

SERGEANT ROCK

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THIRD DRAFT
(Final Polish)

WARNER BROS. INC.
4000 Warner Boulevard
Burbank, California 91522

June 30, 1993
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"The lowly and invincible of the earth
-- to endure and endure, tomorrow
and tomorrow and tomorrow --
I believe man will not merely endure:
He will prevail.
He is immortal -- because he has a soul,
a spirit capable of compassion and
sacrifice and endurance."

William Faulkner

SUPERIMPOSE: January 1, 1944

A grainy image, black and white, familiar to American Cinema History -- Fox Movietone News. A title -- "G.I.'S FACE GERMAN FORTRESS IN ITALY". An image of an imposing structure, monstrous, heavy -- sitting atop a dramatic ridgeline.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Abbey of Monte Cassino, built by Saint Benedict in 529 A.D. One of the most sacred of Christian shrines, it commands the ancient road to Rome through the Liri Valley below.

Shots of the verdant Liri Valley -- myriad white houses and villages spread along the banks of the Liri River.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Monastery is a mere eighty miles from Rome and smack in the middle of the Gustave Line, Hitler's answer to our drive to liberate the Eternal City.

Shots of G.I.'S slogging through mud urging mules past trucks buried in mud -- filthy, rainsoaked, eating cold rations, waving at the camera.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It is in these mountains that our boys have faced some of the bitterest Kraut resistance of the entire campaign.

Shots of G.I.'S firing air cooled machine guns -- M-1's kicking repeatedly -- and men rushing forward through burnt-out olive groves ripped by star bursts of white phosphorous. Mortar crews and 105 batteries pound at the unyielding steep hills.

AUDIENCE

watching the newsreel -- American, mid-westerners, farmers, clerks, wives, children -- stare with apt attention. There was no television in 1944, this is how you saw it.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

These are men of the 36th Division -- Texans, who wrested the town San Pietro from the Nazis.

MOVIE SCREEN

More shots of German prisoners being led in. Italian peasants watch lines of G.I.'S and mules move forward.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And these supermen are surrendering
to the 34th of Iowa.

AUDIENCE

A cheer fills the theater -- a cheer for the home team --
husbands, sons, schoolmates.

CROWD

I-owa -- I-owa -- Red Bulls!

CLOSE - OLD GENTLEMAN

in glasses, bundled for the cold weather wearing a Tyrolean hat -- he has the kindly look of an old clock-maker. He cheers as loud as the others. Even though he's distinctly European, it's his home team too.

MOVIE SCREEN

Shots of the distant Monastery and mountains.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

These men -- together with British, French and New Zealanders have the task of breaking down Hitler's Fortress -- like they did the Winter Line and the Caesar Line and all the Lines before it.

Generals -- standing on a hilltop looking through binoculars -- soldiers and artillerymen all around.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

These boys have taken the best the Krauts can give out, and they keep coming -- this is Mark Clark's Fifth Army. And this is the man who leads 'em.

A tall handsome figure, Clark puts down his field glasses, and notes to an aide. He has a lanky cowboy quality to him -- what we expect heroes to look like.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Garden -- surrounded by an ornate palace -- in the garden is an Army trailer under an American flag. Newsmen cluster around the entrance and Clark stands in the door. The camera tries to move in.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

General Clark gave this interview
at Allied Headquarters in Cacerna.

REPORTER (V.O.)

General Clark -- what have you got
in there?

Clark puts on his garrison hat using a small mirror.

CLARK (V.O.)

I've got a cot -- Regulation Army --
a desk and a bucket of water. The
bucket's half full -- shaved this
morning.

OTHER REPORTER (V.O.)

General, why don't you live in the
palace like the other Commanders?

CLARK (V.O.)

I don't live in a palace at home.
My men don't live in palaces. I'm
a farm boy.

CHEERING and WHISTLES from the audience.

CLARK (V.O.)

Rome has never been taken from the
south except by Belasarus in 536 --
a Barbarian. Mark Clark's Fifth
Army will take Rome by the end of
January 1944 -- I'm no Barbarian,
just a farm boy -- but I will be
the first man in Rome.

MORE CHEERING --

CUT TO:

EXT. SNOWY STREET - SMALL TOWN U.S.A. (IOWA)

An old gentleman -- starts down Main Street bundled
against the cold -- wap! -- he's hit by a snowball --
his glasses fly off. As he kneels to get them, he's
pelted by more.

KIDS

hurl snowballs and shout insults.

KID

Nazi bastard! Kraut! Hey, Jerry,
Heil Hitler! Sig Heil, Kraut!

The old gentleman pulls himself erect. He is tall and broad, his name is Mr. VAN ROCKLEN.

VAN ROCKLEN

I'm an American -- I am a German man but I'm an American.

KID

Eat it, Heinie! Tough shit, Adolf!

VAN ROCKLEN

Hitler you cannot kill with snow.
I am not Hitler -- I am an old German man -- an American.

The Kids run off feeling guilty and tiring of the sport. Van Rocklen continues up the street into a grocery store.

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE

Paper bag -- brought from under the counter by the CLERK who looks around nervously.

CLERK

Twelve bucks.

VAN ROCKLEN

It's a lot of money.

CLERK

You put me out, old man -- wasn't easy -- black market. There's a war on you know.

He takes a box out of the bag. Partagas cigars, Havanas -- Gigantes. Van Rocklen puts the money down.

VAN ROCKLEN

Thank you -- thank you very much.

CLERK

You gonna smoke 'em all yourself?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VAN ROCKLEN

No -- I want them sent -- Air
mail.

CLERK

Air mail 'eh -- some chance --
Where to?

VAN ROCKLEN

I want them sent to Monte Cassino,
Italy -- to my son who is a Top
Sergeant in the 34th Infantry.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIRI VALLEY - RAPIDO RIVER (ITALY)

A swift dark river, cold, with steep banks about fifty feet wide. It is shrouded in mist as the day ends. Beyond, looming above the mist is the great structure of Cassino on its mountain. The river is a barrier that must be crossed. On the north side are barbed wire entanglements. The fog covers the rest of the German defenses. On the south side G.I. engineers remove mines, lots of them. Other engineers string rope and tapes to denote the cleared paths through the minefield. We FOLLOW an engineer with a tape INTO the mist and --

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROAD - DUSK

Suddenly filling with trucks. Bulldozers and tanks are positioned on the sides but it is the trucks that matter -- hundreds of them -- their ENGINES building to a ROAR. The flat area, a thousand yards from the river is known as the line of departure. It is here that a battle begins, and here is where the trucks stop. Men spill out the backs, hundreds, thousands of men. Indeed three thousand men will comprise the 36th Division's first assault. On their flank will be two thousand more from the 168th Regiment of the 34th (Red Bulls). They pour out in large swarms, their voices a rising cacophony that drowns out the motors. Commands carry over the chaos.

LIEUTENANT #1

Second Battalion! Second Battalion
-- assembly point over here!

LIEUTENANT #2

Baker -- Baker -- All Baker down
the road --

CLOSE - TRUCK

It lurches to a stop -- the flag flies up revealing a broad shouldered Sergeant with a grizzled jaw and lively eyes. A face we all know looks out from a battered helmet. This is ROCK.

ROCK

Vacation's over -- Let's make some money!

He jumps out and men pour out behind him.

ROCK

Platoon formations fall in! Carry all your weapons and ammo -- What you carry is what you got.

He grabs a YOUNG KID REPLACEMENT.

ROCK

You got an extra bandolier, soldier?

KID

I got a basic load, Sarge.

ROCK

Go back in the truck and get one, son.

He watches them run past.

ROCK

Easy -- Easy Company -- Squad Leaders, line your people up --

He grabs a dogface.

ROCK

Don't leave the mortars in the truck, asshole -- You're gonna need 'em. Move it.

More trucks -- carrying the 100th Battalion of the 442 Regimental Combat Team. These are small Nisei soldiers of Japanese-American extraction. They spill out of their trucks chattering in pidgin adding to the confusion. A small dark LIEUTENANT waves and bellows like a football coach.

LT. DELGADO

Get your pots on -- take that bayonet off -- You Buddaheads in the 100th -- You're up the road -- Rock -- Get 'em in Squads.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK
(to soldier)
You got a spare bandolier, idiot?
Go back and get it. Squad up,
assholes -- Squad up.

The whole mob -- a half mile long looks like a giant
football rally.

CUT TO:

SAND TABLE MODEL

The Abbey of Monte Cassino, the town of Cassino, the
surrounding mountains. It is very detailed -- olive
groves, houses, the rivers. It is situated in an enor-
mous hall with giant chandeliers. Officers of the
Allied High Command stand around -- French, British,
American. They all defer to Mark Clark, who stands at
the center, while a CAPTAIN points to the river.

CAPTAIN
-- Assuming the British 46th
Division crossing the Gari is
successful, it will pull the Krauts
off our flank as we cross the
Rapido -- here and here -- the
36th and 34th.

A French General, ALFONSE JUIN raises his hand.

JUIN
Your people are under the heights
-- You must never be under the
Germans -- You must be in the
mountains.

BRITISH GENERAL
My troops are not trained for
mountain warfare.

CLARK
Besides -- we haven't the time. We
break through here and it's over
and done with -- Get armor into
that valley and we can really roll
-- Eh, General Harmon?

HARMON looks like a tank.

HARMON
Get me a hole in that line and I
can score.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK

Touchdown Rome! What about you,
General Walker?

WALKER is older, tired.

WALKER

I wish we'd had a few more days --

CUT TO:

RAPIDO - LINE OF DEPARTURE

A tall authoritative Captain -- walks calmly along buttoning his overcoat, Rock at his side. This is JOE DAWSON -- Easy's C.O., and when the men see him do something, they do it too. He stops in front of a particular grizzled group.

DAWSON

They all here?

ROCK

Roll call -- Wildman!

A BEARDED MID-WESTERNER -- Extremely capable -- carries a B.A.R..

WILDMAN (BEARDED MID-WESTERNER)

With you, Sarge!

ROCK

Whipsnake!

SOUTHERN WHITE TRASH -- edgy, unreliable.

WHIPSNAKE (SOUTHERN WHITE TRASH)

Yep.

ROCK

Pascalano!

A NEW YORK KID -- stares at Rock.

ROCK

You're here, Pascalano -- say it!

PASCALANO (NEW YORK KID)

Sir!

ROCK

Bulldozer!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A HULKING BRUTE -- From some steel mill in Michigan. He grunts -- carries the Browning air cooled machine gun.

ROCK

How many boxes?

BULLDOZER (HULKING BRUTE)

Eight, Sarge.

Other men hold up the metal boxes of ammo. Rock nods approval.

ROCK

Beef!

ANOTHER BIG GOON -- carries the tripod -- grunts.

ROCK

Crazy Horse!

An INDIAN -- Mostly crazy -- he's put mud all over his face.

CRAZY HORSE (INDIAN)

Huh?

ROCK

Kluzewski!

A NERVOUS CHICAGO DOGFACE -- Fiddles with his grenades -- drops his helmet.

ROCK

Tie it on. Retread!

No answer -- Rock looks around. An older dirty looking MAN covered in stubble ties his boots.

ROCK

Retread!

He looks up slowly.

ROCK

You want to join us, Corporal?

RETREAD (MAN)

Where's the fucken party?

CUT TO:

LINE - ENGINEERS - NIGHT

Laying out inflatable boats. Behind these are wooden assault boats -- each weighing more than three hundred pounds and can hold twelve men. Behind all this are sections of Bailey Bridges and metal strips to anchor the inflatables and make pontoon bridges. Further behind, the men have broken in Platoon-sized groups and their officers walk before them. The mist rolls by.

CLOSE - DAWSON

He has a crude map of the river and Abbey.

DAWSON

From here to the river is a dead run carrying the boats. The Combat Engineers have cleared the obstacles.

CUT TO:

FOG

On the American side of the river. German sapper teams string wire low across the ground close to the river. Other wires are tightly strung neck high from steel poles.

CUT TO:

DAWSON

DAWSON

-- All the mines are cleared from here to the water --

CUT TO:

GERMAN SAPPERS

planting new ones all over the approaches to the water, working like beavers.

CUT TO:

DAWSON

DAWSON

The water is running fast and cold but the bottom is firm on the far bank --

CUT TO:

GERMAN ENGINEERS

Sinking barbed wire entanglements on jagged steel frames under the water on the far bank. On these clusters of wire are hung potato masher grenades so when the wire is shaken up, the pins will pull --

CUT TO:

CLOSE - DAWSON

DAWSON

Lanes have been cleared through the mines on the far side and marked with tape and stakes.

CUT TO:

GERMAN ENGINEERS

Moving the tapes and stakes to fresh mine fields, while an American Observer stares sightless at them with his throat cut.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - DAWSON

DAWSON

Any questions?

CLOSE - RETREAD AND OTHERS

RETREAD

A frontal assault?

KLUZEWSKI

-- On a river?

BEEF (ANOTHER BIG GOON)

I can't swim!

PASCALANO

You won't get that far.

CRAZY HORSE

If I live through this --

RETREAD

-- I'll kill the son of a bitch --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KLUZEWSKI

-- Who thought it up?

ROCK

I did! This is all my idea.
General Clark personally asked me
to give Easy the shaft and this is
what I came up with -- Any
questions? Then lock and load!

A THUNDERING RUMBLING ARTILLERY BARRAGE -- everyone
tenses, the ground shakes. Joe Dawson looks at his watch
calmly. Suddenly a SCREAMING WHOOSH as what seems like a
hundred freight trains rush by overhead.

SHELLS SCREAM with different SOUNDS -- eight inch -- 155s
-- 105s -- there are flashes on the barely silhouetted
mountains and the other side of the river. The ground
shakes, but the sound is drowned by FIVE THOUSAND MEN
CHEERING -- cheering as armies have done since before
Caesar -- cheering because it's the only thing that will
help them not to think about what's ahead.

LINE

The 36th moves out, first to the left -- some men jog
forward, most walk at a crouch. They pick up the
wooden boats. POP-POP as the CO-2 canisters inflate the
rafts. They move into the mist steadily -- thousands of
them -- kids, plumbers, postmen -- the Citizen Army.

FIELD

Now it starts to happen. A RIPPING EXPLOSION under a
boat blows splinters, bones and steel through those
nearby -- ANOTHER EXPLOSION and ANOTHER.

SOLDIER

Mines! We're in a fucken mine
field!

ANOTHER SOLDIER

This is clear over here!

He is gone in a harsh blast of dirt and blood. The men
panic, many drop their ends of the boats, others drag
them. Lieutenants and sergeants scream them on. Some
turn and hesitate. Suddenly -- the SCREAM of INCOMING
MORTAR FIRE -- deadly sprouts of ground and iron -- men
fall, some lie still but most scream and writhe, some
just seem to run a little further and give up, sinking to
their knees in final despair.

CUT TO:

GERMAN BUNKER

overlooking the river approaches. An UNTEROFFIZIER looks through the narrow concrete slit with powerful binoculars, beside him is an MG-42 machine gun and a long belt of ammo. SHELLS IMPACT in front and around his position. STEEL SHARDS of SHRAPNEL WHINE off the concrete, but the German is unperturbed. He calls out grid co-ordinates to his radioman.

UNTEROFFIZIER

(in German)

One hundred meters left -- fire for effect.

Then he turns his back on the maelstrom and resumes playing cards with the rest of the gun crew.

CUT TO:

ROCK AND DAWSON

kneeling in front of their men who form part of the great massed line of the 34th. They watch like everyone in horrific fascination as their comrades a half mile down are being slaughtered. The faces of the men are grim, almost panicky. Despite the fact that these are seasoned troops, they are all thinking of running.

ROCK

Who's on our flank, sir?

LT. DELGADO

442nd-100th Battalion -- the Japs
-- Why does Easy always get the
bad end of the stick?

ROCK

Our Japs -- this is their first
fight --

LT. DELGADO

They'll probably run.

ROCK

They have a lot to prove --
they'll do good.

DAWSON

(smiling)

Yeah I guess you would know.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAWSON (CONT'D)

(pause)

Look, Rock -- I been figuring --
if one of my Looies buys it -- I
want you battlefield
commissioned --

ROCK

How do you know I won't buy it?
No dice, sir -- I'd rather be dead
than be an officer.

DAWSON

Still got a chip on your shoulder
don't you?

ROCK

Something else for them to shoot
at --

Suddenly a new sound -- ripping the air -- unmistakably
the deadly 88s! Nothing in WWII scared men more than the
sound of 88s. They come fast and flat -- there's nowhere
to go.

34TH AND 100TH

lined up on their feet ready to run one way or the other.
Suddenly a roar emanates from the great mass of men.
SHELLS RIP over their heads and slam into the trucks be-
hind. It seems the mist has been blown away to be
replaced by smoke and steel. Great clouds of silhouetted
men, tortured in assault, lay before them -- BLASTS,
SCREAMS and shocks are directly behind. The MEN'S roar
becomes a savage WOUNDED BELLOW.

CLOSE - G.I.

at the river twisted in agony -- his arm outstretched
covered in blood.

G.I.

Help me! For God's sake -- help
me!

34TH

As one stands -- and lunges forward screaming -- 2000
G.I.s...

CLOSE - ROCK

He howls like the others.

DAWSON

Let's go, Rock!

ROCK

Move it out, you bastards!

They surge forward.

ROCK

Pick up those boats -- Bulldozer
-- Horse!

They grab one of the wooden assault boats. Rock picks up the front of another. Retread and Wildman grab the other end.

ROCK

Get your hands into it -- Retread!

He does and they all start running -- grunting, screaming. The squad ahead of them is carrying the rafts -- they hit mines -- an arm sails back and slaps Retread across the face. He goes down.

ROCK

Get up, Retread! You don't get out of this.

Rock grabs him with his free hand, makes him continue -- more MINES GO OFF -- screams and frag -- a helmet bounces off the boat -- with something in it.

ROCK

Step in the smoke where they've already gone off!

They try to move from one BLAST to ANOTHER. Now 88s RIP great furrows into the ground. A man is blown to pieces behind them -- but over all this is the roar of the mob, and it drives the 34th on in a terrifying kind of exhilaration --

RIVERBANK

Strewn with wounded and dead -- men trip over each other -- CRIES FOR HELP -- MOTHER -- WIVES -- but the assault lurches on to splash into the water. The German MACHINE GUNS RIP across the surface tearing men down. Some fall headlong into the water, others splash and spasm as they are swept under -- but beyond, the boats of the 36th are across. Smoke and fire belch from the other side.

MORE BOATS

Those of the 34th, are brought down the bank. When a mine goes off and a boat goes down, men scream and flail but others pick the boat up.

CLOSE - ROCK

At the water -- they surge forward. Retread drops his side. Rock holds it in the current -- it twists --

ROCK

Get in the boat, stupid!

Retread does -- he's flat -- other easy men jump in on top of him -- BULLETS SPLINTER THROUGH, a man gasps and grabs out at the others.

ROCK

Get in! Get in! Pick up those paddles -- use your rifles! Go!

He rushes off, jumps in. A huge GEYSER GOES OFF almost swamping them. Another boat turns over and goes by, the men screaming as they go under. Rock calls out cadence as they paddle.

ROCK

Call it out -- Let's hear it!
Sound off like you got a pair!

They do -- and make progress towards the far bank where a litter of deflated rafts and shattered boats bob about burning. All along the bank Americans are crouched with their heads down. Easy Company makes the bank and starts to scramble out.

ROCK

Go out the front, meatheads! You don't know what's in that water!

He pushes them on -- heads in the mud like the others. SHELLS WHISTLE IN and IMPACT in chaos and confusion. The river, only fifty feet wide, is like a moat filled with writhing men -- some surging forward, some trying to go back in horror. Bodies wash by, boats capsize, EXPLOSIONS and SPLASHES from MACHINE GUNS leap up everywhere. This scene goes on and on as far as one can see until obscured by smoke and darkness.

CLOSE - ROCK

Taking in the horror. He looks around at his men -- they all look back at him, scared like kids.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Isn't he supposed to get them out of this? Hasn't he always? For a brief moment they are helpless as infants; and for a brief moment of stunned silence so is he. Where are his men? Where's the captain? What can we do?

VOICE (O.S.)

Rock! Sergeant Rock!

He turns and sees Bulldozer up to his waist in the water holding a boat by its rope. The boat is full of the little Nisei infantrymen of the 100th Battalion 442. Bulldozer seems paralyzed because he's tangled in under-water barbed wire. Rock leaps down the bank, reaches out to him, but can't quite make it. A Nisei sergeant jumps over and is quickly tangled up. He starts to go under -- pulls himself up and is BLOWN UP in a violent geyser of water and blood.

