

## AUDIE MURPHY EMOTIONS

Audie Murphy was a very sensitive person who cared deeply about other people all of his life. From the interviews we have done with people who knew him, it has become apparent that Audie Murphy never changed from the time he was a child until his untimely death in 1971. He always went out of his way to help others. As a child he grew up looking after his younger brothers and sister. As a soldier he looked after his fellow soldiers. I have purposefully used the term "fellow soldier" rather than "men" because Audie Murphy assumed this role before he was ever promoted to a position where he had the "responsibility" of taking care of his men. This is probably what set Audie Murphy apart. He just naturally took it upon himself to do what he could to make sure the men he was with were well equipped and were both physically and emotionally up to the terrible task before them. His superiors quickly noted that Audie Murphy was a "natural leader". Not only did he assume leadership responsibilities instinctively, but the other men automatically looked to him for leadership because they knew he "cared" about them. Over and over again we have heard from soldiers who said that they would do anything Audie asked of them because they knew he would never ask them to do anything he wouldn't do himself and he wouldn't ask them to put their life on the line unless it had to be done. This made them willing to sacrifice their lives for him when they might not for someone else.

Audie Murphy kept his emotions in check in regard to not losing his head in the heat of battle....but he did get MAD when the enemy was killing "his" men. His coolness in battle along with intense anger at the enemy was what made him such a deadly fighting machine. Someone did a study of soldiers in battle and discovered that the majority of soldiers, even under battle condition, do not want to kill anybody and would not aim at individual enemy soldiers with the intent of killing them. This set Audie Murphy apart. The intensity of the anger he felt toward those who were killing his men was such that he aimed to kill every single enemy soldier he could get in his sights.

Audie Murphy also said that toward the end of the war, especially when Hitler was throwing mere children at them, he no longer felt the anger he had before and that he purposely started missing enemy soldier that didn't pose an immediate threat to him or his men.

From this information I would say that emotions play a very important role in the makeup of a great soldier. The trick is to feel these emotions and still be able to function effectively. My guess is that the instructors know that soldiers cannot avoid feeling emotions in time of war, so they are trying to teach their men how to control their emotions enough to still be able to think clearly in battle.

Larryann Willis  
Executive Director  
Audie Murphy Research Foundation