

It Was a Gamble and the Odds Were Against Them—

Poker-Wise Lieutenant Plays a Hunch— an Angry Pfc Wins Hand

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WITH SEVENTH ARMD. DIV.—The leading scout had plowed through hip-deep snow, and was in no mood for finessing the game.

He squinted against the purple snow-glare of dawn. There they were, blissfully oblivious—dismounted, stamping their feet, waving their arms, their breaths making frosty patterns on the air. The two tanks, even, seemed to huddle against the farm house as though seeking warmth.

Watching the white-clad group, the paratrooper decided to settle his uncertainty once and for all.

"Hey, you!" he bellowed. "What's your outfit?"

When the men spun, with stricken faces, then ducked for the house, he had the only answer he needed.

So began a grim poker game, outside Wal-

lerode, Belgium, when a patrol from the Seventh's attached Second Battalion, 517th Parachute Regt., went out looking for suckers.

Lt. Charles H. Minard, of Emporium, Pa., wriggled forward for a look.

"We'd better flush 'em out," he said.

"Roger," said S/Sgt. Stephen M. Pasztor, of Toledo, second in command.

The BAR man, Pfc Clifford Seal, of Pendleton, Ind., brought his weapon up.

Minard sent a rifle grenade hurtling into the rear of the house. A dozen Jerries stumbled out, their arms raised, into the sights of the waiting paratroopers. As they waddled away under a two-man guard, Minard, contemplating his two captured tanks, began to entertain a suspicion.

"Come out of those tanks with your hands up!" he yelled.

When the Nazi occupants still refused to

come out, phosphorous grenades hurled down the hatches closed the parley.

Now Tiger tanks were grinding head on toward the scene, followed by two light tanks and two bobbing armored cars. All were firing.

With stakes reversed, and machine gun fire lashing about their ears, the paratroopers themselves then dove for the house and the nearest ditches.

As the German column wheeled by the house, spitting flame, the besieged Americans added bazooka fire to their small arms output. Every vehicle was limping or wobbling by the time it had passed out of immediate range.

The last tank, though crippled, came to a halt a short distance away. Stubbornly it let fly with everything in its arsenal.

Seal, the BAR man, got mad, then. He stood straight up and peppered the torment-

ing steel behemoth, much as David must have slugged at Goliath. To the astonishment of all the Tiger's firing became a ragged hiccupping, and the huge machine, turning, hobbled slowly away.

By that time the little band could see the moving dots of German infantrymen infiltrating toward them from a distant wood. It was time to throw in their cards.

The rest of the squad slipped out of the hot spot as Seal sent final shots zinging against the steel flanks of the retreating Tiger.

Other members of the paratrooper patrol were: Pvt. Wilber F. Stegall, Salisbury, N.C.; Sgt. Leon Bosse, Houston, Texas; Pvt. Clifton D. Dugan, Van Dyke, Mich.; Pvt. Robert Jones, Long Beach, Calif.; Cpl. Charles L. Twibell, Gladewater, Texas; Pvt. Lawrence Rheuark, Los Angeles, Calif.; and Pfc Mike Kane, Philadelphia, Pa.