ROCK

Grenades -- there's grenades in the wire! Stay in the boat!

It starts to turn over in the current.

ROCK

Retread! Pascalano!

Retread grimaces and comes down the bank. Pascalano can't make himself move. Wildman rushes over and grabs Rock's hand. Retread and the reluctant Pascalano form a human chain. Rock reaches out and grabs Bulldozer's wrist. The two strong men pull and Bulldozer comes out of the water tangled in wire, a GRENADE hanging from it. Rock grabs the potato masher -- its pin pulls and he hurls it back over the bank -- BLAM! Now they both pull the boat in, and the Nisei jump off and rush up the bank. Whipsnake crawls over.

WHIPSNAKE

I saw you boys but --

RETREAD

Yeah, sure you did.

WHIPSNAKE

Who are those guys?

WILDMAN

Japs.

WHIPSNAKE

Japs?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RETREAD

Yeah -- our Japs -- Nisei --
Buddaheads, you fucking Philistine.
Ain't you ever heard of the 442nd?

The incident has galvanized the men -- though only a few,
they are a combat unit again.

ROCK

Where's your weapon, Bulldozer?

BULLDOZER

In the river.

A TERRIFIED YOUNG SOLDIER -- Holds his hand up.

SOLDIER

I got a gun -- if you want it. I
ain't gonna use it!

ROCK

Thanks, kid -- He'll remember you
in his will.

Bulldozer takes the gun -- opens it and slaps a belt
across, slams it closed.

ROCK

We gotta get to the assembly
point -- Olive grove about a
hundred yards in -- two hundred
over --

SOLDIER

No way, Sarge -- They got us
pegged -- concrete bunker right
over the bank.

MACHINE GUN FIRE rips across the bank and into the river
beyond, searching for anyone to stand.

OTHER SOLDIER

They can call in the 88's right
on top of themselves -- they're
in concrete!

More FIRE -- EXPLOSIONS geyser the water. Men scream.

ROCK

We gotta get out of here.

He crabs over to Bulldozer -- puts his foot on a HELMET
buried in the mud -- it moves -- a face looks up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK

Sorry -- thought you were dead.

HELMET SOLDIER

It's alright, Sarge -- don't mind me.

ROCK

Where's your squad, soldier?

HELMET SOLDIER

I don't know, sir.

ROCK

Don't 'sir' me -- I'm a sergeant -- I work for a living. You want a squad, soldier?

HELMET SOLDIER

I'm a cook from Headquarters Company -- I'm a replacement -- I'm fine right here.

ROCK

No -- you need a squad -- you got a squad. The rest of you, too -- you're a squad -- my squad. Now -- only the dead are staying here -- so lock and load.

PASCALANO

What about the bunker -- we gonna walk over that?

ROCK

They gotta see, don't they. They can't shoot you if they don't see you.

RETREAD

Yeah, they got flares.

ROCK

I know that, stupid -- They can't see if they're blind -- flares or not. Everybody's got one Willie Peter grenade -- Let's have 'em.

BULLDOZER

Willie Peter -- you gonna blind 'em, Sarge?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK

Genius, Bulldozer -- You got a college degree?

BULLDOZER

No, I'm a working man.

They pass the grenades to him.

ROCK

Good, I won't be wasting a brilliant career -- You can come with me.

He pulls the pin of one, hands it to Bulldozer -- pulls the pin of another.

ROCK

Now!

He throws it -- grabs another -- pulls the pin. Bulldozer does likewise -- together they pitch about six before the first brilliant starburst goes off -- followed in quick succession by others. Rock stands up in the brilliant light of the EXPLOSIONS. He can see the bunker. He throws two more at it.

ROCK

Grenade bath -- keep it going -- C'mon, Bulldozer.

He rushes over the bank, with Bulldozer following, carrying the machine gun. Retread, Pascalano and the Nisei all throw grenades as quick as they can at the bunker slit in the white hot light.

CUT TO:

GERMAN BUNKER - GUNNER

throws his hands over his eyes. The glare from the explosions streams through the slit. The other crewmembers drop their cards and stand up -- the table falls over.

SERGEANT

(German)

What is it?

CUT TO:

ROCK AND BULLDOZER

They run to the side to flank the bunker. Hot frags of white phosphorous rain down upon them. Bulldozer screams as a burning chunk lands on his shoulder -- Rock catches one on his arm -- it starts burning -- he gasps but keeps running.

CUT TO:

GERMAN GUNNER

He sees through the glare -- two figures -- turns the MG-42 -- and BLASTS OUT FIRE so rapid it sounds like a power saw.

CUT TO:

ROCK AND BULLDOZER

Bullets tear into the mud and sand behind them.

CUT TO:

GERMAN GUNNERS

From the front -- traversing to catch them. The gun slams into the concrete wall of the firing slit. The German ducks down and rushes over to a side slit out of sight. The rest of the crew follow.

CUT TO:

SIDE FIRING SLIT

The steel window is pulled down. Another MG-42 -- Thrusts its ugly snout out as a belt is being slapped across the breech. The gunner is about to slam the feed cover when a hand reaches out and grabs the gun by the muzzle -- pulling it forward -- and G.I. boot comes down on the barrel, shoving it into the mud. Two more hands toss in grenades.

ROCK (O.S.)

(German)

Revenge!

BULLDOZER (O.S.)

What's that mean?

ROCK (O.S.)

Payback!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Germans scramble around out of sight. A white-hot EXPLOSION goes off, followed by OTHERS as AMMUNITION and GRENADES are ignited. The blast pours out the slit like lava. In a second it's gone. Rock leans up and EMPTIES his THOMPSON into the embrasure.

ROCK

Now you!

Bulldozer sticks the BROWNING .30 in and CUTS LOOSE with half a belt. When he stops, the bullets ricochet around inside for awhile -- until they stick into something. He looks up at Rock.

ROCK

Easy Company -- Follow me!

CUT TO:

OLIVE GROVE

Rock follows a silhouetted group of men leading wire into the trees.

SOLDIER

It's Rock!

OTHER SOLDIER

I knew you'd make it, Sarge.

MORTAR FIRE BURSTS ahead -- white phosphorous -- it lights up the small group of men. Dawson is on his walkie talkie while his radio to Battalion is being rigged.

DAWSON

(into radio)

-- Yeah, I got about twenty of 'em with their goats -- That's right, I said goats.

Beyond Dawson is a muddy irrigation ditch filled with Italian peasants. Women moan and CHILDREN CRY, they all hold onto their little GOATS which struggle and BLEAT at the sounds of the incessant violence. They stare wide-eyed up at Rock as if he will have some answer for them. Rock looks back at them, his hands shaking.

DAWSON

(into walkie talkie)

-- I copy that -- We'll hold here and try and reassemble, but we're taking fire all the time --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks at the handset.

DAWSON

Cut off --

ROCK

Baker and Delta look like they
got caught in the river.

DAWSON

How do you know?

ROCK

I saw it.

DAWSON

How'd you get through?

ROCK

There was a Kraut bunker -- We
had to take it out --

DAWSON

Your hands are shaking.

ROCK

I can't stop 'em.

DAWSON

Fold your arms so they won't see.

He does -- his jaw is shaking -- he shivers and controls
himself. Dawson watches him and then unfolds his map.

DAWSON

Beyond this grove is a road --
We're supposed to follow it up to
Hill 441.

Lieutenant Delgado leans in.

LT. DELGADO

-- go up a road, after that? It'll
be a slaughter. Got any ideas, Top?

ROCK

Who, me? I don't know -- Sir --
Maybe -- Maybe you could ask them.

He nods at the peasants.

DAWSON

Pascalano! Get up here.

CUT TO:

PEASANTS

Looking up hopeful as Pascalano listens. An old woman starts an emotional appeal in Italian. Dawson looks at Rock.

PASCALANO

-- Says that God is watching your ass. You brought shit to them. Yesterday life was fine, so you have to do something -- to save their butts.

ROCK

They say all that?

PASCALANO

I cleaned it up.

DAWSON

I'll help them, but my men come first.

Pascalano translates as he goes --

DAWSON

I'll need one of them -- old, not married. One who knows where the Germans stay and where they did all their digging. They got a guy like that?

Much mumbling -- the woman responds.

PASCALANO

She says they know nothing.

An 88 barrage SCREAMS over causing everyone to flinch -- children start wailing.

ROCK

Tell them they stay here.

Much commotion and hysteria -- arguing.

PASCALANO

They have a guy like that.

A little rat-faced man -- is produced shaking with fear.

PASCALANO

He was the village thief. His name is Aldo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAWSON

Tell Aldo to be careful where he
steps -- send the others across
the river with their goats.

Rock stands up.

ROCK

On your feet! We're moving out --
Five yards between men. Let's
get out of this place.

CUT TO:

RAPIDO RIVER

The banks are still strewn with the dead, but things
are different. Bridges are up! Pontoon bridges, steel
Bailey Bridges -- a crude type of narrow suspension
bridge -- and across all of these poor men, jeeps,
trucks and tanks. SHELLS still IMPACT in the swamp
and the water, but the 34th Division, the Red Bulls
from Iowa, are going across.

CUT TO:

CLARK

walks through a marsh up to another man silhouetted in
the darkness. There are no lights save a soft red glow
from the distant battle. Other figures are just dark
shapes in the moonlit ground fog. It is quiet, other
than DISTANT ARTILLERY FIRE -- too far away to hear
small arms or screams. A FLARE arcs up and reflects
off the marsh waters. Clark comes up on a stocky
American general looking through binoculars -- LUCIEN
TRUSCOTT.

CLARK

We've lost contact with the 36th --

TRUSCOTT

You mean the 36th is meat.

CLARK

Well, the 34th has gotten across
and units are approaching the
abbey and Cassino town.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK (CONT'D)

I can break out, Lucien -- I know
I can -- Sure the Texans failed
but we're tying down the whole
14th Panzer Korps -- and in 48
hours we land at Anzio and cut
'em off.

TRUSCOTT

Cut 'em off, Wayne -- Right now I'd
like to let 'em go.

CLARK

Nobody said it was going to be
easy -- nobody. Walker knew what
he was up against but he had
doubts. You think when a general
has doubts his officers don't know
it -- and if his officers know it,
so do his men. Those Texans were
whipped before they started --

TRUSCOTT

Did you know it?

CLARK

It's not important for me to know
it -- it's important for me to get
to Rome.

TRUSCOTT

Is it worth it? I ask myself that
sometimes.

CLARK

Rome, Lucien -- men are going to
die this winter one way or another
-- and their parents and wives are
gonna grieve. Wouldn't it be
better if they died for Rome than
for another stinking mountain
range no one can pronounce? We're
here, Lucien -- on the European
continent and we've gotta win win
something -- something of meaning.
Rome has meaning.

TRUSCOTT

You know the expression -- 'First
man in Rome?'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK

Whatta' you mean?

TRUSCOTT

First among equals -- the Roman of
the Romans - Scipio Africanus --
Gaius Marius -- Sulla -- Julius
Caesar.

CLARK

(smiling)

Nothing ever gets done without
ambition. 'If it's possible it
is done -- if it's impossible --
it will be done.' That was Caesar,
too. Why wouldn't I want to be
the first man in Rome? Fred Walker
didn't want to be the first man in
Rome and his men are dying for it.

CUT TO:

BELOW HILL 441

A hill that history will call Snakeshead Ridge -- it will
be haunted by the spirits of brave men -- American,
German, New Zealander, Indian and Pole. But tonight is
just the beginning of this battle and Hill 441 juts out
of the mist into the clear moonlight. Down below, a
solitary line of American soldiers move cautiously --
bundled in their overcoats and holding their weapons
silent. The blue moon reflects off their wet round
steel helmets.

CLOSEUP - ALDO

moves ahead with a certain feral caution -- stopping
occasionally to almost sniff the air. He comes to a
stop -- crawls up the face of a boulder -- looks over.
Soon he is joined by Dawson and Rock.

THEIR POV

German defensive line: metal barrels and helmets
glittering in the light. SHELLS still SHRIEK overhead
IMPACTING up the ridge.

BACK TO SCENE

DELGADO

Sir -- look.

He holds up wire -- pulls it and sees it go back down the hill.

ROCK

Command detonated mines -- not very nice --

DAWSON

Cut 'em.

Rock pulls out his wire cutters -- his hands still shake. He sees Dawson watch him. The others have moved away.

DAWSON

They told me what you did back there -- at the river.

Rock cuts a wire -- pulls up another.

ROCK

I should be dead.

DAWSON

Somebody had to do it. I'm putting you in for a decoration.

ROCK

Put me in for a ten day leave. Better yet, send me home.

He looks at Dawson.

ROCK

I'm cracking up, sir.

DAWSON

Not that I can see.

He turns around.

DAWSON

Get that radio up here.

The radioman comes spooling-out wire. A NISEI CORPORAL follows.

DAWSON

Call the 100th -- call sign Blue Torch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The radioman calls up the 100th Battalion. He hands the phone to the Nisei Corporal.

CORPORAL

This is Harada Second Platoon Hotel.

Then he starts talking in Japanese. Whipsnake and Retread crawl closer.

WHIPSNAKE

He's talking in Jap -- who's he talking to?

RETREAD

He's giving the sit-rep to his people, you moron.

WHIPSNAKE

Yeah -- well who says some a' them Krauts don't know Jap?

ROCK

Well -- he ain't real sharp on his Portuguese, meathead.

He finishes -- confers with Dawson.

DAWSON

Let's get going, Top -- We're going up.

ROCK

Pass it on we're going up -- keep your intervals.

RETREAD

Up? That's where the fuckin' abbey is!

ROCK

Watch your mouth, Retread -- that's one of the holiest god-damn shrines in Italy.

They go past. Rock sees Bulldozer weighted down with his Browning and extra belts of ammo. Rock grabs a G.I. behind him.

ROCK

You.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

G.I.

Me?

It's the replacement from the river -- the one Rock stepped on -- the cook.

ROCK

Yeah you, Cook.

He pulls the belts from Bulldozer, drapes them over Cook.

ROCK

You load for him.

BULLDOZER

I don't want him. He's a fucking new guy.

ROCK

He's a cook -- he knows where to find food -- load for him.

COMPANY

Spread out moving up.

G.I. BOOT

climbing, stumbling along oblivious to the thin trip wire --

FLARE

White hot, goes off in the rocks below them -- lighting a small area.

DAWSON

Jesus -- Move!

He rushes forward -- they all do. Suddenly the PIERCING SCREAM of ARTILLERY -- arcs down over them and goes off below. Another salvo follows -- coming closer. The flare is out, but the next salvo is closer still. They scramble up the rocks burdened by their overcoats and ammunition. Slipping and falling occasionally, they try to keep up with the leaders -- and naturally begin to scatter. The BLASTS start to come closer like a beast that has sensed its prey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PASCALANO

They're following us!

ROCK

They're walking it, you idiot --
Keep going!

Now it becomes a mad dash driven by fear -- only the coolness of Dawson and Rock keep the immediate group together. An EXPLOSION goes off to their side.

CRAZY HORSE

Mines -- the place is mined!

ROCK

That was a short-round -- Just keep going.

Dawson pushes on the back of a man -- pulls another up a slippery boulder. The wall of blast and steel seems to be gaining on them.

ROCK

C'mon -- You can make it!

The Cook falls exhausted --

ROCK

On your feet -- Cook!

He pulls him up -- shoves him along. He falls exhausted -- gasping.

COOK

I can't --

Rock picks him over his shoulder. Dawson looks up -- the slope is steep -- the abbey silhouetted against the clear sky and stars. Shrapnel WHISTLES by and CLANGS off of the rocks.

DAWSON

Get down -- Dig in! Let it go over us!

SOLDIER

He's crazy!

He keeps running up -- off at an angle, a few others follow.

DAWSON

No! -- Get down!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He drops down, pulls Retread down and Crazy Horse. Rock dumps the Cook on top of Bulldozer and they all go to the ground.

DAWSON

Get between the rocks -- Dig in!

RETREAD/WILDMAN/PASCALANO

dig into the mud with their hands clawing like terrified rodents. A few break and run with the others across the side of the slope. The BLASTS are almost upon them. Dawson leaps up and goes after them.

ROCK

ROCK

Captain!

The SHELLS HIT -- Rock's helmet flies off from concussion. He grabs his ears and throws his face into the dirt.

OTHERS

Holding their ears scrambling -- the CONCUSSION lifts them up -- dirt and hot smoking shards of steel rain down. It seems nothing can survive -- smoke and hot gasses whip about on a frenzied wind -- and then it starts to subside as it passes over.

COOK

looks around first -- another BLAST and he shoves his face back into the dirt. His pack is smoking and starting to burn. Suddenly Bulldozer is patting it out. Cook jumps.

BULLDOZER

You're alive, Cook -- Get up!

Retread checks his legs and arms -- Whipsnake starts to laugh. Rock is on his knees watching the BARRAGE continue up the slope.

ROCK

Squad leaders give me a head count.

Wildman calls out names -- feeble answers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK

2nd Squad.

WILDMAN

Ain't no 2nd Squad, Sarge -- we're
all that's here.

He goes on calling names.

WILDMAN

Cavasos --

(silence)

-- Anybody seen Cavasos?

PASCALANO

He's gone.

Pascalano holds up a smoking boot.

PASCALANO

He's gone -- he's just -- gone --

Rock is on his feet -- looking for the Captain.

ROCK

Get 'em on their feet, Wildman --
Let's move -- some of the others
went --

He stops. Above them two men, Beef Riley and Corporal
Hogg, of the mortar section, bring down the Captain.
Riley has him on his shoulder, while Hogg tries to
keep his mouth open. The Captain's rasping breaths
plume mists into the night.

ROCK

Oh no -- Oh, Jesus -- Put him down
here -- carefully --

They do -- Dawson's face is white -- strained. He's
wrapped in his overcoat and held together by pistol
belts. His arms flop about in spasm.

ROCK

Wildman -- morphine -- get some
dressings.

WILDMAN

Right here, Sarge -- Oh Jesus --
Jesus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rock undoes the belts -- opens the overcoat -- something slippery slides around -- blood rushes out. Rock winces, pulls the overcoat back tight. Wildman hands him a syringe. Rock is holding his breath.

WILDMAN

Breath, Sarge -- you gotta breathe.

ROCK

Shut up.

He puts the syringe in. He turns away -- can't take it anymore.

ROCK

Put out a perimeter -- who's on perimeter defense? Gotta put out a perimeter.

He walks away. He looks up at the grim shadow of the Abbey against the stars -- breathes, his gasps great plumes of mist.

DAWSON

Rock!

He turns -- tries to compose himself -- leans down.

DAWSON

My wife -- she told me in the last letter -- be sure to see the Abbey at Monte Cassino.

ROCK

Don't talk, sir.

DAWSON

Don't sir me -- name's Joe -- just like you -- 'cept you wouldn't take a commission, you lazy fucker. You don't get out now -- No way.

ROCK

Yeah -- you're right, Joe.

DAWSON

Shut up, you liar -- Get me my map case.

Rock gets the map out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAWSON

Where are we, Karl?

ROCK

I don't really know -- I'm not sure --

DAWSON

You can read a map, Sergeant.

Rock holds out the map.

ROCK

Here -- close to the Abbey.

DAWSON

That's right, Sergeant -- Now draw a circle around it -- and send it to my wife. That's all -- Karl -- Get 'em out a' here -- Take over -- Do it, Sergeant!

Rock gets up -- moves away, the map still in his hand.

ROCK

Didn't I say to put a perimeter out -- Move him over there to the cave.

He points to a shepherd's cave in the side of the steep slope -- He starts to walk away.

WILDMAN

You ain't gonna leave us, Sarge?

ROCK

I gotta look around -- None of you did.

He staggers off up the hill -- an expression of pain and horror on his face.

CLOSEUP - ROCK

alone on the slope of hell. Smoldering stones and shattered men -- a hand, maybe German, maybe American, reaches toward the deepness of the receding dark. The rest of the body is buried. Rock sees the rippling flash of the batteries of guns -- SHELLS SCREAM overhead in continuous WAIL to IMPACT somewhere in the fog and smoke below. Rock's face is stark and gaunt -- his eyes hollow. For once in his life he doesn't know where to go anymore. What does it matter?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He waits for a shell or a sniper -- what does it matter?
Finally he backs down the slope into the smoke and
finds himself in --

CAVE ENTRANCE

Rock framed starkly against the light of dawn. The
others, about eight or ten, crowd in the shadows,
their eyes the only thing to be seen on their dark
faces.

