

THE SOLDIER THAT WAGGED HER TAIL

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based on a true story...

And dedicated to every man... and Man's Best Friend

FADE IN:

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT - DAY - 1940

WALTER TOLAND, a black English man in his sixties, shuffles through his quiet apartment. A faint BARKING from outside irritates Walter but he tries to ignore it.

The incessant YAPPING continues. Photos nearby depict a YOUNG WALTER in an army uniform. There's also a wedding photo of Walter with his now deceased wife, JUNE.

After some more barking, Walter walks to the window and looks down at...

EXT. STREETS OF LONDON - CONTINUOUS

...a cardboard box with the words: FREE PUPPIES on it. A YOUNG BOY stands near the box.

There's only one PUPPY left in the box, a terrier mutt, yapping excitedly and running into the walls of the box. The loner, unwanted.

On cue, Puppy begins peeing in the corner of the box. Walter sneers at the pup and slams his window shut.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

... Walter locks the window and senses his wife's photo staring through him. He looks from the window to the photo.

WALTER  
(to the photo)  
What do you want from me, June?

Walter looks at the dining room table, set for one. He sighs.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Walter exits the building. Mumbling, he walks towards the Young Boy. Without saying a word, Walter picks up the Puppy and goes back inside.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT - DAY - 1941

Walter sits in a recliner listening to a comical radio program while eating chips. He laughs every few seconds.

Each time Walter eats a chip, he then lowers his hand and the crumbs on his fingers are promptly licked by the puppy- NOW ONE YEAR OLDER and looking healthier, groomed.

Puppy runs out of the room and returns with a tennis ball.

WALTER  
(off the tennis ball)  
Not now, girl.

The puppy drops the ball at Walter's feet, tail wagging.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
In a bit, June.

Walter's named the pup JUNE. June doesn't relent, pushing the ball towards Walter.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
June, I said hang on.

Displeased, June yaps at him. She begins running in circles around Walter.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
(off the radio)  
During the commercial.

Walter continues eating chips and listening to the radio program. June jumps up and snatches the chips from Walter's laugh and hides them in a different room.

Walter finally throws the ball into the next room.

June returns a second later with the ball. Walter laughs. June sees that Walter's tired, so she rests by his side.

Walter looks at his army photo, then back at June. Suddenly;

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Crawl.

With his front paws forward, June does an ARMY CRAWL across the carpet. Walter laughs.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
(holds out finger gun)  
Bang.

June jumps higher than imaginable and feigns snatching Walter's finger.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Still.

June plays dead with her paws up in the air.

Walter laughs again and rewards June with a kiss and some heavy petting.

They look at one another, both perfectly content.

Walter looks down at June and smiles. June wags her tail. Walter stares into June's eager eyes, calm, at peace, as...

FADE TO BLACK.

PANTING over the BLACK SCREEN. An AIR RAID SIREN is heard. In the distance are the faint sounds of BOMBS EXPLODING. The bombs gradually subside and become fainter and more distant. The earth stands still.

EXT. LONDON - DAY

The bombing has ceased. The air is eerily still. Buildings have been reduced to rubble and the streets are silent, until...

...June frantically runs through the debris, surveying the scene. June runs from each destroyed house, barking and digging.

June's tired, but she continues her search. She finally arrives at a familiar building and jumps into the wreckage. She begins to dig. June finds the photo of Young Walter, lying face-up, covered in soot.

June whimpers at the photo. She settles in, moving some debris and nestling next to the photo of Walter.

Army trucks and SOLDIERS pass through the city to look for survivors, but June doesn't budge from the photo.

Nearby, a radio is heard:

RADIO

(filtered)

--from the German planes... And now from the NBC Newsroom in New York. President Roosevelt said in a statement today that the Japanese have attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, from the air. Stay tuned to this program for more information.

(beat, cheerful jingle)

K-L-L-O. The Jell-O program, brought to you by Jell-O and Jell-O pudding--

June nestles in closer to the photo. The remainder of the radio broadcast becomes white noise in the background.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Everyone has cleared out of the area. The only movement is the dust still rising in the air... But June remains. A silhouetted image resting on top of the photo of Walter.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

As the sun rises, June begins to stir and stretch. She walks down the deserted street, whimpering and hearing the low rumble of her empty stomach.

Until finally, June begins to run. Her image growing smaller in the distance.

MONTAGE - JUNE ON HER OWN

-- June walks on the sidewalk and is ignored by the PEDESTRIANS and heavy foot traffic around her.

PEDESTRIAN  
Out of the way, mutt.

-- June runs past the streets of London and enters a forest.

-- June chases after a squirrel, but is constantly outsmarted.

-- June drinking water from a small creek. She plays with her own reflection, then ultimately falls in. She jumps out of the water shivering and shakes herself off.

-- June looks up and sees some bright lights in the sky where planes are taking off. She runs towards the lights.

EXT. BRITISH AIR FORCE HANGAR - NIGHT

June arrives at the source of the lights. The sign out front reads: BRITISH AIR FORCE. June climbs under a hole in the fence and runs towards the safe haven.

INT. AIR FORCE HANGAR - NIGHT

Inside the hangar, TWO BRITISH PILOTS, members of the British Air Force, are working on a plane, one peels an orange as they talk. June arrives and stands at the entrance of the hangar, waiting for the Pilots to recognize her.

PILOT ONE  
(while eating an orange)  
And blow the krauts right out of  
the sky if I ev--

Distracted, Pilot One slaps the other Pilot on the arm and motions for him to 'look over there.'

Pilot Two looks at the entrance of the hangar. They're both staring at June.

PILOT ONE (CONT'D)  
Look at this bugger.  
(to June)  
Where'd you come from?

June remains at the entrance. The two Pilots slowly approach her.

As they get closer, June backs up. The Pilots get closer and closer to June. She retreats some more.

Pilot One extends an orange wedge and June sniffs at it.

June licks the orange and then scarfs it down. Pilot One sees how hungry June is and gives her the rest of the orange. June devours it.

The Pilots laugh.

PILOT ONE (CONT'D)  
Hungry, g--  
(to Pilot Two)  
Girl?

They both look down at June. June looks up at them with the same curiosity, not knowing what they're trying to determine.

PILOT ONE (CONT'D)  
Is it a girl?

Pilot Two shrugs.

Clearly famished, June licks the floor where some of the juice dripped.

Both Pilots look around for some more food. All they can find are some old cans of military C-rations lying around. They put the C-ration on the floor and wait for June's reaction.

They watch as June sniffs the gray nameless meat.

PILOT TWO

Wouldn't even a dog touch that.

June sniffs some more, then finally shoves the canned meat away with her nose.

The Pilots laugh.

PILOT ONE

Even a starving mutt's not fit for  
what the Queen feeds her royal  
army.

June looks up at the pilots, he focuses on the uniforms and medals, things he recognizes from Walter's picture. June begins to bark excitedly.

He makes dizzying circles, barking at the uniforms.

PILOT ONE (CONT'D)

Easy, girl.

Pilot One leans down to pet June. He pets her gently and June begins to calm down.

PILOT ONE (CONT'D)

What'd they call you?

He looks into June's eyes, noticing for the first time that June's fur is dirty and unkempt, totally disheveled.

PILOT TWO

Call 'er mutt.

PILOT ONE

No, c'mon now. It's all in the  
name. Names ain't given, ya' know.  
The name finds you... Is why  
everyone around here still calls  
you shitstain.

Kneeling, Pilot One stares in June's eyes.

PILOT ONE (CONT'D)

(whispering, still petting  
June)

What'd they call you, girl?

PILOT TWO  
 Whattaya' wastin' your time fo'?  
 The mutt can't speak.

Pilot One ignores him, too enamored with June.

PILOT TWO (CONT'D)  
 (thinking back to earlier)  
 They don't really call me that, do  
 they?

It's all white noise as Pilot One bonds with June. The Pilot tenderly acquaints himself to the dog. Pilot Two has seen enough and he leaves.

Left alone in the massive hangar, Pilot One finds a small blanket and puts it over June. The Pilot sits on the floor with June and tries to get her to taste the C-ration.

Tongue hanging out and tail wagging, June getting acclimated to her new friend transitions into...

EXT. HARLEM - DAY

SUBT: HARLEM, 1944

...a stray dog eats some scrap in an alley in Harlem. Without warning, the stray darts into the street and is nearly hit by a moving truck. The moving truck slams on its brakes and the dog scurries off.

Behind the wheel of the moving truck is WILLIAM "BILL" MORRIS, a black man in his twenties. He mutters something under his breath about the dog, then continues driving.

Bill's an excellent driver, he swerves several times, trying to find the fastest lane, dodging cabs and pedestrians. He fights for every inch in his truck. This is war...

This is Harlem. This is NYC traffic.

BILL  
 (off another driver)  
 C'mon.

William swerves between cars. The side of the truck reads:  
 MORRIS AND SON MOVING CO.

EXT. HARLEM APARTMENTS - NIGHT

The Morris and Son Moving truck is parked outside the apartment.

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A military duffel bag is packed near the front door.

NORCIE (O.S.)  
Do you know how long?

In the kitchen, Bill sits silently with his wife NORCIE, a black woman in her twenties who wears a nurse's uniform.

NORCIE (CONT'D)  
You don't have to go back. You  
don't owe it to anyone.

Bill doesn't respond, but he looks up at Norcie with understanding eyes. He knows.

NORCIE (CONT'D)  
This place-- they don-- they don't  
care what you do for them, Bill.  
You can't change how things are.  
You going over there... it won't--

Bill silently stands and clears his plate. On his way to the sink, he gives Norcie a kiss on the top of her head. Norcie stares straight ahead as Bill begins washing the dishes.

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Norcie and Bill lie awake in bed together. Soft, smooth jazz music plays on the record player.

NORCIE  
You'll remember me?

BILL  
How could I forget?

NORCIE  
You won't find some nice German  
girl over there? Some muscular  
German woman who'll seduce you with  
her--  
(thick, guttural noises)  
*Ch, ch, ch...* And her... *Ein,*  
*Tzvei, Drei...*

Bill laughs.

NORCIE (CONT'D)

No..? Or some flirtatious English dancer named Trixie looking to lure in an American soldier for a husband?

BILL

Never.

NORCIE

(takes Bill's hand)

Well, just in case.

She softly kisses the palm of Bill's hand, then wraps his fingers tightly around it. She then does the same with the other hand.

They lie completely still together, wrapped in each other's arms. The soft sounds of jazz soon transition into boisterous BAND MUSIC playing off camera.

EXT. PORT - DAY

HUNDREDS OF WHITE SOLDIERS stand on the deck of a massive ship. On the nearby port, a band plays, women and children are waving American flags, news cameras flash. Everyone cheers as the ship disembarks.

Directly behind that ship is a dirtier, older ship which carries Bill and HUNDREDS OF BLACK SOLDIERS. There is no band for them. No music. Just a few melancholic wives waving goodbye. Bill's ship unceremoniously drifts off to sea.

Bill watches Norcie and the image of the women grow clouded through the fog. He looks out at the vast endless ocean, then to the baby-faces of all the black men surrounding him.

JOHNSON (O.S.)

Ain't no parade for us.

Bill turns around to see CORPORAL RON JOHNSON, a jovial black man in his twenties, extending his hand.

BILL

Don't need a parade.

JOHNSON

Sure... Don't nobody *need* a parade. In the history of man, didn't nobody ever say 'god, it's a nice day, let's have a parade', or 'I just finished my oatmeal, somebody better throw me a p--

Bill, more stoic, stares at the fast-talking Johnson. Johnson gets the hint.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
Okay, okay. I got you... I'm just  
sayin', it'd be nice.

Bill stares back at the port, now only fog staring back at him. Johnson extends his hand to Bill.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
Johnson. Corporal Ron Johnson.

BILL  
Sergeant William Morris. 369th.

JOHNSON  
Harlem Hellfighters?

Bill subtly nods. Johnson whistles, a show of respect for the Harlem Hellfighters unit.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
Y'all were over in Pearl Harbor  
before this?

Bill nods humbly. Johnson looks out to sea.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
London... Ever been? I hear the  
food's shit.

Bill doesn't respond. Johnson looks at the stripes on Bill's uniform.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
(off the stripes)  
What'd you do to get those?

Bill looks up at the sky at some fighter jets flying overhead.

BILL  
I drive a truck.

The fighter jets sail off in front of the ship. The propeller of the ship sputters in the ocean.

EXT. BRITISH AIR FORCE BASE - DAY

Propellers spin and several planes take off. On the runway, PILOTS run towards their planes. Pilot One dashes towards his fighter plane with June chasing behind him.

June barks.

Pilot One kneels down and pets June. He screams over the sounds of engines all around him.

PILOT ONE  
I can't take you, girl.

June barks at him.

PILOT ONE (CONT'D)  
I'll be back. Okay? You understand?

June barks louder.

PILOT ONE (CONT'D)  
(rolling his eyes)  
I can't take you. I'm sorry.

Pilot One embraces June. He then quickly turns around and boards his plane. June barks even louder, knowing this is goodbye.

PILOT ONE (CONT'D)  
(to Pilot Two, motioning  
to June)  
Take her inside.

PILOT TWO  
What?

June continues to bark at Pilot One, trying to get his attention.

PILOT ONE  
Take her inside!

Pilot Two motions to his ears to signify he can't hear.

One last look at June, then Pilot One gets ready for takeoff.

Pilot Two picks up the distressed pup, June fidgets in his hands. Pilot One takes off. June jumps out of Pilot Two's hands. June chases after the plane.

PILOT TWO  
Come back!

June keeps running after the plane even as it ascends into the sky.

PILOT TWO (CONT'D)  
Come back ya' stupid mutt!

June is gone. She follows the trail of the plane and never slows down. Panting, running faster and faster, June follows the trajectory of the plane.

She runs for miles until the plane is a mere spec in the sky. As June finally stops running, she looks around and realizes that she ran out of the air base. She's lost, somewhere in the woods.

Exhausted, she pants, stomach heaving up and down. June finally sits down to rest. She finds a tree and lies down under some dried leaves.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

June walks through the woods. She occasionally stops to pick up a rock. She throws the rock with her mouth and plays fetch with herself.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Dirty, tired and hungry, June continues walking. She still has the rock in her mouth. Suddenly she hears a loud voice amplified by a microphone.

