



THE AUDIE MURPHY NATIONAL FAN CLUB
AUDIE MURPHY - HONORARY PRESIDENT



HONORARY MEMBERS

BILLIE MURPHY - MARIETTA, TX
NADENE MURPHY - PRINCETON, TX
JUNE MURPHY - FLOYDADA, TX
EUGENE MURPHY - JACKSONVILLE, TX

CLUB OFFICIALS

STAN SMITH - EDITOR
SUE GOSSETT - ASSISTANT EDITOR

January 26, 1996

Dear Audie Supporter,

Welcome to the first newsletter of our second year of operation. Looking back to last year, we are pleased with the progress made in the growth of our club. Our membership has gradually and consistently increased. We hope that more of you will take an active role in supporting the club with written articles, suggestions, comments and general feedback. We urge the membership to take full advantage of our classified format.

Dr. Buddy Patterson, Director of the Harold B. Simpson Confederate Research Center at Hill College in Hillsboro, Texas has notified me of exciting news. Hill College has received a gift to build a new library. The area currently occupied by the library will be made available for use by the History Complex for expansion. The preliminary plan will move the Audie Murphy Museum Collection into the new space. The Confederate Research Center will expand into the six rooms it currently occupies. The new library will take at least a year to complete after which the former library will need to be remodeled.

Also, Hill College has received a grant from the Summerlee Foundation to fund a part time position on the History Complex staff. The grant is for three years and may be extended on a year to year basis. Dr. Odie Faulk of Temple, Texas has been hired to fill this position. Dr. Faulk is a retired professor of history who has published over 40 books. He will manage their archival material to make sure that it is used safely and he will encourage the publication of scholarly work. He will also assist in writing narrative for museum displays. Dr. Patterson advises me that the "Audie Murphy Museum will be one of our major attractions." (Submitted by Stan Smith)

French Stamp For Audie? Recently I made contact with the French Embassy in Washington, DC. In speaking with the Defense Attaché's Office, I was advised that their office in Paris was receptive to the idea of a stamp for Audie; however, their stamp program for 1996 is closed out. They too receive numerous suggestions for consideration. The idea of a joint US-French stamp effort in honor of Audie seemed to stimulate their interest. Stamp recommendations for 1997 are encouraged at this time. It was strongly suggested that any success would be vastly enhanced if we could have our senators and representatives write their office in Paris. Such an effort would demonstrate to the French government, that the US was seriously interested in a stamp for Audie. While our own Postmaster General and the Stamp Advisory Board have been remiss if not derelict in their obligations, it would be advantageous to us to apply pressure via the French Government. This opportunity may be the last time we can have any serious possibility of making progress in this matter. Each of you must take the time right NOW to write your own state senators and representatives and insist they endorse a stamp for Audie Murphy by writing the following agency:

**SERVICE NATIONAL DES TIMBRES POSTE ET DE LA PHILATELIE
A L'ATTENTION DE *MONSIEUR LORMAND*
111 BOULEVARD BRUNE
75675 PARIS CEDEX 14
FRANCE**

I cannot stress strongly enough how important it is for you to write these letters. I believe the time and postage will be more productive than first dealing with our own US Postal Service in trying to obtain an Audie Murphy stamp. (Submitted by Stan Smith)

ANOTHER STAMP FOR AUDIE MURPHY! On July 20, 1995, Nevis Island of St. Kitts and Nevis, one of the Leeward Islands in the West Indies, an independent member of the Commonwealth of Nations, issued a souvenir sheet of stamps commemorating the 50th Anniversary of The End of World War II. The sheet consists of eight stamps each with a value of \$1.25. One stamp honors *Audie Murphy*. The other seven dignitaries include Clark Cable, Glenn Miller, Joe Lewis, Jimmy Doolittle, John Hersey, John F. Kennedy and Jimmy Stewart. (Submitted by Stan Smith)