ROCK

I thought I said to put out
perimeter security.

WILDMAN

The Captn's dead.

Rock stares down at them -- Dawson's body is in front
of them, covered with a poncho. Dead Germans are piled
up in the end of the cave. Pascalano shakes his head,
weeping softly. Rock crouches down -- pulls the poncho
back. Dawson looks stiff with rictus already. Rock
swallows and carefully he straightens the lapels --
crosses the hands and brushes the hair out of his eyes.
Rock's face is grim and as rigid as the dead man's but
his eyes cry -- tears pour down his impassive cheeks
over his stiff mouth and jaw.

WILDMAN

I'll get outside, Sarge --

PASCALANO

How'd these krauts buy it in here,
Sarge?

ROCK

(not looking)

Concussion.

PASCALANO

Short round?

ROCK

No -- they sacrificed them --
trying to get us.

KLUZEWSKI

They'd do that?

ROCK

(turns away)

They would.

CUT TO:

GERMAN 88 POSITION - EARLY DAWN

Far behind the Abbey on the heights -- German General VON SENGERS UN ETTERLIN walks out of an underground bunker.

AIDE

Oberst Lieutenant Reiger -- Herr General.

The man before him is a piece of fascist sculpture -- aristocratic, cruel, Teutonic -- Heidelberg dueling scars. REIGER is a Light Colonel of Fallschirmjaeger (paratroops). He wears the distinctive splinter camouflage smock and helmet -- the same as the men who were dead in the cave.

VON SENGERS

I've read your dossier, Reiger, a sniper at Leningrad?

REIGER

Yes, Herr General.

VON SENGERS

What would attract a man of your blood to such work?

REIGER

I am a jaeger (hunter), Herr General. I was raised to appreciate the chase -- and a sniper's work is the highest art of the chase.

They walk down from the gun position which has fallen silent as other BATTERIES OPEN UP and SHELLS SHRIEK OVER. Both men are as calm as if in a garden.

VON SENGERS

You received the Knights Cross at Leningrad?

REIGER

With Oak Leaves, Herr General.

VON SENGERS

Why do you not wear them?

REIGER

I never wear excess decorations in a forward area, Herr General.

He turns and points to the silhouetted darkness of the Abbey above them, and down into the pit of smoldering battle below.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VON SENGER

I want to counter-attack immediately. Stay clear of the Abbey. No German troops are permitted within two hundred yards. You will sweep what remains of the American 34th Division into the river.

REIGER

What of the 36th Division -- the 'Texans'?

VON SENGER

They are already liquidated.

REIGER

Then it is a battle won, Herr General.

VON SENGER

Another bit of time stolen that's all -- The outcome will be the same -- but one has pride, Herr Oberst. Clauswitz states that when the outcome is certain -- strike boldly and negotiate for the best terms -- but then Hitler has never read Clauswitz.

He stops looking down into the black tortured fog that somewhere contains Easy Company.

CUT TO:

ROCK

Looking at a Kraut helmet -- the COOK replacement sits nearby.

ROCK

What's your name, son?

COOK

P.F.C. Delbert Earl -- 115th Support Company --

ROCK

I just wanted your name, Private Cook -- so I know who to write.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILDMAN

Whatta you make a' that helmet,
Sarge?

ROCK

Fallshirmjaeger -- elite, the best.
Perfect specimens -- not even a
single filling in their teeth.

RETREAD

Supermen -- goddamn supermen.
Typical -- typical Easy gets to
fight the goddamn Nazi gods.

ROCK

They're dead aren't they? -- And
you're alive -- So shut up.

He looks over to Cook -- takes off his helmet. Cook
winces. Rock touches his blond hair.

ROCK

Very Aryan.

Hands him the German helmet.

ROCK

Put it on.

He does.

COOK

What for?

Rock lashes out, swats the helmet off his head -- knock-
ing him back -- everyone looks around.

ROCK

When I tell you something the
first and last words are 'Sir',
you sorry piece of shit. Are you
asking me a question?

COOK

Sir -- No, sir.

ROCK

I didn't think so -- Now get out
there and tell me when the Nazi
gods show up.

He throws him a bloodstained camo-smock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COOK

Sir, yes, sir.

He goes.

CUT TO:

DAWN

88 BATTERIES FIRING RAPIDLY, the rounds occasionally leaving lines of vapor down into the valley lit by the morning light into delicate spidery strands that drift away, only to be replaced by new ones. Contrary to this beauty is the smoke, dirty and smudged that rises from the mist-shrouded river below.

REIGER

His face FULL IN FRAME like a hawk looking down from a craggy perch.

BACK TO SCENE

His aide, a CAPTAIN, hands him his camouflaged helmet in a ceremonial manner like a squire arming a knight.

REIGER

(in German)

Cease the artillery bombardment,
Hauptmann Staul.

The Captain backs the order.

REIGER

You may begin your advance.

STAUL (CAPTAIN)

A beautiful morning, Herr Oberst
-- scent of freshness from the fog.

REIGER

You look for beautification in
things, Hauptmann.

STAUL

Yes, Mien Oberst.

REIGER

It is unnecessary and distracting.
Be mindful that you are a soldier
on campaign.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Staul stiffens perceptibly.

REIGER

(gently)

Now go ahead -- you may begin the advance.

Staul waves his arm downward, Reiger smiles at Staul -- sniffs the fresh morning air.

REIGER

-- Only the scent of battle, Hauptmann.

CUT TO:

PARATROOPERS

Rushing down the slope in continuous bounding overleaps, always covering their advance.

They pass by the cave where the stricken Observation Post was. Several bodies are laying on the ground and a few German soldiers are crouched over a fallen comrade while a sergeant tries to help him. A PARATROOPER stops.

PARATROOPER

(in German)

You're one of ours -- you're Fallshirmjaeger.

The Sergeant turns around glaring. It's Rock in a Kraut helmet and smock.

ROCK

(in German)

Of course, you fool -- Get out of here unless you can help.

The Soldier moves on with his team. Soon more pass by. Reiger himself.

REIGER

Unteroffizier! What happened here?

ROCK

(not looking)

We fell under our own barrage.
Somebody made a mistake -- Damned Wehrmacht --

He looks and sees that it is a Lieutenant Colonel. He snaps to attention, heels click. The others follow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK

Excuse me, Herr Oberst.

REIGER

(to Staul)

These are brave men, Hauptmann --
uselessly wasted -- Make a note of
it.

(to Rock)

My condolences, Unteroffizier.

ROCK

Thank you, Herr Oberst.

He turns to leave -- turns back.

CLOSE - WILDMAN

In cave entrance wearing a Kraut uniform, his hand eases
to the handle of his MP-40.

CLOSE - ROCK

He looks up.

REIGER

You were here all night,
Unteroffizier?

ROCK

Yes, Mien Oberst.

REIGER

And your radio was functional?

ROCK

Yes, Mien Oberst -- Until this
unfortunate tragedy.

REIGER

What channel were you operating on?

ROCK

The operators are dead, Herr Oberst.
My task was the security of the
unit. Channel identities are only
known to the operators in case of
capture.

REIGER

Yes -- of course. Then you
wouldn't know --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK

Herr Oberst?

REIGER

A three hour cease fire has been declared by General Von Senger. When your men are attended to, go to forward and with the medical teams and note the positions and number of enemy casualties.

ROCK

Yes, Mien Oberst.

REIGER

I don't trust the Werhmacht reports -- I want my own from my own men. -- Your name, Unteroffizier?

ROCK

Unteroffizier Rocke Herr Oberst.

REIGER

Rocke -- I'll remember that -- One more thing, Rocke -- Did you see any enemy units attempt to reach those heights over there --

He points to Hill 441 (which will become known as Snakeshead Ridge).

ROCK

No, Mien Oberst -- They attempted to break out through the valley and come towards the Abbey -- Their dispositions were small and we stopped them.

Reiger smiles -- puts his hand on Rock's shoulder.

REIGER

A good man, Unteroffizier -- sturdy -- a rock.

He points to the valley.

REIGER

Their 34th Division penetrated further than we expected. But now they lay under those heights -- trapped.

He points to the heights.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REIGER

A thoughtless oversight on the part of the High Command.

ROCK

What, sir?

REIGER

That no one occupies these positions. But it will soon be rectified. We will seal them up and annihilate the 34th Division like the Romans at Cannae. Do you know Cannae, Unteroffizier?

ROCK

Hannibal, Mien Oberst -- I read him as a boy --

REIGER

Very good, Hauptmann -- Make note of Unteroffizier Locke --

(to Rock)

I will be looking for your report, Unteroffizier -- Good hunting --

He leaves. Rock turns and goes back to the cave entrance.

ROCK

Take off your pistol belts --
Leave your weapons under those overcoats.

RETREAD

All of 'em?

KLUZEWSKI

What'd he say, Sarge?

WHIPSNAKE

I don't like it.

ROCK

(harsh)

You're not being asked -- Get up
-- Take off your helmets --

KLUZEWSKI

What'd he say?

Rock sees Cook start to take his helmet off.

ROCK

Not you -- Take this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He shoves an MP-40 into his trembling hands.

KLUZEWSKI

C'mon, Sarge -- What'd he say?

ROCK

He wanted to know if your sister screws on the first date. I told him it took me longer, but then again I am not an officer.

CUT TO:

OLIVE GROVE

A Sergeant of the 100th (Nisei) raises a white flag on a rifle as Medic Teams rush forward.

CUT TO:

GERMAN TROOPS

crouched in defensive positions make careful note of the teams and casualties. They note the number of dead and wounded. A stretcher with a moaning G.I. is carried by.

CUT TO:

MOUTH OF CAVE

The squad emerges, hands on heads looking haggard and beaten because they are. At the front walks Cook, on the flank is Rock, both with MP-40's.

ROCK

Shnell!

They shuffle down the slope towards the American lines. They pass Red Cross medics trying to help a fallen G.I. who is moaning.

ROCK

Don't look, you might know him.

They pass Germans drawing on maps and talking into radios. As they pass a group, a spit and polish WEHRMACHT CAPTAIN looks at his papers -- seems suspicious and follows.

Rock ignores him. The Captain is a nerd, and stumbles across the rocks to keep up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN

What are you doing?

Rock disdainfully looks down at him but keeps going. Cook is nervous. Rock shifts the machine pistol sling over his shoulder so that his hand rests on the grip, and the muzzle travels to the Captain's direction.

CAPTAIN

I asked you a question.

ROCK

Oh -- I am sorry, Hauptmann -- My ears -- the shelling.

CAPTAIN

Where are you going with these men?

ROCK

Prisoner exchange, Mien Hauptmann.

CAPTAIN

Prisoner exchange -- I have nothing in my orders --

ROCK

Different chain of command, after all we are -- Fallshirmjaeger.

CAPTAIN

You are insolent -- There's nothing so elite about you. I know an Austrian accent. You are a big stupid farmboy.

ROCK

Yes, Hauptmann, but I am Fallshirmjaeger.

CAPTAIN

There's nothing so special about you -- You insolent oaf -- the only good you have are your boots.

With that he points to the boots which are not Paratrooper boots, but good old G.I. clodhoppers.

CAPTAIN

Oh!

His mouth drops as Rock's muzzle swings over to his ribs.

ROCK

Keep walking, Hauptmann.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They pass another checkpoint. The Captain only adds to their credibility.

CAPTAIN

I could cry out.

ROCK

That would be foolish and even if you lived, think of the humiliation.

He smiles at the Captain. They come around a burnt-out grove of trees and see a strange sight: American and German stretcher parties loading the dead onto folding stretchers. They work wordlessly together gathering up bodies, arms, legs, heads. An American hands a head to a German. The party moves soundlessly through the horror of it, only compounding their fears. Beyond is a group of Germans, and beyond that the positions of the 100th. Cook looks at the carnage, and a large wet stain soaks down his leg. He stumbles letting the machine pistol loose on its sling.

KLUZEWSKI

(whispers)

Hey, Sarge, the kid's pissin' in his pants.

ROCK

So am I -- shut up.

Too late or maybe it was inevitable, the Germans start towards them -- a SERGEANT, three Wehrmacht troopers, and an Italian peasant. The peasant is pleading with the Krauts trying to be understood -- a little rat-like man -- Aldo!

GERMAN SERGEANT

Halt!

Rock stops -- breathes to pull himself together -- the others stop. Beyond, a hundred feet -- the American position -- shiny G.I. helmets move about. The Germans approach. The Captain is frozen in fear.

ROCK

(in German)

Prisoner exchange.

SERGEANT

(in German)

I have heard nothing --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK

Hauptmann, perhaps you could explain.

The Captain cannot speak -- unintelligible noises stutter out. Aldo looks over -- spits in rage.

ALDO

Bastardos!

OTHER GERMAN

Look, this one has wet his pants -- brave paratrooper.

ALDO

Bastardos Americanos!

Rock stares coldly at the Sergeant.

RETREAD

When?

ROCK

Now!

The German Sergeant's eyes panic -- he fumbles for his Schmeisser. Rock raises his muzzle and FIRES a TWO SHOT BURST into the Sergeant's chest -- then turns and FIRES another BURST into a second man.

ROCK

Run!

They're already gone.

CRAZY HORSE

Don't shoot, we're G.I.'s!

RETREAD

We're coming in -- God, don't shoot!

More SHOTS erupt from German position -- the M-1's CRACK from below. Aldo stands there screaming. Rock turns and drops to one knee FIRING up the hill. Cook steps towards him unsure. Rock throws a grenade -- another. Cook takes off.

CUT TO:

NISEI POSITION

The men of the 100th quickly FIRE up the hill. The Americans run towards them screaming.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILDMAN

Hold you fire! Don't shoot
anymore -- Hold your fire! Our
Sergeant's out there!

CUT TO:

NISEI POSITION

OTHER NISEI

Get those krauts, Yamashita -- Pick
'em off!

Corporal Yamashita tightens his prone position FIRING
head down on the stock of his Garand.

CUT TO:

COOK

Running, screaming.

COOK

I'm American -- I'm American!

He throws off his helmet and discards the Schmeisser.

ROCK

on his belly as the GRENADES GO OFF. He looks up. The
Wehrmacht Captain tries to run, and is SHOT cleanly
through the neck. Rock turns.

CLOSEUP - YAMASHITA

squeezes, the gun bucks slightly.

CLOSEUP - ROCK

His helmet spins off his head and he goes down -- more
FIRING -- another EXPLOSION -- MORTAR ROUNDS IMPACT.
MACHINE GUNS OPEN UP -- the war starts again.

DISSOLVE TO:

SMOKE

Gathering dark, rain, guns CRASH in the distance -- 88's, 105's -- dirty smoke drifts from below the ever present Abbey -- but here below, it is strangely silent, almost peaceful. Rock lays sprawled on his back -- his head and eyes matted with dried blood, next to him, laying almost entwined, is the dead Wehrmacht Captain. There is a hint of movement in Rock's cheeks and his eyes open. He looks up almost startled, he's seeing something in the smoke and rain.

A FACE

Unshaven, young, with a mop of flaring red hair. The bright blue eyes are full of fury -- the mouth is almost snarling -- this is O'HARA.

O'HARA

Come on, you son of a bitch! I knew I'd find you. Suck that air!

Rock gasps.

ROCK

I'm -- I'm an American.

O'HARA

I know who you are -- I heard the story and I'm not impressed! Now breathe, you bastard -- Don't quit -- Don't quit on me, asshole!

Rock blinks his bloody eyes -- sees the Abbey dark on the mountain. The rain washes the blood from his eyes, but more seeps down from his hair -- he blinks and chokes and O'Hara's face is back again.

O'HARA

Have you a sanitary napkin, Sergeant? You must have one 'cause you're a pussy! -- Don't quit on me! Breathe!

He has a syringe -- jams it somewhere into Rock.

O'HARA

Breathe! What would your mother think? You have a mother, don't you? Even crap like you has a mother! What about your father, you bastard -- Do you know who your father was? Well do you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rock mouths softly.

ROCK

I'm -- I'm an American.

Smoke swirls over and everything fades to --

ABBEY OF MONTE CASSINO

Dark in the afternoon light. American fighters (P-38's) ZOOM over and around it. On the hills at its base rise shrouds of smoke from ARTILLERY FIRE. A RIPPING SALVO tears into a forward American position. U.S. 105's ANSWER in kind.

CUT TO:

MARK CLARK

watching it all standing in the back of a jeep. They are in a rear area near the river but SHELLS RIP over -- General Clark's Staff crouch below him, but Clark does not waver. Truscott leans in and yells something.

CLARK

What's that?

TRUSCOTT

They can probably see you from the Monastery. You better get down.

CLARK

There's no one in the Monastery -- No Germans anyway.

A New Zealand General, FREYBERG, shakes his head.

FREYBERG

I wouldn't say that, sir.

CLARK

An' what makes you so sure, General?

FREYBERG

My Intelligence boys say the bloody krauts are in the windows -- can see their bloody binoculars flashing when the sun is low enough. Why one of your own Air Corps people -- a general officer flew over it yesterday in a Cub and --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK

Yeah, I heard that story.

FREYBERG

-- And --

CLARK

-- And you wanta' bomb it into pebbles right?

FREYBERG

Precisely, sir.

CLARK

That's one of the great treasures of Europe and Mark Clark's Fifth Army is not going to be remembered for making a pile of rubble out of our sacred Christian heritage. But I'll tell you what is going to happen, General.

FREYBERG

Sir.

CLARK

Your division is going to attack.

FREYBERG

I'm not prepared, sir.

CLARK

Take as long as you want -- a week -- but my boys are pulling back.

He motions, an aide steps forward. They walk to a field hospital. A medical captain salutes -- several more stand up outside the tent entrance. They look tired -- they are covered in splashed blood.

CLARK

(to an aide)

I don't want the press in on this -- I don't want any headlines about retreats -- we are regrouping under fire -- is that understood, General Freyberg -- You can do that?

FREYBERG

I understand, sir -- but I'll need the Monastery bombed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK

We'll talk about it, General.

(to Colonel)

Get on it, Burt -- I won't be long
in here --

CUT TO:

ROCK

His head covered in bandages. He is delirious and sweating. He looks to his side. A mutilated and bandaged man shakes spasmodically. He turns his head, and even through the bandages, it is seen that his jaw is missing. Rock looks the other way -- plasma bottles and foul-smelling chemical containers hang on a metal brace. The bottles are marked: WHITE, COLORED, NIP. When Rock turns back, he is confronted with General Mark Clark, standing tall and imperious beside his bed. His eyes dart about as if this is part of his delirium.

CLARK

Do you know how you got here,
Sergeant?

ROCK

I got shot, sir. A Medic -- with
red hair --

CLARK

(aside)

He's got a German accent.

(to Rock)

Who shot you, Sergeant?

ROCK

The Japs, sir -- the Japs shot me.

COLONEL

He's all messed up, sir, he thinks
he's in the Pacific.

CLARK

You're in Italy, son.

ROCK

I know where I am, sir -- They
were our Japs, sir, the 100th
Battalion.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR

One Puka Puka -- We got a lot of
'em in here. Brave boys.

ROCK

They're good, General -- if it were
my squad they would have missed --
rotten luck --

CLARK

Well, son -- you got a million
dollar wound -- You'll be going
home -- I'd call that luck ---

Clark gets up -- goes to the next bed -- we can hear
the BOY CRYING -- but we can't see him.

CLARK

Son -- what can I do for you.

BOY (O.S.)

Get me a grenade.

CLARK

Let's move on, Captain --

CUT TO:

ROCK - NIGHT

lays on his cot, sweating, cold. He listens to HIDEOUS
MOANS. A light goes on somewhere -- and silhouetted, a
MEDIC and DOCTOR stand over a distant cot. Rock hears
the dripping of the bottles, smells the alcohol and
blood. He closes his eyes and instantly he sees --

FLASHBACK - SHELLS

EXPLODING, throwing up WHISTLING stone and steel. A
forest of EXPLOSIONS is chasing him -- bearing ever
closer -- he and his men scramble on the loose shale
screaming as the SHELLS overtake them. A man blows
into parts -- his trunk turning over in the air. Rock
buries his face in the sharp rocks --

ROCK

His eyes open, he shivers and looks at the figures dimly
lit far down the web of tubes, bottles, and stands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR

Didn't anyone change his plasma?
They would've seen this.

MEDIC

I don't know.

DOCTOR

Just leaked out -- clear this bed.

They are gone, the light goes out and an inky blackness creeps in around Rock. He feels so incredibly lonely and scared -- he wishes he could cry out. He opens his mouth but nothing comes out.