EMCEE (O.C.)  
Y'all ready for a show!

The sound of cheering echoes through the forest. Excited, June runs towards the voices.

When June reaches the clearing, she sees a stage and on the stage is BOB HOPE, in his forties, entertaining the troops... the white troops.

BOB HOPE  
Look at all these sorry faces. And people say *I* look old. Contrary to what you may have heard, I did not entertain the troops at Gettysburg.

Everyone laughs.

June looks around at all the WHITE AMERICAN SOLDIERS watching the show. They're all engrossed, laughing, smiling.

BOB HOPE (CONT'D)  
Some of these boys have been at sea for so long that they made Phyllis Diller their pinup girl.

June scans all the happy white faces. She walks around and no one notices her.

BOB HOPE (CONT'D)

The stealth bomber is supposed to be a big deal. It flies in undetected, bombs, then flies away. Hell, I've been doing that on stage all my life.

Everyone laughs. June seems confused as she walks through the white faces. She walks towards the back of the audience.

About a hundred yards away from the USO show are Bill, Johnson, NOODLE, a tall lanky black man in his early twenties, TINY, a stout black man in his twenties, and the rest of the black soldiers of the 369th. They're all eating C-rations in silence on the ground or in their tents.

Bill sits off to the side with Johnson next to him. The faint sound of laughter is heard in the distance.

JOHNSON

(off the laughter)

Ain't got no USO show for us.

BILL

Parades and shows is that all you think about...? Me and my men get home alive is all I care about.

JOHNSON

Shoot, we drive trucks. Run supplies. Don't act like we some heroes.

Bill doesn't respond.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Not about the parades and shows. It's about respect. Just a 'thank you,' is all.

BILL

Don't need no thank you. I volunteered for this. You did the same.

Bill spoons his C-ration then reconsiders. He looks around at the black soldiers he's responsible for, their slumped shoulders, low morale, all to the backdrop of laughter in the distance.

BILL (CONT'D)  
 You did a good thing comin' out  
 here.  
 (speaking louder to the  
 rest of the soldiers)  
 All of you. We got a war here and a  
 war at home. We showin' our country  
 what we stand for. They can't  
 ignore what we do. Not forever.

The men mutter, but don't seem too impressed.

Suddenly, their attention's diverted by a light panting off  
 camera.

Bill looks down and sees the small mutt at his feet.

The Black soldiers' faces all light up at the sight of June,  
 their expressions immediately change, a sign of life.

JOHNSON  
 Maybe she escaped from the show.

Bill studies the dog, the dirty fur, skinny stomach, hungry  
 and tired eyes.

BILL  
 This ain't no show dog. She's not  
 from the states. This dog here's  
 one of us.

The Black Soldiers of the 369th form a circle and move closer  
 around June.

June looks up at the eager faces, the enthusiasm she caused.

But June focuses on Bill's face, she sees some of Walter's  
 features in Bill, she notices the stripes on Bill's uniform  
 similar to Walter's.

Suddenly June runs off. She returns moments later and drops a  
 rock at Bill's feet. Noodle, Tiny, and all the men of the  
 369th look on.

NOODLE  
 (to Bill)  
 Look, Sarge, she wants to play  
 fetch with you.

The men all laugh. Bill watches them laugh, he hasn't seen  
 them smile or excited in some time.

TINY  
 Give it a throw, Sarge.

Bill throws the rock several feet. June retrieves it and brings it back. She drops it at Bill's feet again. Everyone laughs.

Bill tosses the rock further and June darts after it. She disappears and everything grows silent. No sound of her. The men grow despondent, until...

...June comes running back with the rock and the men all cheer. This time, June walks over to Bill's C-rations and begins tearing it open with her teeth. She devours the food inside.

NOODLE

Maybe she's looking for a scone or  
some shit.

JOHNSON

Any dog that could stomach that  
must be on our side.

The men all laugh. Everyone watches June eat the military food.

BILL

(to Johnson)

See, ain't this better than a show  
with some white man with a big nose  
tellin' corny jokes?

Johnson smiles. Many of the black soldiers are now surrounding June, petting her. Bill smiles at the scene. June looking directly at him excitedly.

EXT. ENGLAND - DAY

June is sleeping under an army jacket that says Sergeant Morris on it. She sleeps peacefully until...

COLONEL ADAMS (O.C.)

Morris!

June is startled. She wakes up and looks around, sees that all the Black Soldiers are now congregated near some trucks parked by the water. DOZENS OF MASSIVE LANDING SHIPS wade in the water waiting for the trucks to board.

Bill is standing at attention in front of COLONEL ADAMS, a white man in his forties, a career military man. June makes her way over to Bill.

BILL

Sir, yes, sir.

COLONEL ADAMS  
You and the 369th are riding in the  
front. First boat. Have your men  
ready to board by 0800.

Bill salutes and turns to leave.

COLONEL ADAMS (CONT'D)  
And Morris.

Bill spins around.

COLONEL ADAMS (CONT'D)  
You don't stop driving til you get  
to the top of that hill. You  
understand me?

Bill swallows the lump in his throat.

COLONEL ADAMS (CONT'D)  
I don't care what you see. You make  
it to the top of that hill.

Bill nods.

COLONEL ADAMS (CONT'D)  
(gravely)  
Good luck.

Bill nods appreciatively to the Colonel. There's a moment of  
silence, Adams nods reverentially, respectfully to Bill, and  
then;

COLONEL ADAMS (CONT'D)  
What do you call her?

BILL  
I'm sorry, sir?

Colonel Adams motions with his eyes to Bill's feet. Bill  
looks down to see June obediently sitting by his side.

Colonel Adams waits for a response to the question. Bill  
hesitates, he hadn't thought of that, but then;

BILL (CONT'D)  
(smiles to himself)  
Trixie, sir. I call her Trixie.

Colonel Adams studies Trixie.

COLONEL

Looks like she's got diseases. You know she's not comin' on the boat with you?

BILL

Of course not, sir.

Trixie looks up inquisitively at Bill.

INT. BILL'S TRUCK - DAY

Bill wears a makeshift harness around his neck with a pouch big enough for Trixie to fit in.

Bill sits in the driver's seat and Johnson is in the front passenger seat. The truck slowly rolls onto the massive landing ship along with dozens of other trucks.

Bill's truck is in the front. The ramp is slowly lifted and closed, eliminating all sunlight. The ship is pitch black.

BILL

(looks over at Johnson)  
Top of that hill.

JOHNSON

Top of the hill.

They fist bump.

BILL

(to Trixie)  
You like the beach, girl?

JOHNSON

Yep, just don't tell her which beach.

Silence in the truck for several moments. The tranquility is suddenly pierced by the dull sounds of SHOTGUN FIRE AND MORTARS BEING DROPPED OFF CAMERA. Bill, Johnson and Trixie stare straight ahead, not knowing what awaits them.

INT. LANDING SHIP AND BILL'S TRUCK - DAY

The ship remains dark, and the GUNFIRE AND MORTARS ARE LOUDER, MORE FREQUENT. Dozens upon dozens of trucks lined up inside. All the men in the trucks have one thing in common... they are all BLACK. They're young, scared, some barely able to shave.

Tiny reverentially mutters a prayer under his breath. Noodle looks over from his truck, he lowers his head and begins his own form of prayer.

NOODLE

Lord, don't let me die. Lord, don't  
let me die. Lord, don't let me die.  
Lord, don't let me die.

Bill looks back at the young men he's responsible for, sees the fear in their eyes. Bill picks up his radio.

BILL

(into the radio)

These supplies are what keep them  
alive out there. These supplies are  
what keep them fighting. You might  
as well be bringing these supplies  
to your girls, wives, kids back  
home. Ain't no one getting in our  
way... When that door opens it's  
all gas. Keep your mind light and  
your foot heavy. I'll see you all  
at the top of the hill.

He puts the radio down and the confidence immediately disappears. Trixie looks up at Bill. Trixie begins licking Bill's hand.

Bill opens his hand and Trixie begins licking the palm of Bill's hand. Bill closes his eyes and he could almost feel Norcie's kisses on the palm of that same hand.

Bill looks into Trixie's eyes and smiles appreciatively.

BILL (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Dear god, don't let me get killed  
out here where no one knows me.

JOHNSON

What?

BILL

I wasn't talking to you.

JOHNSON

What?!

BILL

(screaming)

I wasn't talking to you!

JOHNSON

Oh... okay... This sounds like some  
shitshow we're being dropped into.

Bill takes a deep breath. He pets Trixie once, then wraps his hands against the steering wheel.

BILL

(to Trixie)  
Top of the hill.

The ramp slowly begins to descend. Bill clenches the wheel tighter, knuckles flashing white. The ramp comes down, a sliver of pure white light beckoning them is immediately contrasted by the rush of blood stained water rushing into the ship and slamming into Bill's truck.

Bill slams his foot on the gas. His truck drives headfirst into the ocean...

EXT. BEACHES OF NORMANDY - CONTINUOUS

SUBT: JUNE 6, 1944

OMAHA BEACH

...underwater, a tire spins against the bottom of the ocean. Bill's truck is the first one out of the landing ship. The water is stained red. Bodies floating all around.

On the beach, the AMERICAN SOLDIERS are under heavy fire, a waking nightmare, the carnage of an ugly war, boys shooting at boys. Bill's eyes go wide, but he tries to focus on only the few inches in front of his windshield.

Bill slams on the gas, ignoring the sights around him. Water slamming into the truck and throwing it around.

His truck is nearly submerged in water.

Trixie is thrown from the harness into the back of the truck. Water begins filling up inside the truck. Trixie doggie paddles in the water, trying to keep her head above the water.

Bill's truck drives in the water, through the carnage, dozens of trucks behind him. Inside the truck, the water is now up to Bill and Johnson's chests.

Bill steps heavier on the gas, desperately trying to outrace the rising water.

The water continues to rise in the truck, only the tops of Bill and Johnson's heads are visible. They look at one another briefly but never say a word.

The water continues to rise, until...

...the tire finally reaches the edge of the shore and the truck begins ascending from the water. The water in the truck begins to lower. Trixie swims to the front of the truck.

Bill and Johnson breathe a sigh of relief momentarily, only to be jolted back to a reality by a BOMB exploding inches away and shaking the truck.

Bill maneuvers his truck deftly, BOMBS EXPLODING ALL AROUND HIM. He swerves and zigzags, just like he did through the streets of Harlem. His sights only set on the top of the hill.

One by one, the trucks of the 369th begin exiting the ocean onto the beach. They try to follow Bill's path. The top of the hill might as well be Mt. Everest with the amount of machine guns and bombs in their path.

Bill expertly jerks the steering wheel left and right, miraculously able to predict where the next bomb is coming from.

He sets the course for the 369th and never falters, his truck slowly making it past the whizzing of machine gun fire and inching towards the top of the hill.

Trixie is back in her harness as Bill continues to drive, the mutt hanging around his neck like a lucky charm. Trixie looks out the window and sees: MEN SCREAMING, LYING HELPLESS ON THE GROUND, ETC... she looks up at Bill and licks his face.

Bill continues to drive, but he felt the warmth of Trixie's breath on his face. He slams on the gas once more and is near the top of the hill. He glances in his rearview mirror and sees his men's trucks behind him.

A few more expertly timed swerves and Bill gets the truck to safety. The top of the hill.

Bill, Johnson and Trixie, stare straight ahead in silence. Johnson finally looks over at Bill, jaw gaping, in total admiration and disbelief of Bill's skill.

EXT. TOP OF THE HILL - DAY

Bill and Johnson stand outside their truck looking at the rest of the men.

Trixie walks around between all the men of the 369th, she lingers around each one long enough for them to pet her. The men are still in disbelief, but they each kneel down and pet Trixie.

Nearby, a group WHITE SOLDIERS are grabbing supplies from the back of the 369th trucks but totally ignoring the men of the 369th. They don't even acknowledge the 369th's arrival.

JOHNSON  
(off the white soldiers  
and being ignored)  
Assholes.

Bill ignores the White Soldiers and returns his focus to his unit.

BILL  
We all here? All accounted for?

Everyone looks around. Bill counts his trucks. No one can believe it. No one speaks. Trixie walks back over and stands beside Bill.

JOHNSON  
That's a god damn miracle.

They all take a moment of reflection and breathe a sigh of relief.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
Where the hell did you learn to  
drive like that, Sarge?

BILL  
I told you I drive a truck.

Johnson shakes his head in awe. Bill picks up Trixie and holds her.

NOODLE  
(off Trixie)  
Looks like you got us a good luck  
charm.

All the men agree.

Bill looks down at Trixie, staring into her eyes differently, like she's more than just a stray mutt.

The men of the 369th all breathe a sigh of relief. Their happiness soon fades when they're reminded again of the lack of reception by the White Soldiers enjoying the supplies they risked their lives to bring.

JOHNSON

And here I thought they'd be happy  
to see us... Like we don't even  
exist.

The men smirk, not out of joy because the truth is too painful to bear. Trixie looks in the direction of the White Soldiers and scans their faces, then back at the black soldiers.

NOODLE

(off the White Soldiers  
unloading supplies)  
Hope the toilet paper's only one  
ply and real sand paper-like.

TINY

Hope the bullets jam in their--

Bill shoots Tiny a dirty look and silences him.

Bill steps closer to the edge of the hill. He and Trixie are looking down at the beach, littered with bodies, the air still pungent with death. Trixie whimpers.

BILL

(to Trixie)  
I know, girl. Don't none of it make  
sense to me either.

JOHNSON (O.S.)

Like we fightin' a totally  
different war than them.

Despite their miraculous feat, Bill witnesses the morale of his team disappear.

Bill turns around and looks at his men, all safe, all boys. He puts Trixie down and storms off towards the White Soldiers.

The men of the 369th watch as Bill marches up to and confronts CAPTAIN PROCTOR, an arrogant white man in his forties.

BILL

Captain.

