

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 CP 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.

CONSIDERED BY THE DECORATIONS BOARD