VOICE (O.S.)

Mom -- Oh God, Mom -- Please --

The voice sobs softly. Rock tries to see where it came from to join it maybe, and suddenly a dark figure is leaning over him. Even in the blackness he can see the red hair.

O'HARA

What're you listening to, fucker?
You'll be crying for her, too.
Go ahead and try it. She ain't
gonna hear you.

Rock just stares at O'Hara not knowing what's next. O'Hara appears as if he'd like to finish him off.

ROCK

W-What do you want?

O'HARA

You know what I want.

Rock's eyes flutter and he's soon asleep.

CUT TO:

MONASTERY

is far away across the Rapido, through the open flap of a warm tent. It is a different world here -- officers, clean uniforms, spit, polish and chickenshit. On a huge table in the f.g., is a beautifully-detailed sand table model of the mountain, the Abbey, the castle hill, along with many of the ravines and passes around it. The heights are numbered: 408-441, for their elevation in meters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On the valley floor and around the myriad of ravines leading back to the river are designations of the American units. Some are question marks.

VOICE (O.S.)

They're all done in -- spent. I've seen enough combat to know when the boys are used up.

Mark Clark listens, hawklike.

VOICE (O.S.)

No officers above the rank of Looie and they haven't eaten in days. Only resupply is mules.

Clark moves around the table with several COLONELS. The voice is sincere and compassionate -- it belongs to ERNIE PYLE, war correspondent. He's a little man, gray hair, sharp features with tired thousand-yard eyes, and a warm smile.

PYLE

It's hard on the mules, General, and harder on the boys.

CLARK

Thanks, Ernie -- I know -- I'm pulling 'em back. But that's what I need your help for -- People listen to Ernie Pyle -- I'm not gonna lie to you, Ernie, you're too smart for me to do that. We'll pull back to the river and guard our crossing.

FREYBERG

Then I will resume the attack.

PYLE

-- And you want me to write something to make it look good. It's a tall order.

CLARK

These men can't give up what they died for. You can do it, Ernie.

He puts his arm around him and walks him out the tent towards the rear. Pyle smiles and walks off, not quite knowing what to think of Mark Clark, but Mark Clark knows exactly what to think of Ernie Pyle. He walks back in briskly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLONEL JOHNS, Operations (G-3), and COLONEL LIDDEL, Intelligence (G-2), go to the model.

JOHNS

Here, sir.

He points to a ravine through the steep mountains that ends over a narrow part of the valley.

JOHNS

Snakeshead Pass -- at the end of
Snakeshead Ridge -- the retreat
would come through here -- it's
the most direct route.

He indicates the narrow valley below.

LIDDEL

-- And they are masked from
observation by Hill 441.

JOHNS

But if the Germans take this pass,
they're looking down our throats.

LIDDEL

-- And call in artillery fire on
the valley -- with perfect
accuracy --

JOHNS

It'd turn a retreat into a rout --
a slaughter.

CLARK

Let's not be too dramatic, gentlemen.
A cool head will prevail. Who
owns that pass?

LIDDEL

No one, sir -- it's not important
-- yet.

Clark turns. Freyberg is smiling!

CLARK

You've something in mind, General?

FREYBERG

(smiling)

No, sir, this is your show, sir.
Mine is to do or die later.

Clark dismisses him with a cold stare.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK

How many men will it take?

JOHNS

A battalion would hold it sure.

FREYBERG

But you're liable to have a sticky time getting them out.

JOHNS

That's right, sir -- if we use a battalion we could lose a battalion.

Clark is feeling boxed in.

CLARK

A company could hold that pass.

They look at him.

CLARK

It's narrow -- an excellent defensive position -- steep sides to the ravine -- one way in. They could hold it if they were good.

FREYBERG

Like the Greeks at Thermopylae.

CLARK

They were Spartans -- not just Greeks.

FREYBERG

It's my recollection that the Spartans never got out either.

CLARK

But they did their job.

FREYBERG

You have men like that in the 34th Division? I would find it difficult to find a company of Spartans in my Division. Real Spartans -- because that's what they'll have to be.

Clark turns to the others.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARK

Colonel Johns -- I want a hand
picked company of Spartans. You
can find 'em can't you?

Silence.

JOHNS

Yes, sir -- I'll get to it right
now, sir.

CUT TO:

ALLIED STAGING AREA - DAWN

On the safe side of the Rapido River. Colonel Johns
talks to a LIEUTENANT COLONEL in a jeep.

JOHNS

-- The very toughest you can find.
A hundred fanatics! Meateaters --
hard chargers. Real sons of bitches,
hand picked. The whole Division
depends on it.

LT. COLONEL

It's a dirty job. It's suicide.

JOHNS

Yeah -- and somebody's gotta do
it. Get going --

The JEEP ROARS across one of the pontoon bridges as
ARTILLERY WARMS up the distance mountains.

CUT TO:

ALLIED STAGING AREA -- FORWARD DEPLOYMENT

On the hot side of the Rapido. The Lieutenant Colonel
is talking to a MAJOR.

LT. COLONEL

-- The meanest bastards you can
find. Men who love the bayonet.
Hand picked.

MAJOR

Well -- the nastiest fuckers
would be the Japs of the 100th --
Love to fight -- runs in the
blood --

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAJOR (CONT'D)

But -- the hardest mothers would
be Easy or Baker of the 168th --
They've been through too much --
They don't give a shit anymore.

LT. COLONEL

Your choice, son.

CUT TO:

FORWARD RESERVE DEPLOYMENT

Foxholes, mud, dead horses and mules -- the valley in the shadow of Monte Cassino, discipline and military behavior take on different meaning here, this is dogface country. The MAJOR walks in with an armed escort. A twisted jeep and burning truck smolder by the side of some blasted buildings. A weary CAPTAIN walks with the Major.

CAPTAIN

Baker! Easy -- ! Fall in on the
double!

CUT TO:

SQUAD

Retread, Bulldozer, Cook, Kluzewski, Whipsnake, Wildman, etc., they stumble to their feet. They look awful -- unshaven -- animals in their wet overcoats.

WHIPSNAKE

Maybe they're sending us home.

WILDMAN

Could be hot chow -- I heard that
we'd be first.

RETREAD

Yeah -- maybe broads and bourbon
and medals -- maybe a parade, you
dumb fuck.

CUT TO:

MAJOR AND CAPTAIN

walk down the line of grizzled men. A fresh iron-jawed
LIEUTENANT follows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAJOR

The worst bunch you got -- axe
murderers -- psychopaths -- hand-
picked --

CAPTAIN

Well, Baker don't have any military
discipline left at all. I think
the whole company ought to be split
up. Don't you agree, Lieutenant?

LIEUTENANT

Yes, sir -- no class whatever.

MAJOR

I want cannibals --

CAPTAIN

Well, that's Easy.

LIEUTENANT

Yeah, you wouldn't want to send
them home.

CUT TO:

EASY COMPANY

(As described) -- The company at attention as the Major
leaves.

CAPTAIN

Who's in command?

A SERGEANT steps out -- no Rock.

SERGEANT

I am, sir, Sergeant Pardee.

CAPTAIN

Your officers?

PARDEE (SERGEANT)

Dead or wounded, sir.

CAPTAIN

Top kick?

PARDEE

Dead too, sir.

CAPTAIN

What's your strength?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PARDEE

What's here, sir, about fifty.

MAJOR

That's better than some companies
I saw this morning. Lieutenant
-- what's your name?

LIEUTENANT

Uh -- Woods, sir.

CAPTAIN

Lieutenant Woods -- this is your
company -- You are now in command.
You will take this company up Hill
364 to Hill 441, Snakeshead Ridge
-- You will follow the ridge to
Snakeshead Pass. You will occupy
Snakeshead Pass until further
orders.

LT. WOODS (LIEUTENANT)

Snakeshead Pass! What do I do
when I get there, sir?

CAPTAIN

Hold it at all costs. Dismissed,
Lieutenant. Good luck.

CUT TO:

SAND TABLE MODEL

Similar to the one we saw in Clark's operations tent, but
this one is even more detailed and thorough -- it is
German. Von Senger stands looking over it all. Using
his general officers hand staff, he traces the valleys
and ridges -- and of course comes to Snakeshead Ridge and
the accompanying ravine.

VON SENGER

Who occupies these heights?

INTEL OBERST

I am not sure, Herr General.

Von Senger looks at his watch, turns to leave.

VON SENGER

Colonel, get me Reiger.

CUT TO:

HOSPITAL - BATTALION AID (34TH)

A MAIL ORDERLY walks down the line of beds -- bottles and tubes glinting in the dim light.

MAIL ORDERLY

Dog! Anymore, Dog, last call for Dog Company. Sing out or bark if you're a Dog.

VOICE (O.S.)

Yo Dog! Dog here!

The Orderly heads for the Dog soldier as Rock swings his legs over the side of his cot tentatively. A DOCTOR stands watching. Rock stands up.

DOCTOR

How you feel?

He sinks back down.

DOCTOR

Try it again later.

ROCK

Doc -- do you know a medic with red hair?

The Doctor stops and smiles.

DOCTOR

Another O'Malley story?

ROCK

What do you mean?

DOCTOR

O'Malley, O'Rourke -- O'Hara -- I don't know -- Everyone has a story -- seems a red haired medic was blown to bits at San Pietro and everyone's seen him out there. I suppose you saw him.

ROCK

He brought me in.

DOCTOR

Then you ain't in any shape to walk, Sergeant.

MAIL ORDERLY

How about Easy -- Easy Company -- anyone?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLDIER

Hey -- I'm Easy.

Rock reacts. The Mail Orderly goes to the man -- Lieutenant Delgado -- and hands him a letter. He can't open it because his arm is mangled, maybe gone.

MAIL ORDERLY

I'll open it for you.

DELGADO

Read it -- go ahead.

MAIL ORDERLY

Jury duty! You're to report to serve on a jury in Tucson, Arizona.

ROCK (O.S.)

Lieutenant!

Delgado turns and sees Rock making his way towards him holding his hand to his bandaged head.

DELGADO

Holy shit, Sarge -- I thought you were dead.

He sits down on Delgado's cot.

ROCK

I -- I got the million dollar wound -- General Clark said I'm going home.

Delgado holds up what's left of his arm.

DELGADO

Yeah, me too.

MAIL ORDERLY

(to Rock)

You from Easy? What's your name?

ROCK

Rocklen, Karl, Sergeant --

He turns back to Delgado.

MAIL ORDERLY

Look, you guys --

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAIL ORDERLY (CONT'D)

(to Delgado)

Sir. All this mail is for Easy,
but I ain't going up there, so
why don't I leave it here or with
the Sarge.

ROCK

What's wrong -- They take mail up
everyday on a mule with the ammo.

MAIL ORDERLY

Not to Easy -- They've been put up
on Snakeshead Ridge.

ROCK

Snakeshead Ridge?

MAIL ORDERLY

Yeah, overlooking the valley --
and nobody's going up there -- Be
lucky if anyone comes back. But
when they do, I'm sure your
buddies'll come an' visit you.

ROCK

They got the wrong end of the
stick again.

DELGADO

It's not ours to worry about
anymore, Rock.

ROCK

That's right -- million dollar
wound.

The Orderly puts the Easy sack down next to them -- takes
out a package --

MAIL ORDERLY

Rocklen, Sergeant -- This is yours.

DISSOLVE TO:

PARTAGAS GIGANTES

The box laying on Rock's lap. Both he and Delgado are
smoking them.

DELGADO

You coulda been battlefield
commissioned --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK

(draws, savoring)
I can take all the crap they dish
out -- I just don't want to be
holding the spoon.

DELGADO

You can't duck it -- 'No man is an
island,' not even Joe Dawson --

ROCK

Let's not talk about him.

Another young man comes over, a handsome college boy
dragging a leg cast.

MAN

Hey that sure smells good --
Havana?

Rock looks him up and down.

DELGADO

Yeah, your name is?

MAN

Bennet -- Lieutenant James.

Rock hesitates --

ROCK

Alright -- here have one. Where
I'm going there'll be lots more.

He hands him one --

DELGADO

Rock don't like to share his
stogies with officers -- Feel
privileged, kid --

The Lieutenant takes it and bites the end off crudely.

BENNET (MAN)

We'll all be smoking Havanas soon
enough. Get out of this bullshit
-- What a load a crap -- For what?
An' I'll be limping the rest of my
life -- For what?

ROCK

How'd you hurt your leg,
Lieutenant?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BENNET

Goddamn Wop mule -- got scared when the planes went over -- slipped and fell on me with a whole load of C-Rats.

ROCK

What happened to the mule?

BENNET

I shot the mother -- Some way to ruin my life in this stupid goddamn war. We ought to leave this place to the Krauts -- they deserve it.

Rock reaches over as if to light the cigar and takes it out of Bennet's mouth. He glares at Bennet.

ROCK

This war is not bullshit -- You hear my accent -- I know -- I'm taking my cigar back -- sir -- and I hope for your sake that mule's leg was broken.

DELGADO

Easy, Rock -- It's just a kid --

BENNET

He's crazy -- I could report him --

Rock looks at him with that look that says "Life is cheap -- Death is certain."

ROCK

If you even dream about it -- Wake up and apologize.

CUT TO:

ABBEY - NIGHT

A Kubelwagen (VW weapons carrier) makes its way up the road in the darkness. Reiger gets out at the massive stone entrance. He looks up at the gate on which is carved the word PAX. SENTRIES challenge him.

REIGER

Oberst Lieutenant Reiger to see General Von Senger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SENTRY

You must enter alone and carry no weapons -- Your pistol, Herr Oberst.

He hands it over uncomfortably.

SENTRY

And your dagger.

He stops.

REIGER

The dagger is part of the uniform of a German officer. A knight is allowed to wear a symbol of his rank. I will take full responsibility, Unteroffizier.

CUT TO:

VON SENGER

watching distantly as the monks chant and light candles. Reiger is at his side.

REIGER

They are beaten -- we have a rare opportunity. We can win -- even if only for a moment -- even if it's futile.

VON SENGER

Strange coming from you -- I would have thought you were the epitome of the New Order.

REIGER

(smiling)

No -- I am not sympathetic to National Socialism. A professional soldier has no politics. I was born into the House as a Knight. And one who is born into such a House has only to grasp the sword -- to charge and die -- I have seen too much -- when the war ends, I want to die on the last day from the last bullet.

They smile at this -- Reiger points at the monks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REIGER

They are doomed -- this place is doomed.

VON SENDER

It is Faith -- surely that you can appreciate.

DISSOLVE TO:

AMERICAN REAR AREA - DUSK

A crowded staging area -- trucks, jeeps, lines of men. The field hospital is built in the frame of a blown out building. A medic and doctor wash themselves and enjoy a smoke. A passing G.I. stops, looks up toward the front. Something's wrong.

G.I.

You hear it?

OTHER G.I.

Sounds like a -- plane.

Sure enough, rising out of the ravines so low it just appears -- is a dark stubby fighter plane coming from the north.

G.I.

That's a Focke Wulf! I know the sound!

The plane banks sharply and wheels into a dive, followed by another plane and another.

ANOTHER G.I.

Jesus -- get off the road! Get off the road!

Men scatter but not before 20 mm cannon SHELLS RIP into the mud sending up huge geysers of dirt like a row of corn stalks. A Jeep is bowled over -- a man is blown to pieces, which turn in the air. MORE EXPLOSIONS, the PLANE'S ROAR is deafening. As it goes over so low, people seem to duck the propellor. A RIPPING EXPLOSION is followed by more CANNON SHELLS going off -- ANOTHER BLAST, a TRUCK EXPLODES. The hospital seems to dissolve in mud and debris as the cannons tear it up. The doctor just stands in disbelief glaring at the FW-190 as it dips its wing almost hitting him, and then he is blown off his feet in a TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION of smoke, mud, steel, bones and flesh.

CUT TO:

INSIDE HOSPITAL

Chaos -- death -- men burn in their beds, they scream hideously -- another BLAST and everything is dark and quiet -- only low moans and CRACKLING of FIRES. A few vague figures crawl about or reach up for help -- everywhere is smoke and twisted metal and shredded canvas.

BLOOD

Seeps from a bottle or body and spreads across the charred floor. A foot comes down firmly in it -- then another. The feet walk, shaky and unsure, but gathering purpose.

BOX OF UNIFORMS

Torn open by the blast, some of them smoldering -- a fire starting behind. A hand reaches out -- pulls at several. Blood-tinged or too small, they are rejected -- finally, a large one with Sergeant's stripes.

BOOTS

Scattered about, around the lifeless body of a totally-bandaged man, his misery over. A hand reaches down -- selects a boot -- compares it to the blood-painted foot.

HELMETS

Stacked on each other -- one has a hole in it -- the hand takes a good one -- puts it back and takes the one with the hole. Then, the booted feet walk through the debris and smoke -- and the hand reaches down, scooping the Partagas cigars into their box.

LIEUTENANT DELGADO

Staring wide-eyed, open-mouthed in horror but dead. His face is charred, his body twisted as if he were trying to rise up. His bed has burned black. The hand reaches out -- closes his eyes -- then it moves down to the floor where nothing had burned, and takes the sack of mail.

JEEP

Outside -- turned over -- the men sprawled dead under and around it. The boots walk close -- other men run by -- more screaming -- chaos -- life and sound are coming back.

VOICE (O.S.)

Get in there, soldier -- see what you can do!

VEHICLE

ROARS by -- a dead G.I. lays in the mud by the Jeep, his face young and peaceful, almost sweet. A shadow passes over him as the hands take a Thompson from the mud behind him, and a web pouch of magazines. Then almost tenderly, so as not to disturb him, the hands relieve him of his grenades, pistol belt, and pack. The last is emptied of its contents. The cigars, mail and extra grenades are stuffed in. Now the boots are walking -- gaining momentum, not marching, but slogging the way a foot soldier does.

ENTIRE SCENE

Burning -- chaotic -- looking back towards the Rapido from the rise to Monte Cassino. The whole thing is wounded -- smoking, burned, bleeding. But there is movement there -- trucks, Jeeps -- men running. Here in the f.g. is the way to hell, and no one comes this way. Suddenly rising INTO FRAME is Rock. A darkly silhouetted symbol of the grizzled Dogface. His eyes glinting under his dark helmet with a hole in it. A trickle of blood runs down his cheek, and a hint of his bandaged head can be seen. He carries his Thompson slung upside down at his side, his backpack half over his other shoulder. He takes a cigar out.

VOICE (O.S.)

Where you goin', Sarge?

Rock lights it.

ROCK

Easy --

He puffs.

ROCK

You ever heard of a place called
Snakeshead Ridge?

They pass by, looking back at Rock as if he's an evil spirit -- and he plods on.

CUT TO:

GERMAN LINES - BRIDGE - DUSK

Deep behind the front -- German tanks are lined up under trees waiting for dark. There are four Panzer MK IVs and one of the new heavier Panther tanks. A stone bridge spanning a small gorge is under attack below.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Two or three aircraft go by, and the German anti-aircraft batteries FIRE at them. Reiger is driven up in a motor-cycle side-car and leaps out.

REIGER

What are you standing here for!

PANZER LEADER

If we move they will see us, Herr Oberst.

REIGER

They're trying to destroy the bridge, you fool! What good are you to me on this side? Get across! Now!

The noise of more ENGINES -- aircraft coming. He slides his MP-40 around and brings the muzzle up. The Panzer Leader crouches down, grabs the hatch. Soon the TANK starts to GRIND down towards the bridge. The others follow.

REIGER

Bring the Panther up! I need that more than the rest of you.

Orders are shouted. The Panther pulls out of line.

REIGER

Schnell! Macht schnell!

A U.S. B-25 medium bomber ROARS over about 500 feet up. A WHISTLING stick of bombs can be heard. The first two Panzers are at the bridge. The 500 pound BOMBS GO OFF in the river bottom, and up the far slope into a group of little houses. The Panzers trundle across. The Panther lurches down towards the stone structure -- another B-25 bores in lower. Reiger lower. Reiger runs and jumps on the big tank -- pulls himself up to the turret as the anti-aircraft OPENS UP. Everyone -- riflemen, truck drivers -- FIRE at the twin engined bomber, which FIRES back from its NOSE GUNS.

REIGER

Schnell! Do not stop! You can do it, comrades -- keep going!

He pushes his helmet back, exultant.

B-25

bears in -- BULLETS RIP around -- dust and stone and CLATTERING steel.