Captain Proctor turns around and stares at Bill contemptuously, annoyed that Bill would even approach him.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Sergeant Morris of the 369th. Me  
and all my men, we brought these  
here supplies and-- and--

Captain Proctor stares at Bill unimpressed. Bill's confidence wanes.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
That all?

BILL  
It'd be nice if we'd been given a  
heads up what we were walking into  
down there.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
You didn't need to know.

BILL  
We got a right.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
You got a right to nothing. You and  
all your men. You bring supplies,  
drive trucks, that's it.

Some of the White Soldiers have now begun standing behind the Captain, trying to intimidate Bill.

Trixie sees the aggressive move and darts towards Bill to stand by his side.

Captain Proctor takes out a crumpled SHEET OF PAPER.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR (CONT'D)  
(off the paper)  
Your next drop.

Proctor extends the paper towards Bill, barely lifting up his hand and forcing Bill to walk towards him. Bill doesn't budge.

Trixie and all the men watch the tense stand-off. Trixie snatches the paper out of the Captain's hands and brings it to Bill.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR (CONT'D)  
(off the paper)  
That's who you're tailing. I'll  
have a Private load you up. You  
bring them the new supplies, bring  
the POW's back to us. Simple as  
that.

Bill reads the paper silently, his eyes widen imperceptibly.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR (CONT'D)  
Keep your men in line.

BILL  
Sir, my men ain't the problem. My  
men just--

CAPTAIN  
Son, if--

BILL  
Sergeant.

CAPTAIN  
Excuse me?

Bill positions his arm to display his stripes to the Captain.

Irked, the Captain sneers at Bill.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
You got your orders. Get the rest  
of your supplies. You push out at  
2200 hours.

Captain Proctor walks away. Bill salutes the Captain and the  
Captain walks off without saluting back.

As Proctor walks off, the White Soldiers follow him save for  
one Private that Proctor tasks with loading the 369th's  
trucks with different supplies. This is PRIVATE EDMUND, a  
disrespectful white Private no more than nineteen. He stares  
with disdain at Bill.

EDMUND  
(to Bill)  
I ain't loadin' a truck for you or  
any other coon.

Edmund spits on the ground. Trixie growls and shows her  
teeth. Edmund just laughs at Trixie.

BILL  
(to Trixie)  
No. Easy, girl.

Trixie continues to growl at the White Private.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Down, Trixie.

Trixie finally settles down. Edmund glares at Bill, not moving one inch towards the supplies that need to be loaded.

The men of the 369th watch to see what Bill will do. To Edmund's chagrin, Bill proudly begins loading the items himself. Trixie follows him to and from the truck.

The men watch as Trixie attempts to shove a supply crate with all her force using her nose and head. She's actually helping Bill.

Johnson walks over to help. One by one, the men of the 369th, help Bill load the trucks with supplies. They'll load their own goddamn trucks. Not a single complaint.

Bill looks on proudly. He watches Trixie continue to drag and push supplies.

JOHNSON  
(off the orders in Bill's  
hands)  
Who we tailing?

Bill shows him the paper. It reads: GENERAL PATTON.

Johnson nods with pride. Bill cannot help but smile.

EXT. TOP OF THE HILL - NIGHT

Night falls and brings the cold with it. Bill greases the engine of his truck as Trixie looks on. Trixie sniffs the grease and gags, a black spot now on her nose.

Bill cleans off his hands and sits down on the ground. He takes out the orders and stares at the words GENERAL PATTON looking back at him.

Trixie walks over to Bill. Bill laughs when he sees Trixie's nose, then cleans it for her. They look down at the beach below, once deafening with cries of men now eerily silent.

BILL  
(to Trixie)  
That was D-Day, girl.

Trixie's tongue hangs out of her mouth excitedly.

BILL (CONT'D)  
You hear me, Trixie? You might have  
just won a war.

Bill pulls Trixie in close and pets her affectionately. Bill opens the palm of his hand and, as if knowing exactly what he needs, Trixie begins licking his palm.

Off the kisses, Bill takes out a PHOTO OF NORCIE from under his helmet and shows it to Trixie. Trixie studies the photo.

BILL (CONT'D)  
You'll meet her one day. You won't  
be jealous, will you?

Trixie sniffs the photo of Norcie.

Bill puts the photo away while looking over his shoulder, noticing the divide between the tents of the Black soldiers and the tents of the white soldiers.

Trixie looks on, her head on as a swivel back and forth, as if she understands the tension as well.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Yep, believe it or not we're all on  
the same side.

Suddenly, Trixie gets up and walks away from Bill.

Bill watches as Trixie walks towards the white soldiers. Trixie walks over to a tent where sobbing is emanating from. Trixie enters the tent.

Inside is Private Edmund, he's holding a letter from home and crying alone. Edmund quickly wipes his eyes when he hears a noise, he notices Trixie.

EDMUND  
Get outta here.

Trixie doesn't budge.

EDMUND (CONT'D)  
Go back to your kind, you mutt.

Edmund tries to sound aggressive but the quiver is still apparent in his voice.

Edmund throws a beer can in Trixie's direction.

EDMUND (CONT'D)  
I mean it.

Trixie walks closer to the Private. She brushes up against Edmund's leg. Edmund sighs and allows Trixie to stay. He says nothing, but exhales in relief having Trixie near.

He crumples the letter and begins to cry. Trixie remains close to him.

Bill watches the scene from afar. He checks his watch: 2100.

INT. BILL'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Bill and Johnson sit in their truck waiting to push out. The rest of the trucks for the 369th lined up behind them. Johnson checks his watch impatiently.

JOHNSON

Let's go.

BILL

We're not leaving her.

Bill is transfixed while looking out the window, staring into Edmund's tent and watching Trixie console him.

JOHNSON

Sarge, we gotta go.

Bill takes a deep breath. Trixie doesn't move from Edmund's side.

Bill finally relents and he revs the engine. He begins driving slowly away, always looking in his side mirror. No sign of Trixie.

The trucks slowly peel out together.

Bill continues to drive, incessantly checking his mirror.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(off Bill's defeated look)

You knew you couldn't keep her.

We're in a war.

Bill doesn't respond.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

She was a stray. Someone else'll--

Bill's not interested.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

We didn't come out here to find a pet. You'll forget about her in--

Suddenly, there's a HONKING coming from behind them.

All the other trucks of the 369th begin HONKING. Trixie is running alongside the trucks. The men of the 369th are all hollering and shouting out their windows as Trixie runs past.

Trixie catches up to Bill's truck and runs alongside it. Bill smiles. Bill opens the door and Trixie jumps in.

BILL  
(to Trixie)  
I'm sorry, Trixie. I didn't want to-

Bill shoots Johnson a dirty look to let Trixie know whose fault it was.

Trixie barks at Johnson.

Both men laugh.

Bill looks back and sees all the men of the 369th still smiling, shouting and cheering. Bill looks over at Trixie and then at Johnson.

BILL (CONT'D)  
She ain't a stray no more. She's  
all of ours.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Eyelids getting heavy, Bill deftly navigates the roads. Johnson keeps watch out the window, gun in his hands. Trixie eats a C-ration on the floor of the truck.

JOHNSON  
(off Trixie eating the C-  
ration)  
Ain't me who's takin' her for  
walks.

Bill checks the signs and the trees. He sees a PAINTED RED BALL on a tree and quickly veers into the forest where the red ball is directing him.

BILL  
(into the radio)  
Red ball express, boys. Red ball  
express.

Bill's truck heads into the forest and the 369th follows.

INT. FOREST - NIGHT

Another red ball painted on a tree and Bill follows it. Several moments later, there's another red ball but Bill doesn't see it. Trixie is looking out the windshield and sees the red ball Bill's about to miss.

Trixie barks. Bill notices the red ball and turns again.

Early morning is upon them, the sun begins to shed some light into the sky.

INT. FOREST - EARLY MORNING

Bill, Johnson and the rest of the 369th are exiting their trucks. They've arrived in front of a different ALL WHITE PLATOON, met by a different WHITE CAPTAIN.

Bill approaches the White Captain. As he walks towards the Captain, he notices all the prying eyes of the white soldiers on him. He also notices a ROW OF GERMAN POWS tied up and blindfolded.

Bill gets to the Captain and salutes.

WHITE CAPTAIN

Who the hell are you?

BILL

Sergeant Morris, sir. 369th.

WHITE CAPTAIN

Well, god damn.

(looks over at all the  
supply trucks)

We haven't seen a supply truck come  
out this deep in over three weeks.

How the hell you find us?

Bill motions towards a red ball painted on a tree nearby.

WHITE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

(deferentially)

Son of a bitch. Well, good on you.

The White Captain looks over at all the men of the 369th. He sees Trixie standing at attention between Tiny and Noodle.

WHITE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Odd bunch, but you people are  
alright in my book.

Bill forces a smile, he recognizes the backhanded compliment. Bill looks at the Captain, then takes out the piece of paper from his pocket. There's an uncomfortable silence.

WHITE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
What is it..? I ain't gonna sing or dance. We appreciate you comin' out, but what the hell else you want from me?

BILL  
General Patton?

WHITE CAPTAIN  
Excuse me?

BILL  
General Patton, sir. We were supposed to be trailing the General.

The Captain in command laughs.

WHITE CAPTAIN  
Patton, hell, You tell him I say 'hi' if you see him. You're about three days behind. Shit, Patton and his boys don't stop. Think they could win the war on their own. Shit, I reckon they could.

Bill takes a deep breath.

WHITE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
(smirking)  
Patton.  
(off the supply truck and the German POWS)  
My boys'll unload for you and you can bring the Krauts back.

Bill salutes and the White Captain begins walking away, still laughing.

WHITE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
(to himself)  
Patton. Ain't no supply truck finding their way all the way out to Patton from here.

Bill hears the words but doesn't respond.

White Captain walks past the red ball on the tree. He looks up at it and turns over his shoulder one last time to Bill.

WHITE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
(off the 369th and the red  
ball)  
So you all really just--

Bill doesn't flinch. Captain shakes his head in awe and turns to walk away again.

BILL  
Harlem Hellfighters of the 369th.  
You see any other divisions up  
there, you tell 'em the  
Hellfighters 'll be back.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The White Captain's platoon has just finished unloading the supplies. The German POWS, still blindfolded and tied to each other, wait near the trucks.

Noodle and Tiny watch the White Soldiers open the supplies.

NOODLE  
Deliverin' a bunch of food and  
supplies to some white folks. I  
could've done this in the states.

TINY  
That ain't true.

Noodles eyes Tiny, waiting for an explanation.

TINY (CONT'D)  
They never would've let you carry a  
gun.

Tiny laughs.

The German POWS, malnourished and tired are slowly led into the back of the trucks of the 369th. As they're boarded onto the back of the trucks, the Germans pass Trixie. She watches them closely, noticing the different uniforms, different features, different colors.

INT. BILL'S TRUCK - NIGHT

In the back of the truck are a DOZEN GERMAN POWS. Bill and Johnson drive with Trixie between them.

NOODLE (O.C.)  
 (filtered, radio)  
 Hey, Sarge, one of my Krauts keeps  
 screamin' 'bout something. Now I  
 don't speak Kraut, but it certainly  
 looks like he's doin' the pee  
 dance... Over.

Bill thinks for a moment.

JOHNSON  
 We got another six hours back to  
 camp. Make 'em wait.

Bill continues driving. He catches a glimpse of Trixie's big  
 innocent eyes.

Bill suddenly slams on the brakes. Johnson rolls his eyes.

BILL  
 They're still human.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

With the guns of the 369th all aimed at their backs, several  
 of the German POWS urinate on the side of the road.

NOODLE  
 See, now I couldn't pee with a gun  
 pointed at me. Too much pressure.

BILL  
 Really? Something tells me that's  
 the only way you could.

Bill walks away.

TINY  
 Sarge, has got jokes.

NOODLE  
 (to Tiny)  
 Shut up.

Trixie sees all the Germans peeing and she takes her cue.  
 Trixie runs over next to the Germans and begins peeing beside  
 them.

Bill watches for a moment, the unity of Trixie joining the  
 Germans, he's confused and astounded at the same time.

Bill walks back to his truck and Trixie soon joins him. He  
 looks deep into Trixie's eyes as he pets her.

BILL  
You can't tell, girl, can you? Is  
it all the same to you..? That must  
be nice.

Trixie looks up at him, tail wagging.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Or maybe you can. Maybe it just  
makes no difference.

JOHNSON (O.S.)  
I don't mean to break this up, but--

Bill looks up and notices that Johnson and some German POWS  
are standing nearby.

Bill stands and helps load the Germans into the truck. Right  
before they enter, they're eyes are covered with blindfolds  
again. DIETER, a German POW only eighteen years old, is the  
last to board.

Before he's blindfolded, Dieter notices Trixie. Dieter has a  
crestfallen smile when he sees Trixie.

DIETER  
(off Trixie, in German)  
Hund.

Bill doesn't respond, slightly taken aback by the German  
speaking to him and the smile on the boy's face.

BILL  
Get on the truck.

DIETER  
(in German)  
Hund.

Bill quickly blindfolds Dieter and pushes him onto the truck.  
The back of the truck slams shut and Bill takes a deep  
breath.

INT. ARMY BASE - DAY

The 369th are all situated on small cots in the corner of a  
massive army base filled with white soldiers. Tiny, Noodle,  
Johnson and the rest of the men are getting some much  
deserved relaxation. One of the platoons present is the  
indignant/intolerant Captain Proctor and his men.

Bill walks through the camp, familiarizing himself, looking  
around at all the sights of war.

Bill finally passes the fenced enclosure where the German POWS are being kept. Some beg for food or water, other stand solemnly. Bill, with Trixie by his side, walks over to the fence.

Dieter pushes his way to the front. He looks at Bill and then to Trixie, but says nothing, still clearly remembering their previous encounter.

BILL  
(pointing at Trixie)  
Hund..?

Dieter looks at Trixie.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Bow wow..? Woof. Is that Hund?

Dieter nods.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Dog. Trixie.  
(pointing to Trixie)  
Her name is Trixie.

DIETER  
(thick German accent)  
Tuhricksie.

Bill nods. Bill kneels down and pets Trixie gently to calm her. Trixie remains close to the fence.

