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## Senate

### HONORING THE USNS HERSHEL “WOODY” WILLIAMS, T-ESB 4

Mr. President, I would like to take a moment celebrate the christening of the USNS Hershel “Woody” Williams, T-ESB 4. This Expeditionary Sea Base ship, the second of its kind, is named in honor of Medal of Honor recipient and West Virginia icon, Chief Warrant Officer 4 retired Hershel “Woody” Williams.

Woody Williams was born on a dairy farm in 1923 in Quiet Dell, West Virginia. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and served as a demolition sergeant in the Battle of Iwo Jima with the 21st Marines, 3d Marine Division. As a result of Woody’s valiant service, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor from President Truman on October 5, 1945. Today, at 94-years-old, he is the last living Medal of Honor recipient from the Battle of Iwo Jima.

What sets Woody apart from so many others who also honorably served is that his brave service on the battlefield was bookended by compassionate service to members of our armed forces and their families. Before entering the Corps, Woody had the painstaking task of delivering Western Union telegrams to Gold Star West Virginia families who lost loved ones early in the war. After he served 20 years in the Marine Corps and Marine Corps Reserves, he spent 33 years as a Veterans Service Representative in the Department of Veterans Affairs, and is still serving on the Governor’s

Military Advisory Board in the State of West Virginia. He is a fierce advocate for all veterans of all eras.

On January 14, 2016, during a ceremony in Charleston, West Virginia, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus announced that the Expeditionary Sea Base Ship 4 (T-ESB 4) would be named the USNS Hershel “Woody” Williams. On Saturday, October 21, Woody will be joined by his family, five of his fellow Medal of Honor recipients, fellow World War II veterans and four of the five living USS Arizona survivors from Pearl Harbor for the joyous occasion of the christening. I look forward to the great honor of joining these heroes at the event in San Diego this weekend.

Perhaps in no other time in our recent history has it been more vital to remember and emulate the heroism, perseverance, and patriotism of those who belong to the greatest generation. Woody is the embodiment of the best of his generation. Through the christening of a ship that bears his name, we are both honoring his great service and lifting up a role model to inspire all West Virginians and Americans alike.

I would like to salute Chief Warrant Officer 4 Hershel “Woody” Williams. I also want to thank him for his great service to this great nation and the great state of West Virginia – for showing us the power of patriotism, freedom and family.