

COMPANY "B" 15TH INFANTRY  
APO #3

COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE RENDERED

I am Staff Sergeant Norman O. Hollen, platoon sergeant, third platoon, Company "B", Fifteenth Infantry. At the time of this incident, at which I was present as an eyewitness, I was a private first class, rifle grenadier, first squad, third platoon, Company "B", Fifteenth Infantry.

When we landed on 15 August 1944 at about 0600 hours, near Ramatuelle, France, we started through a vineyard toward a boulder covered hill which we had to cross to reach our objective. In all the smoke and confusion one of our squads and an attached light machine gun squad had become separated from us and we had to go ahead without them.

We were spread out through the vineyard as we approached the hill, our right flank being about 40 yards from a small draw which led up to the right of the hill, between it and a house. When we were about 250 yards from the hill enemy among the boulders on the top of it started firing at us with a machine gun and small arms and we all hit the dirt. So long as we remained quiet the enemy didn't fire, but as soon as we started trying to move forward, one or two at a time, they would fire on us. In about 20 minutes one of our men had been killed and another wounded, and we hadn't made any progress.

Staff Sergeant AUDIE L. MURPHY, our platoon sergeant, suddenly jumped up and ran to his right, to the safety of the draw. The enemy fired at him but he reached the draw safely. He withdrew through it and finally located the men of the light machine gun squad and brought them back with him. He went on past our line, unseen by the enemy, until he was about 150 yards from the enemy machine gun, and on its flank. Because he knew the exact location of the enemy, he took personal charge of our light machine gun, laying it just over the edge of the draw and then pouring surprise fire at the enemy machine gun crew. He killed two of the crew and wounded the third, silencing their gun.

During this time the others were able to move forward to within about 100 yards of the enemy positions. Staff Sergeant MURPHY returned the machine gun to the machine gun squad and came up to take his position on our right flank again. His best friend had been wounded slightly and sent for medical aid, but the two met in the draw and the friend came up with him.