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Audie as Audie, Reliving a Past

By VIRGIL MIERS, Times Herald Amusements Editor

Audie Murphy plays himself on the screen in the filmization of his autobiography, "To Hell and Back," which will world-premiere in Texas this week, and we were trying to remember if such an event had ever occurred before in the movies. So we asked Audie, who was conveniently near a telephone in California.

"Well, I've heard some talk out there about that," Audie answered, "but I guess I haven't really kept up with the movies enough to know. It's a strange feeling reliving some of your past. There was some times during the filming when I wished we hadn't started it."

"I kept feeling," Audie continued, "that it would be wonderful to actually relive some of those experiences; be able to save one guy's life in battle, maybe, by telling him to go one direction instead of another. I couldn't remember, though, how it all happened. I had some strong feelings about some scenes.

STARTS IN TEXAS

Audie, in the film, is said to be found as a farm boy in Texas, and then followed through his enlistment in the Army and his emergence from World War II as that holocaust's most decorated soldier. The picture ends with him overseas after getting the many decorations.

Audie says that very few changes have been made from his book. His home-town is identified as being only in Northeast Texas. Actually, some of the nation thinks of Audie as being from Farmersville, Texas. This isn't true, but it is an honest mistake. He was born and reared, with eight other brothers and sisters in Kingston, outside of Greenville.

When he returned home from the war, some of his family had moved to Farmersville. He had never before been there, but given a hero's welcome in the town. Stories confusedly reported him as being a Farmersville boy. He has a brother and sister, Joe Murphy and Mrs. Corinne Burns, now in Dallas.

MAY SEE HIMSELF YET

Audie hasn't seen his completed story on film, only rushes, or scenes, of it from time to time. "I may get up enough nerve to see it with Dallas friends," he said. For that matter, he never saw the completed "Red Badge of Courage," the Civil War story that has been his and his friends favorite film.

The 31-year-old actor, one of the quietest and unassuming and when you know him, personable players of the screen, now lives with his wife Pam (the former airline hostess of Dallas, Pamela Archer) and their two boys in a home in Van Nuys, Calif. That is

his address, but, he says, when he thinks in terms of home, he lists Texas.

One of the sons is named Terry Michael, and he portrays a small part in "To Hell and Back" as one of Audie's brothers. The other son is James Shannon, called Skipper, named after James (Skipper) Cherry of the Interstate Theaters Circuit here who is one of Audie's closest friends.

DALLAS MEN BEHIND HIM

His first taste of show business came in Dallas. He had just returned from war, had been written about in Life magazine with his picture on its cover, when Raymond Willie, also of Interstate Theaters here, suggested that he be interviewed on a regular Sunday Interstate broadcast called "Show Time."

Interstate's R. J. O'Donnell called James Cagney on the Coast, and the actor was instrumental in getting Audie two bit parts as his first tryout in movies. Dallas' Paul Short then signed him to a contract, coming out with Audie's first starring role in "Bad Boy." The contract was later sold to Universal-International Studios where he has made most of his movies.

THREE NEW FILMS

Friday, Audie was having wardrobe tests for "The Charles Russell Story," the film about the cowboy painter that will begin shooting in Wyoming the first of next month. Saturday, he was completing the last day of work on "The World in My Corner," a prizefight story to follow "To Hell and Back."

The only other film coming up for Audie in 1955 will be "The Petticoat Brigade" which he describes as "an off-beat Western."

The young actor is boarding a plane Sunday for Dallas. His wife and two sons are already here. He will be here until Tuesday, when leaving for San Antonio to begin the Texas premiere tour that brings him back to Dallas and the Majestic stage on Friday.

The portion of Audie's life told in "To Hell and Back," the book and the movie, chronicles an amazing, brave and finally exciting episode of a Texas farm boy's fate. However, the story of a mild-mannered, freckle-faced Texan becoming one of the land's most popular movie stars is some story, itself. It could be a sequel, but it probably won't be. We don't believe you could talk Audie into taking again, the Murphy role.

CAPTIONS: IN REAL LIFE.—Audie Murphy photographed in Europe during World War II, and below, cutting the cake in Dallas as he married Pamela Archer.