In our October 1st newsletter, it was announced that Texas A & M University will release a “Major Chapter on Audie” in September. The actual release date ended up being November 15th. We can now better clarify this publication. *The Texas Military Experience: From the Revolution through World War II* is a collection of essays on different military topics by twelve authors. The section on Audie Murphy, approximately eighteen pages long, was written by Dr. Roger J. Spiller who is George C. Marshall Professor of Military History at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in Fort Levenworth, Kansas. In addition to describing some of Audie Murphy’s experiences in World War II, Dr. Spiller recounts a little of the history of the Third Infantry Division and makes observations of war in general. While the section by Dr. Spiller was most informative and well written, it was anticipated that there would be much more about Audie. Unless one is interested in Texas history, paying over \$30.00 to obtain this publication in order to extract the eighteen pages by Dr. Spiller is hardly justified. Hence, my original reference to a Major Chapter on Audie is quite misleading. (Submitted by Stan Smith)

CINDERELLA STORY: War hero’s widow returns for reunion. On June 3, 1995 Pamela Murphy traveled from California to Wyandotte, Oklahoma to receive the honors as classmates of the Seneca Indian School gathered to present her with an Outstanding Alumni Award. The chairman of the Alumni Association said they wanted to recognize one of the school’s more famous classmates. After all, it was more than 40 years ago that Pamela Archer’s marriage to Audie Murphy gained national attention. But to the locals, it was a hometown success story, with the newspaper headlines proclaiming “Audie Murphy Weds Cherokee Maiden.”

Now in her 70’s, Mrs. Murphy works at a veterans hospital in California. There she is reminded of Audie almost every day. “I often think if Audie were alive today he wouldn’t be all so much different than some of the men I see at the hospital. That’s part of the reason I keep working there. I have such a respect for those veterans and what they sacrificed for us,” she said.

Ever since Audie’s untimely and tragic death on Memorial Day, 1971 Mrs. Murphy said “I never wanted to remarry. I never even wanted to go out on a date with anyone else.” She believes that Audie would be pleased with her career choice. Mrs. Murphy mentioned that Audie was a quiet man, reluctant to talk about the traumas of war. She said, “But this I know -- Audie will always want to be remembered as a soldier. As for being an actor, he always had the same reply.” - “It beats picking cotton.” Source: The Joplin Globe 6-11-95

MARQUEE MEMORIES

By member Bill Russo of Stoughton, Massachusetts

All through the 1950's and 1960's for many of us, Saturday matinees at the movies meant seeing a grade B movie. For Audie Murphy nearly every movie he made was a western, tailor made for Saturday's kids. Our expectations need not wander too far in any direction because Audie always gave us a product we could count on. You seldom went and found yourself watching Audie in a first-rate film, or one based on classic literature. If you did, you knew that it was not Audie at his best.

* Audie did films based on Hemingway (*Gun Runners*) and Graham Greene (*The Quiet American*), and even Stephen Crane (*Red Badge of Courage*), but these were high-brow efforts in which Audie did not ride, shoot straight, or act bad enough.

* Well past forty years of age, Audie was the "kid" in many movies. Later in his career, he complained that he "kidded his way through the west." He was either the *Cimarron Kid*, the *Silver Kid*, the *Utica Kid*, or *Billy the Kid*. If he wasn't the Kid, someone called him the kid. If they did not call him kid, he was called the "Youth" as in the *Red Badge of Courage*. On his television show, *Whispering Smith*, the villains scoffed and asked him if he shaved yet. He was 35.

* On screen Audie seldom drank alcohol. Setting an example for all kids at the matinee, he'd go into the saloon at Diablo and ask for a glass of water. In *No Name on the Bullet* he spent all the time in the saloon calling for a fresh pot of coffee. Who'd ever seen such a thing?

* You may have thought the name Audie was strange, but in movies he was always called Cass, Chad, Craig, Chris, Clint, Cash, Clay (three times), or Jess, Jesse, Jeff, Jed, or Joe. Once in a while, his screen name was just as weird as his real name: Yancey, Logan, Banner, Ring, Reb, or even Seven.

