



THE AUDIE MURPHY NATIONAL FAN CLUB
AUDIE MURPHY - HONORARY PRESIDENT



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My pilgrimage to Arlington National Cemetery by club member Thelma Moncrieff, United Kingdom

In September 1999, a milestone in my life was achieved, when I traveled with my husband, Ivor, from England to America to visit Audie's grave. It was a very special time for me and very emotional. Having been a loyal fan since the early 50's, on hearing the news of Audie's tragic death, I promised myself that one day, yes one day, I would travel to the States, to visit and say my own farewell to Audie. That day was 23 September 1999.

When we arrived in Washington DC, we inquired from our tour manager, how to get to Arlington National Cemetery, because we wanted to visit the next day. She made plans for a guide named Susan to come to our hotel and take us to the cemetery first thing the following morning. We had not expected such special treatment and thought it most kind of her.

The next morning was sunny, warm with clear blue skies, absolutely perfect, and my feet were not touching the ground. I had bought Audie a red rose the previous evening at a florist in Union Station, and had written a message in a card to go with the rose.

As we walked up the path towards the Tomb of the Unknowns, my thoughts were racing and I couldn't speak. We stopped to watch the Honor Guard change, and whilst doing so, I felt a tap on my right shoulder (and with my mind only on one person) I turned, and almost expected to see Audie standing there smiling saying, "You made it then." But, it was Susan our guide, asking if I would like to quietly slip away to visit Audie's grave. She took us further around the path and pointed - and there he was, underneath this beautiful tree. My breath was taken away, I was speechless; I wanted to cry; I wanted to pinch myself. Was I really here at my Audie's grave side? The atmosphere was so electric; I have never felt anything quite like it before. My husband stood back with our guide so that I could have my precious quiet moments with Audie on my own, then before we left he took just one photograph of me with Audie's headstone showing the red rose and card I had placed there for him.

What a visit it was! What a day I will always treasure! What a very special person Audie was! What a role model for the young Americans of today, unique in my opinion, not perfect, because none of us are. That is why we are always learning all of the time while we go through life, but here he is nearly 29 years after his untimely death, still touching the hearts of so many people who admire and feel privileged to have known him. He will never be forgotten, he is part of America's history.

OF HEARTS AND HERO

Three Texas towns claim W.W.II icon as their own

06/23/2000

By Patricia V. Rivera / Special Contributor/ Dallas Morning News

On the day that the nation's most decorated World War II soldier would have turned 76, Jim H. Foy stood in front of Farmersville's Audie L. Murphy monument and reminded the small crowd of their ties to the legendary veteran. In September 1945, on that spot in Farmersville Town Square, Mr. Murphy looked out at a sea of faces gaping in awe at the lad who had single-handedly fought off a German attack even though he was badly wounded. "From Farmersville he left and to Farmersville he returned," said Mr. Foy, president of the Farmersville Main Street Program. "He claimed us as his hometown in his enlistment papers, so we claim him." It's best not to let the folks in Hunt County get wind of that comment. Around this time of year, many people in northeast Texas like to lay claim to the late Mr. Murphy. Farmersville held its ceremony on Tuesday. Greenville will attract hundreds to an Audie Murphy Days celebration that runs through Sunday. Early Sunday morning, Celeste will remember the soldier with a solemn ceremony near a marker off U.S. 69 erected in his honor.

"This is where he always called home, no matter what others say," said Charles "Curly" Combs of Celeste. The facts, assembled from a variety of sources in Farmersville, Greenville and Celeste: Audie Murphy was born in a cotton pickers shack near Kingston, in Hunt County. He attended school in Celeste (and Floyd for one year), worked and lived in both Farmersville and Greenville picking cotton and doing odd jobs. "We're all so proud of him that we all want to claim him," said Adrien Witkofsky, director of the American Cotton Museum in Greenville. The museum, along with the Farmersville library, has a large collection of Audie Murphy memorabilia.

The irony is that 70 years ago only a very few people wanted anything to do with Mr. Murphy or his family. Many parents in Celeste refused to let their children play with Mr. Murphy or his eight brothers and sisters because their father, Emmett Murphy, was known as a drinking man. Back then, Mr. Murphy didn't seem destined for greatness at all. He dropped out of fifth grade to support his family once his father abandoned them. His mother died in 1941. Poor, uneducated and feeling helpless, the 17-year-old placed his siblings in an orphanage and tried to join the armed forces. At first even they did not want him, even though the United States was on the verge of going to war. "He was laughed out of the Marine recruiting office because he was only 5-5 and 112 pounds. The Navy also turned him down," Mr. Foy told the crowd in Farmersville. "The Army told him to return when he turned 18."

