star family initiative, to place a monument honoring the families who lost sons and daughters in each state.

"There are already six Gold Star monuments in West Virginia," Williams said. "That shows who we are."

Williams also had a surprise for the citizens of Milton. Now that he has no remaining family in Marion County and Ona, where he currently resides, is unincorporated, Williams announced, to much applause, he is adopting Milton as his city.

However, the town also had a surprise for him as the Milton Middle School choir sang the 94-year-old veteran Happy Birthday.

Veterans Memorial Park is located at 1224 Main St.