

# War stories

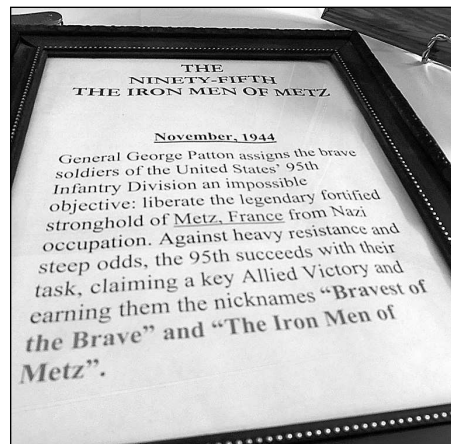
World War II veteran offers details he doesn't often share

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel



photo by Jon Stinnett

**James E. Fox shows off some of the accolades he received as a sergeant in the 95th Infantry Division, known as the "Iron Men of Metz." Below: A plaque details the task and exploits of the 95th.**



Eventually, the unit would earn distinctions for its ability to fight off German counterattacks and a nickname to match its ferocity — the "Iron Men of Metz."

On Oct. 19, 1944, the 95th was sent into combat east of Moselle, France and patrolled the Seille River there, repeatedly repelling German attempts to cross its bridge. In early November, the unit went on the offensive, advancing to Bertrange and capturing the city of Metz itself by Nov. 22. It would continue its advance through bitter fighting, capturing cities in France, the Netherlands and into Germany until the war ended. Throughout the fighting, Fox kept up his task of discovering and sending word of enemy positions back to his commanders, often finding himself alone and in grave danger.

Once, while observing the actions of one Sgt. Warner, Fox saw the sergeant suddenly stand at attention.

"The next thing you know, I felt a foot planted in my butt," he said. Turning around, Fox observed the figure of General George S. Patton himself.

"He said to me, 'I think they're getting a little anxious,'" Fox said. "'Let's give 'em something to get excited about.' And we shot 'em all down. We kicked the &\*& out of 'em three different times; after the second time, all that was left was a church steeple and a couple other buildings."

Once, Fox said he discovered an ammunition depot and heard the 88s — German anti-aircraft artillery — begin firing.

"They say that if you can hear 'em whistle, it means you're okay," he said. "But the next thing I knew, I woke up in the basement."

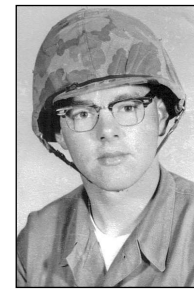
During the course of the fight, Fox wound up with a bit of shrapnel in his neck ("It didn't bother me for a long, long time") and a Bronze Star, awarded for shooting down a German plane that would've decimated his unit.

But according to his daughter, Fox's greatest accomplishment may have come after he returned to America.

"I'm just so proud of him because he came home and raised all our kids," she said. "He's such a great leader, and he loves his grandkids so much. He always took us camping and hunting. I just feel so lucky, because so many families didn't have their loved ones come home to them."

## Ron Turpin

Sgt. (E-5), USMC  
June 1962 to July 1968  
Camp Pendleton, Okinawa, Bremerton, Wash., Vietnam  
Wounded in action, Vietnam



Air Force Base, Anderson Air Force Base, Guam, Fairbanks, AK  
Served as a Jet Engine Technician on B-52 bombers and KC135 tankers. Also trained on Hounddog missiles. Spent all duty with the Strategic Air Command.

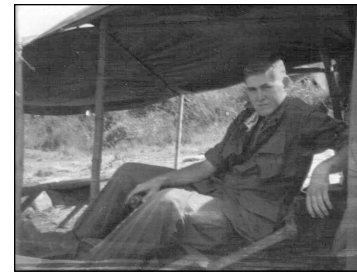
## Stephen Willis

U.S. Army  
Rank: SP4  
May 17, 1971-  
June 24, 1974  
Basic — Ft.



Lewis, WA; Ft. Eustis, VA; Nuremberg, Germany, Ft. Hood, TX

## Terry Neil Turpin



Marine Corporal  
Sept. 1965 to March 1967  
Vietnam  
Purple Heart

## Victor Wilson

Corporal, U.S. Army, 1951-53  
Ft. Rucker, Ala. And Darmstadt, Germany Overseas Medal, Rifle Medal, Veterans Medal of Honor



## Leonard Waitman

U.S. Army Air Corps  
European Theater  
Legion of Merit, American Defense Service Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with seven stars, Army Expeditionary Force, Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Presidential Citation, Overseas Service bars



## Carlton Woodard

1st Lieutenant, US Marine Corps  
July 1941-1945  
Parris Island, SC



## Larry B. Watkins

U.S. Air Force  
E-4 Sergeant  
Nov. 1968 to Aug. 1972  
Fairchild



Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune  
EWA Marine Corps Air Station, Territory of Hawaii  
Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii

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On Veterans Day, we salute the American veterans and active-duty military whose courage and dedication have protected our freedom and our way of life for generations. We recognize their service and their sacrifice, their selflessness and bravery, their hard work and their faith. Please join us in celebrating the men and women of our military, past and present, this Veterans Day. Proudly fly your flag, thank a veteran and show your support for those who continue to serve today.

## Thanks, Veterans!

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Banner Bank  
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