

Quotes of Audie Murphy¹

ON FEAR

"I never moved into combat without having the feeling of a cold hand reaching into my guts and twisting them both into knots."

"Seems to me that if you're afraid or living with some big fear, you're not really living. You're only half alive. I don't care if it's the boss you're scared of or a lot of people in a room or diving off of a dinky little board, you gotta get rid of it. You owe it to yourself. Makes sort of a zombie out of you being afraid. I mean you want to be free, don't you? And how can you if you are scared? That's prison. Fear's a jailer. Mind now, I'm not a professor on the subject. I just found it out for myself. But that's what I think."

"I was scared before every battle. That old instinct of self-preservation is a pretty basic thing, but while the action was going on some part of my mind shut off and my training and discipline took over. I did what I had to do."

"People are very quick to ridicule others for showing fear. But we rarely know the secret springboards behind human action. The man who shows great fear today may be tomorrow's hero. Who are we to judge?"

"If you're afraid of anything, why not take a chance and do the thing you fear. Sometimes it's the only way to get over being afraid."

"The way I see it, if you're scared of something you'd better get busy and do something about it. I'd call that a challenge - and I believe that the way to grow is to meet all the challenges as they come along."

ON BRAVERY

¹ Some of the best known quotes of Audie Murphy as written on Pages 369-371 of Colonel Harold B. Simpson's book "Audie Murphy: American Soldier"

"I don't know what bravery is, sometimes it takes more courage to get up and run than to stay. You either just do it or you don't. I got so scared the first day in combat I just decided to go along with it."

"Loyalty to your comrades, when you come right down to it, has more to do with bravery in battle than even patriotism does. You may want to be brave, but your spirit can desert you when things really get rough. Only you find you can't let your comrades down and in the pinch they can't let you down either."

ON WAR

"War is like a giant pack rat, it takes something from you and it leaves something behind in its stead. It burned me out in some ways so that now I feel like an old man [at thirty-one] but still sometimes act like a dumb kid. It made me grow up too fast. You live so much on nervous excitement that when it is over you fall apart."

"I am in favor of no more war but as long as war clouds hover over the earth, as a citizen, I feel we should be prepared for the worst."

"War robs you mentally and physically, it drains you. Things don't thrill you anymore. It's a struggle everyday to find something interesting to do."

"War taught me how to get along with people, not to be selfish. War is a pretty good course in public relations."

ON THE ARMY AND SOLDIERING

"I have to admit I love the damned Army. It was father, mother, brother to me for years. It made me somebody, gave me self-respect."

"Two weeks of combat can make an old man out of you. You grow up real fast in the army and you learn not to make the same mistakes twice. Because if you do, you don't grow up at all."

"You've got to believe that you are right to be a good soldier, that's why mercenaries are no good. It's emotion that makes a good fighting man - and knowing that you are fighting for a good cause."

"I was proud of being a tough soldier."

ON PATRIOTISM

"Nobody likes for his life to be disrupted. But when the country calls, they need you."

"It's out of mode nowadays to be patriotic. If you show patriotism you are considered a subversive."

ON ACTING AND HOLLYWOOD

"Sure the exhibitors love me; I'm a two bag man! By the time I'm through shooting up all the villains, the audience has gone through two bags of popcorn each." [In 1955 Audie was selected as the most popular western star by the movie exhibitors].

"As an actor I'd make a good stunt man."

"Acting is daydreaming. And I had daydreamed all of my life. It was the only way I could escape my environment."

"I guess that all those westerns on television killed the market, I seem to be the only one left. I'll keep making them till they get wise to me."

(In reference to making western pictures.)

"The faces [actors and actresses] are the same, and so is the dialogue [plot]. Only horses are changed. Some of them get old and have to be retired."

"I came to Hollywood because I had no place else to go."

(In a letter to Spec McClure)

"My operation [appendectomy] is still draining. If this keeps up it may have a longer run than most of my pictures."

"I'm working under a great handicap...no talent."

Of the role of himself in 'To Hell and Back (1955)': "I don't think I'm the type. Maybe Tony Curtis would do."

Bill Mauldin: "In him, we all recognized the straight, raw stuff, uncut and fiery as the day it left the still. Nobody wanted to be in his shoes, but nobody wanted to be unlike him, either."

"I guess my face is still the same, and so is the dialogue. Only the horses were changed."-A.M. at 40.

"I have a deadly hatred of fear. It has me by the throat . . . Fear is the blot . . . I am not brave. I simply perform first and think later."

"You lead from the front."

"I must have done some of my best fighting in a war I was in long before I joined the Army. You might say there never was a 'peace time' in my life, a time when things were good.... It was a full time job just existing."

"You Do the Prayin' and I'll Do the Shootin' "

"In life quality is what counts, not quantity."

"The real heroes of the war are those who never came home."

"The real heroes are dead."

"I'll tell you what bravery really is. Bravery is just the determination to do a job that you know has to be done."

"I know you people don't want to stand in this hot sun any longer and just look at me."

"In 1948, I returned to France at the invitation of French Government. It was still a war-ravaged country ... but this time there was something different. It wasn't the absence of fighting, nor the silence of the big guns, nor the disappearance of uniforms and chow lines ... I didn't know what it was until one morning when I was taken to the grounds of a small French school. The children had been assembled in the play yard. They were grouped close together and arranged in wobbly little rows, their dark heads bobbing around like flower buds on long stems. One of the teachers rapped for silence. The kids quieted immediately and turned their eyes towards her. Their Faces were scrubbed and bright in the sunshine. The teacher raised her arms, and for a moment, there was no sound ... Then the teacher brought her arms down and the kids began to sing ... I Knew why I felt at home. The spirit of freedom was hovering over that play yard as it did all over France at that time. A country was free again. A people had recovered their independence and their children were grateful. They were singing in French, but the melody was freedom and any American could understand that. America, at that moment, never meant more to me ... The true meaning of America, you ask? It's in a Texas rodeo, in a policeman's badge, in the sound of laughing children, in a political rally, in a newspaper... In all these things, and many more, you'll find America. In all these things, you'll find freedom. And freedom is what America means to the world. And to me."

"I never like being called the 'most decorated' soldier. There were so many guys who should have gotten medals and never did - guys who were killed." -- **Audie Murphy**