On June 29, 1942, Mr. Murphy spent the night in Farmersville and then hitchhiked to Greenville where he caught a bus to Dallas for his induction. The first chapter in a legend was written when he swore an oath and officially entered the Army. The baby-faced teenager fought in nine major European campaigns. He was wounded three times and quickly rose in rank from private to sergeant. He later earned a battlefield commission as a second lieutenant and eventually became the commanding officer of his unit. By war's end, he had killed at least 240 enemy soldiers and had won every medal the Army had – 33 – as well as five decorations from France and Belgium.

He left northeast Texas as a loner and returned as the nation's most beloved soldier in war. Fame and glory engulfed Mr. Murphy. People who just three years earlier avoided him lined up to shake his hand. "He'd shake hands with anyone who wanted to, and I wanted to shake his hand," said Mr. Combs, who was 14 at the time of Mr. Murphy's return from war. He made it to the cover of Time magazine and in the process put little-known towns such as Celeste and Farmersville on the map. "He wrote a series of six stories that appeared in newspapers across the country with a Farmersville dateline," Mr. Foy said. His 1955 autobiographical movie, To Hell and Back, traced the life of the Texan who struggled with depression and alcoholism. It was one of 44 films in which he appeared after the war.

Bill and Nadine Lee were among the few at the Farmersville ceremony who knew Mr. Murphy. They became close friends once the soldier-turned-actor needed help riding a horse for his movies. "We spent a lot of time together. He was so thankful that he even flew this country boy out to Hollywood for a week," said Mr. Lee, 94, of Farmersville. But in neither Southern California nor northeast Texas did Mr. Murphy ever find peace of mind. The images of war and death had taken over his heart and soul. "He came back home to visit, but his mind was always elsewhere," Mr. Lee said of Mr. Murphy, who died in 1971.

Perhaps Mr. Murphy's most vivid legacy is seen in the small towns that never forgot the soldier who fought for his nation like few men had done. A glass case underneath the cash register at Pryor's Charcoal Grill in Farmersville holds several newspaper and magazine articles about Mr. Murphy. Waitress Ann Donaldson fields many questions about the man from young and old. "Some don't know who he is, so I tell them all about him," she said. Ms. Donaldson said there's always chatter about the place he'd really call his hometown. "Different people say he's from Farmersville, Greenville and Celeste," she said. "It doesn't matter. He's still our hero."

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA - A PROCLAMATION

On March 1, 2000, President Clinton issued a proclamation acknowledging the immigration of the Irish people who departed from their nation faced with severe hardships and came to America to pursue a dream of a promising future. A number of Irish Americans were singled out, including Audie Murphy. President Clinton said "Patriots such as Audie Murphy, our most decorated soldier of World War II, redefined the meaning of courage." It was subsequently declared that and proclaimed that March 2000 as Irish-American Heritage Month. (Submitted by Rita Richardson of Santa Fe, New Mexico.)

AUDIE MURPHY FIRST DAY OF ISSUE FROM FLEETWOOD

On May 3, 2000 Fleetwood issued a set of Distinguished American Soldiers. The set consists of five covers for only \$20.00. In addition to the Audie Murphy First Day cover, the remaining set consists of a cover for Sergeant Alvin York, General John Hines, General Omar Bradley plus a cover with a block of four for all four distinguished soldiers. This set may be ordered directly from:

Fleetwood
One Unicover Center
Cheyenne, WY 82008-0001
800-443-3232

Many thanks to club member Stephen Fuller of San Jose, California for this information.

AUDIE MURPHY FIRST DAY OF ISSUE FROM THE WASHINGTON PRESS

Washington Press, publishers of Artcraft Engravings has also issued its own First Day of Issue of Audie Murphy. Your bonus copy is herewith enclosed with the compliments of the fan club. For those of you desiring extra copies, they are priced at only \$1.95 and may be ordered as follows:

The Washington Press
Two Vreeland Road
Florham Park, New Jersey 07932
(973) 966-0001

UPDATE: Club member Gloria Cox from West Memphis, Arkansas has advised me that the recipe book from Shepler Western Wear is out of print. Furthermore, Eddie Brandt Saturday Matinee memorabilia is no longer at the address in North Hollywood, California. I am sorry for any inconveniences.

CRITICS CHOICE VIDEO has Audie on their cover! Their May 2000 big book supplement lists under new videos on page 39 "Ride Clear of Diablo" and "Gunsmoke" at \$14.95 each. Critics Choice Video can be contacted at Post Office Box 749 - Itasca, Illinois 60143-0749. Toll free number 800-367-7765. This is your opportunity to add two hard to find videos to your collection. Many thanks to club member Barbara Koziol, Columbus, Nebraska for the information.

