Audie Murphy

There are places that have remained stuck in time, places where the war has passed and left indelible traces, places told by the protagonists in their books and their memories. These places sometimes remain silent and unexplored for a long time, until fans and researchers find the indications and traces on those books and patiently put themselves to research. At that point, these places manifest themselves to the researchers and tell with the images of today what the soldiers wrote with yesterday's memory. This is one of those places and the narrator is the most decorated soldier of the Second World War, Audie Murphy, the place is located at Mignano Montelungo (CE) in Italy, the research is of the Society of Third Infantry Division US Army Outpost # 16 Italy..

20 June 1925 - 28 May 1971

Born in Kingston (Texas)
Died at the Brush Mountain - plane crash
Buried at the Arlington National Cemetery

During the Second World War it was:
First Lieutenant of the 15th Regiment of the Third US Army Infantry Division
To hell and Back, to hell and back, was the book where Audie Murphy recounted her life as a soldier.
The book, written in 1955, was translated and printed also in Italy in various editions; it is still available on several online sales sites. The book, as well as an autobiography, is also the story of all the infantry soldiers, men torn from everyday life and hurled into a world of violence where they learn to survive and die. To Hell and Back is the journey from the landing in Sicily to the entrance to Germany. A journey that tells the landings in Gela, Salerno, Anzio and the south of France; the carnage of Anzio and Colmar, where the Third Infantry Division obtained scores of Medal Of Honor and hundreds of other medals.

In Chapter IV of the book, Audie Murphy recounts the advance of the 15th and 30th Infantry regiment of the Third Division along the Mignano valley, towards the line of defense prepared by the Germans, the Bernhard Line, called by the Winter Line Allies and in In particular, a narrow road between the mountains where Via Casilina passed, the road that led to Cassino, the narrow pass became for the allies the «Mignano Gap».

The exploratory patrol, commanded by Audie Murphy, was the first to reach the goal, a small hill located between Montelungo and Monterotondo, called quota 193.

Murphy's team consisted of:
- Swope - Machine-gunner
- Mike Novak - rifleman
- Cicca - rifleman
- Horse Face - Rifleman
- Capehart - Riflemen
- Kerrigan - Riflemen
In the two images the deployment of forces in the field and the indications of the various places - photo Fifth Army 1943
Mignano Gap today
The 30th regiment would have bypassed the mountains around Mignano and attacked Monterotondo from the North, the 15th regiment had to overcome Mignano on the ridges of the mountains and attack Monterotondo and Montelungo from the South, the 7th regiment would have attacked Monte Camino.
In the 30th regiment there were two soldiers who became famous, Maurice Footsie Britt and Floyd K. Linstrom, their positions are highlighted in the maps. Audie Murphy was with her team in an advanced position in exploration.
Audie Murphy recounts her mission, the transition between the mountains, on narrow paths, where mules sometimes fell and the soldiers had to carry all the load on their shoulders. Once you have gone downstream, after passing Mignano, near Monterotondo, the first contact with the enemy, a tank hidden in a grove.

In this fight he is injured in the Capehart legs. In this first phase the attack from SUD (A) fails and must be attacked again from SOUTH (A) and at the same time from NORTH (B) to conquer Monterotondo.
While the 30th regiment resists the counterattacks of the Germans (A), the 15th regiment tries to attest to the pedi of Monterotondo, around the quota 193 and on the first shares of Montelungo (B). These are the glory days for Maurice F. Britt and Floyd K. Lyndstrom.

During the rally stages at the feet of 193 share the team by Audie Murphy is seen by a patrol of Germans advancing along the road (C), Murphy immediately opens the fire and once discovered their position they are forced to escape along a channel that passes between Monterotondo and the quota 193. Going up the canal they find an old quarry and take refuge in it.

In the next satellite images the search for the canyon and the quarry.
The positioning of the quarry and the certainty that it was that of Murphy is given to us by some circumstances recounted in the book.

1. Their escape route starts from the assembly point at the base of elevation 193 and cuts the hill in half.

2. Along the path we would have found a rocky area.

3. At the highest point of the path we would find a cave.
To our great excitement, when we reached the middle of the gully we found a rocky area and in the center a cave with a cave, was that told by A. Murphy?

Murphy says that the artillery shots started from Montelungo (A) and fell on the top of Monterotondo (B), they saw them passing over their heads (C), the cave was that ...
Murphy's story goes on to recall a German patrol that went up the gully from the opposite side.

When he was in range, Swope (A), positioned with the machine gun among the rocks, he severely wounded three Germans (B) and the others surrendered. The three wounded Germans were taken to the cave and died during the night (C).
The places, after 75 years, have kept most of the traces of those days told by Audie Murphy, the search on the battlefield gave us incredible emotions, Murphy's story could be seen and we give you the photos of that day. Today we have a precise point where the most decorated American soldier of the Second World War fought and spent tragic hours that remained etched forever in his memories.

The rocks along the canal.
To hell and back, reread chapter IV at the precise point where the boys of the Third Infantry Division fought.

A great emotion, a silence and a prayer for all those soldiers who came from the United States of America and shed their blood so that we could live as free men.

A big hello to all the friends of the Society of Third Infantry Division US Army.

Written and realized by Luigi Settimi with the collaboration of all the members of the Outpost # 16 Italia.