Dieter understands the cue and bends down as well. He slides two fingers through the fence and pets Trixie. As he pets Trixie, Bill's reminded that Dieter's just a boy. This moment lasts for several seconds until Trixie suddenly runs away.

Bill can only watch as Trixie runs to the other side of the camp.

Away from Bill, Trixie rejoins the rest of the 369th. She immediately begins eating an open C-ration that belongs to Tiny.

TINY  
(to Trixie)  
Oh, you just feel right at home  
now. Don't even ask. That's a man's  
dinner, you know.

Trixie goes right on eating.

Tiny sees Noodle lying on his cot with pencil and paper out.

TINY (CONT'D)  
You writin' home?

NOODLES  
Dear Mom, counselors is cool, food  
is cool, send more quarters. This  
ain't no summer camp. This is  
war...  
(shakes his head and  
resumes doing something  
on paper)  
I'm an artist.

TINY  
Oh, you draw?

NOODLES  
Sketch. This ain't a crayon and I  
ain't a child. I sketch.

TINY  
So, let's see.

Noodle holds up the sketch: A BEAUTIFUL DRAWING OF THE 369TH  
STANDING IN FRONT OF THEIR TRUCKS. IN THE FRONT ARE BILL AND  
TRIXIE.

Trixie jumps on Noodle's cot and admires the sketch.

NOODLES  
See, Trixie's got good taste.  
(looks up and sees Bill,  
calls to Bill)  
Hey, Sarge, where'd you really find  
her?

BILL  
She found me.

NOODLES  
Why does everything gotta be so  
philosophical with you? The  
location. The location, Sarge,  
where you found her. Ain't no way  
she just ran up on you like that in  
the woods.

Everyone laughs. Bill turns to walk away.

BILL  
You men all good?

JOHNSON

You keep drivin' like you do and  
keep Trixie around for good luck,  
and we'll be all right.

Bill smiles and walks away. The crescent shaped moon is almost tranquil if not for the bombs illuminating the sky in the distance.

INT. ARMY BASE - NIGHT

Bill sleeps soundly. Suddenly;

Edmund and TWO WHITE PRIVATES are quietly approaching his cot.

They grab hold of Bill's shoulders and he's jolted awake. WHITE PRIVATE #2 puts up a menacing finger to his mouth to motion for Bill to keep quiet.

EXT. ARMY BASE - NIGHT

Groggy but afraid, Bill stands outside the base. The Two White Privates flank him on each side. Edmund seems ashamed, refusing to make eye contact. Suddenly;

Captain Proctor emerges from a tent and approaches Bill. Out of the corner of his eyes, Bill sees Trixie inside about to run to him. He imperceptibly shakes his head at her and she stays.

Captain Proctor stares at Bill with disdain.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR

Think you're real soldiers. Real  
proud of what your men did today?

Bill knows it's not a question and keeps quiet.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR (CONT'D)

You drive trucks. Don't forget  
that.

BILL

Yes, sir. How could I? We're the  
best at what we do, sir!

Captain Proctor sneers at Bill, then an ominous smile creeps across his face.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
I've got a special mission for you,  
Morris. The 217th needs ammo.

Bill furrows his brow at the mention of 217th. Captain Proctor reaches into his pocket and pulls out the ORDERS. Bill looks at them, they're not signed.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR (CONT'D)  
Just you.

Trixie sees the fear in Bill's eyes. She wants to run towards him, but Bill shakes his head 'no.' He looks at her, eyes welling up with tears, forces a smile and says a silent 'goodbye.'

CAPTAIN PROCTOR (CONT'D)  
Just one truck.

Bill swallows hard. It's a suicide mission.

INT. BILL'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Bill sits in his truck staring straight ahead. Next to him is Johnson, also staring blankly through the windshield. Both appearing scared for the first time since the war.

JOHNSON  
(barely above a whisper)  
There ain't no 217th.

Bill turns the key in the ignition.

Johnson crumples up the fake orders and throws them out the window. Trixie races to retrieve them and runs after the truck.

INT. BILL'S TRUCK - NIGHT (LATER)

Bill and Johnson drive in silence.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The signs are all torn down, bullet holes through them. Singed tanks and trucks left for dead on the side of the road. Bill's truck sails down the road.

INT. BILL'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Recent thick plumes of smoke in the distance. Bill continues driving.

JOHNSON

Let's just turn around. This is a  
suicide mission. He'll never know.

BILL

I'll know.

Bill finally pulls over to the side of the road.

JOHNSON

This is it. These are the  
coordinates. Can we go back now?  
See. There ain't nothin' here.

Bill takes a deep breath.

He exits the truck and stretches his legs. Johnson does the same. Johnson takes a few steps towards the woods to relieve himself.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(back to Bill, begins to  
pee)

Two minutes.

As Johnson urinates, Bill looks out at the gray dreary surroundings.

BILL

You ever feel like nothing will  
ever truly feel like home? Like we  
don't belong anywhere?

JOHNSON

Can I just piss, please?

Johnson has his back turned, facing the woods. Suddenly...

...a TWIG SNAPS in front of him.

Johnson looks up. He sees nothing.

Another TWIG SNAPS.

Johnson slowly reaches for his gun. Bill hears it too, frozen in fear.

Several more TWIGS SNAP, getting louder. Closer. Footsteps are fast approaching, coming right towards Johnson.

Johnson quickly runs back to the truck. Bill does the same. It's too late. Out of the woods...

...Trixie springs out, the crumpled up phony orders in her mouth. Johnson exhales. Trixie jumps into Bill's arms.

BILL

Trixie, are you crazy, girl? I told you to stay.

JOHNSON

I nearly shot her.

Bill pets Trixie. Standing near the truck, Johnson and Bill breathe a sigh of relief, when...

...another TWIG SNAPS in the woods.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(to Trixie)

You bring a friend?

Bill shakes his head 'no' gravely and motions for them to hide behind the truck. Suddenly;

...THREE NAZIS appear. They emerge from the woods, RIFLES in each of their hands.

Bill and Johnson quickly duck behind the truck, Trixie clutched in Bill's arms. Both men's faces go pale.

Bill puts Trixie down and takes out his gun. He puts a finger to his lips to tell Trixie to keep quiet.

The Three Nazis notice the truck and point their rifles at it.

NAZI #1

(off the truck)

American.

They FIRE at the truck twice. Bill and Johnson wince silently.

The Three Nazis walk slowly, heading straight for Bill and Johnson's truck.

Bill and Johnson hit the ground. Trixie follows suit. They slowly army crawl under the truck. Trixie watches them army crawl. Trixie looks at Bill and has VISIONS OF WALTER.

TRIXIE BEGINS TO ARMY CRAWL beside Bill. Bill is amazed at the sight, but doesn't have time to marvel.

Bill, Johnson and Trixie remain silent under the truck. They watch as the Nazi boots approach the truck. The Nazis walk to the front of the truck first.

The Nazis look through the front windshield of the truck. They fire off two more rounds through the windshield while laughing.

NAZI #1 (CONT'D)  
(in German)  
See if anything's left.

The Nazis begin walking towards the back of the truck, closer to where Bill, Johnson and Trixie are hiding.

Nazi boots inching closer and closer to the back of the truck.

Bill and Johnson TAKE THEIR GUNS OUT of their holsters.

The Nazi boots are now inches away from them. They can barely breathe.

Bill, Johnson and Trixie listen as the Nazis open the back of the truck. The Nazis enter the truck, looting and looking around.

Bill begins army crawling out from underneath the truck, Johnson and Trixie silently follow.

Bill and Johnson stand up, guns aimed at the back of the truck. They wait as the Three Nazis jump off the truck, immediately confronted by the sight of Bill, Johnson and Trixie.

THREE NAZIS  
(in German)  
Put it down!

BILL AND JOHNSON  
Get on the ground!

All five men SHOUT over each other, no one understanding the other. Sensing the tension, Trixie barks incessantly.

THREE NAZIS  
(in German)  
We will shoot you!

BILL AND JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
Lower your guns!

The screaming continues. Trixie barks.

Bill has his gun aimed at Nazi #1. Johnson has his gun aimed at Nazi #3. The Nazi in the middle goes back and forth pointing at Bill and then Johnson.

Nazi #2's finger hovers near the trigger, slowly applying pressure. He points his gun at Bill. Trixie eyes the gun. Bill's eyes go wide, and...

...Trixie LEAPS INTO THE AIR AND BITES the shooting hand of Nazi #2.

Bill and Johnson seize on the chaotic moment and each one FIRES A SHOT at the other two Nazis. Bill then turns his gun on Nazi #2- who's still struggling with Trixie- and KILLS him.

Bill stands there in shock, his mouth agape.

The smoke clears. Bill looks around. All Three Nazis lay dead on the ground.

There is no satisfaction in Bill's eyes, only relief. He looks at Trixie and then at Johnson. They're okay.

Without saying a word, Bill picks up Trixie and enters the truck.

INT. BILL'S TRUCK - NIGHT

No one speaks. Even Trixie looks stoically straight ahead. She looks up at Bill, recognizes the pain in his eyes.

They continue to drive in silence, windshield pierced with bullet holes.

INT. ARMY BASE - NIGHT

Bill's truck is parked. Bill, Trixie and Johnson exit.

Trixie immediately runs towards the rest of the men of the 369th, who rejoice upon seeing her return. Johnson joins them as well, but Bill doesn't move.

TINY

What happened?

JOHNSON

They tried to get us killed. We were outnumbered. We would've-- If--

Johnson looks down at Trixie, not even realizing that he'd been petting her the whole time to calm his nerves.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(off Trixie)

This little-- She...

His voice trails off.

Johnson realizes that Bill has stormed off in a fit of rage in the opposite direction.

TINY

Where's he--

JOHNSON

Oh, Jesus, he's heading to the Colonel's tent.

NOODLE

Ain't no black man marching into the Colonel's tent uninvited. Is he lookin' to get court-martialed?

Johnson runs after Bill.

As Bill gets closer to the Colonel's tent, he's receiving more and more shocked looks from RANDOM WHITE PRIVATES.

Johnson catches Bill just before Bill reaches the Colonel's tent. He grabs Bill's shoulder and looks at him incredulously. Bill says nothing.

JOHNSON

You can't--

Bill doesn't respond, only blind rage in his eyes.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

They'll throw you in jail.

BILL

He was trying to get us killed!

JOHNSON

You goin' in there is not gonna change anything.

BILL

Someone's gotta know!

JOHNSON

This ain't news... And so he'll know. Then what? Still ain't nothing gonna change and you'll be in jail. Who does that help?

Bill is still angry, but he knows that Johnson's right.

BILL

We could've died. He's supposed to have our backs.

JOHNSON

Now who's looking for a parade? The KKK, the police, the politicians in suits. They're all trying to get us killed. He's just wearing a different uniform.

Bill takes a few deep breaths and begins to calm down.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

The way I see it there are only two sides in life: lucky and unlucky.

(takes Bill's hand, off the skin color)

And this, where we come from, this makes us mighty unlucky.

Bill shakes his head 'no.' He looks over his shoulder at where the 369th congregates.

BILL

Not the way I see it. We're the luckiest ones here. Just don't no one realize it yet.

JOHNSON

Sure. And we got that miracle mutt god sent you.

Bill can't help but smile at the mention of Trixie as a 'miracle mutt.'

BILL

Yeah, we got that.

Bill and Johnson walk back together. They pass several dozen tents until;

Suddenly, Bill stops in front of one tent and looks at it. He abruptly walks in unannounced into...

INT. CAPTAIN PROCTOR'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

...where Captain Proctor is standing with several of his men, including Edmund and the other White Privates who sent Bill on the suicide mission.

When Proctor sees Bill and Johnson, he's dumbfounded. The blood drains from his face, like he's staring at ghosts.

BILL  
Mission accomplished, sir.

Proctor's jaw hangs open. Bill salutes with a smug smile on his face and walks out of the tent. Edmund hides his grin about Bill and Trixie's return.

Johnson and Bill walk together through the base, eventually rejoining Trixie and the 369th.

INT. ARMY CHURCH - DAY

Bill sits on the first pew. His gun is in his hands, staring down at the two empty holes in his chamber as a result of the night before.

He inhales deeply.

INT. ARMY BASE - DAY

Bill sits by himself on his cot scribbling a letter. As he writes, Trixie eats from an open C-ration next to him.

BILL (V.O.)  
I drive, Norcie. I drive just like  
I did back home.

MONTAGE - TRIxie JOINS THE 369TH AND BILL FALLS IN LOVE

-- Bill greases his engine. Trixie grabs the grease with her teeth and runs away with it.

BILL (V.O.)  
These men look up to me and I try  
to stay brave. If they only knew  
that I just close my eyes and  
pretend I'm driving home to you.

-- Trixie brings the grease to the other men. All of the men of the 369th now grease their engines the same way as Bill.

-- Trixie and the men of the 369th drop off supplies for a different platoon. Bill shows the orders with GENERAL PATTON'S name on it.

BILL (V.O.)  
We're doin' things no one expected  
us to do. These supplies keep them  
going. But I don't know if anyone  
notices.

-- The 369th unloads without help from Proctor and the white soldiers. Proctor is more and more angry with each successful run Bill, Trixie and the 369th make.

BILL (V.O.)  
And I still wouldn't be able to do  
it without her.

-- Trixie drags some clothing off the truck with the rest of the 369th.

BILL (V.O.)  
Don't get mad, but-- I did end up  
meeting someone over here.

-- Summer fades and the leaves begin falling from trees. Bill and Trixie play fetch in the cold.

BILL (V.O.)  
Just like you imagined. A girl  
named Trixie and I can barely  
understand a thing she says.

-- Bill shares his water and his C-rations with Trixie.

BILL (V.O.)  
And somehow I don't need to,  
because she understands me so well.

-- Bill's truck is stuck in the snow. He uses his helmet to dig out the wheel. Trixie furiously digs beside him.

BILL (V.O.)  
She understands me like you did.  
With just a look.

-- Bill lying in bed while petting Trixie.

BILL (V.O.)  
She's like some sort of miracle god  
sent me. She saved my life, Norcie.  
If I get home to you, it'll only be  
because of her.