* If he wore his black leather vest, you had a special treat: he'd be bad to the bone as in *Kid From Texas*, *Night Passage*, *Duel at Silver Creek*, *Gunpoint*, or *No Name on the Bullet*.

* The titles of his movies told us a good deal about the action: The words ‘gun’, ‘gunfight’, ‘rifle’, or ‘bullet’, was most common (ten times) or ‘hell’ (three times). Colors or numbers were popular in the title too: red, black, silver, or six, seven, forty. I always expected to see the title *Six Black Bullets from Hell* on the double bill.

* Dan Duryea always played “Whitey” -- a sneering villain (*Ride Clear of Diablo*, *Night Passage*, or *Six Black Horses*) whom Audie deep down respected and liked in the movie. Charles Drake always played Audie’s loyal best friend (*Walk the Proud Land*, *Showdown*, *Gunsmoke*, *To Hell and Back*), and he usually got killed.

* Most of the women co-stars were actresses I never saw again in a movie. Once in a while a big name emerged. There was Sandra Dee, Gia Scala, Barbara Rush, and Joanne Dru. It seemed like they were in all the movies made between 1958 and 1962, so they were in Audie’s movies too.

* Usually Audie had to deal with some twelve year old boy (an orphan or a ward). These included actors like Brandon de Wilde. Audie later told a story about how much these saccharine scenes bothered him and he altered one script by having himself shoot the boy and dog when they became insufferably cute. The Universal studio executives were not amused. The case probably centered on *Ride a Crooked Trail* which featured Eddie Little. In *Forty Guns to Apache Pass*, Audie had to slap the hysterical boy played by Michael Burns. As I recall, he used more gusto in this scene than in any other movie.

* Audie regularly played a sheriff, marshal, or ranger. If he were in the Army, he was a captain or lieutenant. Twice he played privates: that had to be some kind of joke. In *Red Badge of Courage* he was supposed to be a private and a *coward*. In *Joe Butterfly* he played a private and a *shirker*. Those roles were too ridiculous to believe; so, those films were box-office disasters, to no one’s surprise.

Club member, Mrs. Lois Lacy Lewis, former Celeste resident, now of Greenville, Texas has presented two special valentines to the Walworth Harrison Public Library in Greenville, Texas. One valentine was signed by Audie Murphy for classmate Patricia “Pat” Verble when they were in primary class together at Lane School during the early 1930’s. According to Mrs. Lewis, now a young 98 years old, Pat was “favored by Audie.” The second valentine was signed by June Murphy, also to Pat Verble. The Murphy youngsters were students in the classroom of Elizabeth Pierce. Pat Verble sent Lois Lacy Lewis the two cards shortly before her death in the late 1980’s. The cards will be displayed under safety glass in the Audie Murphy Room of the new library, now under construction. Its opening is scheduled for mid 1996. Source: Greenville Herald Banner, August 25, 1995.

MOVIE REVIEW

When Universal decided to build Audie into a Western star, the studio recognized that his two greatest needs were acting experience and exposure to theater audiences. Murphy could no longer be sold as a war hero. Movie-goers had to accept him as an actor. Audie was like a baseball player taken off the sandlots, placed in the major leagues, and expected to handle his position.

Hollywood had a number of ways to cover his acting inexperience. One was to surround the green actor with seasoned players. This had been tried with Audie in his starring movies. So Universal tried a second method, the gimmick movie.

The gimmick with SIERRA was the real life love affair between Audie Murphy and Wanda Hendrix. During their courtship days, they had been publicized as “America’s most romantic young couple.” They were married on January 8, 1949. The public smiled upon the union and declared it “Ideal.”

While Universal was pondering ways to get Audie more acting experience and screen exposure, somebody came up with a brainstorm: “Why not co-star the young lovers in a movie?” The advantage of the arrangement would lean heavily to Murphy. Wanda, a skilled actress and good screen name, could likely carry the picture if Audie stumbled dramatically.