TREADS

The bridge gives way behind the treads -- pieces break off and fall, the whole thing starts to crumble.

B-25

ROARS over -- a stick of five bombs spin towards us. The EXPLOSIONS go off in train right up to the structure and SHATTER it to fragments just as the treads clear the far side.

CUT TO:

ROCK

walking alone through the misty darkness. By the side of the road is a slit trench with mortar pits. The helmeted heads of the crew are barely seen above the earth. It is strangely silent -- no sentry challenges Rock as he walks up.

ROCK

Where is your security, soldier --
I walked right up here.

They don't answer -- they just look out at the darkened hills. Now he sees why. They are all dead -- frozen in the positions of last life -- killed by some horrible concussion or frag, he doesn't know. Rock steps around. Their faces are drawn in rictus showing the hideous smile of death. The wind blows and Rock gags on the smell, covering his mouth and withdrawing in horror. He pulls himself up --

ROCK

I am sorry -- I am very sorry.

He walks on into the mist -- suddenly he hears the noise of VEHICLES. Out of the mist and darkness they ROAR without lights -- trucks, Jeeps, half-tracks. Canvas has been pulled down, or tops put up so no one can see who's inside.

ROCK

Easy -- do you know --

They don't even slow -- they would run him down. In a second they are gone -- headed back to the Rapido. Rock watches them go and turns around to see a figure emerging from the mist -- a man and a mule. Rock walks toward them. As they draw closer, the G.I. looks up -- he is a big BLACK SOLDIER whose helmet looks small on him -- he's also a sergeant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLACK SERGEANT

'Lo --

ROCK

Nice day.

The man looks at the slit trench by the side of the road.

ROCK

They're dead.

He sniffs the air.

BLACK SERGEANT

Been that way awhile -- you don't know if they happen to have a machine gun? I'as lookin' for a machine gun.

ROCK

I didn't ask.

BLACK SERGEANT

I got me a lot of ammunition -- belts of it -- I'as lookin' for something to shoot it up in.

ROCK

You're not going back?

He indicates the rear.

BLACK SERGEANT

Only to find a machine gun.

ROCK

I'm Rock -- Easy 168th.

Rock looks at the heavily loaded mule. A helmet with a Colonel's eagle is tied on it.

BLACK SERGEANT

Fuller -- Delta -- 61st -- Motor Transport.

He sees Rock looking at the helmet.

FULLER (BLACK SERGEANT)

That was Colonel Cooke -- he was as fine a white man as I ever knew or served under. He was like a daddy.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FULLER (CONT'D)

I got his dog tags an' his
West Point ring, too. And the
mule's name is Scarlett -- and she
and I been together through all
this.

ROCK

What do you want a machine gun for?

FULLER

To get me some payback.

ROCK

Would you like a cigar?

CUT TO:

EXT. SNAKESHEAD PASS - SERGEANT PARDEE

stands in the narrow mouth of the pass with Wildman.
A como-man comes up from the floor stringing wire.
They look back into the valley.

THEIR POV

The division is retreating -- even in this darkness
VEHICLES and men can be seen in snakelike lines, moving
back towards them from the front.

BACK TO SCENE

PARDEE

Hook up to Battalion -- hell, take
it to Regiment.

WILDMAN

There won't be no Regiment.
They're pulling out.

PARDEE

Don't get down on it -- it's just
a couple a' units regrouping.

WILDMAN

It'll be more and more. Pretty
soon it'll be a flood -- I was at
Kassarine, remember? Where's the
Looie?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOGFACE

The Looie's down in them boulders,
Sarge -- I think he's drunk.

They start down.

CUT TO:

LIEUTENANT WOODS

leaning against a rock in a good defilade from everything. He carries two canteens, one of which is out at his side. Pardee and Wildman come down to him. He looks up but doesn't rise. Pardee crouches down next to Lieutenant Woods. He points down to the left.

PARDEE

Second Platoon is dug in covering
the stream bed with the .50 -- I
got .30s all along and up here
with us and the mortar section.

WOODS

You got lots of ammo -- I hope --
I want lots of mortar rounds --
mortars and mines'll keep 'em
away.

He twists around to the como-man.

WOODS

Goddamn it -- is that wire through
to Battalion -- I need Arty in
here.

PARDEE

He just left, sir -- give him time.

WOODS

Time, it's already dark. They
come at dark.

He fidgets with his carbine -- lays out magazines.

WOODS

Sergeant -- send out patrols.

PARDEE

Patrols? Where, sir?

WOODS

Out there -- I wanta know what's
out there.

CUT TO:

RETREAD, CRAZY HORSE AND COOK

dug in -- Crazy Horse has his ear to the ground.
Kluzewski and Beef are dug in nearby.

BEEF

Indian bullshit -- he didn't hear
nothin' last time. He never hears
nothin'. We was nearly run over
at Salerno -- he didn't hear
nothin'.

RETREAD

How you expect him to, if you
don't shut up.

Wildman crawls up.

RETREAD

What's the dope?

WILDMAN

Fucking Looie wants patrols --
Fucker's fucked up -- drunk --
fubar.

RETREAD

Tell him Crazy went on patrol an'
Cook -- you see anything out
there, Cook?

COOK

I've been right here.

RETREAD

See, just what I told you, nothin'.
(indicating Crazy
Horse)
He don't hear nothin' either.

WILDMAN

Good enough for me -- this guy's
gonna make us meat. The
Division's pulling out down below.

KLUZEWSKI

What the fuck are we here for?

WILDMAN

Some sorta security -- but I
ain't gettin' left out to dry.
This is bad news -- if Rock were
here --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEEF

Yeah, if Rock were, he'd know
where they'd be coming from --

WILDMAN

When -- and how many -- he'd know
where to put the mines -- how to
lay in the guns better and what to
Goddamn do -- if he were here.

RETREAD

Well he ain't here -- he ain't on
this earth -- Rock is dead -- he was
human after all -- the big prick.
And I'll tell you something else --
if Rock were here -- we'd all get
killed. So I don't wanta hear no
more about the son of a bitch.

WILDMAN

So whatta you wanna do about it,
asshole?

RETREAD

It's not my call.

WILDMAN

That's what you're wearing them
stripes for.

RETREAD

I say if something starts, we
drop a grenade in the Looie's hole
and bug out.

WILDMAN

That's crossing a line.

RETREAD

The bastard's gonna kill us -- we
have the right to do it.

WILDMAN

Right -- how you figure that,
meathead?

RETREAD

In other countries -- those on top
like officers or politicians got
the right to shit all over the
little guy.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RETREAD (CONT'D)

But we are Americans and Thomas
Jefferson said the tree of liberty
is watered with the blood of
tyrants -- which means we the
people got the right to blow that
son of a bitch up --

CUT TO:

ROCK AND FULLER

walking uphill in the mist. They come upon a column of
mules bringing down wounded and dead -- a line going
down -- one mule going up. The MULES BRAY and nuzzle
each other -- the men are silent.

ROCK

Easy?

CUT TO:

ROCK AND FULLER

walking past a beaten column of soldiers on a narrow
trail -- going to the rear in defeat. A CORPORAL
talks to Rock -- pulls out his map.

CORPORAL

-- Yeah -- they said some company
of the 168th is staying up above
where the valley narrows.

CUT TO:

FIREBASE

A 105 battery. Rock and Steel talk to a LIEUTENANT
with a map.

LIEUTENANT

I just wanta get outta here --
Yeah, I got orders for fire
support of Easy 168th -- what's
it to you?

ROCK

Can you show me where?

CUT TO:

ROCK AND FULLER

climbing up the mountainous path towards Snakeshead Ridge -- below him more and more little knots of soldiers are falling back -- a squad here, a platoon, trying to pull a pack howitzer, there. Mules everywhere -- going down. A FLARE arcs up and lights the huge distant monastery. ARTILLERY WHISTLES in and IMPACTS the ravines in front and below him. COUNTER-BATTERY FIRE answers as if the artillery had a life of its own.

FULLER

-- They never let us fight because we was niggers. Well, let me tell you son, this nigger is a man -- a human man! I tell you -- I been in more battles than Joe Louis. I'as in the First World War -- on the Marne. I was young an' full of fight. My daddy was at San Juan Hill in the 9th Cavalry. He was a Buffalo Soldier -- he had a horse, not a mule.

ROCK

Did he blab as much as you do?

Rock takes off his helmet, feels his bandage and tenderly touches around his wound. He puts his helmet back on and continues.

CUT TO:

DARKNESS

In the depths of the ravine, wraith-like shapes move forward from rock to rock -- along the stream bed -- up in the stunted olive trees -- more figures on the steep side of the gorge.

CLOSEUP - FIGURE

A German paratrooper sets up his FG-42 machine rifle on a perch covering his comrades who widen out a perimeter as they advance up the stream bottom. The second line follows, and men bring in what seems like loudspeakers and set them carefully into the boulders, tilting them up towards the canyon walls as others run back unrolling wire. Aside from the loudspeakers, como positions are set up with field phones, and mortar pits are dug. All of this is done as if choreographed.

CLOSEUP - REIGER

bedecked in his camouflage, he looks no different from the others. His executive officer, Staul, and bodyguard of three men stay with him as he jogs from position to position. He stops near a captain who silently hands him binoculars.

REIGER'S POV

The American position and the steep gorge leading up the pass -- moonlight shows a barren rock strewn expanse but no movement. Suddenly a flicker of light -- the binoculars sweep past and return quickly.

CUT TO:

DOGFACE

In the mortar section -- lights his cigarette -- leans over to light another.

BEEF (O.S.)

Get that match out! Who the shit is that?

VOICE (O.S.)

Goddamn replacement.

CUT TO:

REIGER'S POV

This time through a scope and crosshairs. Darkness -- maybe shapes -- the scope traverses, searching for prey.

CLOSEUP - RIEGER

Squinting through the Mauser's scope -- smiling -- he nods to his XO. He makes a hand signal to the Captain -- who makes the same to a Sergeant.

CLOSEUP - MORTARS

Shells dropped in -- PLONK! PLONK!

FLARES

illumination rounds light up the hillside. More ROUNDS WHISTLE up -- high explosive.

SCOPE'S POV

A distant American looks up and out, his face green-white for a second over the rocks. The scope bucks in recoil on the SHOT, but we see the man's helmet fly off. When the scope COMES DOWN, the American is gone.

Movement as men scurry. Reiger RACKS the BOLT. An arm, a back is exposed -- BLAM -- the IMAGE JUMPS again and COMES BACK ON a man shaking in spasms as he slides down the rocks.

CUT TO:

AMERICAN POSITION

The HIGH EXPLOSIVE ROUNDS WHINE in, spouting vicious little black and orange EXPLOSIONS -- WHINING off rocks and steel.

CLOSE - PARDEE

He gets on his field phone --

PARDEE
Where's it coming from?

BEEF AND PASCALANO

Their heads down as the MORTARS rain down.

BEEF
Think a' naked women -- think a' naked women.

A harsher sound -- RIPPING the air -- TREMENDOUS EXPLOSIONS on the canyon walls above them -- 88s in salvo SCREAMING in from over the mountains. Rocks and boulders tumble down, fragments land everywhere.

CLOSE - WILDMAN

He looks over at Retread and Kluzewski. They look back at him as to say -- Now? But Wildman is a loner -- he's got his own time and his own ideas -- a pro like Rock. He motions for them to keep their heads down.

CUT TO:

PARDEE

Crawling over to Lieutenant Woods and his shelter. Woods is white faced on the verge of panic.

PARDEE

Whatta you want, sir -- some counter-battery?

Woods can't answer, but Pardee is already gone, talking into his field phone.

CUT TO:

REVERSE ANGLE - SLOPE OF SNAKESHEAD RIDGE

Rock and Fuller stop and see the glow from the illumination rounds. They hear the MORTARS. They walk higher and see several figures directly ahead of them. They sense each other's presence almost at the same time -- the TWO MEN whirl around, guns coming up -- one goes to his knees. Rock brings up the chopper but he can see that the shape of the helmets are American.

ROCK

Password!

MEN

Million dollar legs!

ROCK

Betty Grable!

MAN

Who are you, brudda?

ROCK

Easy 168th.

MAN

One Puka Puka -- Baker -- what's left of it.

Rock steps close -- the two soldiers are Nisei. One carries a bazooka -- the other, rockets. Both have carbines. Rock points at the bazooka.

ROCK

You were going to use that?

OTHER MAN

You're a big guy, Sarge -- you'd take a lot of stopping. I'm Sagara, Corporal -- and this is Private Onami, my loader.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK

What're you doing here?

SAGARA (OTHER MAN)

Looking for some tanks -- what about you guys?

ROCK

We're vacationing in the valley --

SAGARA

Wounded, eh? Looks like a good one -- the bullet go through?

ROCK

Must've.

Rock nods towards the noise as a FLARE arcs up above the mountain over them.

ROCK

Want to come along?

SAGARA

Could be some -- possibilities -- Thanks for the invite.

ROCK

Stay behind me and keep your mouths shut.

SAGARA

You don't got to worry about us, Sarge -- we're sneaky.

CUT TO:

SNAKESHEAD VALLEY

Alive with fire -- Bulldozer BLASTS away with his .30 BROWNING, sending tracers out into the night. Other tracers criss-cross and take off at sharp angles as they hit the rocks. Cook loads for him.

COOK

Whatta you see?

BULLDOZER

Shit if I know -- just keep 'em out there.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - REIGER

He is cool and collected sitting on a rock oblivious to BULLETS WHIRRING off the stone cliffs around him. He drops his hand. The MORTARS STOP -- the flares go out. American tracers still line out from their positions, making them somewhat clear. Reiger's aide, Staul, notes the locations -- drawing on a map illuminated by a red flashlight.

REIGER

Music!

HAND

turns on a record player -- puts the needle to a disk.

LOUDSPEAKERS -- BLARE OUT -- TANK NOISES! LOW RUMBLINGS, SHIFTING GEARS, BACKFIRES, some closer, some farther.

CUT TO:

PARDEE

Down the slope from Lieutenant Woods. He looks up in panic.

PARDEE

Tanks! How'd they get tanks in there? Battalion said the fucking bridges were bombed when they sent us up here -- Get me Battalion!

COMO-MAN

Line's still dead -- never got through!

PARDEE

Get the mortars to fire some illumination!

COMO-MAN

We can't stop tanks!

CUT TO:

RETREAD, CRAZY HORSE, BEEF AND OTHERS

As they all pull back.

BEEF

Tanks! We can't stop tanks!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Retread slithers over towards Wildman's hole.

RETREAD

Wildman -- it's time to do it.

Wildman is already up -- behind him crouching.

WILDMAN

Yeah tanks -- Screw it let's go.

Panic is contagious, they pile up the slope -- rushing from cover to cover -- suddenly their own MORTAR FIRE -- PLONK! PLONK! The sky goes green. They all dive for cover.

PARDEE

Searching the night with his binoculars -- his eyes -- he can't see a thing -- nothing's moving.

PARDEE

Lieutenant, sir -- do you see anything -- I can sure hear 'em.

He crawls up to Lieutenant Woods' hole -- and Woods is gone.

PARDEE

Jesus.

The flares go out.

WILDMAN AND RETREAD

Clamber over the boulders up the hill, leading the others. Wildman sees Pardee -- grabs him, pulls him down.

PARDEE

What're you doing --

WILDMAN

Gotta do it, Sarge! Now! Behind the rock.

He lobs a grenade into Lieutenant Woods' position -- Retreat lobs one, as does Whipsnake. They drop and wait.

PARDEE

What?

BLA -- BLAM -- BLAM -- FRAGS WHISTLE off the stone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Another flare goes up.

PARDEE

You bastards -- He ain't there --
He's gone!

He jumps up, points behind the boulder.

CLOSE - REIGER

He raises his Mauser.

REIGER'S POV

Pardee distant, a long shot but distinct.

CLOSE - PARDEE

He points down to where the Lieutenant was -- nothing's
there, except the canteen.

PARDEE

(laughing)
He's gone, split --

A BULLET RIPS through his hips -- he screams and
hideously twists, his legs going wobbly.

WILDMAN

Sniper!

He dives at Pardee and takes him down as another ROUND
SPRANGS off the rocks behind them. The flare goes out.

PARDEE

Oh God -- Oh God --

Wildman comes up -- the others are all down.

WILDMAN

Medic! Get the medic from the
Mortar Section!

RETREAD

(to Kluzewski)
You get him.

WILDMAN

Can you move your legs, Sarge?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PARDEE

The stars -- they're getting pale
-- Am I dying -- Oh God, they're
getting pale --

WILDMAN

It's okay, Sarge -- the sun's
coming up -- You'll make it, Sarge.

He gets up -- motions the others away.

PARDEE

I know what you did.

WILDMAN

The Looie bugged out -- he was
gonna get us killed.

PARDEE

That don't make it right.

He rushes over to the others -- grabs the Como-Man.

WILDMAN

Alright -- tell the flank platoon
to fire for one minute and pull
back -- don't let em see us or
they'll be all over us -- withdraw
to the mouth of the pass in
Overwatch -- Do it!

RETREAD

You givin' the orders?

WILDMAN

I got an extra stripe, too -- you
gotta bitch?

RETREAD

No -- no -- just wanna know who's
responsible.

A tension between them. Wildman considers it. The
Medic, MEEKS, runs up. Wildman grabs him.

WILDMAN

Morphine, Doc -- enough to keep
him quiet -- then split.

MEEKS

Leave him?

WILDMAN

The Krauts got good medics -- You
wanna live don't you?

CUT TO:

LIRI SIDE OF PASS

Very steep -- hard climbing -- Rock pulls himself up and helps the others. He takes his helmet off, his head is pounding.

ONAMI

Hurts, eh, Sarge? How'd it happen?

ROCK

Japs -- Japs shot me.

He smiles -- at that moment a figure runs towards them down a goat trail. They level their weapons.

ROCK

Password.

It is Woods -- he runs in headlong flight.

WOODS

Fuck you!

He's gone. They continue up.

CUT TO:

MOUTH OF PASS

Easy is just below the edge -- the sky is glowing light in the east as the dawn comes up. They turn around and look up at the pass only to be confronted by a figure standing in the lightening sky -- Rock.

WILDMAN

Holy Mother!

PASCALANO

It's Rock -- It's Goddamn Rock!

BULLDOZER

Sarge!

They can't believe it -- they don't know whether to jump for joy or hang their heads in shame.

PASCALANO

You a ghost, Sarge?

RETREAD

You're supposed to be dead.

ROCK

Maybe I am -- Maybe this is heaven.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks at them, and then back over his shoulders --

ROCK

Going someplace, ladies?

RETREAD

This ain't a place we can hold.

ROCK

You George Patton? Or Winston fucking Churchill. You running the big picture, Retread? I don't remember letting crap like you run a latrine in the regular army. Since when did you start giving the orders -- You don't mind if I take charge for a little while do you? Well do you, Corporal?

RETREAD

No, Sarge.

ROCK

Good -- I like you, Retread, you can take the Point Squad -- Where's Pardee?

WILDMAN

(ashamed)

He's down the hill.

ROCK

Dead?

WILDMAN

Wounded.

ROCK

You left a wounded man in my Company behind.

WILDMAN

I'm sorry, Sarge -- I --

ROCK

Shut up -- I like you too, Wildman -- You can cover Retread's flank -- Now maybe the rest of you are confused maybe -- That's why you're too high up -- not down the slope -- dug in covering each other like soldiers -- Bulldozer, set up your gun here and cover redeployment -- Are the mortars laid in?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILDMAN

Well we --

ROCK

Good -- start harassing fire so we
can position -- What about mines?
Any of 'em go off?

BEEF

No, I don't think so.

ROCK

Then what's your Goddamn problem?

RETREAD

Tanks -- They got tanks!

ROCK

You see 'em? -- No, didn't think so.

SAGARA

Tanks -- we're looking for tanks.

KLUZEWSKI

Who're those guys?

ROCK

They eat tanks.

PASCALANO

What about the mule?

ROCK

She eats flowers -- name is
Scarlett -- Stop talking and get
moving.

They do -- scrambling back -- Wildman yells orders --
the columns turn -- the word passes -- Redeploy! Rock's
back! Rock's back! Only Retread hesitates, glares at
Rock.

ROCK

What're you waiting for, Corporal?

RETREAD

Coulda sworn you were dead.

He starts back down.

ROCK

Fucked up again, Retread.

CUT TO:

PARDEE

Laying in the boulders all alone. He hears FOOTSTEPS -- SCUFFLING as men move around. Fear breaks out in beads of sweat despite the cold. Suddenly a face looms over him. It's Rock.

