

# The Bandera PROPHET

May 18, 2021

## Growing Up In Bandera

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The Bandera Prophet

Looking back to my early years in Bandera I have come to realize that our world wasn't that far removed from the horrors of WWII. For us as kids we were playing war games and doing battle while pretending to be Audie Murphy who was the most famous real war hero at the time. Going to the Bantex Theater on the weekends to see the latest war film was a must.

Now that I have matured I see things from the past more clearly and have a better understanding of some things that I had witnessed as a youngster. Things I now realize had a much deeper and darker connection to things kids could never fathom. So many of the men I was around were survivors of those frightening years and carried visions of horrific suffering and bloodshed. I truly believe that some of them who were known to be heavy drinkers were trying to forget the hell they had gone through. I know one such man who was a sniper in The Philippines during the war. They weren't likely to talk about their experiences, not even to the kids around them who were sounding their battle cries while playing soldier.

An older man who was my foreman on a job in San Antonio told me of serving under Capt. John Langford. That same Mr. Langford owned the Langford's Hardware Store in Bandera for many years where my wife worked after graduating from high school.

It is just in more recent years I have found out about men I had known my entire life who left high school to go to war and returned later to finish their schooling. According to stories I have heard about their return to school it was a bit trying for teachers and the other students.

Understandable when you consider they left as boys and returned as men who had seen the dark side of humanity.

Many of the Hollywood actors back in the day had served our country during wartime. Big names who left their starring roles on film to answer the call were unselfish and understood the consequences. Go study the bios of the big stars from those troubled times and you will find the list is long and quite impressive.

Audie Murphy was not only one of my favorite heroes in real life but he was a favorite in those westerns at The Bantex Theater every Saturday while I was Growing Up In Bandera. If you are familiar with his personal life you know the movie "To Hell And Back" told of his wartime deeds, but I don't think he ever truly came all the way back.

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