

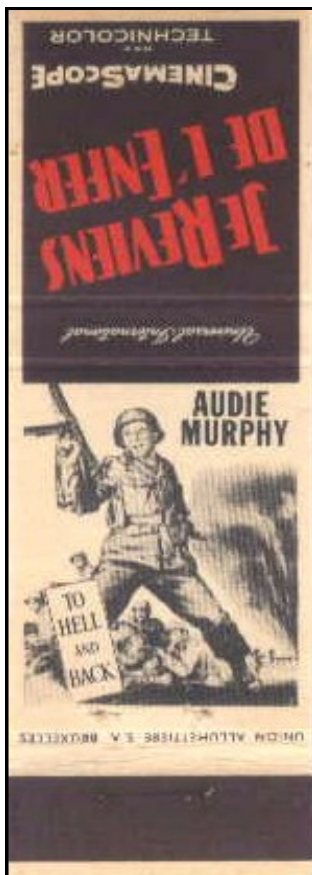
Texas Personalities

Audie Murphy

If I asked any of my seventh grade students who Audie Murphy was, they wouldn't have a clue, but when I was a kid, I grew up watching all of his movies. He was one of my heroes. He wasn't a John Wayne [*sorry, John!*]; he was the real thing. "Just a kid too young to shave...but old enough to win every medal his country had to give!" That was Audie Murphy.

He was born the son of poor Texas sharecroppers in 1924. He enlisted in the Army in 1942, ten days after his eighteenth birthday. Starting as a private in the infantry, he was a 2nd Lieutenant by October, 1944. His service in the European-African-Middle Eastern theatre made him the most decorated U.S. combat soldier of World War II. His courage and dedication earned him the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star with First Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device and First Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart with Second Oak Leaf Cluster, Legion of Merit, Good Conduct Medal, Distinguished Unit Emblem with First Oak Leaf Cluster, American Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with one silver service star, three bronze service stars and one bronze service arrowhead, World War II Victory Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Marksman Badge with Rifle Bar, Expert Badge with Bayonet Bar, French Fourragere in Colors of the Croix de Guerre, French Legion of Honor, Grade of Chevalier, French Croix de Guerre with silver star, and the Belgium Croix de Guerre 1940 with Palm...and he did it all when he was less than 20!

Actor James Cagney invited Murphy to Hollywood in September 1945, when he saw Murphy's photo on the cover of Life Magazine. He ended up making 29 films, mostly westerns, including *To Hell and Back*, his autobiography,



in 1955 [*which I have*]. It was Universal Studios' top grossing film for the next 20 years! He was also a poet and a successful songwriter. Suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome ('Battle Fatigue'), himself, he lobbied for veterans' health care. He died in an air crash in 1971 and was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery. After President Kennedy's grave, *his* is the most often visited.

Audie Murphy is most familiar within the hobby from such movie advertising covers as shown here.