PARDEE

Rock -- They left me, Rock -- They
all left me --

ROCK

Don't worry -- they just forgot for
a little while. We're here --
we're all here.

The medic, Meeks, leans over -- checks his bandages.

PARDEE

You're supposed to be dead,
Rock --

CUT TO:

PLATOON LEADERS

Corporals -- Wildman -- Retread -- Sagara -- Anderson
(from the Mortar Section) -- Sergeant Fuller. All crouch
down around Rock. Men filter down the slope and into the
crevasses below. The Como-Man tries his set.

COMO-MAN

Nothing -- The last guy didn't get
through.

ROCK

That means we gotta send someone
to follow the line --

WILDMAN

Now?

ROCK

No -- we need everyone -- there's
a lot of work to do. Take all
the extra mines and explosives.
Put them all around our positions
-- command detonated. I want a
second line of machine guns here
-- foxholes and barbed wire -- put
out ropes so we can fall back
quickly in the dark.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILDMAN

What about tanks -- they were out there? We heard 'em -- loud.

ROCK

But you didn't see them. Back in '36 the Condor Legion used to scare the Spanish with a Victrola and loudspeakers.

RETREAD

They ain't supposed to have tanks -- but what if they do?

SAGARA

We could use some mines and explosives on the ravine walls -- something to push 'em into where we got a good shot.

ROCK

You'll have to be out front -- You'll need cover -- a squad.

RETREAD

Who's gonna take that?

FULLER

I will.

RETREAD

But, Sarge -- no squad ain't going with him -- he's a --

ROCK

He's a Sergeant.

He turns to Fuller.

ROCK

Take 2nd Squad 1st Platoon -- Bulldozer and his machine gun.

FULLER

That's what I here for.

ROCK

Let's go.

Rock, Fuller, Anderson and the Como-Man are gone -- leaving Retread, Wildman and the Nisei gathering and checking equipment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RETREAD

How's he know that stuff?

SAGARA

What stuff --

RETREAD

(to Wildman)

About them Nazis in Spain -- You ever think about that? Was he there?

WILDMAN

Rock's regular Army -- he was a Sergeant when you were selling snake oil. He was at Schoefield Barracks on December 7th.

RETREAD

(to Nisei)

Yeah -- by the way -- where was you guys on December 7th?

ONAMI

I was selling snake oil in Honolulu.

SAGARA

I was screwing your sister while he was selling the oil.

RETREAD

I ain't got no sister.

CUT TO:

G.I.S

Setting up mortars between boulders -- Rock supervises.

MACHINE GUN CREW

Lines up the big .50 cal. -- "In the Mood" painted on its receiver. Wildman directs them to dig it in under an overhang, while a field phone wire is led in.

AMMO

Passed around to all positions.

GRENADES

Laid out ready in front of the holes -- mounds of dirt put up in front of each hole, so that they are protected from direct fire, but can cover each other from the sides.

TRIP WIRES AND DETONATORS

Linked up, barbed wire is strung out along the flats -- all the while Rock is everywhere, laying out the escape ropes -- measuring the depth of a hole -- pointing out good positions.

CUT TO:

FLATS

A stunted olive grove and scrub oaks line a stream bed at the valley floor. Just above this Bulldozer and Cook dig in their gun near the ravine wall. They pile up rocks, then shovel dirt and mud on top. They sense something -- turn around to see Fuller. He's put dirt on his face -- a few brushes on his helmet and pack, and he blends into the terrain.

FULLER

You call that laying in a gun?

Bulldozer looks up -- he knows how to lay in a gun.

FULLER

You move it over there -- 'bout a yard or two and you still got the same sweep -- 'cept now the rock's gonna protect you -- You drive 'em into that gully behind up on the overhang -- then them bullets'll bounce around that gully 'til they hit something soft. You understand, son?

BULLDOZER

Yeah -- yeah, pretty good, Sarge. Where'd you learn that?

FULLER

Machine gun is an art, son.

CUT TO:

FIELD GLASSES POV

Watching from a long distance as rocks are piled up -- dirt moved -- a shovel flickers in the morning light.

CLOSE - GERMAN CAPTAIN

In a forward trench expertly camouflaged with nets and foliage. He lowers his glasses and looks at a topographical map laid out by his lieutenant. He carefully marks the position of the activity he has been observing and then leans down and speaks softly into a field phone.

CUT TO:

RIVER BED - GERMANS

Digging what amounts to be an open tunnel -- a trench leading up to the American positions. The dirt is carefully pushed back so that it doesn't show on the sides. A squad leader at the front carefully removes the mud from around a planted mine, exposing it. He reaches up and disarms it -- then passes it back.

CUT TO:

FULLER, BULLDOZER AND COOK

They are tense to say the least.

COOK

You see those bushes along the riverbank -- in the bed?

FULLER

What bushes?

COOK

The dark clumps -- ones that look like vines -- kinda small.

BULLDOZER

What of it?

COOK

Well I've been resting my eyes over there and I counted five clumps -- now there's only four.

FULLER

Where?

He moves over with his glasses, picks up the field phone.

CUT TO:

ROCK

On the field phone.

ROCK

Keep watching -- lay your guns in
to sweep towards us.

He hands the phone back to the Como-Man. Wildman waits.
Retread crawls up with Cook.

ROCK

What'd you bring him for?

RETREAD

You wanted someone to run the wire
back -- he's useless.

ROCK

Yeah.

RETREAD

Maybe I ought to go.

ROCK

He'll do --
(to Retread)
Get back to your squad.

CUT TO:

MOUTH OF PASS

Cook with Wildman and Scarlett -- He looks at her, she
bares her teeth. On her back is a roll of wire,
Lieutenant Woods' carbine and the helmet. Wildman points
out on a map the best route.

COOK

Don't worry about me, I know how
to get down. I can always find my
way home.

WILDMAN

The last guy didn't.

COOK

What's this -- belonged to a
colonel.

WILDMAN

Yeah -- his dogtags and West Point
ring are in an effects bag tied
inside -- name was Cooke.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COOK

Cooke -- that's what I do.

He starts to turn and leave.

WILDMAN

I'm gonna live through this, buddy
-- If I find you bugged out on us
-- I'll get you.

COOK

Don't worry about a thing, Corporal
-- I undertand the mission.

Wildman gives him a last thousand yard stare, and goes back down.

COOK

Come on, Scarlett.

CUT TO:

WILDMAN

Crawling down to Rock's command position. Rock scans with the field glasses.

WILDMAN

He's on his way -- What about the Nazis that got the first one?

ROCK

I don't think they got him. Maybe artillery -- a mine -- maybe he took off. If they got him they would know we've got no way to call for help.

WILDMAN

Yeah, go on.

ROCK

That's why they won't use their panzers -- if they have any.

WILDMAN

I don't get it.

Rock looks up in the sky.

ROCK

We own the sky during the day.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK (CONT'D)

What's a panzer's natural enemy?
An airplane. If they show -- we
call for help -- they lose -- so
if they have tanks, they don't
have many, and they will use them
in the dark. Tonight.

WILDMAN

What if you're wrong?

Rock looks at him.

ROCK

You think I ever wanted this?

WILDMAN

I guess that's what you get, Sarge.

CUT TO:

GERMANS

Digging closer and closer -- another clump of shrubs
moves as they dig.

CUT TO:

FULLER

Watching with glasses -- Bulldozer is by his side.

BULLDOZER

You see it?

FULLER

Yeah.

CUT TO:

ROCK

On the phone.

ROCK

Get out of there! Pull the gun
back to the second line -- leave
the B.A.R.s in those positions
and be ready to run!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He fumbles around in his pack -- comes up with the cigars -- takes one out and puts it in his pocket -- lights another -- his hands are shaking.

CUT TO:

FULLER

Picks the gun off the tripod -- shoves it into Bulldozer's hands --

BULLDOZER

After all that work.

Another man grabs the tripod. Fuller takes a B.A.R. and lays it where the .30 was.

BULLDOZER

You stayin', Sarge?

FULLER

Get going -- I'll be along.

CUT TO:

BEEF AND PASCALANO

in the center rocks -- just behind -- they watch their machine gun crew pull back. Beef lines up his B.A.R. -- Pascalano lays magazines and grenades out.

CUT TO:

ROCK

On phone.

ROCK

Fire mission -- time on target --
one-zero-five -- Willie Peter
followed by H.E. -- Fire for effect.

CUT TO:

MORTAR SECTION

Hands adjust the wheels on the tubes, other hands load the fat bombs into the top openings -- dropping them. PLONK! PLONK! PLONK! The whole section FIRES at once. While the projectiles are in the air, the second rounds are dropped in.

CUT TO:

BEEF AND PASCALANO

The increasing WHISTLE of the MORTARS bear down on them.

PASCALANO

Jesus! Somebody fucked up!

They bury themselves in the mud -- all around them horrific white hot BLASTS flower like cactus. Most of it is just in front of them -- but a few hit the rocks behind. A hot burning piece lands on Beef's leg -- he screams -- shakes it -- Pascalano brushes it off with his rifle stock -- deeper black EXPLOSIONS ERUPT -- FRAG WHISTLES off the stones.

CUT TO:

ROCK

Into phone.

ROCK

Adjust twenty yards north, damnit!
Let's have it!

His face is strained looking for his men.

CUT TO:

PASCALANO, BEEF

The mortars walk forward into the stream bed -- MEN SCREAMING can be heard. Suddenly Germans come up as if from underground. The mortars cut into them -- men fall, others are blown flat, but still others FIRE from the trench covering their comrades. Even though the Germans are caught they don't panic -- there is something really scary about this. Beef FIRES SHORT BURSTS taking down several and manages to silence one of their guns -- but there are a lot of them, and they spread out into the stream bed and begin to RETURN FIRE.

CUT TO:

REIGER

Watching, almost calm as if he were relieved that it has started.

REIGER

Counter fire!

GERMAN MORTARS

FIRING in response as fast as they can.

CUT TO:

AMERICAN LINE - EASY COMPANY

BLASTS away with everything they got -- Garands -- B.A.R.s. The targets are still in the open, and the G.I.s never have an opportunity like this. Many Germans fall but they still move into the available cover with smooth precision. If it was an American unit caught up there, it would be a slaughter, but now the SUPPORTING FIRE from the German MACHINE GUNS and MORTARS begin to zero in. The MORTARS BLAST pieces of rock, and sweep through the foxholes. The MACHINE GUNS CHURN UP the mud and dirt, but the mounds the G.I.s have put in front and their fields of fire protect them.

CLOSE - FULLER

He FIRES away with his B.A.R., but the mortars are suddenly dropping on his position. He grabs the gun and scrambles up into the rocks on the ravine wall. He's cut off from the retreat by the MORTAR BLASTS. The very place he and the machine gun were, is blown to bits.

BEEF AND PASCALANO

Their position is hit too. The mortar rounds are dropping into the foxholes -- short screams are cut off by the BLASTS.

CUT TO:

ROCK

Not used to being in this position of command, he lets himself up to see -- and a BURST OF FIRE RATTLES around him. He ducks back -- gets the field phone.

ROCK

Easy Three to Easy One -- pull back!

CUT TO:

RETREAD

On the left flank -- he doesn't need any encouragement --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A sweep of his arm and his riflemen are up and scrambling back into the rocks covering each other as they go.

CUT TO:

ROCK

Grabs a B.A.R. and vaults over the boulders down towards the center. The men are withdrawing under HEAVY FIRE. MORTARS FALL fast -- the Germans are advancing -- not a charge but a steady leap-frog. Rock cuts into them with SHORT, accurate BURSTS -- the men stream past him. He changes magazines and RESUMES FIRING, oblivious to the steel MAELSTROM around him.

CUT TO:

BEEF, PASCALANO

They pick up their guns and go bounding toward steep boulders. Beef reaches his B.A.R. out to Crazy Horse on top of the rock, who grabs it and pulls him up -- but Pascalano is burdened by the ammo and his own rifle -- he trips -- gets up and is blown through the air by a MORTAR BLAST. He lands with a wet thud and tries to move, emitting a gasping scream.

BEEF

Sees Pascalano -- starts back, but Whipsnake and Crazy Horse pull him in, and they all withdraw.

BEEF

You can't leave him there. You know what Sarge said!

He turns around and there's Rock! They look at each other -- Whipsnake crouches away like a scared dog. Rock changes magazines -- shoves the B.A.R. into Beef's hands -- unslings his Thompson. They go over together scrambling down the boulders.

CLOSE - PASCALANO

Lying in the mud.

PASCALANO

Medic! Medic! Oh, God, I shoulda never come here -- somebody help me!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And somebody does -- Out of the cover come Rock and Beef hurling grenades and dropping smoke cannisters. BULLETS kick up around them. Rock hits the dirt next to Pascalano -- pulls him by his legs while Beef crouches with the B.A.R. A flash of AUTO FIRE from out of the smoke -- Beef answers with a BURST. Rock pulls Pascalano onto his shoulder, gets up -- his cigar falls out -- Beef FIRES and grabs the cigar -- shoves it back in Rock's teeth. He doesn't see two German paratroopers rushing in with assault rifles. Rock crouches on one knee and FIRES with his THOMPSON taking down one. Beef finishes the other, CHOPPING him up with the rest of his B.A.R. magazine. They run back to the boulders.

MACHINE GUNS

Dug in well behind boulders up the pass. The men pour into the second line -- ammo and grenades have been laid out -- holes already dug -- fields of fire determined. The men of Easy now turn with a vengeance -- each one squints through his sights -- make it count -- make them pay. They no longer fight as a trained unit, but as desperate, cornered animals.

CLOSE - BULLDOZER

He FIRES his MACHINE GUN down into the Germans who are advancing into their former positions. Kluzewski loads for him.

BULLDOZER

Where is he?

KLUZEWSKI

Who?

BULLDOZER

That big nigger Sergeant. You see him?

KLUZEWSKI

No.

BULLDOZER

Sons of bitches!

He RIPS into Germans trying to move along the flanking wall -- they duck behind the rocks -- Bulldozer CHEWS up the rocks in front of them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KLUZEWSKI

Don't waste it!

But Bulldozer's beyond hearing -- then suddenly there's a MUFFLED BLAST and a German staggers out -- a grenade, but from where? A flash and the STEADY THUMP of the B.A.R. -- more go down -- taken from behind.

BULLDOZER

Where? He's alive!

KLUZEWSKI

Up on the wall --

But the flash is gone.

CUT TO:

ROCK

Back at his position with the Como Man.

COMO MAN

All platoons are back, Sarge.

Wildman scrambles in.

ROCK

Then blow it.

Wildman scrambles over.

WILDMAN

There's guys down there!

Rock grits his teeth -- tries to light his cigar -- he's shaking too bad.

ROCK

Blow the charges.

WILDMAN

I heard 'em screaming!

ROCK

So are the Krauts and they'll be in your laps in a minute -- Blow 'em!

HANDS

Twist detonators -- wires lead out.

VALLEY FLOOR

Erupts in a rippling wall of EXPLOSIONS. Bodies fly mixed with rocks and mud.

CLOSE - ROCK

Gritting his teeth -- barely holding it together.

ROCK

Sweep the area with continuous fire --

COMO MAN

(into phone)

All platoons sweep with continuous --

CUT TO:

SMOKE

Chaos on the lower slope -- even the elite Fallshirmjaeger have had enough. They withdraw in leap-frogging overwatch, leaving behind dead and wounded but taking their weapons. The American MORTARS chase and harass them.

CUT TO:

REIGER

Watching the spectacle with his glasses which he slowly lowers. In his entire military experience his troops have never failed in an assault.

REIGER

Discontinue mortar support --
Re-register all pieces for the top of the pass.

CAPTAIN

Yes, mien Oberst.

REIGER

-- To all fire on command --
thirty second duration.

CUT TO:

BATTLEFIELD

Smoking -- charred -- strewn with dead and dying.
 Germans crawl back toward their lines. No Americans
 move. SPORADIC FIRE continues.

CUT TO:

ROCK

Looking through his glasses -- his face impassive -- worn
 out. His hands shake uncontrollably.

ROCK

(voice cracking)

Cease fire.

VOICES (O.S.)

Cease fire -- cease fire -- We
 licked 'em -- They're running
 home -- Fuck you, Heinie. Eat
 it, Adolf!

Rock's hands shake so badly he drops the glasses which
 swing around his neck. Beef crawls up looking shaken.
 He lights Rock's cigar.

BEEF

Pascalano's dead.

Rock looks up. He reaches into his pocket, takes out
 his extra cigar, hands it to Beef.

ROCK

Take it -- You earned it.

Beef lights up, both look away empty.

RETREAD

Scrambles up along with Sagara.

SAGARA

We really gave it to 'em. Good
 job, Sergeant.

Rock doesn't hear.

RETREAD

They ain't coming back. We beat
 'em -- We fucking beat 'em.

Suddenly, the DISTANT PLONG-PLONG, the WHISTLE turning
 into a SHRIEK -- MORTAR ROUNDS -- lots of them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They arc over and impact in the mouth of the pass obscuring it in dust and smoke. The EXPLOSIONS are so tightly packed that nothing could live through them. As suddenly as they come -- they are gone. Everyone slowly raises from the mud.

WILDMAN

What was that?

ROCK

That was the door closing.

CUT TO:

REIGER

Watching the smoke rise in the mouth of the pass.

REIGER

(softly)

To the death.

CUT TO:

COOK

Working his way down the mountain pulling the mule. Below, the glint of vehicles and men in distant little lines are silhouetted for a second against the ridgeline. Occasionally, shells arc over from either side and impact in the valley, or on the slopes below the ever-present Abbey. A FORMATION of B-25s ROARS in low over the valley, and angle up over the monastery like a flight of noisy birds. Cook sees below, a long column heading towards the bottom of the ridge. He crouches not knowing who they are. They're headed for the Rapido. They wear filthy overcoats, and the sun glints off the bare steel of their helmets. They don't look around -- they just trudge ahead, and from this, Cook knows they're Americans. He looks up at the mule standing there out in the open, as if to ask advice.

LINE OF MEN

Pass by Cook, who stands looking at each one as if he could do something. A grizzled Sergeant stands with a CAPTAIN, again looking at a map. He points up a hill.

CAPTAIN

It'd be bad if the Krauts were up there -- I'm glad I won't be here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COOK

You gotta do something! You
can't just walk away!

CAPTAIN

I understand how you feel, son --
but I got my boys to consider.

He turns and leaves -- the sergeant gives him a look
of tired contempt and goes also. The end of the column
passes by. Cook hesitates, he wants to go with them,
but he can't. He stumbles down toward the sound of
GUNS. He walks on over a rise and finds a burnt-out
Jeep -- charred, even its tires are burned.

COOK

Burned up -- all that gasoline.
Sure glad I missed that one.

He walks a few paces -- stops --

COOK

Scarlett -- I got an idea.

He pulls the wire out so it clears the Jeep, then unties
the helmet.

CLOSEUP - HAND

He puts on the West Point ring -- jangles the dog tags.

CUT TO:

CLARK'S COMMAND POST

On a rise overlooking the safe side of the Rapido. Clark
sits in a folding chair reading mail, about a hundred
feet from his trailer. Before him stretches the whole
panorama -- the smoke-pocked hills, the Abbey, etc. An
AIDE brings General Freyberg to him. Clark looks up
from his letter -- he stands.

CLARK

I want it made clear in future
communiques that any reference
to the present action be known
as an Allied redeployment. Any
advances will be known as Fifth
Army advances or breakthroughs
-- Whatever. Is that clear?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AIDE

Anything going that way is Fifth Army, anything coming back is Allied. Yes, sir.

CLARK

Good -- now, General Freyberg, what's on your mind this afternoon?

FREYBERG

The Abbey -- The krauts are using it. If you want my division to break through I must have it bombed.

CLARK

Can you break through?

FREYBERG

With proper support I --

CLARK

I agree -- one more push -- I feel it in my guts.

Freyberg looks out at the men and material pouring back to the Rapido bridgehead.

FREYBERG

Like I said, sir -- with proper support. I can't do it otherwise.

CLARK

Alright -- alright -- I'll bomb the goddamn thing. You get me through here and the Fifth Army will be in Rome in two weeks. One more push, General, that's all I ask.

He reaches his hand out -- to seal a bargain. Freyberg, a New Zealander, takes it somewhat confused.

FREYBERG

By the way, sir, how are your hundred Spartans holding the pass?

CLARK

Haven't heard otherwise so they must be holding. That right, Captain?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN

They are being given all available support, sir.

FREYBERG

Are they Allied or Fifth Army?

