

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

COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE RENDERED

I am ELMER C. BRAWLEY, 37402205, Infantry, Acting Platoon Sergeant, Company "B", Fifteenth Infantry, in which capacity I was present at and an eyewitness to the following action:

Company "B" on 26 January 1945 was south of the BOIS DE RIEDWIHR near HOLTZWHR, FRANCE. At about 1400 hours in the afternoon we came under a heavy concentration of artillery fire for about ten minutes. When this artillery fire was lifted, six German Mark VI tanks came out of the woods some 400 yards to our front, charging toward us as they fired their 88mm guns.

Second Lieutenant AUDIE L. MURPHY, O-1692509, our Company Commander, ordered us to withdraw to previously prepared positions 200 yards within the woods. As we withdrew across the snow-covered ground, hundreds of enemy infantrymen poured out of the woods, firing automatic weapons as they came.

Lieutenant MURPHY stayed on at his CP under a pine tree on the edge of the woods and directed artillery fire by telephone upon the advancing tanks and infantrymen. Except for a tank destroyer 10 yards to his right rear and a forward observer, Lieutenant MURPHY was out there alone.

Our artillery shells landed squarely in the midst of the advancing KRAUTS, killing at least 30 of them; but as the dead Germans fell, others streamed out of the woods to take their place.

Meanwhile, the enemy tanks continued to fire. A direct hit knocked out our tank destroyer and it began to pour out smoke. The tank destroyer men withdrew to the main elements of Company "B", followed by the forward observer, who, I learned, was ordered by Lieutenant MURPHY to set up an OP in the company area.

Lieutenant MURPHY, however, continued to remain at his CP, directing artillery by telephone. The enemy Mark VI tanks crashed through on both our flanks, firing persistently at the Lieutenant and shattering branches of the trees at his side with shell fragments. In a storm of machine gun fire from the tanks, he coolly went on telephoning fire orders.

The hostile tanks charged by Lieutenant MURPHY's CP, coming within 50 yards as they passed and firing at him; but apparently they wanted to avoid the burning tank destroyer and so didn't come any closer.

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About 250 KRAUTS circled around through the open meadow to the front. These infantrymen fired rifles and machine pistols at Lieutenant MURPHY as they pressed forward. We were meanwhile attempting to hold off the Mark VI's with bazooka and artillery fire.

When the Germans had gotten within 100 yards of him and were closing in on him, Lieutenant MURPHY got on top of the hull of the tank destroyer, which was burning and threatening to explode at any moment. He seized the 50-caliber machine gun and fired straight at the advancing KRAUTS, who moved irresistibly closer and closer. Silhouetted vividly against the nude trees, dark evergreens, and deep snow, without cover of any kind, he stood there, as the flames moved closer to the gasoline and ammunition in the tank destroyer. All around him, 88 mm shells, and bullets from machine guns, machine pistols, and rifles, shook the forests and sent up flurries of snow and dirt,

He killed 12 Germans trying to outflank him from his right; but the German hordes were so numerous that they kept on coming. Twice Lieutenant MURPHY was blotted from sight by sudden spurts of flame when his tank destroyer was hit by enemy artillery. Machine gun bullets pelted the sides of the vehicle and shot by dangerously close to him, while shell fragments and pieces of rock shredded his clothes; but he stayed at his perilous post.

Finally, fragmentation from an 88 mm shell hit him in the leg; but even then he continued to hold off the entire enemy force, helped solely by artillery fire.

The enemy tanks, meanwhile, returned because Lieutenant MURPHY had held up the supporting infantry and they were apparently loathe to advance further without infantry support. These tanks added their murderous fire to that of the KRAUT artillery and small arms fire that showered Lieutenant MURPHY's position without cessation.

The KRAUT infantrymen got within 10 yards of Lieutenant MURPHY, but he killed them in the draws, in the meadows, in the woods-- wherever he saw them. Though wounded and covered with soot and dirt which must have obscured his vision at times, he held the HUNS at bay, killing and wounding at least 35 of the enemy during the next hour.

Lieutenant MURPHY, worn out and bleeding profusely, then limped through a continuing hail of fire and brought the Company forward. Refusing to be evacuated, he led us in a savage attack on the enemy, dislodging the Germans from the whole area. When

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the fight was over, he allowed his wound to be treated on the field.

Inflicting more than a 100 casualties on the enemy during his indomitable one-man struggle, Lieutenant MURPHY broke the entire attack of the Germans and held hard-won ground that it would have been disastrous to lose.

Elmer C. Brawley

ELMER C. BRAWLEY
Sgt 37402205
Co "B" 15th Inf

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 1 day of March 1945.

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