

MEDAL OF HONOR

AUDIE MURPHY



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MEDAL OF HONOR

AUDIE MURPHY

SCRIPT

Chuck Dixon

PENCILS AND INKS

Rick Magyar

COLORS

Peter Pantazis

LETTERING

Troy Peteri

COVER

Rick Magyar

PRODUCER AND EDITOR

Joseph Craig

DESIGNER

Kevin Irwin

Special thanks to Matthew J. Seelinger, Erik Villard, David A. Smith, and Jim McLaughlin.

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HIS COURAGE HAD BEEN RECOGNIZED IN SICILY AND ITALY. AND THANKS TO HIS ACTIONS IN FRANCE, THE NATION'S HIGHEST HONOR WOULD SOON BE BESTOWED UPON...

AUDIE MURPHY



ONE OF TWELVE CHILDREN AND ABANDONED BY HIS FATHER, AUDIE WAS PUT TO WORK EARLY PICKING COTTON IN HUNT COUNTY, TEXAS.



STANDING AT FIVE FEET, FIVE INCHES AND WEIGHING ONLY 110 POUNDS, HE WAS TURNED AWAY BY THE MARINES BUT ACCEPTED INTO THE U.S. ARMY.



ASSIGNED TO THE 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION, HE SAW ACTION IN SICILY, ITALY, AND FRANCE.



IT WAS IN ITALY THAT MURPHY'S INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE AND COURAGE WOULD FIRST BE RECOGNIZED.

LEADING A TEAM INTO ENEMY TERRITORY, HE DESTROYED A GERMAN TANK WITH RIFLE GRENADES.



THE BRONZE STAR WAS THE FIRST OF HIS MANY MEDALS FOR VALOR.



ARRIVING IN SOUTHERN FRANCE, HE WOULD RECEIVE A DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS AFTER KILLING SIX GERMANS, WOUNDING THREE, AND TAKING FIVE PRISONERS.



MORE COMMENDATIONS FOLLOWED, ALONG WITH A BATTLEFIELD COMMISSION TO SECOND LIEUTENANT IN OCTOBER 1944.



JANUARY 1945 NEAR HOLTZWUHR IN THE COLMAR POCKET, FRANCE.



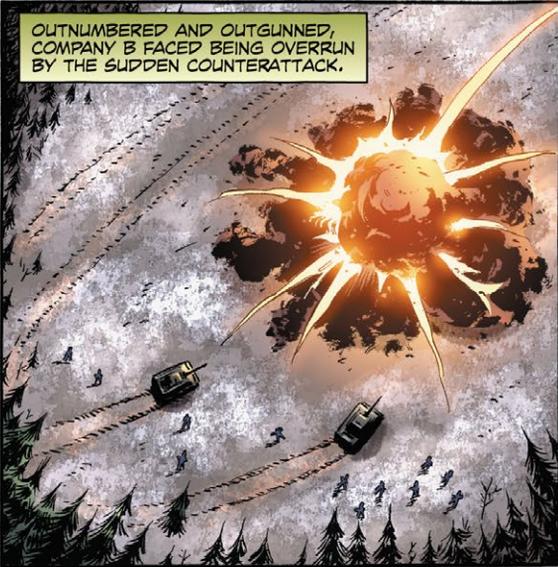
WHILE AWAITING REINFORCEMENTS, COMPANY B FACED ATTACK BY GERMAN INFANTRY.



THESE WERE PANZERGRENADIERS CLEARING THE WAY FOR A COLUMN OF SIX HEAVY TANKS.



OUTNUMBERED AND OUTGUNNED, COMPANY B FACED BEING OVERRUN BY THE SUDDEN COUNTERATTACK.



MURPHY HEADED FOR HIS COMMAND POST CLOSER TO THE ADVANCING ENEMY.

BACK TO YOUR POSITIONS, MEN! MOVE!



FROM HIS ENDANGERED POSITION, MURPHY CALLED IN CLOSE ARTILLERY SUPPORT TO TRY AND HALT THE GERMAN ADVANCE.

I WANT A ROUND OF SMOKE AT CO-ORDINATES THIRTY-POINT-FIVE!

STAY ON THE LINE!



THE SMOKE MARKS THE GERMAN POSITION.





TWO HUNDRED RIGHT!
TWO HUNDRED OVER!



THE GERMANS PRESSED ON
DESPITE THE BARRAGE.

AN 88MM ROUND FROM A
TIGER STRUCK AN M10 TANK
DESTROYER, DISABLING IT.



ALONE NOW, MURPHY KEPT UP
A WITHERING FIRE UNTIL HIS
CARBINE AMMO RAN OUT.



THERE WAS ONLY ONE
WEAPON LEFT TO HIM.

THE FIFTY CAL ATOP
THE CRIPPLED M10.



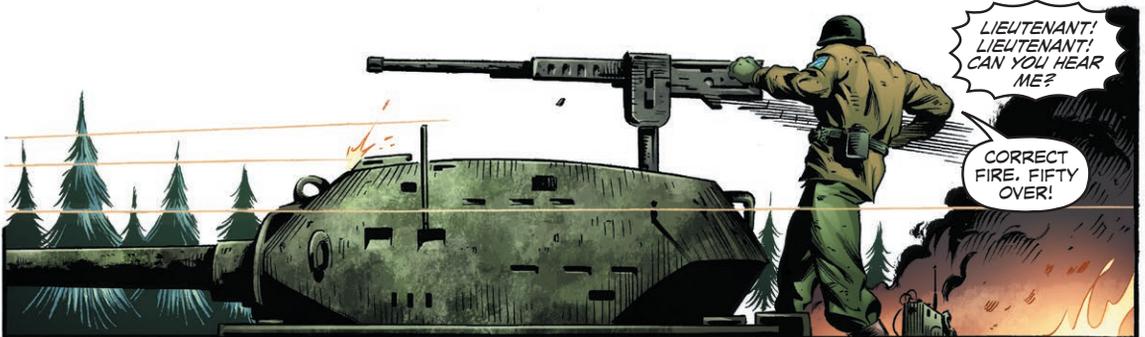
WITH THE RUMBLE OF THE TIGER ENGINES GROWING LOUDER, MURPHY EXPOSED HIMSELF TO ENEMY FIRE.