CUT TO:

ROCK - LATE AFTERNOON

Crouched down behind his command hole in the steep boulders. MORTAR ROUNDS fall occasionally, but the men are well dug-in and the rocks give good protection. Rock opens his pack and takes out the mail. His platoon commanders crowd nearby.

ROCK

Mail call -- I almost forgot.
Take what's yours back to your platoons. Here's one for you, Retread.

He hands him a square flat one -- Retread grabs it hungrily and pulls away.

WILDMAN

Some of these guys were gone at the river. A lot of 'em.

ROCK

Give them to the others.
Everybody wants a letter. Doesn't matter who it's from.

He carefully reaches in and gets himself a new cigar. He crawls up over a few rocks to a flat, somewhat shielded area where the wounded are laid out. Doc Meeks and another G.I. go from man to man, checking bandages, plasma, etc. There are six wounded men and five dead covered in overcoats. Rock leans down to the FIRST MAN.

ROCK

How'd you get hit, kid?

SOLDIER (FIRST MAN)

Rocks and shrapnel, Sarge -- in the butt.

ROCK

That's what was sticking up.

The next one is Pardee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK

Stogie, Sergeant?

He puts it in Pardee's mouth -- lights it. Pardee draws -- holds it feebly.

ROCK

Don't I take care of you?

Rock moves to the next man -- a head wound.

ROCK

You got the million dollar wound, son. You're going home. Broads, steaks, beer.

CUT TO:

RETREAD

On the flank with Beef, opening his package.

BEEF

Hey, was there one for Pascalano?

RETREAD

Shud up.

He pulls out a small record and a picture of his family. The record is one of those made by a machine.

RETREAD

I got 'em all right here -- Musta made this when they had the picture taken. See that's Lewis, my oldest and --

BEEF

What'sa matter with writing -- they literate?

RETREAD

Shud up -- gimme your spare socks -- I'm gonna wrap it up real good.

He looks around.

RETREAD

Hey where's the Japs? They was here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEEF

They went to the right flank to look for that nigger Sergeant.

RETREAD

Why?

BEEF

They wanta get behind the tanks when they come.

RETREAD

Tanks -- there ain't no tanks -- it's all bullshit -- I sure wish I could get my hands on that Victrola.

BEEF

You sure there was nothing for Pascalano?

RETREAD

Nope -- you said he didn't have anybody.

BEEF

He had a mother -- even Rock had a mother.

RETREAD

Don't bet on it.

CUT TO:

KLUZEWSKI, WHIPSNAKE

In their hole. Kluzewski looks at a photograph.

WHIPSNAKE

Is she naked?

KLUZEWSKI

No, but she's got one of them tight swimsuits on.

WHIPSNAKE

Is she good? How good?

KLUZEWSKI

Good as it gets --

Whipsnake leans in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KLUZEWSKI

Hey -- it's my letter -- my
picture --

WHIPSNAKE

It weren't written to you -- it
belongs to some dead guy -- it
ain't right.

KLUZEWSKI

Alright -- I'll sell you half the
rights. Want me to read the
letter?

WHIPSNAKE

How much for the picture?

CUT TO:

FULLER

High up on the ravine wall -- he's camouflaged himself
and worked his way into a good position. He loads his
B.A.R. magazines from a bandolier. A pebble falls down
almost on him. He looks up and sees Sagara and Onami
sitting right above him.

FULLER

Damn -- I be dogged! How'd you
get up there.

SAGARA

I told you -- we're sneaky.

They climb down with their bazooka and rockets.

FULLER

Gonna be dark soon.

ONAMI

We like it when it's dark.
They can't see us.

FULLER

What about you -- I heard you
can see in the dark.

He pulls his eyes up into slits.

FULLER

That's so too much light don't
get in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAGARA

That's right we can see in the dark -- but you the one with the ten-inch dick.

CUT TO:

VALLEY - FIREBASE - BATTALION ARTILLERY

105 Howitzers -- dug in to cover the retreat -- complete with tents dug in and sand-bagged. WILLIE and JOE, two dogfaces, are on perimeter duty with a buddy, SAM.

WILLIE

Naked, bare ass?

JOE

Bare fucking ass -- Boots and helmet is all -- Colonel's silver eagle.

SAM

Said his Jeep got it -- everybody dead -- gasoline all over him -- clothes burning -- ripped 'em right off -- rolled in the mud.

JOE

'Colonel Cooke' -- 36th Division Texans? I never heard of him.

WILLIE

You ain't in the 36th, stupid -- so he says gimme that overcoat -- a full colonel -- Me talking to a full bird colonel. Yeah sure I says -- what am I gonna say -- screw you?

JOE

Where is he now?

CUT TO:

TENT - COOK

Stands next to a Sterno heater wrapped in Willie's overcoat. A LIEUTENANT hands him several pairs of pants. He tries them on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COOK

I want everything you got turned around now. I want fire support for those boys. I want 105s -- 155s -- mortars. I want air.

CAPTAIN

Can't give you air, sir -- it's after dark.

COOK

Alright then feed my mule and start plotting those coordinates. I want a fire mission ready the minute you make contact.

OTHER LIEUTENANT

We can't make contact, sir -- nobody answers.

COOK

That's 'cause it's probably hand to hand up there. Keep trying -- you'll get through. You all owe your lives to those boys.

A MAJOR comes in.

MAJOR

Shouldn't we put this through to Division, sir.

COOK

'And how can men die better than facing fearful odds -- for the ashes of their father -- and the temple of their gods?'

They all turn and stare at Cook.

COOK

You didn't read McCauly at the Point, Major?

MAJOR

(sheepish)

Uh -- I'm not a West Point man, sir.

COOK

'Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul, with all the speed you may -- and I with two to help me will hold 'em all at bay.'

CUT TO:

CRAZY HORSE

With his head down listening to the ground. His head comes up -- looking wide-eyed.

CRAZY HORSE

They're coming, brothers!

CUT TO:

PANZERS

Bursting out of the dirt, trees and mud they were buried in. SNORTING FIRE and BACKFIRING from their EXHAUSTS, the two PKV IVs are followed by the Panther -- its huge 88 mm. gun swinging around from behind. The tanks spread out across the valley floor as infantry join up from the shadows alongside and behind. All this to Wagner's overture from "DIE MEISTERSINGER," which BLARES from the LOUDSPEAKER.

CLOSEUP - OFFICER

Signals with the drop of his hand.

MORTARS

BOMBS being dropped in all at once. The TUBES BELCH them out as others are dropped.

DUG-IN MACHINE GUNS

Begin systematic SWEEPING of the draw.

ASSAULT GUNNERS

With FG-42s and MG-42 MACHINE GUNS -- rush forward -- throw themselves down FIRING their weapons from bipods.

STURMTRUPPEN

Crack infantry being their assault attempting to infiltrate in swift spear thrusts.

CUT TO:

ROCK

Looking over his line as the MORTARS rain everywhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Shards of STONE and STEEL rip into the mud or WHINE all around -- a SCREAM -- as a ROUND finds a fighting hole. The American positions are again well-placed with large boulders or mounds of dirt in front -- fields of fire connecting. The riflemen and gunners look out at their covering counterparts, a look of resignation -- We are pushed to the corner -- They ain't giving us a chance. Americans fight best under these conditions. Make 'em pay. Rock takes off his helmet -- touches his wound, puts it back on -- lights a cigar.

WILDMAN

(to Rock)

Illumination?

ROCK

Not yet.

Suddenly the Como-Man grabs Rock.

COMO-MAN

I got 'em!

(into phone)

This is Easy Three -- receiving you, Shotgun -- loud and clear -- Sarge, it's Battalion arty!

Rock allows himself to smile -- almost howls and controls himself -- looks at his map -- he's marked it hoping for this.

ROCK

Grid -- three-nine-five -- one -- by four-two-zero-five --

The Como-Man repeats it gleeful.

ROCK

Fire mission -- Time on target -- Hold -- Alright -- Have our mortars fire illumination followed by Willie Peter -- Everyone else hold fire.

COMO-MAN

-- Followed by Willie Peter hold all fire --

The PLONK! PLONK! as the SHELLS ARC up. A walking BARRAGE falls across the Germans and they all duck. When they come up, the flares have lit the valley and the white PHOSPHOROUS starts EXPLODING in showers below. The Infantry can be seen and they go to ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK
Heavy machine guns -- flank guns.

CUT TO:

BIG .50 "IN THE MOOD"

Starts CHOPPING OUT a line of TRACERS to be joined by the .30s on the flanks. Soon the whole valley is criss-crossed with red hot LINES and ROUNDS glancing up like giant sparks. The Germans ANSWER in kind and the battle is joined.

CLOSE - ROCK

Gets up.

ROCK
Fire at will.

He runs in the defilade from position to position.

ROCK
Keep it steady -- don't waste it.

To another B.A.R. team:

ROCK
Short bursts -- short bursts --

To Kluzewski, Whipsnake:

ROCK
What're you waiting for? Fire your weapon, Whipsnake!

To Crazy Horse, another G.I.:

ROCK
Still hear 'em?

CRAZY HORSE
Sure, Sarge -- I hear 'em good.

ROCK
How many?

CRAZY HORSE
Lots of 'em!

CUT TO:

REIGER

Running forward with his men -- the green-white light falls on him and fades. MORTARS IMPACT around but the fire is not intense enough to stop them, and the caliber of the mortar is too small. But accurate RIFLE and MACHINE GUN FIRE starts to find its mark. A MAN SCREAMS like a child, ANOTHER falls, CALLING for his mother. A BULLET smacks into a trooper with a WET WHACK next to Reiger. Another's HELMET CLANGS off. Reiger goes to ground -- the next wave passes FIRING. Reiger crawls forward dragging his sniper rifle -- his aides scramble to keep up. He sets up a firing position as the GROUND RUMBLES. The two lead PANZERS GROWL forward, men rolling out of their way -- others jumping up and following.

CUT TO:

ROCK

Back at his command hole -- the Como-Man is at his side.

COMO-MAN

When? When, sir?

ROCK

Don't sir me, son, I'm just a sergeant and I've never done this before -- Wait a little longer.

CUT TO:

BULLDOZER

Down close -- the Germans disappear into the shadows, the flares are out momentarily. When a new one lights, four Germans are on top of them. Bulldozer pulls the GUN from the tripod and rolls into the darkness as MACHINE PISTOL BULLETS STITCH the ground where he was. Bulldozer comes up SPRAYING down three of the assailants with hot .30 cal. TRACERS. He nearly cuts them in half. The fourth one jumps on him. Bulldozer comes up, pulling back the German's head by the helmet -- the NECK CRACKS. Bulldozer's mouth is bloody like he's bit something. He picks up the Browning.

BULLDOZER

Get me another belt!

A flare illuminates them -- a Panzer looms -- the GUN turns -- FIRES -- a tremendous EXPLOSION behind as rocks fly.

CUT TO:

FULLER, NISEI

Fuller FIRES carefully as the infantry draws even with him. Not too much so that they know where it comes from. The lead PANZER pulls into the light. They can see it FIRING at the machine gun position. Sagara lines up but waits.

ONAMI

Need to go little further -- back
shot is more better --

SAGARA

Nice tank -- nice tank --

Onami pats him to show it's loaded. The ROCKET FIRES -- a long shot -- STREAKING down into the engine compartment from behind.

A violent RIPPING BLAST. They duck back as the infantry FIRES at them. The TANK seems to glow, the hatch flies open and the gasoline and ammo go up -- a TREMENDOUS BLAST blowing the turret askew.

SAGARA

Luck --

The second TANK FIRES at them and they are forced to drop down into their crevasse. Rocks rain down on them.

CUT TO:

ROCK, COMO-MAN

Crouched over the map -- MORTARS EXPLODE around them, stones and steel fall around. Wildman scrambles up.

WILDMAN

Got one on the right! Ha!
Those Japs did it -- Goddamn --

He catches himself.

WILDMAN

They're all over the place --
We're gonna be overrun.

He fixes his bayonet on his Garand. Rock pulls his Thompson around -- checks his magazine pouch that it's clear.

ROCK

Alright -- give me illumination
all tubes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 COMO-MAN
 (into phone)
Illumination!

 ROCK
Fire mission -- H.E.!

 COMO-MAN
Shotgun, Shotgun -- Easy Three --
Fire mission time on target H.E.
Let's have it all.

CUT TO:

105 BATTERIES

The high explosive rounds are rammed into the breaches.

 SERGEANT
Fire!

All go at once and are quickly reloaded and fired. Cook walks behind the guns -- overcoat, helmet -- pistol belt and scarf.

 COOK
Music! Music to my ears! God
I love that sound. Come on --
keep it hot -- Brave men are
dying!

Willie and Joe watch in amazement.

 WILLIE
A colonel! A full goddamn bird
colonel.

He turns to them.

 COOK
C'mon, you two, just don't stand
there -- haul rounds -- We're all
in this together.

They pitch in as does Cook himself, a colonel who fights like a sergeant.

CUT TO:

ROCK

Looks over the boulder oblivious to the danger -- below him the whole flat is lit up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Germans come up -- both tanks are in the open -- a SCREECH of incoming heavy ROUNDS.

ROCK

Everybody dig it's going to be close!

The Como-Man echoes to the platoon -- TRACERS ZIP by everywhere. The SHELLS SCREAM into the lower slope ARCING right over Rock's head -- a LINE OF BLAST -- a TRAIN OF DETONATION -- hitting almost at once. Everything is lost in the geysers of earth and fire, but the Sturmgruppen have made it into the rocks, and little vicious battles take place -- Garand against STG-44 -- bayonets, knives, grenades, teeth. Two Fallschirmjaeger scramble up toward Rock -- one pulling a potato masher. Rock ducks -- swings around and CHOPS both down, but the grenade bounces on the shoulder and starts to roll.

HAND

Sweeps the GRENADE over, between boulders, and comes around taking Rock down. The hand is black -- it's Fuller -- a SHARP BLAST.

ROCK

I thought you were dead!

FULLER

You talk too much.

ROCK

I owe you a cigar.

They scramble back up.

Rock grabs the phone.

ROCK

Shotgun -- Shotgun -- Take it right fifty meters.

The SALVOS pour in.

ROCK

The Japs -- where's the Japs?

FULLER

Still out there.

The SHELLS POUND in -- slabs of rock fall where the Japs were --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK
(into phone)
Walk it back and out in fifty
meter increments.

The smoke clears on the flank -- no movement. The two tanks turn their GUNS toward them -- FIRE -- the SHELLS EXPLODE behind. The larger 88 BLAST from the Panther almost flattens them from concussion. The wounded start screaming.

VOICE (O.S.)
Doc -- Doc -- Oh God!

The SALVOS start ERUPTING -- walking towards the tanks. The Panther turns and runs for the left -- a BAZOOKA ROCKET ARCS out of the blasted right wall and hits the Panther square.

ROCK
They're alive! They're still
alive.

But the round did no more to the Panther than a rifle would. The second tank turns its gun towards the cliff again. Another ROCKET flashes into its turret -- it staggers -- then continues turning. But now a SALVO SCREAMS over and rips in train up to the smaller beast, BLOWING IT UP on its side. Another ROCKET skis in under the tread and the TANK erupts in flame.

FULLER
Motherfuck!

But the Panther has figured it out, and runs for the left side of the canyon.

ROCK
Correct to the left -- one hundred
meters -- Hold your elevation!

SHELLS SCREAM in following the Panther -- almost catching up to it -- the tank stops abruptly. Instead the SHELLS EXPLODE on the ravine's rim above and behind.

ROCK
Can't get him -- he's in
defilade --

The TANK runs to the scrub oaks along the ravine wall and hides there, turning its 88 and FIRING. Everyone ducks as rocks shower down. The tank's elevation is too high, its MACHINE GUN CHEWS UP the hill searching. The infantry comes up and runs towards the tank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK

Stop 'em!

(into phone)

Second Platoon -- Bulldozer, give
me some fire on that infantry.

He turns to Wildman.

ROCK

Get that B.A.R.!

They grab B.A.R.s -- lay them across the boulders --
Fuller joins them.

FULLER

If enough of them get to the tanks
-- they can run right up on us.

Another 88 RIPS over and showers them with stones. They
drop.

ROCK

Where did you learn so much?
You're just a goddamn sergeant.

FULLER

Regular Army --

Another ROUND slams in --

ROCK

We gotta stop it --

FULLER

We ain't got jack.

Wildman pulls a rifle grenade from his pack.

WILDMAN

Anti-tank!

ROCK

Not against that thing --

FULLER

Japs said it's soft in the backside.

ROCK

Back and treads -- Come on!

They scramble down to the left.

CUT TO:

FIREBASE - 105s

The GUNS are FIRING slowly now -- supporting fire to keep the infantry at bay. Cook seems let down by the lack of intensity.

COOK

If that's what he wants -- he knows what he's doing.

JOE

Who, sir?

COOK

Rock.

WILLIE

Rock?

COOK

Sergeant Rock, you dummy -- Easy Company -- Company of the damned.

He starts off.

JOE

Company of the damned.

CUT TO:

155 BATTERY, LONG TOMS

Further towards the Rapido. A SERGEANT on the phone.

SERGEANT

Yeah -- I'll be --

He puts the phone back --

SERGEANT

There's a company up there holding back a Kraut assault -- all by themselves --

LIEUTENANT

What company?

SERGEANT

I think he said Easy --

CUT TO:

RIFLEMEN

In a hole full of mud below the Abbey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIFLEMAN #1

Company of the damned -- they
left 'em there --

RIFLEMAN #2

Left 'em out to dry -- no way
outta those hills.

CUT TO:

DOGFACES

Truding back to the river.

DOGFACE

Easy Company -- 167th or 9th -- I
don't know - holding off a whole
Kraut battalion.

CUT TO:

MULE SKINNERS

Coming down the steep trail --

MULE SKINNER #1

A Panzer regiment -- a whole Kraut
Panzer regiment -- hold to the last
man. They ain't got no way out.

MULE SKINNER #2

I heard they got no ammo -- 'cept
what they take off the dead Nazis.

CUT TO:

TRUCK DEPOT - BLACK SOLDIERS

At the Rapido.

TRUCK DRIVER

Easy Company -- some guys get the
bad end of the stick -- the whole
Herman Goering Division.

OTHER TRUCKER

Tough mothers -- glad they're ours.
You ever heard of Captain Rock?

CUT TO:

FIELD KITCHEN

Safe side of the Rapido. COOKS heating up trays of steaming food.

COOK

I met Colonel Rock at Salerno -- fights like a sergeant.

OTHER COOK

Why do those always have to die --

COOK

'Cause they're brave, stupid.

OTHER COOK

Easy Company -- Company of the damned.

CUT TO:

PANTHER TANK

Its GUN traverses -- FIRES -- RIPS into the pass above -- a steel beast with a natural malevolence. Infantry are trying to get through to it --

CUT TO:

ROCK, OTHERS

They scramble down to the heavy machine gun position -- only it has been blasted -- the overhang has caved in -- the crew are dead -- arms and legs scattered -- the .50 cal. gun, "In the Mood" is laying on its side off the tripod. Rock grabs it.

ROCK

It's okay -- This can cut a tread -- bring the tripod.

They sling their B.A.R.s and grab the tripod and ammo belt. Around the corner is a foxhole -- and men crouched behind rocks -- it's Retread's platoon -- they are pulling back.

ROCK

Where are you going?

SOLDIER

Gettin' outta here, Sarge. Didn't you --

RETREAD

I told 'em to pull back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Their eyes meet.

RETREAD

Ain't got a chance here against that thing. When he gets enough infantry he's gonna move -- and then it's curtains.

Silence.

RETREAD

You got any other idea, Sarge?

ROCK

Alright -- take 'em up the hill -- Deploy 'em in good cover -- get going.

Retread turns and leaves. Rock crawls out over a rise -- there it is, about thirty yards away -- its MOTOR GRUNTING. Its MACHINE GUN BARKS -- splatters mud across them. They back down to safety.

ROCK

Put the gun here -- dig it in. When he comes over that -- we cut his tread.

FULLER

Who?

ROCK

You wanted to fire a machine gun.

FULLER

How you gonna make it come this way?

ROCK

Damned if I know.

Rock hands the spare B.A.R. to Wildman -- takes his Garand and fits the rifle grenade on -- takes another from his pack.

WILDMAN

Hey, they're mine.

ROCK

I'm wearing the stripes. Cover for him and keep the infantry off my back.

He slings the Thompson over his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILDMAN

What if you buy it?

He hesitates not knowing what to say.

