

Enlisted Hero Walk Lackland AFB



Technical Sergeant Forrest L. “Woody” Vosler



Congressional Medal of Honor

World War II

On Dec. 20, 1943, flying on his fourth combat mission over Bremen, Germany, Vosler's aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire, forcing it out of formation and into an extremely vulnerable state. Vosler was severely wounded in his legs and thighs by a 20mm mortar shell exploding in the radio

compartment. With the tail end of the aircraft destroyed and the tail gunner wounded in critical condition, Vosler stepped up and manned the guns. Without a man on the rear guns, the aircraft would have been defenseless against trailing attacks. While keeping a protective stream of cover fire from the tail gun, Vosler was struck in the chest and face. Metal shrapnel was lodged into both of his eyes, impairing his vision. With only a sight of indistinct shapes and blurs, Vosler never left his post and continued to fire. With the aircraft struggling to stay airborne, Vosler volunteered to be thrown from the plane to lighten the load-- this selfless request was denied. He crawled back to his position at the radio and desperately tried to send out a distress signal. While the pilot was preparing to ditch the plane into the sea, Vosler, completely blind by now and using only memory and sense of touch, managed to fix the radios while rapidly fading in and out of consciousness. With the aircraft now sinking into the sea, Vosler made his way onto the wing just in time to save the injured tail gunner from falling off into the frigid waters. He held him there with one hand, both bleeding out and on the brink of death, until other crewmembers assisted them into the dinghy. Vosler was awarded the Medal of Honor on Sept. 6, 1944, by President Roosevelt.