One movie critic noted that “Audie and Wanda made a cute couple” while another one complimented Audie on his “terrific job” of horse-back riding.

In the case of SIERRA there were two rather obscure players who were destined to become famous. One was Anthony Curtis. He shortened Anthony to Tony, and as Tony Curtis, became a big star. The Jim Arness who got 16th billing in SIERRA was the same Jim Arness who became a household name as Marshal Dillon in the long-running television series GUNSMOKE. Through the years, the Murphy movies were studded with small-time names that went on to wealth and fame.

Synopsis: - Audie stars as Ring Hassard, who makes a living as a mustanger, rounding up wild horses to be tamed and sold. He lives with his father, Jeff, played by veteran actor Dean Jagger, in an isolated cabin. Years before, Jeff had been falsely accused of murdering another man. Jeff has avoided contact with the authorities since.

The plot involves Ring meeting a woman lawyer, Riley, played by Audie's real-life new bride, Wanda Hendrix. Jeff is injured while attempting to tame one of the mustangs. Ring and Riley ride into town to get a doctor for him. Complications arise quickly: Riley is bitten by a rattlesnake, but recovers; Ring encounters a gang of cowboys who have stolen his recently acquired mustangs. After attempting to get his mustangs back, Ring is overpowered and brought to town to stand trial for horse stealing (which, as any true Western fan knows, subjected a guilty prisoner to a sentence of hanging). Riley defends Ring, but the judge now wants to find out where Ring's father is. Ring, of course, won't talk. Later, Ring manages to escape from jail (Audie Murphy would, in the course of his movie career, escape from jail and all sorts of confinement seemingly dozens of times) and to bring a doctor back to the cabin to attend to his father.

A posse is formed to find Jeff. Riley finds out that Jeff is not the killer people think he is. As the climax of the movie nears, the mustangs stampede. Riley is rescued by Ring (again). Another man confesses that he was the real murderer. Jeff is exonerated; Ring and Riley fall in love and presumably live happily ever after.

The movie was filmed from August 30, 1949 to October 3, 1949 in the Kanab, Utah area as well as at Universal Studio. It ran 83 minutes and was released in June, 1950.

Burl Ives sings six songs in this film: "End of the Road", "Hideaway", "Black Angus McDougal", "Drift Along", "The Whale Song" and "Sarah the Mule"

A note of interest regarding Audie and reasons for not smiling throughout the film. Seems as though Audie developed cracked lips while in the brilliant sun of Utah which caused him quite a bit of pain. Some of the scenes were shot back in Hollywood away from the scorching heat so that Audie could heal from the fever blisters.

The director of this movie gave Audie a nice compliment saying "You have to tell Audie what to do only once". He felt that Audie held a unique status as a motion picture actor, one that few other stars held and put him in the same class as Alan Ladd, Gary Cooper and Van Heflin. He also said that Audie was destined for great things on the screen. (Submitted by Sue Gossett)

OPERATION HOMECOMING PLUS 50: On August 19, 1995 the Veterans Administration Medical Center, Dayton, Ohio celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the World War II Homecoming. After the parade and opening ceremonies, the exhibits were open to the public for viewing, In addition to myself, my husband, Dave Gossett manned the exhibit which we prepared in tribute to Audie. Our display was located in a building along with the 82nd Airborne and Living History Association. Many people saw our display and asked numerous questions. A video tape of Audie’s life was also running continuously and a surprising number of people stopped by to watch. We had one lady join the fan club right on the spot. Club member Dave Graham of Hilliard, Ohio was most gracious in lending his items to the exhibit.