-- Halfway across the world, Norcie braces the New York cold on her way to the hospital. She's reading Bill's letter, an angry and confused look on her face.

NORCIE  
(pissed)  
What in the-- this man must have  
lost his da--

-- Norcie finds a small photo in the envelope of Bill with Trixie. She smiles when she realizes Bill's letter and relationship is with a dog.

BILL (V.O.)  
She's not you, but it feels like  
the next best thing. I hope my two  
girls meet real soon.

-- Norcie smiles. Thousands of miles away, Bill sleeps peacefully with Trixie resting on his stomach.

INT. ARMY BASE - NIGHT

Bill sleeps with Trixie resting on his stomach. Suddenly;  
Trixie wakes up. She looks around, licks Bill's face, sniffs the air, then runs away.

Trixie's being lured out of the tent by SEVERAL WHITE PRIVATES who are holding out some uncooked hot dogs. They lure Trixie further and further away from Bill's tent.

Oblivious, Bill goes right on sleeping.

EXT. ARMY BASE - NIGHT

The hot dogs are tossed into the back of the truck. Trixie jumps into the truck and the door is slammed shut on her. She whimpers and barks.

Driven by a White Private, the truck pulls out of the base. Trixie barks, but no one can hear her.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The back of the truck opens. Trixie looks around and sees she's in the middle of the cold forest. The Two White Privates approach her slowly, trying to get her off the truck.

WHITE PRIVATE #1  
C'mon... I'm not gonna hurt ya'.

Trixie growls and gnashes her teeth at them, not allowing them to approach her.

WHITE PRIVATE #1 (CONT'D)  
C'mon, back to the woods where you  
belong.

Trixie growls and snaps her teeth at him.

The White Private gets closer and closer, hands outstretched.

Trixie snarls and ferociously tries to bite one.

White Private #1 lunges and grabs Trixie. He quickly drops her outside the truck.

The truck deserts Trixie in the woods. Trixie barks as the truck drives away. She looks around, all alone again. She whimpers once, then looks around at all the dense trees surrounding her.

She barks, the echoes bouncing off the trees, slowly fading, but...

INT. ARMY BASE - NIGHT

...in the still of night you can almost hear the faint whimpers from Trixie.

Bill is startled awake. He puts his hand on his chest to feel for Trixie, then puts a hand under his cot and pets only air.

He looks around startled. Outside, the sun has begun it's ascent.

EXT. WOODS - EARLY MORNING

Trixie runs through the woods with a purpose, navigating and hurdling broken branches. She continues to run as the sun rises.

INT. ARMY BASE - DAY

Several gray clouds block out the sun.

BILL (O.S.)

Trixie.

Johnson, Tiny, Noodle and the rest of the 369th slowly begin to stir from their sleep, waking to the sounds of Bill calling for Trixie.

JOHNSON

What is--

BILL

Trixie... Trixie...

They see Bill walking up and down the base searching for Trixie. Johnson takes a deep breath.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Trixie...? Trixie! Come 'ere, girl.

One by one, even though they're still half-asleep, the men of the 369th join Bill in looking for Trixie.

Even Dieter, the German POW, watches on sympathetically.

Captain Proctor exits his tent and looks around smugly at the scene. Bill and the 369th stop walking in front of Captain Proctor.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
She was a stray. Probably best.  
Animals belong in the wild.

Bill walks away, disgusted by even the sight of Proctor. But the remainder of the 369th stare defiantly at Captain Proctor.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR (CONT'D)  
(to Johnson)  
He best move on... because I can  
tell you, she isn't coming back.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Trixie is still running, weary and out of breath. The forest stretches for miles. Suddenly, Trixie stops running.

Trixie looks up at one particular tree. It has a RED BALL painted on it. Trixie stares profoundly at the tree for another moment, then resumes running.

After several moments, she sees another RED BALL painted on the tree causing her to dart in a different direction. The sky is soon lit up by planes flying overhead. An air raid SIREN blares off camera.

INT. ARMY BASE - NIGHT

All the men on the base are scrambling, loading trucks and sending them out. The planes are flying overhead with more frequency. BOMBS AND GUNFIGHTING are heard in the distance.

Only Bill and the 369th aren't running.

With men scrambling in every direction, Bill is in the midst of a tense standoff with Captain Proctor, face to face.

BILL  
I won't leave without her.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
(pointing towards the  
sounds of machine gun  
fire)  
Those men need supplies. You'll do  
what you're told.

Bill doesn't move.

BILL  
She's got to b--

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
Are you defying an order?

Bill doesn't respond. The 369th hold their collective breath.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR (CONT'D)  
Sergeant Morris, are you defying a  
direct order? Get your men out of  
here.

Bill grits his teeth and doesn't answer. Finally;

BILL  
Move out.

Bill and the 369th collect their gear.

INT. WOODS - NIGHT

Trixie never stops running. She spots red ball after red ball  
on the trees and veers in different directions. She follows  
the red balls, getting closer to home, closer to Bill.

INT. ARMY BASE - NIGHT

As Bill's truck leaves the base, he constantly checks his  
rearview mirror, the base becoming smaller and smaller behind  
him.

He checks his mirror one last time... no sign of Trixie.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Trixie spots the red ball on a tree. She can make some light  
at the end of the woods. She begins to run faster. She can  
see the base.

Trixie bolts out of the woods and makes it to the base.  
Excitedly, she looks around...

...It's deserted. Trixie walks over to Bill's cot, curls up  
and rests.

EXT. TRENCHES - NIGHT

WHITE CAPTAIN #2 and his platoon rush over to get the new  
supplies from Bill and the 369th.

WHITE CAPTAIN #2  
Sure as hell good to see you guys.  
We dug in two days ago.

Johnson and Tiny carry over a crate of ammo for the new  
platoon.

They continue to unload supplies. Noodle and Tiny trip while  
carrying a crate of food. Several of the GERMAN POWS use the  
distraction TO ESCAPE INTO THE WOODS, including Dieter.

White Captain #2 watches Bill's men unload the trucks.

WHITE CAPTAIN #2 (CONT'D)  
(off the supplies)  
Keep the rest. There's another unit  
about six click north. If you could  
find 'em...  
(his voice trails off)  
Good work.

He salutes Bill. Bill just stares at him.

BILL  
Sir... have you seen a dog?

White Captain #2 stares at Bill incredulously.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Bill and the 369th have reached another Unit and are dropping  
off supplies, while taking back some German POWS. WHITE  
CAPTAIN #3 scratches his head in awe.

WHITE CAPTAIN #3  
How'd you make it out here so  
easily?

BILL  
I drive.

Bill salutes and walks away.

WHITE CAPTAIN #3  
You the fellas chasin' Patton?

Bill turns around proudly for a moment, then heads back to his truck.

WHITE CAPTAIN #3 (CONT'D)  
I heard about you.

Bill is already back in his truck. Bill sees a red ball and drives.

INT. ARMY BASE - MESS HALL - DAY

Trixie roams the mess hall searching for food. She knocks over pots, pans and empty cans, finding only empty C-rations. Suddenly;

...the sound of an ENGINE outside. Trixie's ears perk up. She runs outside and sees some SUPPLY TRUCKS in the distance with American flags waving from the sides of the truck. The trucks are being led by a MASSIVE TANK.

Trixie quickly runs after them.

Trixie catches up to the trucks. She runs alongside them and looks through the windows. She doesn't recognize any of the soldiers. It's NOT the 369th.

The trucks all begin to honk and laugh when they notice Trixie running alongside them. Trixie runs in front of the TANK and the massive tank stops inches away from the tiny mutt.

Several WHITE OFFICERS emerge from the tank hatch.

Trixie ignores the white officers. She looks around and sees a MEXICAN PRIVATE in one of the back trucks. Trixie singles him out and walks over to him. The Mexican Private picks up Trixie.

MEXICAN PRIVATE  
Where'd you come from?

Mexican Private looks up and it begins to snow.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

A dusting of snow has now covered the ground. A new platoon and a new White Captain, WHITE CAPTAIN #4 welcomes the convoy of Bill and the 369th. Bill and his men unload supplies. There's GUNFIRE nearby.

White Captain seems amazed by the sight of Bill and the supplies.

WHITE CAPTAIN #4  
That simple?

BILL  
You keep putting up them red balls  
and we'll find you.

Impressed, White Captain #4 salutes Bill and is about to turn away.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Sir...  
(takes out his original  
orders from his pocket)  
Any idea the location of Patton's  
men?

White Captain #4 studies Bill's face. Bill doesn't flinch.

WHITE CAPTAIN #4  
You're serious.

Seeing that Bill's very serious, White Captain #4 takes out a map.

WHITE CAPTAIN #4 (CONT'D)  
Sure. But you won't catch 'em. No  
one will. Even if you was the best  
driver on the whole damn planet.  
He's up near Antwerp now.

Bill's eyes go wide.

WHITE CAPTAIN #4 (CONT'D)  
The roads is shit. Real rugged.  
Barely paved. Forest all around  
you. Can barely see a foot in front  
of you.

BILL  
If it's all the same to you, I'd  
like to load up and try. I've got  
orders.

White Captain #4 shakes his head, baffled by Bill's confidence and determination.

WHITE CAPTAIN #4  
Don't matter what I say to you,  
does it..?  
(looks over at the tired  
men of the 369th)  
Well, at least let your men rest,  
get some chow in the mess hall.  
We've got reinforcements showin'  
up. 'Bout half a click out. You  
wait til they get here and then you  
and your men can go chase your  
white whale.

Bill considers this as his men continue to unload the supplies. Suddenly, there's a loud noise rumbling behind them.

WHITE CAPTAIN #4 (CONT'D)  
(off the rumbling)  
God bless the USA.

White Captain #4 sees a TANK approaching. All the men begin cheering and hollering the arrival of the tank.

White Captain #4 then narrows his eyes, confounded by something.

WHITE CAPTAIN #4 (CONT'D)  
What in the hell is that?

Bill turns around and sees that on top of the tank is the MEXICAN PRIVATE AND TRIxie. All the men of the 369th begin shouting to Trixie, but she doesn't hear them perched atop the tank. She barks proudly.

The tank slowly rolls past Bill. Trixie looks down at Bill and barks. Bill just smiles.

INT. MESS HALL - DAY

The men of the 369th eat and relax. Through an open window...

EXT. WOODS - DAY

...Bill and Trixie walk alongside each other in silence. Getting reacquainted, no words needed, each one relishing the other's company.

EXT. WOODS - DAY (LATER)

Bill and Trixie rest underneath a tree, staring up at a sliver of the sky through the branches.

BILL  
You'll like the city. Lots of  
action. I mean, no one *likes* it,  
but you'll get used to it.

Trixie walks in a circle around Bill.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Me and Norcie, we want a big  
family. Lots of kids. You like  
kids?

Trixie stares at Bill curiously, concerned.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Don't worry, not too many.

Trixie barks in agreement and Bill laughs.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Besides, they could never replace  
you.

Bill grabs Trixie and brings her in closer. After a moment of silent petting;

BILL (CONT'D)  
How'd you find me, girl?

Trixie giddily jumps up and licks Bill's face. He places a rock in front of Bill and excitedly wags his tail.

BILL (CONT'D)  
(off the fetch request)  
Not now, girl. I'm tired.

Bill closes his eyes and Trixie settles down next to him.

BILL (CONT'D)  
When you were gone-- It's just like  
Norcie. There's an emptiness, but I  
knew I'd see you again. It was  
meant to be.  
(holds Trixie's face)  
You and me were meant to be.

They rest for a moment, until the serenity of the moment is shattered by...

PRIVATE (O.S.)

Grenade!

Before Bill can think, the earth RATTLES AND SHAKES AROUND HIM, DIRT flies in the air. Everything is muted. He looks and sees Trixie barking, but hears nothing.

Within seconds, all of Bill's senses return, heightened. The men of the 369th run for cover. Bill grabs Trixie and runs as fast as he can.

He cradles Trixie in his arms and runs towards one of the trenches.

Bill dives and lands in a trench with Trixie. Bill looks up and sees he's in the trench next to Edmund. Pale faced, Edmund holds his rifle in trembling hands, terrified, face covered in sweat and dirt.

BILL

You're okay. You hear me?

Wide eyed, Edmund can barely nod. Bill puts Trixie down and takes the Private's rifle.

BILL (CONT'D)

You just stay down. Okay? You're gonna be okay. What's your name?

The Private is rattled, shell-shocked.

BILL (CONT'D)

Your name.

Trixie goes closer to the Private, licks his hands.

EDMUND

Ed--Edmund.

BILL

Edmund, saint of protection.  
Perfect.

Bill stands up and begins firing the rifle towards the advancing Nazis. Trixie lays low and barks at the sound of the gun shots, or the fact that Bill's standing. Each time Bill takes cover, Trixie stops barking.

Bill continues firing as Trixie and Edmund stay low. Another BOMB is dropped nearby and SHRAPNEL flies in every direction.

After several more tense moments of fighting, the Nazis retreat. The US forces celebrate. The smoke begins to clear.

To Bill the only sound in existence is the sound of...  
WHIMPERING.

Bill looks down and sees some RED BLOOD covering Trixie's fur. Bill grabs Trixie and picks her up, examining her leg.

BILL (CONT'D)  
She's been hit. Some shrapnel. I  
need a medic.

People look up and see Bill holding a dog. No one responds. Trixie whimpers. Bill grows more frantic.

BILL (CONT'D)  
She's got shrapnel in her leg.  
Where's the medical tent?

Again, everyone looks at Trixie and Bill perplexed, dealing with wounded soldiers instead of dogs.

Bill begins to run with Trixie, looking for the medical tent. Only the men of the 369th slowly emerge and match Bill's urgency.

JOHNSON  
Hey, we need some help here!

NOODLE  
You got a medical tent?

Bill runs with Trixie towards the medical tent, his men following close behind.

Bill storms into the...

INT. MEDICAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

...with Trixie in his arms and followed by Johnson and Noodle. An ARMY DOCTOR is working on several other WOUNDED SOLDIERS.

BILL  
It looks bad. Some shrapnel in her  
leg.

ARMY DOCTOR  
(without looking up)  
Okay, which leg?

BILL  
Front right.