ANECDOTES ABOUT AUDIE MURPHY

By

Col. Henry R. Bodson USA (Ret.)

Three weeks after the capture of Rome in early June 1944, the US 3rd Infantry Division closed out its occupation of the city and moved back south, past the raw battlegrounds between Anzio and the great city. The division's 15th Infantry Regiment and its combat team partner, the 39th Field Artillery, settled in north of Naples, near the coastal village of Pozzuoli. It was a time for healing, but also a time for training for the battles to come--amphibious training. The troops didn't know where. But the troops did know that they would go into battle in combat team formation. Thus it was that the commanders of the 15th and 39th agreed that it would be a good idea for all of the infantry noncommissioned officers to be trained in calling for, and directing, artillery firepower.

Sergeant Audie Murphy was there, sitting on the knob of a sand dune, as I addressed my group of trainees. I hadn't met Murphy, didn't know him; but I was impressed with the interest that all of the NCOs showed in the business at hand. We covered rapidly some of the general principles of employment of artillery firepower and then got down to the methods of artillery adjustment. Our terrain board was a clearing between several dunes, our artillery was a large ball of cotton which, when plunked down on the ground, represented an artillery shellburst. Using the cotton shellbursts, I exercised every one of the NCOs through a terrain problem. They all seemed to get the hang of it. Then a day or two later, we went out to do the real thing with real artillery.

Our firing range was improvised. Gun positions were selected a few miles inland from the coast, and our observation post was a comfortable sand dune looking out to sea where a large anchored raft was our target. Several hands popped up when I asked for volunteers to direct artillery fire on to the target. I picked the hand of a young, red-headed, freckle-faced sergeant, who seemed to be no more than 18 years old.

He put his field glasses to his eyes, made some observations and measurements, and then spouted out his firing order to the radio operator close by for transmission to the artillery fire direction center. A wag in the group remarked, "Let's dig some foxholes fast! That first shot will be in our laps!" A few anxious moments passed, then a few heads dipped into their collars as we heard the whine of artillery shells overhead. "Short! Add 100!" commanded the sergeant. His data had been good--good enough to produce a volley burst directly on line between the observation post and the target. But, good grief! He was making only the minimum jump in range to get an "over" round and thus bracket the target! Moments later, the shells whined over again. "Over! Drop 50, fire for effect". We couldn't believe our eyes. His estimate of range change was perfect. The next volley clobbered the target. The freckle-faced sergeant smiled, obviously pleased with himself, then slowly sat down. It was all quite amazing. After only a few hours of terrain board instruction, Sergeant Murphy had fired the perfect artillery problem.

Stamp Dedication Ceremony - May 3, 2000

I had the distinct pleasure of observing the official Distinguished Soldiers stamps dedication ceremony on May 3, 2000. The distinguished soldiers honored were John Hines, Omar Bradley, Alvin York, and Audie Murphy! The ceremony was held in the Pentagon's courtyard, with an audience of about 200 (including two U.S. Senators). It was a beautiful day. Musical presentations were provided by "Pershing's Own" U.S. Army Band. The colors were presented by "The Old Guard" Third U.S. Infantry, and then everyone stood for the National Anthem. Then the Honorable Einar Dyhrkopp (Chairman, Board of Governors, U.S. Postal Service) and the Honorable Louis Caldera (Secretary of the Army) dedicated the stamps. Mr. Dyhrkopp spoke from the heart about service and sacrifice - it turned out he served aboard a destroyer in the Pacific during World War Two that was attacked and badly damaged by kamikaze pilots. Both speakers recited some details of the heroism and service of the distinguished soldiers (and Audie Murphy was variously referred to as a Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Major). After the stamps were officially unveiled (the draping fell off by accident part way through the ceremony), family members of the distinguished soldiers were recognized and received framed sets of the new stamps. Terry Murphy took the stage and accepted one set of stamps for Audie Murphy's family. I had the pleasure of chatting briefly with Mr. Murphy after the ceremony and found him to be a pleasant, reserved gentleman. He gladly signed my Audie Murphy First Day Cover! He stated that he was working on a biography of his father. I also had a chance to chat with Mr. Dyhrkopp after the ceremony and he noted that he'd been trying to get Audie Murphy his stamp for seven years - and accepted the creation of a Distinguished Soldiers block of four including Audie Murphy as something of a compromise. I believe that John Hines, Omar Bradley, and Alvin York are in good company to be honored with Audie Murphy! (Submitted by club member Stephen Surko, CDR, USN)

