

STARS & STRIPES

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E X T R A C T

TINY UNIT DELAYS TANK COLUMN 6 HOURS

By Hal Boyle

Associated Press Correspondent



A BELGIAN VILLAGE UNDER GERMAN ATTACK.

Dec. 19 (AP).--One lieutenant and two anti-tank gun crews knocked out four German Tiger "Royal" tanks yesterday in a flaming street battle which held up a Nazi armored column for six hours until American reinforcements arrived. The column was spearheading the center offensive in that sector.

But for the battle wisdom of Lt. Jack Doherty, 27, of Latrobe, Pa., and the valor of his gun crews, this fight would have been lost before it was well started, and the speedy German column might have been miles inside the American lines shooting up rear area outfits.

Doherty and his men, supported only by a single company of doughboys who would have been powerless to take on the tanks alone, bore the brunt of the sledgehammer thrusts by the vanguard of the German armored smash.

"It was still dark when I sent one of my three-inch anti-tank guns across the stream at the edge of the town to try to hold the wooden bridge there," Doherty recalled. "We did hold it until daybreak, when machine-gunners drove us away, but we retook it by eight-o'clock and lost it again at nine. It was burning when we finally pulled back at noon.

"At ten o'clock, I got another of my guns up," Doherty continued. "Four Royal Tiger tanks came moving down the street. With their first shots each of my guns set one Tiger ablaze.

"Nobody came out of one tank, and only two crew men got out of the other. They ran into a house and climbed to the roof--so we shot the roof right out from under them."

Another German tank was hit by both guns simultaneously, and a fourth Tiger backed along the road like a blind, trapped beetle. During the fight, another Tiger had moved out and found a better corner.

"It had a better firing angle than we did--it could shoot at us, but we couldn't get back at it very well," Doherty said.

The Nazi monster tank knocked out Doherty's half-track and set his jeep on fire. Doherty ordered his men back. He managed to pull back one of the guns with the help of Sgt. Louis Celanto, New Haven, Conn., Cpl Roy Ables, Cleveland, Tenn., the gunner, and the rest of the crew.

To protect them, the leading gun, commanded by Sgt. Martin Hauser, of Los Angeles, Calif. and Gunner Cpl. Paul Lanzi, of Newark, N.J., continued to engage the well-placed Tiger. Hauser and Lanzi then destroyed their own gun with an incendiary burst and made their way back a few six miles to our headquarters.

The platoon sergeant, Kester O. Lowe, of Sarasota, Fla., remarked, "Hitler would be damned unhappy if he knew that the two guns which caused so much trouble were commanded by an Italian and a German--Celanto and Hauser."

A TRUE EXTRACT:

ROGER D. FINE,
Capt, 825 TD Bn,
Adjutant.

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