



Student Name:

Class Period:

Date:

Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Audie Leon Murphy. Then, answer questions about it.

Audie Leon Murphy 1925–1971

Born in 1925 in a Hunt County sharecropper's shack, Audie Murphy recalled being "thrown into the struggle for existence" as a child. Orphaned at sixteen, he escaped a life of poverty when the United States entered World War II. The undersized Murphy lied about his age to enlist in the army.

Murphy's courage and ferocity earned him multiple honors throughout the war in Europe. In January 1945, he single-handedly fought off six Panzer tanks and 250 German infantry for over an hour, earning the Medal of Honor for his actions.

Returning home a national hero, Murphy was convinced by film legend James Cagney to take up acting and became one of the most popular movie stars of the 1950s, playing the lead in many westerns and in director John Huston's epic *The Red Badge of Courage*. Murphy also wrote a best-selling memoir about his wartime experiences and played himself in the movie adaptation.

But the war dogged Murphy. Gambling debts and unpaid taxes complicated his postwar life, and he struggled with insomnia and outbursts of violence that landed him in legal trouble. In 1971, a private plane on which he was a passenger crashed in Virginia, killing all aboard.

Murphy, one of the most decorated American combat soldiers of World War II, was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. He was forty-five years old.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Audie Leon Murphy. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. What did Audie Leon Murphy do to earn the Medal of Honor in World War II?
2. What did Murphy do after the war?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Making Inferences.** Murphy called the memoir of his wartime experience *To Hell and Back*. What does this imply about what he faced during war?