

COMPANY "B" FIFTEENTH INFANTRY  
A. P. O. #3 U. S. ARMY

COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE RENDERED

I am ANTHONY V. ABRAMSKI, 42060471, Private First Class, Rifleman, Company "B", Fifteenth Infantry, in which capacity I was present at and an eye-witness to the following action:

On 26 January 1945, Company "B" was out in open country just beyond a tongue of woods near HOLTZWILHR, FRANCE. At about 1400 hours, the enemy counter-attacked with a terrific punch. Six heavy tanks started coming toward us with about two companies of German infantrymen following them. The assault was preceded by a ten minute artillery concentration on our positions.

Second Lieutenant AUDIE L. MURPHY, O-1692509, ordered us to withdraw to positions we had prepared about 100 yards inside the woods. As we pulled back, the KRAUT infantry moved up behind their screen of tanks. The tank guns and machine guns were firing at us all the time.

Lieutenant MURPHY remained at his CP, which was under a tree in the open meadow, so that he could direct artillery fire on the advancing enemy. Together with a tank destroyer, which was across the main road through the woods and about 10 yards to his right rear, he held that rearguard position under raking fire from the German tanks.

From my position in the woods, I saw a direct hit from an enemy 88mm gun smash into our tank destroyer. The crew piled out as fast as they could and withdrew toward the company position in the forest. A lot of smoke was coming out of the knocked out TD. It was slowly burning.

The enemy tanks were now abreast of Lieutenant MURPHY's position, rolling across the open field on both sides of him and firing at him with their cannon and machine guns as they passed. AP and HE shells struck all over the area. The Lieutenant stood bolt upright, giving fire directions, although fragments from exploding shells cut through the leaves of the tree beneath which he was standing. The tanks swept past him.

All this time, Lieutenant MURPHY calmly continued to direct artillery fire on the KRAUT infantry, which was advancing about 200 yards behind the tanks. I saw shell after shell explode in the midst of the German skirmish line. Dozens of Germans were killed by our concentrations, but the line kept moving toward us.

As we engaged the KRAUT tanks with bazooka and directed artillery fire, I saw Lieutenant MURPHY climb on top of the burning tank destroyer while bursts of machine pistol fire from the advancing infantry battered against the hull and tread. Though smoke was pouring from the open hatch, Lieutenant MURPHY climbed on top and opened up on the enemy with the TD's 50 caliber machine gun. The

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destroyer was burning inside, and it was chock full of ammunition and gasoline; at any moment the thing might have blown-up. It was like standing on top of a time bomb.

The KRAUTS threw everything they had at Lieutenant MURPHY. As the destroyer had been knocked out with its three inch gun facing the enemy, he had to swing the 50 caliber around 180 degrees to engage the KRAUT and he had to fire over the open turret. That meant that he was standing on the TD chassis, exposed to enemy fire from his ankles to his head and silhouetted against the trees and the snow behind him.

As the infantry swarmed up toward the destroyer, they fired their automatic weapons and rifles at Lieutenant MURPHY. I could see their white machine gun tracers smash against the hull and turret and then glance off. The small arms fire seemed to be converging in on him from all directions, and I don't understand yet how he came through it alive.

Then about a dozen Germans worked their way up through a ditch to get him from his right flank. They advanced by stealth to within 50 yards of him, then Lieutenant MURPHY spotted them. Wheeling his machine gun toward this new enemy, he fired burst after burst down into the gully, killing the entire German force.

The six German tanks faltered in their attack on our prepared positions because they had no infantry support. The tanks turned and moved through the woods toward Lieutenant MURPHY's position, firing at him with their 88mm guns and machine guns. I could see Lieutenant MURPHY fire his machine gun at the approaching tanks, forcing them to button up, then turn his weapon on the infantry, which was still advancing under a curtain of automatic weapons fire.

Friendly artillery fire shelled the path of the cruising tanks, preventing them from overrunning Lieutenant MURPHY's position. HE shells from the German Mark VI's scored two or three direct hits on Lieutenant MURPHY's destroyer. Flames burst from the hatches and the whole tank destroyer was sometimes wrapped in billows of smoke. When the smoke cleared after one of these shell hits, I saw that Lieutenant MURPHY had been hit. His uniform was tattered and spattered with dirt, and blood was seeping through his torn trouser leg.

Through all this furious fire, Lieutenant MURPHY stood in his exposed position and fired whenever the Germans attempted to advance. I saw him kill KRAUTS in the ditches and ground folds and on the open meadow. Assault elements rushed forward to within 10 yards of his destroyer in a desperate effort to swarm over it or set it ablaze with grenades. Lieutenant MURPHY stopped and killed these Germans with machine gun fire at ranges of 10 to 20 yards from his position.

Bleeding freely from his leg wound, his face black from smoke and dirt hurled up by exploding shells, Lieutenant MURPHY fought on, killing a total of about 25 and wounding approximately two dozen more of the enemy. I expected

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to see the whole damn tank destroyer blow up under him any minute.

For an hour, he held off the enemy force single-handed, fighting against impossible odds. When his last round of ammunition was spent, Lieutenant MURPHY climbed painfully down from the top of the tank destroyer and made his way back to our company position. Although his wound looked really bad, he refused to wait for treatment. He reorganized the Company and led us in an attack which swept the German force back into the woods they had come from. After he had done that, he stopped for first aid right on the field, but he wouldn't take evacuation.

The fight that Lieutenant MURPHY put up was the greatest display of guts and courage I have ever seen. There is only one in a million who would be willing to stand up on a burning vehicle, loaded up with explosives, and hold off around 250 raging KRAUTS for an hour and do all that when he was wounded. Lieutenant MURPHY not only stood off one of the most rugged and determined squarehead forces I have ever run into, but he must have killed and wounded about a hundred of them with directed artillery and 50 caliber fire.

*Anthony J. Abramski*

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Pfc 42060471  
Co "B" 15th Inf

Subscribed and sworn to me this 11 day of February 1945.

*Charles C. Blossom Jr.*  
CHARLES C. BLOSSOM Jr.  
1st Lieut. Infantry  
Summary Court

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