

News and stories

'The fallen have names': Gold Star Families Memorial Monument dedicated at veterans cemetery in Boscawen

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Bea Lewis | [Union Leader](#)

BOSCAWEN - The Gold Star Families Memorial Monument was unveiled Saturday during a poignant ceremony at the New Hampshire Veterans Cemetery.

"This monument is more than just a beautiful piece of stone and, as you can see from the pictures laid at its feet, it's people's lives and loves and losses. It's courage, hope and heartbreak. It's family and friends," Stephanie Ouellette told the hundreds who turned out for the dedication. Her brother, Marine Cpl. Michael Ouellette, 28, was killed in Afghanistan on March 22, 2009, and was awarded the Navy Cross.

"The fallen have names and they have stories, and Gold Star families want you to know their loved one's names and their stories. Not just today but every day, tell their stories and honor the families left behind. That's how they live on."

Hershel "Woody" Williams, a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient for his actions in neutralizing seven concrete-reinforced pill boxes on Iwo Jima under withering enemy fire, was the impetus

behind the memorial.

Remembering the fallen and their families has been a special mission for Williams, sparked when he drove a taxi as a teen and delivered Western Union telegrams announcing war casualties.

Williams, one of only four surviving World War II Medal of Honor winners, said he has been hailed as a hero but said the true heroes are those who never came home.

"They and their sacrifice must not be forgotten. Their sacrifice must not be in vain. For those who lost a loved one, the war is never over, the loss never goes away," he said.

"We as a nation have not made efforts to honor those who have given more than any of us. This memorial will last for untold years and, as the years pass, young and old will look upon it and be aware it took sacrifices of those who were loved to keep America who she is," Williams said.

"We will not forget - we never will. We honor them, and as the wind lifts the banner of Old Glory let it lift our hearts in prayer and remember who they are, what they did and how we are blessed because of them."

Among those attending the ceremonies was the family of Marine Cpl. Brandon Garabrant, 19, of Greenfield, who was killed by an IED in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, just three months after graduating from Con-Val High School.

His father, John, said Brandon was buried at the New Hampshire Veterans Cemetery, noting his service is the only to be held on a Saturday on the weekend of the Fourth of July.

"It was kind of special for them to do that for us. It's a beautiful place," Garabrant said of the cemetery.

John Hutchinson of Weare attended with a group from the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association.

"This is an important dedication. It's why all of us come here. This ground is as sacred as it gets. Every single one of these markers (represents) a hero," Hutchinson said.