

Sgt. Audie Murphy

Audie Leon Murphy, son of poor Texas sharecroppers, rose to national fame as the most decorated U.S. combat Soldier of World War II. Among his 33 awards and decorations was the Medal of Honor, the highest military award for bravery that can be



given to any individual in the United States of America, for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty." He also received every decoration for valor his country had to offer, some of them more than once, including five decorations by France and Belgium. Credited with killing more than 240 of the enemy while wounding and capturing many others, he became a legend within the 3rd Infantry Division. Beginning with his service as an Army private, Murphy quickly rose to the enlisted rank of staff sergeant, was given a battle field commission as 2nd lieutenant, was wounded three times, fought in nine major campaigns across the European Theater, and survived the war.

During Murphy's three years active service as a combat soldier in World War II, he became one of the best fighting combat Soldiers of this or any other century. What Murphy accomplished during this period is most significant and probably will never be repeated by another Soldier, given today's high-tech warfare. The U.S. Army has always declared that there will never be another Audie Murphy.

Sept. 21, 1945, Murphy was released from the Army as an active member and reassigned to inactive status. During this same time, actor James Cagney invited Murphy to Hollywood in September 1945, when he saw Murphy's photo on the cover of Life Magazine. The next years in California were hard times for Murphy. Struggling and becoming disillusioned from lack of work while sleeping in a local gymnasium, he finally received token acting parts in his first two films.

His first starring role came in a 1949 released film by Allied Artists called, "Bad Boy." In 1950 Murphy eventually got a contract with Universal-International where he starred in 26 films, 23 of them westerns over the next 15 years. His 1949 autobiography "To Hell And Back" was a best seller. Murphy starred as himself in a film biography released by Universal-International in 1955 with the same title. In the 25 years that Audie spent in Hollywood, he made a total of 44 feature films.

Murphy suffered from what is now known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and was plagued by insomnia and depression. During the mid-60s he became dependent for a time on doctor prescribed sleeping pills called Placidyl. When he recognized that he had become addicted to this prescription drug, he locked himself in a motel room, stopped taking the sleeping pills and went through withdrawal symptoms for a week. Always an advocate for the needs of veterans, he broke the taboo about discussing war related mental problems after this experience. In an effort to draw attention to the problems of returning Korean and Vietnam War veterans, Audie Murphy spoke out candidly about his personal problems with PTSD, then known as "Battle Fatigue." He publicly called for the United States government to give more consideration and study to the emotional impact war has on veterans and to extend health care benefits to address PTSD and other mental health problems of returning war vets.

While on a business trip May 28, 1971, he was killed when a private plane flying in fog and rain crashed in the side of a mountain near Roanoke, Virginia. Five others including the pilot were also killed. Murphy was 46.

Murphy was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery June 7.

In 1996, the Texas Legislature officially designated his birthday, June 20, as Audie Murphy Day.



SPC. BROOKS FLETCHER

Inductees recite the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer during the Sergeant Audie Murphy Induction Ceremony held at Soldier Hall April 24.

Army Strong

SAMC inducts 10 NCOs

SPC BROOKS FLETCHER

31st Brigade Public Affairs

Audie Murphy is a household name in the Army. Murphy set the standard for leadership among Soldiers and noncommissioned officers. Named the most decorated Soldier of World War II, he is also the most decorated Soldier in American history.

In honor of Murphy, the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club was established to recognize

Soldiers who display the leadership qualities that Murphy embodied.

The organization endows the very essence of Murphy's motto, "You lead from the front." And for 10 Fort Bliss NCOs, this motto could not be more correct.

April 24, those NCOs were inducted into the SAMC during an induction ceremony at Soldier Hall in Bldg. 2. These NCOs have demonstrated leadership

and commitment toward their units, Soldiers and themselves.

As the official party took their seats, Command Sgt. Maj. Franklin Saunders, U.S. Army Intelligence Center and Fort Huachuca, Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Clem, 108th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, and Sgt. 1st Class Robert Edwards, president SAMC, the induction ceremony began with a narration of the NCO creed, a skit, and a brief video on the history of Sgt. Audie Murphy.

"Each [NCO] deserves praise and respect," said Saunders. "[SAMC] is an elite organization that exemplifies the traits of Audie Murphy."

Sanders and Col. David Mann, chief of staff, USAADACFB, began the award presentation by recognizing and inducting two NCOs from 31st Brigade – First Sgt. Kelly Farrell, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1-44 ADA Bn., and Staff Sgt. Wesley Balderas, HHB, 31st ADA Brigade.

Following the pair from the 'Ready and Vigilant' Brigade, were the NCO Academy's Staff Sgts. Henry Scott and Samuel Carbajal.

The last six inductees represented the various units within the 108th ADA Brigade.

Sgts. James Knox and Michael Vinson, a pair of light wheeled vehicle mechanics, along with Staff Sgt. Daniel Kopta, represented 1-7 ADA Bn.

Continuing the lineup of NCOs from the 'Deeds Above Words' brigade were two staff sergeants from 2-43 Bn., Shandrel Stewart and James Fisher.

Finishing the presentation of SAMC inductees was Sgt. 1st Class. Jonathan Land, headquarters, 108th Brigade.

"It is indeed a great honor to be inducted into SAMC and with it, so much is expected of you," Saunders said.

Closing the induction ceremony, Edwards presented Saunders with a SAMC plaque.



Command Sgt. Maj. Franklin Saunders, command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Intelligence Center and Fort Huachuca, presents the SAMC medallion to Staff Sgt. Wesley Balderas, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 31st Air Defense Artillery Brigade.