At the mention of '*front right*,' Army Doctor stares peculiarly at Bill, noticing that Bill's holding a dog.

ARMY DOCTOR

You've got to be kidding me. Look around. I've got men. Soldiers. Real soldiers. Get the hell out of here with that thing before you contaminate the whole area.

Johnson takes an angry step towards the Doctor, but Bill holds him back.

NOODLE

She's one of us.

Army Doctor just sneers and turns his back.

Bill looks at Trixie's wound sympathetically. Trixie looks up in pain. Bill has a moment of clarity and exits the medical tent.

EXT. BASE - CONTINUOUS

...Bill walks purposefully away from the medical tent. A wounded Trixie in his arms, Bill walks directly towards the Colonel's tent.

JOHNSON

Sarge, where are you going?

NOODLE

Sarge!

JOHNSON

Sarge, just wait.

(to Noodle)

He can't do that.

Determined, Bill approaches the Colonel's tent. He takes a deep breath before entering, and then...

INT. COLONEL ADAMS'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

BILL

Colonel Adams, sir. I'm sorry. I know-- I know you can have me thrown in prison for not following the chain of command, but--

He shows the Colonel Trixie's leg. Trixie's losing energy, her eyes closing.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Trixie, sir.

Colonel looks at Trixie's leg. He says nothing.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Please, sir. The doc won't operate  
on her. Won't even look at her.

The Colonel says nothing, always just assessing with his eyes.

BILL (CONT'D)  
This dog is more than just-- more  
than morale, sir. She's one of us.

Colonel Adams looks at Trixie and then back to Bill, considering everything.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Colonel, you told me to not stop  
driving till I hit the top of that  
hill... Well-- I haven't stopped  
driving since. I got to that hill  
and I kept on driving. I haven't  
stopped driving since I got here.  
And Trixie's one of the main  
reasons why.

Colonel Adams sits down and picks up his phone. He imperceptibly nods sympathetically at Trixie and places his free hand on her head. Bill immediately leaves the Colonel's tent.

EXT. MEDICAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

Bill hurries towards the medical tent where Johnson and Noodle are still anxiously waiting.

JOHNSON  
What hap--

Bill blows past them and enters the...

INT. MEDICAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

...as Bill enters, Army Doctor stands at the front of the tent hanging his head in shame.

ARMY DOCTOR  
I-- I-- I'm sorry. I-- had no idea.

Bill doesn't respond. He places Trixie on the exam table.

ARMY DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
 (off Trixie)  
 I didn't realize. If--

Bill's focus remains on Trixie. The Army Doctor begins working on Trixie.

ARMY DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
 (to Bill)  
 You can wait outside if you'd like.

Bill stares daggers through the Army Doctor. He pets Trixie, letting her know he's there. He's not going anywhere.

EXT. MEDICAL TENT - NIGHT

All the men of the 369th are now gathered in front of the medical tent. They all pace, smoke, anything to ease the tension. After several moments, Bill emerges. He wears a solemn face.

The 369th collectively hold their breath, until...

BILL  
 You can't kill the mutts of the  
 369th.

Trixie comes limping out of the tent with her leg in a bandage. All the men cheer and bend down to greet her. Johnson hugs Bill.

EXT. ARMY BASE - DAY

In the snow, Bill, Johnson and the rest of the men are loading up their trucks with crates upon crates, double their usual supply run.

Trixie, leg still dressed in a bandage, barks at Noodle to work faster.

White Captain #4 angrily marches towards Bill.

WHITE CAPTAIN #4  
 Sergeant, you ever break command  
 and go over my head to the Colonel  
 again and I'll have you thrown in  
 jail.

Bill nods respectfully. Captain #4 stands there, admiring Bill's courage. The Captain looks over at Trixie.

CAPTAIN #4  
(off Trixie)  
Is she--

Bill nods appreciatively. Bill salutes and turns to leave.

WHITE CAPTAIN #4  
What's your name, Sergeant?

BILL  
The Hellfighters, sir. We're the  
Harlem Hellfighters.

White Captain #4 nods.

WHITE CAPTAIN #4  
(handing Bill a folded  
piece of paper)  
Well, good luck.

The White Captain salutes the entire 369th and walks off.  
Bill opens the paper and sees it's A MAP WITH ANTWERP CIRCLED  
ON IT AND A LINE INDICATING THE FASTEST ROUTE.

INT. BILL'S TRUCK - DAY

Bill checks his rearview mirror and sees the rest of his men  
in their trucks. The map of Antwerp is open on the floor  
under Trixie's leg.

JOHNSON  
(off the map)  
I hear the Germans sent three  
armies over to Antwerp.

Bill looks over at Johnson.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
Over two hundred and fifty thousand  
men.

Bill looks over and sees Trixie gnawing at her bandage.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
Patton's dug in. They're looking to  
end the war over there.

Through the windshield, the snow creates a veil of white.  
Bill turns the key in the ignition.

INT. BILL'S TRUCK - NIGHT

The road is no longer paved, the night eerily still. The forest is denser and thick snowflakes obstruct their vision. Trixie reaches for Bill's canteen and helps herself to some water.

Bill looks around intensely as he drives. All the white trees look the same, the roads each seem perilous than the last.

JOHNSON  
(off the white trees)  
Merry Christmas.

BILL  
I haven't seen a red ball in over  
an hour.

Johnson and Bill survey their surroundings. Bill drives for several moments, until his radio cackles.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
(filtered, over the  
radio)  
Morris, this is Captain Proctor.  
Pull over. I'm taking lead.

Bill and Johnson roll their eyes.

JOHNSON  
(to Bill)  
What the hell is this? He's gonna  
get us killed.

BILL  
(into the radio)  
Sir, with all due respect, this is  
what we were trained to do. I think  
if you just gave me a min--

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
(filtered, over the radio)  
Pull over.

Bill pulls his truck over and watches through the mirror as Proctor's truck comes towards the front.

NOODLE  
(filtered, over the radio)  
This is some straight bull-- That  
man don't know his head from his  
ass.

BILL  
(into the radio)  
Noodle, you still got your radio  
on.

Even Trixie seems to smile.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Trixie, Bill, Johnson and Noodle are all lined up in a row taking a piss.

Suddenly, Trixie barks. She kneels down and puts her head against the ground. Bill studies her. Bill kneels down and touches the ground... he can feel the ground shake.

BILL  
We're close.

One of the White Privates try to start up their truck but it's got a wheel stuck in the snow. The White Privates dig with their hands. Without saying a word, Tiny and Noodle use their helmets to dig them out.

INT. BILL'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Bill and Johnson drive, in the unfamiliar position of not being in the lead.

JOHNSON  
(off Proctor's truck)  
He's got us goin' in circles.

Trixie's looking out the window at a thick plume of smoke in the distance. Proctor has them driving away from the smoke.

BILL  
(to himself)  
We're so close.

Trixie barks at the opposite direction. Drawn faintly on a tree going the other way is a RED BALL, so faint and nearly washed away. Trixie barks again at it. Bill misses it, but he trusts Trixie's instincts. Suddenly;

Bill swerves his truck in front of Proctor's and slams on his brakes. Proctor and Bill both jump out of their vehicles at the same time.

The two men square off in the snow, lit by headlights.

Trixie tries to jump out of the truck to help Bill, but Johnson grabs her. Throughout the conversation, Trixie tries to wriggle free from Johnson.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
You got a problem, Morris? Move  
your vehicle.

Bill doesn't move. BOMBS AND GUNFIGHTING can be heard behind them in the woods.

BILL  
You got us going in the wrong  
direction.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
Watch your tone.

BILL  
Trixie seen a red ball in the  
opposite direction.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
I don't give a damn what you think  
your dog saw.

BILL  
We can make it to Patton. They need  
these supplies.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
Get back in your vehicle now. We're  
staying the course.

BILL  
There's a red ball back there. We  
need to turn around.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
We stay the course!

BILL  
What are you afraid of?!

CAPTAIN PROCTOR  
(puts a finger in Bill's  
face)  
Watch your tone, boy.

Trixie barks from the truck.

Bill stands erect and puffs his chest out, staring daggers through Proctor. Proctor backs off slightly.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR (CONT'D)  
 You wanna play hero? Take your men  
 into that--  
 (pointing into the woods  
 where the bombs and tanks  
 can be heard)  
 --be my guest. I got my men to  
 think about. You want to drive out  
 there because your mutt thinks she  
 saw something? You trust that dog a  
 bit too much, understand me? I  
 don't trust my men's lives to the  
 word of a stray.

Trixie escapes Johnson. Despite her injured leg, she runs through the snow towards Bill. Bill smiles and proudly lifts her up for Proctor to see.

Proctor turns his back and walks back into his truck.

BILL  
 I plan on bringing each one of  
 those men home. They all got  
 mothers, sisters, families, just  
 like your men. Lives. Just like  
 your men.  
 (holding up Trixie)  
 And I trust her the same way I  
 trust any one of my men. Do you  
 understand me..? Sir.

Proctor says nothing and returns to his truck. As Proctor and his men's trucks drive off in the opposite direction, Bill is left standing in the snow holding Trixie.

The snow continues to float down on top of them. Trixie sticks out her tongue to catch some flakes.

EXT. FOREST OUTSIDE ANTWERP - NIGHT

The trucks of the 369th are all parked with headlights on facing the forest. The men follow Trixie as she sniffs and inspects different trees.

Trixie leads the way. Trixie stares at each tree then runs to another. She finally stops in front of a snow covered tree and begins barking.

Tiny and Noodle quickly run over to the tree she's barking at and begin brushing away the snow with their hands. They furiously remove snow, until... a RED BALL is visible.

The men all stare with mouths agape. They look into the uninviting forest, dull sounds of bombs and tanks in the far off distance.

Bill takes a step forward. He faces his men and Trixie.

BILL

This is it. We get in those trucks and we drive through those forests, there's no turning back. No reinforcements for over three weeks. If we go in there, we'll likely be asked to fight. I know it ain't your duty, but this isn't some ordinary supply run. Those men need a hell of a lot more than food, clothing, fuel. They need us to stay. You certainly don't have to. And I won't think any less of you if you choose not to. I can't make this decision for you... Some of us got good reasons for being here, wishing or dreaming we could change something, but now we all got better reasons for making it home and telling what we saw. The good, the bad, the ugly. This ain't for us. We got a chance to do something for our kids, our kids' kids. They might forget us, but they won't forget what we did. We the change.

Bill waits. The men don't move, scared, processing. And then...

Trixie steps forward towards Bill. The men of the 369th watch Trixie; even with her limp, in the cold snow, she limps closer to Bill and stands next to him.

Johnson steps forward.

JOHNSON

We the change.

Tiny and Noodle both step forward.

TINY AND NOODLE

We the change.

One by one, the rest of the men of the 369th step forward.

ALL OF THE 369TH

We the change!

Trixie barks in unison with them.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The trucks of the 369th slowly roll through the forest and shut their lights. They come to a stop. Up ahead, they can see a small American base. They quietly exit their trucks.

Bill and the 369th take in the scene: TIRED SOLDIERS cleaning their guns. WOUNDED SOLDIERS hobbling slowly around. The morale is low. They're all tired, hungry, cold.

Slowly, the Tired Soldiers begin to notice the arrival of the 369th. A hush falls over the base. The Soldiers slowly turn and stare at Bill and the 369th. They stare at the black soldiers exiting the trucks.

All the men of the 369th exit their trucks and feel all the eyes on them. The 369th begin to unload their trucks under the watchful eyes of the Tired Soldiers. Now there are almost a Hundred Tired Soldiers watching the 369th.

BILL

Sergeant Morris. We got fuel.

No response. Just staring at him as if he were some alien.

BILL (CONT'D)

Clothing. Food.

One of the Tired White Soldiers approaches the truck.

The Tired White Soldier puts a hand on Johnson's shoulder. Johnson spins around, ready for a fight. But instead...

...the Tired White Soldier begins unloading the truck for him. All the Tired Soldiers help unload the trucks with smiles, their morale instantly lifted.

Trixie exits the truck and barks. Everyone turns their attention to Trixie and her wounded leg. One of the soldiers shoots Bill a quizzical look.

Bill shrugs. The Tired Soldiers all laugh.

TIRED WHITE SOLDIER

(off all the supplies)

Hell yeah!

Everyone cheers.

TIRED WHITE SOLDIER (CONT'D)

We're about to win a war, boys!

Everyone cheers again. The Tired White Soldiers unload, giving the 369th a much needed break. Bill looks around and takes out his original orders from his pocket- the same orders he received at the top of the hill.

BILL

I'm sorry, but are you-- is-- are  
you General Patton's platoon?

The Tired White Soldier looks at Bill and shakes his head solemnly.

BILL (CONT'D)

This is Antwerp, isn't it?

They don't respond, some snicker at Bill. Dejected, Bill puts the orders away. His shoulders slumped, defeated.

BILL (CONT'D)

(to one of the Soldiers)  
How long you been out here?

BOOMING VOICE (O.S.)

Forty-one days.

Everyone stops what they're doing and turns around. The White Soldiers drop what they're doing and stand at attention.

Bill turns around and sees a silhouetted, svelte figure emerge from a tent. He recognizes the famous helmet, the figure, the voice... It's GENERAL PATTON.

Bill salutes and stands with reverence. Trixie stands at attention next to Bill, but Bill moves in front of Trixie to hide her, motioning for her to be quiet. Trixie does her best to oblige, burying her head in the snow.

Trixie peeks from underneath her paw to stare at the shadowy imposing figure approaching.

GENERAL PATTON

Forty-one days we've been dug in.  
No reinforcements. No new supplies.  
Sure as hell didn't get no USO  
shows, did we, boys?

TIRED WHITE SOLDIERS TOGETHER

(as one)  
Sir, no, sir!

GENERAL PATTON

But did any of that matter?

TIRED WHITE SOLDIERS  
Sir, no sir!

General Patton takes several more steps closer, his face coming into focus, but still very much a dark shadow.

GENERAL PATTON  
Those rotten krauts think they're takin' over Antwerp they got another thing comin'. Isn't that right, boys?

TIRED WHITE SOLDIERS  
Sir, yes, sir!

GENERAL PATTON  
I don't care how many stinkin' armies they send.

