

## **REPORT TO THE EDITORS**



### **AUDIE IS HOME**

I was sitting in the living room of his sister's house when Audie came back. His sister and brother-in-law and a cousin were waiting. Audie got out of the car and came across the patch of Bermuda-grass lawn. His sister and the two men and his sister's two little boys streamed out the door. I followed.

Their greetings were quiet and restrained. This was the first time in nearly three years that Audie had seen any of his kin. Audie's sister kissed him. He shook hands with his brother-in-law. They introduced me, a newspaperman. I was still wearing a khaki shirt and Audie noticed it and my shoes. He stooped down and caught the hands of his sister's two little boys. They held back, bashfully.

"Well, how's everything?"

They made small conversation, still standing in the yard. The sun was hot. Then his two young sisters and little brother arrived from the near-by-church-supported orphans' home where they lived. The relatives were smiling broadly, but everyone talked haltingly in subdued tones. They were walking sentinel on their emotions. Audie's face was a little set. He smiled some. He wore his big smear of freckles becomingly, but his lips looked dry in his weathered face. He wasn't bigger than a minute - five feet seven, 130 pounds. A week from that day he would be twenty-one.

The sister's house was small, so when other relatives came, they all went downtown to the Coffee Shop. Audie had fried chicken. The day before, he had been flying home from France and had ridden in a parade in San Antonio with thirteen generals.

Nobody knew Audie very well when he left Farmersville, Texas in the summer of 1942, to go over to neighboring Greenville to see about enlisting. He was just seventeen. He had been out of school since the eighth grade, working at odd jobs, freckled-face anonymity in the community. Nobody ever remembers kids like that. Since then he had traveled some. He had been to Tunisia, Morocco, Sicily, Anzio, Salerno, the French beach, the Rhine, the Colmar pocket, Nuremberg and Salzburg.

### **"Make Yourself at Home in the Store, Audie"**

At Ramatuelle he had run ahead for seventy-five yards, under terrific fire, crouching and lugging a machine gun he had found. He had set it up, killed two advancing

Germans, wounded two others, captured five, then led his men on to capture a hill and the entire enemy garrison. And later, in the snow at Holtzwihr, he had climbed upon a burning tank destroyer, manned the gun and held off 250 Germans and six German tanks, single-handed, for one hour.

The Farmersville mayor related those things. Audie heard four speeches and a band concert. The mayor presented him with \$1750 in War Bonds, bought by townspeople.

The mayor called on him to speak. He thanked them. He said "I know you people don't want to stand in this hot sun any longer and just look at me."

He wanted to visit the big town, so he went sixty miles over to Dallas. He tried to buy a new shirt, and a crowd collected in the store. Five giggling girls crowded up, hunting an autograph.

They asked him to sign his name, and also to put down what he was "commonly called."

He wrote, "A fugitive from the law of averages."

He went over to Ashburn General Hospital at neighboring McKinney to see some of his buddies. Audie had been wounded at Veuyaulle, Saint-Die and Holtzwihr, besides having malaria in Anzio.

At home again, the drugstore man told him, "Now make yourself at home in the store, Audie, whenever you have time to loaf."

Audie said, "Thank you, sir. The last time I tried that here I was run out."

First Lt. Audie L. Murphy wears the Bronze Star, Three Purple Hearts, the Legion of Merit, the Silver Star and a cluster

equivalent to two Silver Stars, the Distinguished Service Cross and the Congressional Medal of Honor. That is almost all that a combat infantryman could possibly be awarded by the United States.

-C. S. BOYLES, JR.