AUDIE MURPHY DAY – JUNE 23-25 – GREENVILLE, TEXAS

The Audie Murphy Day Celebration 2000 started unofficially for several fan club members at the Continental Breakfast Room at the Best Western Inn. We (Sharon Lovell, Daytona Beach, Florida and Ann Joiner, Houston Texas) ran into Sue Gossett, down from Ohio, and the Williams family (David and Deborah and their daughters, Sheena, Crystal, and Jaden), in town from Arkansas. We were delighted to meet the Australian contingent, Beni Penollar and John and Jenny Bax, all from Sidney. Ann Lang and Corrinna Craig joined us there. The hit of the morning was the T-shirt designed and worn especially for the occasion by Jenny Bax, which sported Audie's Hollywood Star on the front and a "Gunsmoke" photo on the back. We all proceeded to the Fletcher Warren Civic Center for the first morning's activities, arriving shortly after 8:00. The Brass Quintet Band from Texas A&M at Commerce provided military background music between 8:00 and 9:00 as the fans gathered in the lobby and display areas of the civic center. We were pleased to see Larry

Winter's extensive collection, again on display, as well as James and Diane Thomason's array of T-shirts and other memorabilia available for sale. Sgt. George Keck of the Audie Murphy Platoon, Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, shared a display of his personal collection. Authors Sue Gossett, The Films and Career of Audie Murphy, and Robert Nott, Last of the Cowboy Heroes: The Westerns of Randolph Scott, Joel McCrea, and Audie Murphy began their all-day book signings. Artist Don Moore displayed his prints and Gordon Thomas showed a miniature version of his sculpture of Murphy. At the Post Office booth, postal workers sold Audie Murphy Stamps and Pictorial Cancellations.

The official proceedings began promptly at 9:00 with the Posting of the Colors by the 1st Battalion of the 3rd Division's 15th Infantry Regiment from Ft. Benning, Ga. All loyal Audie Murphy fans should recognize this distinguished battalion as the one in which Murphy served during the war. Cloral Lovell gave the Invocation. Adrien Witkofsky of the American Cotton Museum sang the National Anthem and "God Bless America"; Kevin James sang "Proud to be an American" before Hunt County Judge Joe Bobbitt began introducing the morning's speakers and honored guests. Willis R. Whitten, Jr., who served with Murphy in France, spoke of his memories of the Cleurie Quarry incident which led to Murphy's first Silver Star. Greenville Mayor Byron Chitwood welcomed all of us to the celebration. Frank Warholic, commander of VFW Post 5154, Towaco, New Jersey, told how he had collected 11,000 signatures for the Audie Murphy Stamp Drive. Then Warholic presented a plaque to Diane Thomason, honoring her work during the stamp drive. Members of the 1st Battalion, 15th Regiment performed the Fallen Comrade Ceremony, which included readings of Murphy's citations. The leader of these young men was 1st Sgt. Alfredo Albiziente. Sgt. Jameson of the Texas National guard presented the 1st Battalion with a Texas flag. 1st Sgt Albiziente accepted for the battalion. Next, former Greenville Postmaster Fred Arrambidez, currently Postmaster of Tyler, Texas, invited Murphy's sister Nadene to the podium where they unveiled the new stamp. SSG. Worchek from Ft. Hood spoke, and introduced four members of the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club from that base. The last speaker for the morning session was Sgt. George Keck, who introduced several members of the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club from Ft. Sill: drill sergeants SSG Rod Marshall, SFC Tim Wayne, SSG. James Sibley and SFC Jasper Riat. After a moving address by Sgt. Keck, the festivities moved to American Legion Post 17 for a barbecue luncheon.

After lunch we took the Australian contingent on a shopping spree and returned to the civic center between 2:00 and 3:00 p. m. when we ran into devoted fan Teri Edge and her friend Lee Parker from Longview, Texas. During the rest of the afternoon we visited with old friends, and made new ones. Sharon interviewed several people, including Feller Goff, Robert Nott, and Dan Hurt. During the interviews, Goff spoke of his friendship with Murphy from their early days in Hollywood. He told how Murphy was always a "decent and modest" man, and of his regrets that there are few living role models for today's young people. Robert Nott and Sharon created a new version of the "not-Nott" joke as she began her interview with the author of Last of the Cowboy Heroes (Sharon: That's spelled with two 'T's is it not? Robert: "Yes, it is, Nott."), and who is currently working as arts and entertainment writer for the Santa Fe New Mexican. Don Hurt from