FULLER

Your stogie ain't lit.

ROCK

I don't have one.

Fuller holds up Rock's pack -- fishes around and finds one -- hands it to him.

FULLER

You'd forget your own head if it weren't screwed on.

He lights Rock's stogie and takes one for himself.

FULLER

You owe me this -- Get going.

He crawls out carefully, keeping boulders between he and the tank.

ROCK

Slow down -- take your time.

His hands are shaking -- he feels the wound on his head. He leans up to look -- the tank -- right there! How can they not see. If those flares would stop for Christ's sake. He ducks back breathing harder.

The tank's turret turns as if looking for him. He ducks back down, the smoke from his cigar drifts up. He sees it and tries to brush it away.

CUT TO:

TANK'S POV - THROUGH SLIT

The turret TURNS, the machine gun TRAVERSES the rocks and mud. Sure enough, a wisp of smoke! The turret STOPS.

VOICE (O.S.)

(in German)

Achtung -- The fool is smoking -- machine gun?

OTHER VOICE (O.S.)

No, give him the 88 -- Why waste time --

CUT TO:

ROCK'S CIGAR

Glowing on a stone. Rock has scrambled up closer to the tank. Suddenly a tremendous BLAST as the 88 blows out a huge trench where the cigar was!

CLOSEUP - ROCK

He smiles.

ROCK
(to himself)
Thanks, Papa -- Now we make 'em
pay you back.

He rolls on his back, pulls up the Garand -- wedges the butt into the mud -- raises the grenade.

ROCK
If we could now have your attention.

BLAM--KLANG! The GRENADE goes off against the side of the turret. It looks impressive -- the 88 muzzle drops. Quickly he jams the second one on -- puts in the blank -- the tank smokes -- lots of VOICES.

ROCK
Not bad.

The thing surges to life, SNORTING fire, the turret turns towards him.

ROCK
No such luck!

He scrambles backwards crawling frantically. The MACHINE GUN DROPS the trees behind -- RIPS the stones above. He crawls faster back towards the others. He hears the HATCH OPEN -- the COMMANDER will be able to shoot down and hit him.

TANK COMMANDER
(in German)
There! You swine!

Suddenly a CLANGING as .50 cal. ROUNDS SPLATTER off the turret -- the hatch closes.

ROCK
In the mood.

He scrambles back -- but now the TANK lifts -- ROARS over the rocks -- one huge tread poised above him. He climbs up the small rise -- the tread comes down -- he rolls under -- CRUNCH-CLANK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Now he's under the thing -- his only chance is to crawl as fast as he can -- the treads swerve -- he rolls -- holding the Garand by the barrel -- the stock is chewed off. Suddenly it stops -- one tread spins on the steep incline. He looks ahead and sees Fuller, Wildman, and "In the Mood" pointed at him. He slips back.

ROCK

Shoot!

CLOSEUP - FULLER

He FIRES at the exposed left tread. Sparks and TRACERS fly -- metal breaks off. Fuller HAMMERS away -- concentrating the heavy slugs. It jams, he clears it -- BLASTS away.

CLOSEUP - ROCK

TRACERS ZING by -- dirt and pieces of metal -- he covers his head, holding the rifle.

CLOSEUP - TREAD

It starts to break -- more chunks -- suddenly the gun stops.

CLOSEUP - FULLER

Clearing -- chewing cigar.

FULLER

Fuck! The fucking fucker's fucked!

Another SHORT BURST. The tread breaks -- flops down and rolls off the road wheels.

TURRET

Lowers, but can't depress enough to get them -- FIRES.

FULLER, WILDMAN

Are blown flat by the concussion -- boulders tumble down.

ROCK

Scrambles backwards -- rolls out and to his knees -- jams the broken wrist of the Garand into the dirt -- aims at the radiator slats -- BLAM--KLANG! This time fire and smoke. The TANK starts to glow -- KA-BOOM! The TURRET BLOWS off -- Rock rolls away -- scrambles towards cover -- BULLETS rip into the dirt -- another EXPLOSION as more AMMO DETONATES -- more RIFLE FIRE -- the infantry! Rock fumbles for his THOMPSON -- gets it up in time to HOSE DOWN two or three -- and then he's out of ammo. Four more raise up -- level their rifles when suddenly they buck and fall -- cut down by SHORT, PRECISE BURSTS. Rock scrambles back to the defilade. Who did it? Fuller is crawling on hands and knees -- Wildman helps him to his feet. Together the three scramble up the narrow trail. Rock stops at two G.I. boots -- looks up -- Retread standing with a smoking B.A.R.

ROCK

It was you!

RETREAD

Just doing my job, Sergeant. I'm a corporal -- that's what the stripes are for. By the way, where's my stogie?

He looks around, Fuller still has his pack -- he hands him one.

ROCK

I'm running low -- Make it last.

CUT TO:

COMMAND POSITION

Rock crawls up -- exhausted. Sagara is there, with the Como-Man. An illumination round fades -- nothing moves save the burning tanks.

ROCK

Quiet.

SAGARA

Maybe they quit.

Rock shakes his head -- what does he expect --

ROCK

Your buddy?

SAGARA

He didn't make it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK

I'm sorry.

SAGARA

We went to high school together --
he was the last one.

He walks away -- sits down stoically. Rock sits, too --
turns to Wildman.

ROCK

Pull everyone back -- Redeploy
at the mouth of the pass -- They
can't get tanks up there.

WILDMAN

What about their mortars?

ROCK

Dig deep.

DISSOLVE TO:

BULLDOZER, SAGARA

Digging in a new position high on the pass -- behind them
lay the moaning wounded. From their position they can see
almost everywhere else -- holes and rocks -- a shroud
here, a helmet there. Below is just a great void of
darkness marked by the still burning carcasses of the
distant tanks. Rock is beyond caring -- just worn out.
Wildman sits next to him.

WILDMAN

Only an hour left 'til dawn --
Division should be out of the
valley.

Rock holds up his hands.

ROCK

I wonder -- if it was worth it.

WILDMAN

'Course it was or what'd we do
it for?

ROCK

They would've killed us, too --
We had no other choice. We had
to --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILDMAN

Talk like that don't do you no good.

ROCK

Tell it to Pascalano. I never wanted this crap -- I don't know how they stand it.

WILDMAN

Who?

ROCK

Officers.

Wildman looks at him.

ROCK

When it gets light -- you take 'em down. Fuller and I will cover.

WILDMAN

Like you say -- you're wearin' the stripes.

Suddenly the LOUDSPEAKER CRACKLES. A soft voice comes on at first indistinct, then clear -- a little American girl.

VOICE (V.O.)

Daddy -- Daddy -- I miss you so much at Christmas. Hurry home soon.

FEMALE (V.O.)

Melvin -- everyone's fine -- we didn't have money for gifts so we sent cards and boxes of apples. Things are tough with all the rationing.

Retread stands up.

RETREAD

Where's my pack! They got 'em -- They got my kids! That's my wife! They got 'em!

He scrambles for a THOMPSON -- picks it up.

ROCK

Grab him!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RETREAD

Dirty bastards -- You've gone too far, you fuckers.

He stands on a rock and FIRES -- the muzzle flash bright in the night. Bulldozer goes for him but he kicks Bulldozer in the face.

RETREAD

Leave me alone, you fuckers.

SCOPE POV - FROM DOWN BELOW

Retread stands barely lit by the muzzle flash of his tommy gun. When the magazine is empty -- the crosshair and post settle -- BLAM -- the scope bucks with the recoil -- when it comes back Retread is gone.

CLOSE - REIGER

He looks up from the rifle -- hands it to Staul.

REIGER

Another.

CUT TO:

RETREAD

Crumpled on his back in his muddy foxhole. Rock and others dive in.

ROCK

You stupid fucker!

He grabs him.

ROCK

Why did you fall for that? Stupid -- you fucked up again. You hear me, you fucked up! Doc -- Doc -- Medic!

Retread looks up at him.

RETREAD

You big son of a bitch -- I always hated you. I thought you were dead -- I thought I got lucky.

He points at Rock's cigar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RETREAD

Give me a drag.

Rock does.

RETREAD

Guess my luck ran out -- Get the
bastard, Sarge --

He dies -- grabbing Rock, shaking, then still.

ROCK

I wouldn't have it any other way.

He gets up mumbling to himself, then sits down cross-
legged, picking up dirt and throwing it at the ground.

ABBEY

In the first light of dawn -- Rock can just see it over
the pass from where he's dug in. Wildman sits by his
side -- they both have letters in their hands. Rock
looks down into the darkness below -- the ghostly shapes
of the smoking battlefield.

ROCK

From here -- in this light it
almost looks as if nothing ever
happened. Nothing changed --

He looks over at Wildman, who has the picture of the
girl in the swimsuit. He shows it. She's lithe and
firm -- young in a Betty Grable pose.

ROCK

Knock-out --

WILDMAN

I bought it from Beef -- nobody
read the letter -- she's just a
kid -- seventeen -- writing to
her brother.

ROCK

Who was he?

WILDMAN

Some replacement we lost at the
river -- She talks about Benny
Goodman and that new kid Sinatra.
You like Goodman?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK

Love him.

WILDMAN

She and her brother used to go fishing a lot but now the river is frozen over but it gets nice in the spring -- warm and green -- I never been fishing -- What's yours?

Rock reads.

ROCK

Dear Soldier -- I am eight years old. Even though I don't know you, I miss you a lot. I hope this war is over soon so you can come home. It has gone on long enough. Did you get turkey for Christmas? With gravy I hope. My mom says to keep your socks dry, it's the best way to stay warm. I hope you're not hurt or wounded and have a nice place to sleep. I miss you more already and maybe we will get married when you come home and I grow up. My name is Amanda. Love and good luck --

WILDMAN

You ought to marry that girl, Sarge --

ROCK

Yeah, but will she wait?

Rock gets up and moves crouched over to Doc Meeks whose arm and chest are bandaged. Meeks is sitting next to a corpse covered with an overcoat -- only the G.I. boots are visible.

MEEKS

Whipsnake.

Rock nods and leans down next to Pardee, who remarkably, is still alive. He takes a cigar out, breaks it in half -- lights it, and hands it to Pardee. Pardee takes it with a shaking hand, while Rock lights his half. He tastes the smoke.

ROCK

Been a long time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A HEAVY ROAR wells up -- permeating everything -- Aircraft -- the ROAR builds louder and louder. Rock leans up and stares out towards the sun.

SKY

Sure enough the contrails can be seen in the high blue -- lit by the sun. Specks of silver that become silhouettes. More and more of them -- the ROAR gets louder.

WOUNDED

Stare -- prop themselves up on their elbows.

VOICE

It's the whole Air Force.

OTHER VOICE

Maybe they're coming for us.

CLOSE - SAGARA AND FULLER

They watch too.

FULLER

They ain't coming for us.

BEEF

I never seen so many planes.

SKY

Filled with planes -- B-17s, B-25s, P-47s, P-38s. Now they are directly overhead and passing -- and now we start to hear the BOMBS.

ROCK AND WILDMAN

The group strain to see without exposing themselves against the ridge -- the SHRILL WHISTLE of hundreds of BOMBS -- they all know and stare at the:

ABBEY

Full in the morning light -- suddenly EXPLOSIONS sprout up all around the great walls -- more and more -- the DEEP THUNDER of the BLASTS -- the explosions cover and obscure the Abbey -- they seem to burst forth from the crest of the mountain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The whole world shakes and throbs.

CUT TO:

CLARK'S COMMAND TENT

On the Rapido -- everyone is up and cheering, screaming. Clark watches, with the press corps photographing him against the spectacle. Bombs fall on the nearby hills -- one across the river -- two in the river -- huge geysers -- people running and cheering -- screaming -- and the whole crest of Monte Cassino is obliterated in smoke and EXPLOSIONS that go on and on. Clark raises his glasses. Ernie Pyle walks up and stands next to Clark.

CLARK

Enjoying the show, Ernie?

PYLE

Quite a show.

CLARK

Give the people what they wanta see.

PYLE

What's this rumor about a company that held a pass up there -- cut off -- Easy Company?

CLARK

A rumor.

PYLE

Rumors have a way of becoming legends --

CLARK

I appreciate what Easy Company did as much as anyone -- I'm indebted to them but the action will be swept under the rug. It has to be, Ernie, you know that. Rome, Ernie, that's the legend.

CUT TO:

105 BATTERY

In support of Easy -- the guns are long silent, getting ready to pull out. Everyone stares at the monastery being pulverized -- many cheer. Cook stands next to the MAJOR in command of the battery.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAJOR

Makes me feel -- good. God how I hated that thing. How 'bout you, sir?

COOK

You don't have to sir me -- I'm just a goddamn corporal. I was a replacement with Easy.

MAJOR

You said you were Colonel Cooke.

COOK

I am a cook -- Field kitchen -- Division Headquarters.

MAJOR

You're impersonating an officer?

Cook raises his field glasses.

COOK

Whatta you gonna do? Send me to Italy?

CUT TO:

REIGER

Walking among the wounded laid out under the blasted trees on the valley floor. He leans down to talk to one -- offers another water. All the while the POUNDING of distant BOMBS.

STAUL

Herr Oberst -- General Headquarters.

He talks into a field phone in the open.

STAUL

Herr Oberst -- they can see you. They are bombing the Abbey, Herr Oberst.

All the men crane their necks as if to see over the pass. Reiger picks up the phone.

REIGER

Yes, Mein General -- Yes I am aware of it -- I cannot see the Abbey from my position. Yes -- Yes -- they are fools.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REIGER (CONT'D)

Occupy the ruins? The ruins of the Abbey -- But we have heavy casualties. Mein General, I understand -- I will begin immediately.

He puts the phone down -- looks down a line of bodies covered in trenchcoats. Staul waits.

REIGER

This place is of no use to anyone -- Anyone -- We are withdrawing -- Make it quick and orderly.

He stands up and walks towards the pass. He picks up his sniper rifle. Staul rushes to catch up to him.

STAUL

Herr Oberst! -- They can see you! There are mines!

REIGER

You may return to the unit, Staul -- You have your orders --

STAUL

What can you do -- They are not important anymore.

REIGER

My honor demands satisfaction, Hauptmann -- I wish to be alone.

He turns and his look freezes Staul -- he goes on alone.

CUT TO:

WILDMAN

Looking through his glasses. The others stand in their foxholes.

WILDMAN

They're pulling out.

BULLDOZER

It's a trick.

BEEF

Why -- what for?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRAZY HORSE

Whatta you think, Sarge?

Rock lowers his glasses.

ROCK

I don't know -- maybe we got lucky
-- Let's not wait around to find
out. Wildman, take 'em out in squad
columns --

WILDMAN

First Platoon, saddle up!

They get to their feet -- start moving out in column at
combat interval.

CUT TO:

CLOSEUP - ROCK

Looking through his glasses. The remnants of the company
are long gone. He puts the glasses down.

ROCK

They are leaving -- it's over.

FULLER

There's one left.

ROCK

I know -- take the gun and get
going. I promised Retread.

FULLER

Stupid -- how do you even know?

ROCK

I know.

FULLER

I'm a sergeant, too -- You can't
order me to go.

ROCK

You may be a sergeant, but it was
my company. Get out of here.

CUT TO:

REIGER

Walking insanelly up the center of the valley, oblivious to an enemy. He comes to the boulders and stops -- a figure stands up about fifty yards away -- Rock carrying an M-1.

REIGER

(in English)

I want to see your commander.

ROCK

(in German)

I am in command.

REIGER

(German)

You -- I know your voice -- You German?

ROCK

(German)

No -- I'm an American.

REIGER

You are a traitor to your people -- Your Fatherland.

ROCK

You have your ways. I have mine.

They pause -- the wind blows smoke past them.

ROCK

(German)

Let's get this over with.

REIGER

(German)

For honor.

ROCK

(German)

Honor.

REIGER

(German)

On count of three -- One -- Two -- Three!

They raise their RIFLES -- a fifty yard shot offhand at an opponent firing at you is no easy matter -- not like in movies. They FIRE simultaneously --

CLOSEUP - ROCK

Reiger's bullet grazes Rock's helmet. Rock pulls in, FIRES THREE MORE TIMES -- classic offhand rapid fire match style -- regular Army.

REIGER

He fumbles for the bolt -- racks it -- opens it again ejecting the cartridge. He takes a few steps -- drops the rifle to his side. Rock FIRES again and Reiger pitches forward into the boulders.

ROCK

Lowers the M-1 -- ejects the cartridges -- puts in a new clip.

ROCK

Aufweidersehn, Herr Oberst.

CUT TO:

TOP OF PASS

Fuller picks up his gun -- puts it over his shoulder. Rock comes up. They walk into the pass. Beyond is the smoking ruin of Monte Cassino and the Liri Valley lit by the morning sun.

DISSOLVE TO:

BRIDGE ON RAPIDO

Fresh troops cross in trucks -- New Zealanders -- ready for the fight, not knowing what's waiting for them. As they pass, the motley tattered remnants of Easy Company 168th trudge up to the traffic GUARDS.

GUARD

Hold it -- only authorized personnel -- Where's your C.O.?

Rock walks forward. A fresh LIEUTENANT steps up to meet him.

LIEUTENANT

Who are you, Sergeant?

ROCK

Easy -- this is Easy 168th.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIEUTENANT

Easy? You ain't the guys up in the mountains -- Not that Easy Company?

GUARD

They're dead -- No, sir, these ain't them.

ROCK

We're tired -- We're going across. We're gonna sleep in the sun.

Suddenly there's commotion from the troops in the trucks -- the word: Easy, Easy Company -- Company of the damned --

NEW ZEALANDER

Hey, Easy -- Thanks, mate.

OTHER NEW ZEALANDER

Good show, Easy -- Give 'em a cheer --

OTHERS

Give 'em three -- Hip hip hooray for Easy -- Easy! Easy!

They all break out in spontaneous cheering -- reaching out from the trucks to shake hands.

NEW ZEALANDERS

Thanks -- Thanks for everything -- Good luck, Easy -- Good show!

The TRUCKS START UP. Rock motions the men to start across -- They are filthy, unshaven, hollow-eyed, white, black, yellow.

GUARD

What kinda outfit is this.

ROCK

Infantry.

They pass by one by one.

ROCK (V.O.)

They're just ordinary guys, Father -- just like you'd meet anywhere at home. Not heroes, just average Joes trying to stay alive and get the job done.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROCK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Beef Riley -- he's a pipefitter from New Jersey, and Bulldozer, a lumber salesman. Sagara's from Hawaii and wants to teach math, and Wildman works in a steel mill. Pardee worked for the T.V.A. and Fuller, he's regular Army like me.

As they go, Rock follows, his BACK TO us.

ROCK (V.O.)

And there were others -- Whipsnake, Onami, Pascalano, Kluzewski, Captain Joe Dawson, Retread and a medic named O'Hara to name a few -- These are the best friends I'll ever have.

The column disappears over a rise as Rock follows -- the last -- alone.

ROCK (V.O.)

-- The finest men I'll ever know.

And as he crests the rise, the olive trees fade away -- the Italian landscape turns slowly into long rows of green spring corn. A small Iowa town stands in the distance bright and clear in the new light, and Rock stands on a farm road as Karl Rocklen once more. He wears civilian clothes and carries an Army bag. A soft wind blows his hair and he looks down on the heartland that stretches away in promise.

"So it came to pass that as the soldier trudged from the place of blood and wrath that his soul was changed. He came from hot plowshares to prospects of clover tranquility. And it was as if hot plowshares were not. Scars faded as flowers."

- Stephen Crane

THE END

POSTSCRIPT

The battle for Monte Cassino raged on for more than three months, ending in May 1944. It cost over two hundred thousand casualties from the Belligerents and the civilian population.

General Mark W. Clark -- Entered Rome with the Fifth Army on June 4, 1944, just two days before the invasion of France. He took a road sign marking the city limits while under fire.

Ernie Pyle -- Died on Okinawa in 1945 by enemy shellfire. He was the most beloved of American war correspondents.

The 34th Division -- Fought all the way up the Italian peninsula suffering heavy casualties. It was disbanded after the war.

The 442nd Regimental Combat Team (100th Btln.) -- Was the most decorated unit of WW II, receiving more than 18,000 decorations and suffering 120% casualties.

In Roman times, the highest honor bestowed upon a soldier was the Crown of Grass. It was given rarely, and only for action that saved an entire legion of comrades. The crown was made of grass to symbolize the earth and life itself, which is more valuable than gold or silver.

THIS SCRIPT WAS PREPARED
BY WARNER BROS. INC.
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