HE CONTINUED DIRECTING FIRE ON THE APPROACHING TANKS.

HOW CLOSE ARE THEY TO YOUR POSITION?

JUST HOLD THE PHONE AND I'LL LET YOU TALK TO ONE OF THE BASTARDS!



LIEUTENANT! LIEUTENANT! CAN YOU HEAR ME?

CORRECT FIRE. FIFTY OVER!

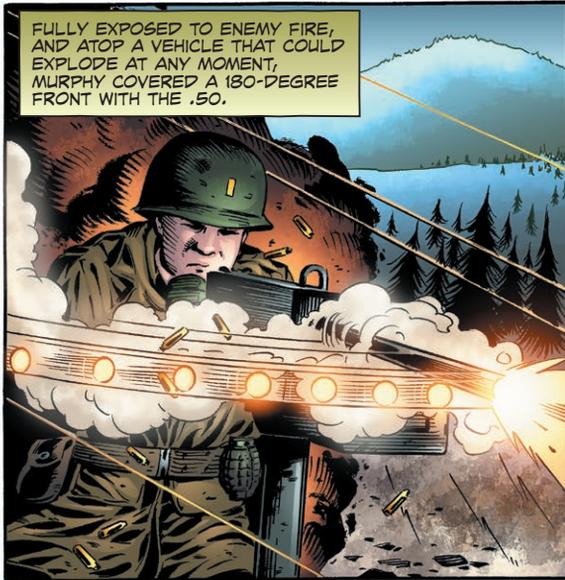


HIS COMPANY WITHDRAWN, LIEUTENANT MURPHY REMAINED BEHIND TO SLOW THE PANZER ADVANCE.

THE SMOKE OF THE BURNING VEHICLE HID HIS POSITION FROM THE GERMANS AT FIRST.



ENEMY SOLDIERS MOVED TO FLANK MURPHY'S POSITION.



FULLY EXPOSED TO ENEMY FIRE, AND ATOP A VEHICLE THAT COULD EXPLODE AT ANY MOMENT, MURPHY COVERED A 180-DEGREE FRONT WITH THE .50.



HE WOULD TAKE DOWN MORE THAN FIFTY ENEMY TROOPS THAT DAY.



THE ENEMY CLOSING IN ALL AROUND HIM, MURPHY CALLED IN A FINAL COORDINATE.

CORRECT FIRE. FIFTY OVER. KEEP FIRING.

THIS IS MY LAST CHANGE.



FIFTY OVER? THAT'S YOUR OWN POSITION.

I DON'T GIVE A DAMN! FIFTY OVER!



SHELLS RAINED DOWN ALL AROUND MURPHY'S LOCATION STARTING IN THE FIELD..



...AND MARCHING CLOSER TO ENGLUF THE GROUND ALL AROUND THE BURNING TD.

HAVING DEVASTATED THEIR SUPPORT INFANTRY, THE DEADLY ACCURATE BARRAGES DROVE THE PANZERS INTO RETREAT.



BUT THEY STILL REPRESENTED A DEADLY THREAT. ONE PANZER SCORED A DIRECT HIT ON MURPHY'S VEHICLE.



AMAZED THAT HE HAD SURVIVED, MURPHY FOUND HIS RADIO WAS DEAD.

SGT. BOWES? DO YOU READ ME?
DAMN.



IGNORING A LEG WOUND, MURPHY HELD OFF THE ENEMY UNTIL HIS AMMO IS SPENT.



EXHAUSTED AND SUFFERING FROM LOSS OF BLOOD, MURPHY RETURNED TO HIS COMPANY.

DESPITE HIS WOUNDS HE WOULD DIRECT COMPANY B BACK TO THEIR POSITION TO RESIST FURTHER COUNTERATTACKS.



SIX MONTHS LATER, SEVENTH ARMY COMMANDER LT. GEN. ALEXANDER PATCH PRESENTED AUDIE MURPHY WITH THE MEDAL OF HONOR AND THE LEGION OF MERIT FOR HIS ACTIONS AT HOLTZWHR, FRANCE.



INVITED TO HOLLYWOOD BY JAMES CAGNEY, MURPHY WOULD BECOME A HERO ON THE SILVER SCREEN IN DOZENS OF HIGHLY POPULAR WESTERNS.



HE WOULD CONTINUE HIS MILITARY SERVICE AS A CAPTAIN IN THE TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD AS WELL AS A MAJOR IN THE ARMY RESERVE.



AUDIE MURPHY DIED IN A PRIVATE PLANE CRASH IN VIRGINIA IN 1971.

FITTINGLY, HIS BODY WAS RECOVERED TWO DAYS LATER ON MEMORIAL DAY.



WITH EVERY AWARD FOR VALOR AVAILABLE FROM THE US MILITARY, AUDIE MURPHY REMAINS THE MOST DECORATED SOLDIER IN AMERICAN HISTORY.



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