TIRED WHITE SOLDIERS  
Sir, yes, sir!

GENERAL PATTON  
This is our ground!

TIRED WHITE SOLDIERS  
Sir, yes, sir!

GENERAL PATTON  
We're here to win a war!

Patton takes another iconic step forward, the decorated jacket visible.

GENERAL PATTON (CONT'D)  
So, you know who we are...

Patton takes one more step and he finally enters the light. Bill standing face to face with General Patton, the legend, the myth, grinning right at him.

GENERAL PATTON (CONT'D)  
Now... who in the hell are you?

Bill swallows hard. Scared, Trixie quietly moves behind Tiny, behind all the men of the 369th.

EXT. PATTON'S BASE - NIGHT

Trixie hides behind a tree. She then scampers forward and hides behind another tree. In front of her, Bill and General Patton are walking. Trixie's following them from a safe distance.

GENERAL PATTON  
What's your name, son?

BILL  
Sergeant Morris, sir.

GENERAL PATTON  
That's not a name.

Bill looks at him confused.

GENERAL PATTON (CONT'D)  
A name? Your real name. What your  
momma calls you when she's mad.  
Your father just before you felt  
the belt on your hide. You know, a  
real name?

BILL  
William Morris, sir.

GENERAL PATTON  
William Morris. William Morris.  
That's a fine name. Strong.

They continue to walk. Trixie following close behind.

GENERAL PATTON (CONT'D)  
You and your boys are brave,  
Morris. You help yourselves to  
whatever you want around here.  
What's ours is yours.

Bill nods respectfully.

Patton stops walking abruptly and stares into Bill's eyes.

GENERAL PATTON (CONT'D)  
You volunteered for this, Morris,  
didn't you? I can see it in your  
eyes.

Bill doesn't even have to answer.

GENERAL PATTON (CONT'D)  
Yeah, sure you did. A man like you  
wasn't gonna wait to be drafted.  
What kind of statement would that  
make..? A man without something to  
prove got no reason to wake up in  
the morning.

Patton stares intensely at Bill. Bill swallows the lump in  
his throat.

GENERAL PATTON (CONT'D)  
They've got two hundred and fifty  
thousand men coming our way.

Bill nods austerely.

GENERAL PATTON (CONT'D)  
You know I might need you and your  
men to stay. At least til  
reinforcements arrive.

Bill nods again knowingly.

GENERAL PATTON (CONT'D)  
Don't know when that'll be.

Still hiding behind a tree, suddenly, Trixie's ears perk up.  
She sniffs around, and then...

...without warning, Trixie dashes out from behind the tree  
and runs right past Bill and General Patton.

BILL  
Trixie, no!

Trixie doesn't listen. She darts through the army base  
looking for something, kicking up snow behind her.

Trixie finally stops running and looks up at something while  
panting.

Trixie is standing opposite WILLIE, a large two year old  
WHITE BULL TERRIER. Willie the bull terrier towers over  
Trixie, but Trixie stands her ground.

Willie flashes his teeth and growls. Trixie yaps back at him.

Bill catches up and is flabbergasted by the sight of another  
dog on the base.

BILL (CONT'D)  
(off the bull terrier)  
What the--

Patton can be heard cackling.

GENERAL PATTON  
Don't tell me this mutt came with  
you.

Bill hangs his head. Trixie and Willie stare at one another.

GENERAL PATTON (CONT'D)  
(off the bandage)  
She catch that with you?

BILL  
Yes, sir.

GENERAL PATTON  
(kneels down to pet Trixie  
Well, then this bitch is tougher  
than half the men I've got.

Bill imperceptibly nods while looking proudly at Trixie.

GENERAL PATTON (CONT'D)  
(yanks Willie's leash and  
gets him to sit)  
Allow me to introduce you to my boy  
Willie.

BILL  
(motioning to Trixie)  
Trixie.

INT. PATTON'S TENT - NIGHT

Trixie eats out of a bowl that reads: WILLIE.

Jealous, Willie sneers at her nearby.

One of PATTON'S MEN comes in and stands at attention.

PATTON'S SOLDIER  
Sir?

GENERAL PATTON  
At ease.

Patton's Soldier presents a map and a communication to the  
General.

PATTON'S SOLDIER  
From the North. Enemy should be  
here by 1800 tomorrow.

Patton thinks for a moment. Bill excuses himself. But before  
he leaves, he hears;

GENERAL PATTON  
They come in sooner and they'll  
know our reinforcements haven't  
arrived.

Bill tries to get Trixie's attention to leave, but Trixie is too engrossed with eating out of Willie's bowl. Bill pats his legs hard to get Trixie's attention.

Trixie finally follows Bill out.

EXT. PATTON'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

...Bill walks quickly away from Patton's tent with Trixie.

BILL

Are you trying to get us killed?

Trixie licks her lips and the remaining food off them. She barks happily at Bill.

BILL (CONT'D)

Yeah, you're real pleased with yourself.

They continue walking until they rejoin the rest of the 369th. The men look to Bill, waiting for some news.

TINY

So..?

Bill just looks at them.

TINY (CONT'D)

We good? We pushin' off?

Bill takes a deep breath and they all know the answer. Some men go eat and some go lie down.

EXT. FORESTS OUTSIDE ANTWERP - DAY

The sun begins to rise, glistening off the snow. Flurries of snow begin to fill paw prints made in the snow.

Bill wakes up. He lets his hand hang from his cot and feels for Trixie, but he grasps at only air. She's not there.

Outside, Trixie's playing in the snow with Willie. She chases after Willie, unafraid and nipping at his heels. Trixie catches Willie and then runs away.

Suddenly, Willie stops and looks around. Trixie waits. Willie looks out into the open forest, he hears something. A FOOTSTEP CRUNCHING IN THE SNOW in the distance. Willie quickly runs back towards Patton's tent, barking the whole way.

Trixie follows Willie's lead. Trixie runs into...

INT. BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

...directly to Bill and barks, purposely trying to wake up the whole 369th.

BILL  
(half asleep)  
What is it, girl?

Trixie continues barking, unrelenting.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Trixie, not now.

Using her teeth, Trixie pulls the blanket off of Bill.

Soon all of Patton's Men are out of their tents and scurrying around. Trixie runs around the barracks barking, waking everyone up.

Bill realizes something is wrong and quickly dresses.

BILL (CONT'D)  
What is it, Trixie?

Tired White Soldier pokes his head into the barracks.

TIRED WHITE SOLDIER  
Hey, we're gonna need you guys.

Bill and the 369th run...

EXT. FORESTS OUTSIDE ANTWERP - CONTINUOUS

...outside. All of Patton's Men are in position; in tanks, in front of machine guns, crouching down with rifles, etc... The men of the 369th stand frozen, unsure what to do.

TIRED WHITE SOLDIER  
(pointing to some unmanned  
machine guns and some  
extra rifles)  
Like now!

...Bill, Johnson and the rest of the men run towards the guns. They each pick up a gun or man a MACHINE GUN. Bill stands in front of the machine gun, awaiting further instructions.

TIRED WHITE SOLDIER (CONT'D)  
Just fire!

BILL  
At what?

The 369th all have deer in headlights look on them.

TIRED WHITE SOLDIER  
Anything.

Without actually seeing the enemy, the White Soldiers ALL SHOOT into the distance, into the other side of the forest.

Bill and the 369th look on confused. They don't see the enemy.

TIRED WHITE SOLDIER (CONT'D)  
(off Bill's confusion)  
Just fire. All of you! They'll think reinforcements have arrived. Don't stop. The more bullets, they'll think the more men we've got.

Bill swallows hard, recognizing how dire the situation is. He takes a deep breath, and;

Bill and Johnson begin FIRING THE MACHINE GUN into the forest. The rest of the men follow suit. BULLETS WHIZ through the air. Every soldier in Patton's army and the 369th fires at the invisible target. A barrage of bullets make the tiny unit seem like an entire army.

Trixie remains close to Bill's side as he fires.

#### MONTAGE - BATTLE OF THE BULGE

-- The 369th never stop firing, trying to thwart the German advance

-- Trixie runs between soldiers with ammo in her mouth

-- The sun goes down. The firing never stops. Some of the men even fire without lifting their heads. It's all a show

-- Norcie walks past a news stand back home. NEWSPAPER HEADLINES are all about General Patton and the Battle of the Bulge

BILL (V.O.)  
 I can feel it, Norcie. I can almost  
 smell the Harlem air. I'll be with  
 you soon.

-- Trixie brings canteens of water to tired men

-- Noodle falls to the ground, exhausted. Trixie brings  
 Noodle some water and licks his face

-- The sun comes up. For two days straight the men fire at  
 nothing, desperately trying to hold off the German advance

EXT. FORESTS OUTSIDE ANTWERP - DAY

A steady fog rolls in. Dehydrated and sleep deprived, the men  
 continue to fire. The German fire is getting closer. The  
 369th and Patton's men can barely lift their arms to continue  
 firing. All of a sudden;

Trixie begins barking. She barks and suspiciously looks into  
 the thick fog. Bill and some of the other men turn around.  
 Trixie darts into the fog and disappears.

Bill tries to stop her but he has no energy. After several  
 moments, Trixie reemerges and resumes barking. Behind Trixie  
 is...

... a CONVOY OF AMERICAN TRUCKS AND TANKS. SOLDIERS come  
 pouring out. REINFORCEMENTS HAVE ARRIVED! The reinforcements  
 get their orders and assume their positions. They fire, the  
 tanks advance, a massive display of force.

There's a moment of silence. The sound of gunfire grows  
 fainter... The Germans are retreating.

Bill and the 369th can finally breathe a sigh of relief.

TIRED WHITE SOLDIER  
 (to Bill)  
 So..? What's it feel like?

Bill looks at him quizzically.

TIRED WHITE SOLDIER (CONT'D)  
 To win a war.

Exhausted, Bill can't even comprehend that. He slumps to the  
 floor with Trixie.

EXT. PATTON'S BASE - DAY

The battle is over. Patton's Men are drinking, roughhousing and singing. Johnson and the rest of the 369th are boarding their trucks.

Before they leave, Trixie jumps from the truck and runs towards Willie. She yaps at him and sniffs at him. They say their goodbyes.

Bill takes one last look at the celebration and smiles. General Patton walks over to Bill and stands directly in front of him.

Bill waits, but Patton says nothing. Patton just stares intensely at Bill. No words, until;

General Patton salutes Bill. Everyone from the 369th notices the gesture. Even some of Patton's men have stopped their celebration to look on in awe.

Trixie looks on, noticing the hush that's fallen over the rowdy base. Trixie notices the way the White Soldiers are looking at Bill's men.

Slowly, all of Patton's Men begin saluting the 369th as the 369th drives away. Trixie stands at the back of the truck and watches.

INT. MAIN ARMY BASE - DAY

Bill and Johnson walk around the base. The mood on the base is jovial, light. The radio is being blasted and some men are gathered around laughing and cheering. The only person not happy is Captain Proctor, he leers at Bill from a distance.

A broadcaster comes on and a hush falls over the base.

SOLDIER

Quiet, this it.

RADIO

(filtered)

I only wish that Franklin D. Roosevelt had lived to see this day. General Eisenhower has informed me that the forces of Germany have surrendered to the United Nations.

Cheers erupt.

RADIO (CONT'D)  
(filtered)  
The flags of freedoms fly all over  
Europe.

Everyone erupts in celebration. Bill hugs Johnson. He picks up Trixie and Trixie licks his face.

BILL  
That's it, girl. It's over.

Bill smiles from ear to ear. Trixie continues to lick his face.

BILL (CONT'D)  
We're going home.

Johnson watches the scene with some skepticism when he hears "**We're** going home."

JOHNSON  
Sarge, Trixie can't--

BILL  
(to Trixie)  
It's really over. Thank you. Thank  
you.

JOHNSON  
They won't let--

Bill doesn't hear him. Johnson swallows hard, not wanting to ruin the moment. He just walks away. Bill and Trixie continue their embrace as Proctor looks on with disdain.

INT. MAIN ARMY BASE - NIGHT

Bill, Johnson, Tiny and Noodle are playing a game of cards. Trixie walks around the table looking at each man's cards.

TINY  
A good shower and a good meal.

NOODLES  
Probably more than just one for  
you. Besides, I'm not holding my  
breath, probably end up shipping us  
back home last.

Even as they play, Johnson continues to look at Bill with concern.

JOHNSON

Sarge, I was meaning to talk to you  
about--

Bill wins the hand.

NOODLE

(off Trixie behind him)  
She workin' for you? You two got  
some secret signal or something?

Everyone laughs.

NOODLE (CONT'D)

No, it ain't funny. I've seen dogs  
and owners with messed up  
relationships. ESP type stuff.

Johnson looks at Trixie then back at Bill.

JOHNSON

Sarge, it's kind of important. I  
don't think Trixie--

Interrupted again, this time by Captain Proctor. Proctor  
walks over to the card game with a sheet of paper in his  
hands. Never breaking eye contact with Bill, Proctor slams  
the orders down on the table.

CAPTAIN PROCTOR

217th.

Bill looks at the order and sees it's for the 217th, the same  
made-up division.

JOHNSON

I thought we were done with this  
bull--

TINY

Haven't you heard? The war's over.

Bill stands confidently and takes the phony order sheet.

JOHNSON

(stands, to Bill)  
Alright, let's go.

Proctor puts a hand on Johnson's shoulder and forces him to  
sit. This time it's only Bill. Alone.

INT. BILL'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Clutching the steering wheel tightly, Bill drives through the darkness. On the passenger seat sits Trixie.

BILL  
(somberly)  
We were so close, girl... so close.

INT. BILL'S TRUCK - NIGHT (LATER)

Bill holds the orders open. His truck is parked in the middle of an open field. No one in sight.

BILL  
(to himself)  
Happy..? Nothing. That son of--  
(to Trixie)  
Now we gotta find our way back. I  
promise this will all be over soon.  
We'll be back home. Warm. Well-fed.

The sun is rising over the horizon, creating a gorgeous pink hue. Bill and Trixie both marvel at the sunrise.

BILL (CONT'D)  
(to Trixie)  
Wanna run?

