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Recognizing and honoring Corporal Herschel “Woody” Williams for his dedicated service to the United States of America.

WHEREAS, Hershel Williams was born in Fairmont, West Virginia on October 2, 1923; and

WHEREAS, On May 26, 1943, Williams successfully enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Reserve in Charleston, West Virginia; and

WHEREAS, In October 1943, Williams joined the 32nd Replacement Battalion, and on December 3, 1943, he left for New Caledonia in the southwest Pacific aboard the Motor Ship Weltey Reden; and

WHEREAS, In January 1944, he joined up with the 3rd Marine Division during the Battle of Guadalcanal. From there, he was then attached to Charlie and Headquarters Companies, 1st Battalion, 21st Marines; and

WHEREAS, On February 21, 1945, Williams landed in Iwo Jima. Two days later, American tanks were trying to open a lane for the infantry when they encountered a network of reinforced Japanese concrete pillboxes, buried mines, and black volcanic sands. Williams went forward with his 70-pound flamethrower in an attempt to reduce the devastating machine gun fire from the fortified enemy positions. Covered by only four riflemen, he continued this arduous task for four hours under heavy enemy small-arms fire; and

WHEREAS, On multiple occasions he returned to his own lines to prepare demolition charges and obtain more flamethrowers. Once resupplied, he returned to the front lines to wipe out one enemy pillbox after another; and

WHEREAS, On yet another occasion, he was charged by multiple enemy riflemen who attempted to stop him with fixed bayonets. Williams neutralized every one of them by bursts of flame from his weapon; and

WHEREAS, Williams fought through the remainder of the five-week-long battle and was wounded on March 6, 1945, for which he was awarded the Purple Heart; and

WHEREAS, In September 1945, Williams returned to the United States and on October 5, 1945 for having distinguished for his gallantry in fierce battle, Cpl Williams was presented the Medal of Honor by President Harry S. Truman in a ceremony at the White House; and

WHEREAS, Of the 27 Medal of Honor recipients awarded for the actions at Iwo Jima, Williams is the sole survivor; and

WHEREAS, In October 2013, the Hershel Woody Williams Medal of Honor Foundation was launched to carry out Woody's vision of recognizing and honoring Gold Star Families around the country. A Gold Star Family is one that has lost a loved one in the service of our country in the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, Williams’ passion and love of his country and fellow man never ceases; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Recognizes and honors Corporal Herschel “Woody” Williams for his dedicated service to the United States of America.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Corporal Herschel “Woody” Williams, further evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.