

Bungle on German Surrender Charged in Murphy's Book

By the Associated Press

In his book "Diplomat Among Warriors," Robert Murphy says a United States general "bungled" Germany's unconditional surrender to the allies in 1945 by having the Germans sign "the wrong armistice terms."

This resulted in a Russian protest to Washington, cost a Russian general his assignment to supreme allied headquarters, and caused a second surrender ceremony to be held in Berlin

two days later, according to Mr. Murphy's account.

As he tells it, this is what happened 19 years ago:

In anticipation of Germany's surrender, representatives of the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union spent months working out the precise terms the Germans would have to sign when they finally reached the point of surrender.

Mr. Murphy, who was political adviser on Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's supreme command staff, transmitted the surrender documents to Gen. Eisenhower's chief of staff, Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, in March of 1945.

The Germans surrendered a little more than a month later, with the ceremony being held in a schoolhouse in the French city of Rheims on May 7. Gen. Eisenhower delegated the signing of the documents to Gen. Smith.

"The surrender ceremony at Rheims was strictly military," Mr. Murphy wrote, "but as soon as the formalities ended I had access to the text. It was then I discovered that a strange document, that is, strange to me, had been used."

Mr. Murphy writes that he got Gen. Smith out of bed by telephone and asked what had happened to the United States-



ROBERT MURPHY

—AP Wirephoto

British-Soviet documents that had been turned over to him. He says Gen. Smith could not recall having received those documents.

"But don't you remember," Mr. Murphy says he asked, "that big blue folder which I told you were the terms approved by everybody?"

This reminder jolted Gen.

Smith fully awake and he hastily jumped into his uniform and raced back to his office, Mr. Murphy writes, and there they found the folder of papers in Gen. Smith's personal top-secret file cabinet.

A few minutes later Mr. Murphy and Gen. Smith received an urgent message from Washington saying Moscow was protesting that the terms signed at Rheims were not those which Russia had agreed to.

As Mr. Murphy explains it: "Smith, harassed by a thousand complex matters of highest importance, had suffered a rare lapse of memory."

In expectation of a German surrender he had ordered three officers to prepare surrender documents and those were the ones that had been signed. Gen. Smith's documents had been certified by the Soviet liaison officer at Gen. Eisenhower's headquarters, and Moscow had never informed the officer, a Gen. Susloparov, that any other terms were in existence. Nevertheless, he was promptly recalled to Moscow because of his approval of the wrong terms.

"The bungled affair was covered up immediately," Mr. Murphy says, "by an announcement by SHAEF early in the morning that the documents which had been signed in the middle of the night merely 'formalized the surrender' and that 'the official surrender' would be signed in Berlin on May 9."