Sergeant Rock

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Abstract

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"And look out for the mine field here.‖ I pointed to the scribbles just below the bunker.

"Check.‖

"Me and the private here will take the sniper in the treehouse.‖

"I'm a captain!‖ Smith yelled.

"Ok, ok. Me and the CAPTAIN will take the treehouse. Keep your eyes open, men. Watch for snipers, and watch for new hideouts. Them Jerries is everywhere. We'll meet back here at twenty-four hundred hours.‖

"When?‖

"After while! Schees, what do they teach you guys in boot now-a-days?‖ I grabbed my M-15 two-by-four with the shingle nail trigger and sight and started up the dark tunnel in the hay. Sarge followed with his hens-egg handgrenades, being careful not to jar the pins loose. Rocky slapped the clip into the butt of his water-pistol with a click of his tongue and squeezed out of the bailed fort.

"Here, use this.‖ I handed him a sixteen-inch bayonet.

"What is it?‖ Smith was always a little slow.

"It's a knife, stupid. Put it in your boot.‖ The private stuffed the pretend knife in his combats and pulled his rolled pants leg over it, as we crept down the haymow ladder one step at a time, always ready for a sneak attack.

I waited at the bottom for the other three. Once we were all down, I put my finger to my lips and tip-toed to
the open barn door. Plastering my back to the wall, I peeked around the corner. All clear. I waved to the men. "You've got your orders. Good luck, men. Let's hope we all get back alive. C'mon private."

"Captain!"

"C'mon!" I dashed around the corner and crouched as I ran to the cover of the gate a few feet away. Smith followed as the others sprinted the opposite direction to the sound of distant artillery.

A bullet screamed by my ear as I rose up to look over the edge of the trench-gate. "Get down! Wanna get your head blowed off?"

"What is it?" Smith was scared stiff, breathing hard. I can't blame him though—this was his first time in combat.

"Sniper in the corn crib. Hand me that grenade." I pointed to a dried chunk of hog manure by his foot.

"I ain't picking that up!" Shell shock! Smith had frozen under fire! I grabbed the grenade and lofted it into the building. An explosion rocked the ground, and the building went up in a neat spray of splinters and red-orange flame.

"Randy, can I be the general for a while?"

"No, you can't be the general. It takes years of experience and hard work. Besides, you don't even watch 'Combat'; you wouldn't know how to act. Now c'mon, we gotta get that treehouse."

We hopped over the gate and started down the fence line, shooting as we went. Smith was all right now, gunning down as many Jerries as he saw. He got one in a tree right over our heads. We'd both have been goners if he'd missed.

"You see that one, General?" he asked proudly.

"Yeah, way to go kid. Here's a medal for it." He'll make a real good soldier some day, maybe even a general like me. He's only seven. When he gets to be ten, like me, he'll be a good soldier.

"Hold it, Cap'n."

Smith whirled to face me, a big grin on his face. He
clicked his heels and saluted as he answered. “Yes, Sir!”

“There’s our target.” I pointed to the treehouse we had built a few weeks ago. It used to be our clubhouse, then it was our hideout when we robbed the rich and gave to the poor, but now the enemy had it. The fuel barrel we used to use for an elephant on safaris stood under the tree. It was a fuel dump for the enemy now. “We gotta knock off that fuel and the sniper.”

“How come we gotta knock off the fuel?”

“Cuz they always do, that’s why.”

“Ok, we’ll do it.” He paused a second. “General, how we gonna do it?”

“I don’t know yet. Let’s go in for a closer look.” We were in enemy territory now, so we had to crawl across the driveway on our bellies to keep from being seen. I was trying to think how Sergeant Rock would do it when all of a sudden—ka-blam—I hit a mine. I rolled over and over, moaning and holding my leg.

“General! You all right?” Smith looked really worried.

“It’s my leg. I think I blew my foot off.” I made the ugliest face I could.

“It’s gone all right,” he said, looking at my tennis shoes. “Those damn Jerries. We gotta get you back to camp.”

“No. We gotta get that sniper and the fuel.” I sounded just like Sergeant Rock. “We gotta. Get. ‘Em.” I took a deep breath, moaned once more, and pretended to pass out like they do on tv.

“First I’m taking you back to camp.” He dragged me back across the driveway and towards the barn. I could tell he was getting tired, so I came to and limped the rest of the way leaning on his shoulder.

When we got back in the haymow, I hollered, “Medic!” then said, “I’ll be okay kid. Just a flesh wound.” Sergeant Rock would’ve been proud.

“I’ll take care of those Jerries for ya, General. I’ll get ‘em.” He really meant it.
The captain was gone for just a few minutes when Sarge and Rocky came back. "How'd it go, men?"

"Mission accomplished, General. We took the bunker with no casualties. You should have seen us, we had a blast!"

"Yeah, I even got a couple of hogs with the grenades." Rocky was all smiles. "You should have seen 'em run. Ha! Clear down to the back pasture. How'd you do? Where's Stevie?"

"Ah, I got my foot blown off. You should've seen the look on Stevie's face. He drug me halfway from the treehouse."

There was another explosion outside. But this time it sounded closer and more real than before. Jimmy and Tommy didn't hear it, they were laughing too hard.

"Stevie go home?" I shook my head. "Where is he then?"

"He's still out knocking off the treehouse and gas barrel. Said he was gonna get even with the Jerries for blowing my foot off." They laughed even harder and said he wouldn't know how to start to knock off anything.

I told them about blowing up the corn crib with manure, and they told me about scaring the cattle out of the back lot with clods, to make their escape they said. We laughed and laughed at each others' adventures. Then Mom came.

"Randall James Miller!"

She sounded kinda mad, like the time she found the word "shit" written on my pencil case. I never said it, I was just clowning around at school, but she was mad anyway. And that's what she sounded like now. I was scared, but I knew I'd better answer quick.

"Up here, Mom."

"You come down here this instant!"

I had no idea what I'd done, but I was down the ladder in a second.

"What have you boys been up to!"

"We were playing army, Mom. What's wrong?"
“Stevie’s been hurt. He came to the house asking for matches. Said your father needed them for his cigarettes. Next thing I knew, the gas barrel exploded. He said something about ‘‘knocking off’’ something. Your father has taken him to the hospital, and I want to know what’s going on!”

“We were playing army, Mom. I don’t know where Stevie’s at.” I wondered what Sergeant Rock would do.