

# Dallas Morning News

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## Memorial Room

### Tribute Paid Audie Murphy

SAN ANTONIO (UPI) – The woman Audie Murphy called “The Reverend” stood in glass-enclosed room full of momentos of the East Texas farm boy Friday and spoke of her admiration for the little man who became America’s most decorated fighting man.

Pam Murphy, Audie’s widow, smiled as she recalled the kindness and humor of her man. Around her gathered other members of his family, friends and high government and military officials come to pay tribute to his deeds.

“I’m very proud,” Pam said gazing around the Audie Murphy Memorial Room in the lobby of the \$37 million Veterans hospital named for her hero husband.

“**I DON’T GRIEVE** for Audie because I think he’s all right,” she said. He was always brave. He had more guts . . . and I like that.

“I want the young people to know he didn’t smoke and he didn’t drink. He was one of the first people to work with drugs. He had his failings. Just like he gambled in war, he liked to gamble.”

Murphy’s widow and his sons, Terry, 23 and James, 21, will unveil an 8-foot tall, 1-ton statue of his likeness in ceremonies Saturday. The memorial room will be opened for public inspection. Murphy was a farmboy, a soldier and a Hollywood actor who made 44 movies and wrote several country western songs and poems. And it’s all there to see.

Murphy, whose parents had died, spend his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday at Kingston, Texas trying to join the Marines and the paratroopers. They turned him down as underweight.

**HE REJECTED** the Army’s attempts to make him a cook and went on to win a battle commission and 24 battlefield decorations, more than any soldier of World War II. His awards included the Congressional Medal of Honor which is prominently displayed in the memorial room.

Murphy who grew two and on-half inches taller and put on 40 pounds during the war, is credited with driving off a force of 200 Germans and six tanks singlehandedly with a tank destroyer for a weapon in his citation for the nation’s highest military award.

Another time he stormed a hill alone and killed or captured a detachment of Germans who waved a white flag, then opened fire on a friend of his.

James Cagney helped launch Murphy on his acting career, the highlight of which was his starring role in a biography entitled, “To Hell and Back.”

Spec McClure, a Hollywood writer who collaborated with Murphy in writing the saga said Friday Murphy wanted to be a star after playing bit roles in three films.

“**I TOLD HIM** he couldn’t act,” McClure recalled. “But he said Look at all those other guys, they can’t act either.”

After that McClure said Murphy never took second billing.

In his later years, Murphy suffered a series of financial disasters, one of which he was trying to rescue when the plane he was on crashed killing all six aboard in the hills of Georgia on May 28, 1971.

Mrs. Murphy and McClure recalled how Murphy spent much time visiting wounded militarymen in hospitals, chided Marines about how he would have liked to serve with them had he not been “undernourished” and was very conscious of his rights as an American.

While making the movie of his life, McClure said he and Murphy visited a graveyard in France where Murphy’s friend was buried, along with two Germans Murphy killed in retaliation.

French photographers wanted Murphy to pose in a triumphant manner, McClure said, but Murphy declined and instead stood reverently at attention.

“It was them or us,” Murphy said.