Among the items on display was the LIFE Magazine article from July 16, 1945, five different copies of “TO HELL and BACK”, a commemorative medal with Audie on one side and Alvin York on the other, the books “HERO”, “AUDIE MURPHY - AMERICAN SOLDIER”, “THIS FABULOUS CENTURY” (showing Audie’s medals in full color) “WAR MOVIES” (depicting To Hell and Back), a brief description of Audie’s military heritage from Colonel Simpson’s book, a photo of Audie’s grave marker at Arlington Cemetery plus numerous articles and a binder that included a brief biography, a list of his awards, pages of citations from not only the United States but France as well, along with stills from TO HELL and BACK, the patches that he wore, etc. People looked through the materials on the table and seemed to really enjoy seeing what was there.

My guess is that well over one hundred people enjoyed seeing the exhibit and I am certain that a lot of folks will remember this tribute to Audie for a long time to come. There will be another commemorative event for all veterans (all wars) and for the people of greater Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky, and the Midwest during Memorial Day Weekend May 24-26, 1996. This will be called “Closing the War and Coming Home”. The contact person heading this up asked me personally if I would participate in this affair. Not only will I attend this event and display all of Audie’s military memorabilia, but will also take a lot of the movie remembrances that I have accumulated over the past 41 years.

All in all, this was a wonderfully fitting tribute to Audie and to his memory. I am very proud to have been able to participate in this event. Many thanks to those fan club members who stopped by and viewed the exhibit. It was great to speak with them as well as to the veterans of World War II. I wish you all could have been there to see this part of history take place. (Submitted by Sue Gossett)

TEXAS BAND PLAYED AUDIE'S SONG: Charlie St. George, of Copperas Cove, Texas, and his Memory Makers' 11 piece band provided musical entertainment for the first evening of the celebration to honor World War II heroes held in Fredericksburg, Texas on September 2nd & 3rd. Former President George Bush was among approximately 20,000 veterans attending this invitation-only celebration of the 50th anniversary of the war's end when St. George and his big band dedicated "The President's Waltz" a song written by Medal of Honor recipient *Audie Murphy* and Scott Turner. It was the last song that Audie wrote before his untimely and tragic death in a plane crash on May 29, 1971. St. George said that "It was first titled 'Audie's Song,' but Scott renamed it "The President's Waltz." The band was selected over big bands from Dallas, Houston and San Antonio. The Memory Maker big band is composed of retired Fort Hood band members, and band directors of middle schools, high schools, and universities in Central Texas. This celebration was held in the hometown of WW II Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz and the site of the Admiral Nimitz Museum. St. George intended to have "The Presidents Waltz" presented to the attending presidents at the celebration. Source: Killeen Daily Herald, September 1, 1995.

On September 29th, my wife and I had the honor of attending the PATRIOTS DINNER in Philadelphia, PA. during which time the city paid tribute to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society and to those recipients and widows in attendance. At present there are only 184 living recipients. Approximately 121 were able to attend this formal gathering of Heroes. The guests, family and friends brought this affair to over 1,000 requiring it to be held in the convention center. The keynote speaker was President George Bush. Also on the dais were Bob Hope, the Governor of Pennsylvania and MGEN Patrick Brady USA (Ret.) General Brady is the out going president of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. I should like to quote a portion of General Brady's acknowledgment speech: "Among us are names that will ever be a part of American history - Sgt York, Charles Lindbergh, Douglas MacArthur, Jimmy Doolittle, Eddie Rickenbacker, Richard Bong, Audie Murphy." [Needless to say my wife and I had a marvelous time] (Submitted by Stan Smith)

"This is Your Life" update: Several club members have inquired about the reference on page 250 of Don Graham's biography "No Name on the Bullet" and to a television episode of "This is Your Life" Audie Murphy. Mr. James B. Pollock, Vice President, Ralph Edwards Productions has confirmed "the only time Audie Murphy was on 'This is Your Life,' either as subject or guest, was on the radio version (3/8/49. I (Mr. Pollock) must assume that Mr. Graham got the wrong date." (Submitted by Stan Smith)

"The real heroes of the war are those who never came home"