St. Paul, Minnesota told Sharon of an incident that occurred when he was 10 years old and of his first meeting with Audie Murphy. He and several of his friends were standing outside a movie theater in San Francisco, waiting to buy tickets to see the movie "Bad Boy," when Murphy happened to drive by. The boys stood in total awe as Murphy stopped his car, got out, and shook hands with each of them. Teri Edge talked with Marguerite Turner who lives in the area and said she used to play Spin the Bottle with Audie when they were little. (How many of us ladies would have liked to have done that?) Richard Rodgers, curator of the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Website was there with his wife, Marie, their son, Beau, and daughter, Anastasia. We chatted briefly with Audie Murphy historian Michael West. We were excited to meet Mary Barron, from New Mexico, a fellow fan-clubber and contributor to the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Website's Message Boards. We joined Beni Penollar as she greeted email friends Marvin and Joy Gibson, here from Missouri, who are the proud grandparents of one-year-old "Little Audie." We agreed with David Williams of Arkansas that this was the biggest crowd ever. (David would know even better than many of us. He and his family have been attending for the last five years.) Deanna Glause from Colorado was here with her daughter Karen and grandchildren Brice and Nick from Nebraska. I am sure there were many we missed, but two people can only talk to so many others. We are glad that so many came and wish we could list all your names.

Saturday's Ceremonies were held at the American Cotton Museum. The ceremonies began at 10:00 a. m. with an Invocation by Cloral Lovell. Afterwards, the Ft. Sill, Oklahoma Color Guard raised the flag, followed by a 3-gun salute and TAPS presented by the American Legion of Texas. Next came a fly-over by an Army Apache helicopter flown by Chief Warrant Officers J. D. Richardson and John T. Ivey from Fort Hood, Texas, home of the original Sgt. Audie Murphy Club. The helicopter then landed, and was available for guests to visit and inspect for the rest of the day.

At the podium, ceremonies began with solos by Adrien Witkofsky and Kevin James. Corrina Craig read an original poem titled "Medal of Honor" which moved us all as it vividly recalled Murphy's action on that memorable day. Judge Joe Bobbitt welcomed the crowd and introduced the speakers, Mayor Byron Chitwood and Congressman Ralph Hall. The ceremonies, which were held outside the museum, were brief because of the heat, and the rest of the morning, visitors were able to browse the exhibits. Sharon, with her little tape recorder, went about talking with people from Texas to California, all having a good time and appreciating the tribute to Audie and all veterans. Among them was 1st Sgt. Alfredo Albizuente, commander of the color guard from Fort Benning, GA., who graciously gave us 1ST Battalion, 15th Infantry (Can-do) Regiment medallions. He invited us to come to Fort Benning to see The China room in their museum, particularly to see their collection of Audie Murphy memorabilia. Sharon also talked with Mayor Chitwood who thought this celebration was timely. "We need to remember why we are free today," he said.

Congressman Hall gave an inspiring, as well as amusing, speech. Rep. Hall was a good friend of Audie's and thinks of him with many fond memories. He said Audie Murphy will live as long as we don't forget. He knew Audie would accept the praise we give him, but would want to share it with all those who didn't make it back.

Sunday's festivities included a bus tour of Hunt County, which stopped frequently at various places of interest for Audie Murphy fans. The stops included Farmersville's downtown memorial, the town of Celeste, and the historical marker near Kingston, which indicates Murphy's birthplace. While in Celeste, the tour stopped at the Audie Murphy Memorial Garden for the flag raising ceremonies there. "Curly" Combs should be commended for continuing to keep the marker and garden area in peak condition. Sgt. George Keck and his soldiers conducted the ceremony. Joe Bobbitt spoke briefly and recognized several of the guests.

We (Sharon and Ann) spent our evenings comparing notes and working to make certain, to the extent we were able, that our information was complete and correct, and preparing our report. We apologize for any "errors and omissions." For everyone involved, the renewal of old friends and the making of new ones, along with an abundance of picture taking, was a delightful experience for all. We missed our dear Stan Smith, Editor of the Audie Murphy National Fan Club, and hope that he feels better soon. (Submitted by club members Ann Joiner & Sharon Lovell)

I have been advised that **WORLD IN MY CORNER** is now available from:

SOUNDTRACK
Attention: Paul Magwood
Post Office Box 800704
Santa Clarita, CA 91380
(661) 296-6843

The price is only 29.95 plus \$4.00 shipping and handling.

THE AUDIE MURPHY DAYS 2000 – LIMITED EDITION COLLECTORS SERIES

Looking for Murphy memorabilia? Want items like an 11oz white coffee mug; baseball caps; 8 x 10" computer mouse pads; black satin jackets or tee shirts? Request a sales flier from:

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432 CR 4518
Wolfe City, Texas 75496
(903) 455-5160

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