Bill scoops up Trixie and...

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

...exits the truck. He holds Trixie and takes a few steps into the field towards the sunrise.

Unbeknownst to Bill, SOMEONE'S WATCHING HIM FROM BEHIND A TREE. AN UNSEEN NAZI with a PISTOL in his hand watches the truck.

Bill takes several more steps into the field with Trixie in his arm.

The HIDDEN NAZI takes several furtive steps towards Bill.

Bill stops walking. He gets a bad feeling in his gut about what's behind him. He walks again and can hear the faint sound of a boot crunching the dried grass behind him.

Bill walks a little quicker. Without raising suspicion, Bill slowly puts Trixie down.

BILL  
(slowly reaching for his  
pistol)  
Isn't it beautiful, Trixie?

Bill's hand inches closer and closer to his pistol. He takes several steps, grabs his pistol and spins around.

The Nazi's pistol is pointed at Bill's head. Bill can now see the Nazi uniform but can't make out his face. The Nazi stands about thirty feet away, only open field between them.

They both point their guns at one another. Trixie is standing by Bill's side silently, she looks on at the two solitary men aiming at each other. Trixie stares carefully at the Nazi's face.

Bill closes his eyes for a moment. He opens them and aims his pistol.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Please don't make me do this.

Neither man flinches.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Please don't make me do this!

Surprisingly, Trixie walks away from Bill and towards the Nazi. She purposefully walks into the middle of the field and then stops, standing directly between the Nazi and Bill.

Bill can't understand Trixie. He squints as he aims his pistol and the Nazi's face comes into focus... IT'S DIETER.

Dieter recognizes Trixie. He recognizes Bill. But he doesn't lower his pistol.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Please.

Dieter's finger is wrapped around the trigger. He looks at Trixie between the two men.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Hund. Hund.

Dieter's hand trembles.

BILL (CONT'D)  
(barely above a whisper)  
Please.

Trixie looks up at Dieter with innocent eyes.

In unison, Bill and Dieter slowly begin lowering their guns. Bill exhales. He looks at Dieter and then at Trixie in amazement.

Dieter takes a moment to stare at Trixie, soaking her in. Dieter then runs off in the opposite direction.

Bill falls to the floor, crying. Trixie walks over to him but does nothing. She just knows Bill needs her by his side. The sun rises behind them.

EXT. MAIN ARMY BASE - DAY

Proctor stands at the entrance of the base with his jaw hanging open as he watches Bill's truck pull in. Bill exits the truck and approaches the stunned Proctor.

Bill's about to salute, but then notices all the eyes of his men watching him from behind barrack windows.

Instead of saluting, Bill crumples up the fake order and throws it at Captain Proctor's feet. Trixie turns around and purposely kicks dirt onto Proctor's boots.

Bill and Trixie sluggishly enter the barracks where everyone from the 369th is waiting for them. They greet Bill in silence.

OFF CAMERA is the sound of shot glasses being slammed down in celebration.

EXT. GERMAN BAR - NIGHT

The snow is melting on the ground. There's a sign on the bar that reads: NO PETS ALLOWED. Trixie is waiting outside. Annoyed, she looks at the sign and then pees on the side of the bar.

INT. GERMAN BAR - NIGHT

Bill and his men drink and laugh. On the other side of the bar are some WHITE PRIVATES from Proctor's unit, including Edmund. Bill and the 369th pay them no mind.

JOHNSON

Seen his face when you threw that paper. I wish I had a camera.

TINY

Man, I'm just glad we don't have to salute him or any other like him ever again. Makes my skin crawl.

The White Privates are now snickering and laughing at the 369th. Bill and his men grit their teeth and try to ignore it.

NOODLE

(taking out one of his sketches)

Man, I can't wait to hold my girl again.

JOHNSON

They say it could be months before everyone gets home. And best believe they'll save us black folks for last.

BILL

I'm just thankful we're all going home. Together.

One of the White Privates, the same one who abandoned Trixie in the forest, throws a pretzel in Bill's direction.

Johnson stands but Bill subtly shakes his head 'no.' Johnson sits back down.

BILL (CONT'D)

You should all be proud of what we did. What you all chose to do. You get home, you tell anyone who's willing to listen. You don't let them forget.

(raises his glass)

To the Hellfighters.

The men raise their glasses and drink. Just then, the White Private throws another pretzel at Bill.

WHITE PRIVATE #1

(shouting at Bill)

Where's your furry lady? She lets you go out at night without her?

White Private barks at Bill. The other White Privates begin barking and laughing at Bill as well. Edmund hangs his head shamefully.

Outside, Trixie has climbed some garbage cans and made it to a nearby window where she can watch the scene.

Johnson's blood is boiling, his cheeks red.

BILL  
(off Johnson's face)  
Leave it alone.

JOHNSON  
Nah, I'm tired of keeping quiet for  
these jokers. I'm tired of leaving  
things alone.

Johnson defiantly walks over to the White Privates. Tiny and Noodle are right behind him, itching for a fight.

The White Privates stand.

NOODLES  
Man, you got something to say to  
us?

The men are face to face. Trixie barks from outside.

WHITE PRIVATE #1  
What's a matter? You all miss your  
puppy?

The White Privates continue laughing.

Johnson clenches his fist, desperately trying to restrain himself.

WHITE PRIVATE #1 (CONT'D)  
(off Johnson's clenched  
fist)  
What are you gonna do? Take a swing  
at me. Do it.

Johnson raises his fist, quivering with anger. Tiny and Noodle are ready to fight.

BILL  
(a hand on Johnson's  
shoulder)  
He's not worth it.

Bill looks directly at Edmund, intense eye contact.

BILL (CONT'D)  
None of them are.

Johnson exhales and lowers his fist.

JOHNSON

You're lucky the Sergeant's a better man than me. Better pray I never run into you stateside.

The men follow Bill and turn their backs.

WHITE PRIVATE #1 (O.S.)

They won't let you bring that stupid dog back to the states with you. You gonna cry when you have to say goodbye?

Bill's eyes go wide. Johnson closes his eyes, he didn't want Bill to find out like this. Stunned, Bill doesn't move.

WHITE PRIVATE #1 (CONT'D)

Oh, you didn't know?! Ha! You thought she'd come home with you, live happily ever after..? That's right. You'll never see her again.

Bill clenches his teeth, seething with anger and sadness. From the window, Trixie sees Bill's face change and she barks again. She's never seen him like this.

WHITE PRIVATE #1 (CONT'D)

That ugly mutt should've stayed lost when I left her in the forest.

Bill sees only red when he hears that. He turns around abruptly ready to strike the White Private, but before he does...

...Edmund PUNCHES the White Private in the face. Lays him out cold.

Bill looks over at Edmund. The other white privates are stunned. Bill cannot believe what Edmund just did.

In an instant, the other White Privates JUMP AND PUMMEL Edmund mercilessly. Trixie jumps up and down and yaps from outside, clawing at the window.

Bill, Johnson, Tiny and Noodle can't just look on as Edmund is beaten. They join the fray and the fight escalates into a brawl.

Trixie jumps down from the window and runs to the front of the bar, slipping inside when someone else exits.

Trixie darts straight to the brawl and hurls herself into it. She bites one of the White Privates and an AGONIZING SCREAM is heard. The men are eventually broken up, some with bloody noses, bloody lips, black eyes.

The men stare at one another. White and Black on opposite sides, both beaten, tired...

CORPORAL ADAMS (V.O.)  
 You have all done a great service  
 for your country. When you get  
 home, some won't understand the  
 sacrifices you've made.

...an invisible line in the sand between the two sides. The only difference... is that Edmund stands with Bill and the 369th.

COLONEL ADAMS (V.O.)  
 You are all brothers.

Trixie looks at the two rows of men, whites and blacks separated. She hangs her head, disappointed, and sluggishly walks out.

EXT. MAIN ARMY BASE - DAY

THOUSANDS OF SOLDIERS are lined up in formation, including the 369th and all of Proctor's Men, sporting black eyes and swollen lips. Colonel Adams addresses the men from the front. Trixie is hidden inside Bill's shirt, only her head sticking out.

COLONEL ADAMS  
 Look around you. You are all  
 united. One goal. One bond. Now, I  
 know you've all been out here a  
 long time. You're cold. Hungry.  
 Tired. So, it'll take a few months  
 to get everyone out, but..  
 (points to a massive ship  
 behind him)  
 ...who the hell wants to go home  
 today?

The men all cheer, the Black Soldiers slightly less enthused than the Whites, not optimistic at all in their chances.

COLONEL ADAMS (CONT'D)  
 You hear your unit, collect your  
 gear, say your goodbyes. You'll be  
 off to Fort Dix at 0700.

Everyone cheers again.

Everyone waits with baited breath as Colonel Adams takes out a list. Bill crosses his chest.

COLONEL ADAMS (CONT'D)  
84th infantry division.

An all white unit celebrates silently.

COLONEL ADAMS (CONT'D)  
97th.

Another all white unit.

COLONEL ADAMS (CONT'D)  
111th.

All White. Bill and his men begin to look discouraged.

COLONEL ADAMS (CONT'D)  
106th.

White. With each passing unit, the 369th hangs their heads, losing more hope. Hidden inside Bill's coat, Trixie stares up at Bill's sad eyes.

COLONEL ADAMS (CONT'D)  
72nd.

All White.

Colonel Adams clears his throat. He puts the paper away. It's over.

Bill and the rest of the black soldiers look around knowingly, not saying a word, they expected this. Trixie peeks out from Bill's jacket. He pets her. She can see how disappointed he is, Trixie licks the palm of his hand.

COLONEL ADAMS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
369th.

Bill looks up at Johnson. They're both stunned. All the men are. Mouths hanging open, some are visibly holding back tears.

The rest of the white soldiers are equally stunned, Captain Proctor's face goes red and he storms off in anger.

Before following his men to the ship, Bill approaches Colonel Adams. Bill salutes reverentially.

BILL  
Thank you, sir.

COLONEL ADAMS  
Nothing to thank, Sergeant. Points system. You and your boys had more deliveries than any other division. Your accomplishments didn't go unnoticed. Merit based points system. Simple as that.

*A points system. Merit based.* Bill imperceptibly smiles proudly, something so poetic about those words.

Colonel Adams grins, a knowing grin filled with pride, and then walks away. Bill watches from a distance as all his men make their way towards the ship.

In the rush of excitement, elation on the faces of his men, Bill suddenly grows stoic. Fear in his eyes, Bill looks down at Trixie. Trixie looks up and sees the concern and panic in Bill's eyes.

Trixie sees the ship, and the pain in Bill's eyes. Trixie whimpers.

EXT. SHIP - DAY

Bill's wearing four layers of clothing and Trixie is hiding between the layers. She pokes her head out.

BILL  
(to Trixie)  
You gotta stay out of sight, girl.

Bill pushes Trixie's head down.

The men of the 369th wait in a single file line to board the ship. Bill watches as each soldier in front of him has his bags thoroughly searched by a MARINE before boarding.

Bill sweats nervously.

JOHNSON  
(to Bill)  
Don't worry, Sarge. We got this.

Bill, Johnson, Tiny and Noodle all anxiously await their turn. The line inches closer.

Trixie pokes her head out again. She watches the tense scene when the bags are checked. Trixie looks up at Bill and whimpers again.

BILL  
(to Trixie)  
Everything's gonna be okay, Trixie.

Trixie resumes hiding. The line inches closer.

Noodle is searched first by the MARINE and allowed to go through. Tiny and Johnson follow. Their bags are all approved. They wait anxiously for Bill.

Bill steps forward. The Marine eyes him suspiciously, the layers of clothing are odd and bulky.

MARINE  
Anything in your bags?

Bill barely shakes his head 'no.'

The Marine eyes Bill with narrow eyes.

MARINE (CONT'D)  
Anything you may have taken from  
overseas; plant, food..?

Again, Bill swallows hard and shakes his head 'no.' The Marine looks through Bill's bags. Nothing.

The Marine now looks again at Bill's clothing.

MARINE (CONT'D)  
Sir, I'm going to have to search  
your person.

The Marine reaches out to pat down Bill. Bill closes his eyes. From inside the coat, Trixie whimpers faintly. The Marine places a hand on Bill, when;

Noodle drops to the floor and begins CONVULSING.

JOHNSON  
Seizure. He's having a seizure.

TINY  
Call the doc!

The Marine panics for a moment and kneels down beside Noodle.

Noticing the diversion, Trixie quickly slips out from Bill's coat. Johnson grabs Trixie and quickly stuffs her into his bag. Johnson picks up his bag and boards the ship.

Noodle comes to from his 'seizure.'

NOODLE

Nah, I'm good, must've been  
something I ate.

Bill closes his eyes and breathes a sigh of relief as he watches Johnson board the ship with his luggage.

INT. SHIP - DAY

As the ship sails towards deeper and deeper waters, Bill and Trixie look back at the land. It gets smaller and smaller, meaningless, a speck in their past.

Trixie walks to the other side of the ship, only the vast ocean in front of her. She barks and happily wags her tail.

EXT. PORT - DAY

SUBT: FORT DIX, NEW JERSEY

The massive ship gets closer and closer to the port. MEDIA, WOMEN AND CHILDREN are waiting on the dock.

Many of the soldiers rush to the deck to see family members and media. Most of the crowd is white, the media focused on the white soldiers.

Bill, Johnson and the 369th are pushed to the back of the ship.

JOHNSON

Like they don't even see us.

But Bill is smiling. He's looking out at the crowd and he can make out Norcie, standing with several other BLACK WOMEN.

BILL

(to Johnson)

Doesn't even matter. It doesn't  
even matter anymore.

Bill holds up Trixie in his arms so she can see Norcie, see the cheering crowd. Trixie barks. Norcie sees Trixie for the first time and then focuses on Bill's beaming face. She smiles from ear to ear and waves happily.

Bill's fingers wrapped around Trixie transition into...

INT. TRUCK - DAY

...Bill's fingers are wrapped tightly around a steering wheel. His face is severe, swerving back and forth.

Bill is back in his moving truck, still driving. Sitting in the passenger seat is Trixie. Bill looks over at her, both perfectly content.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Bill struggles with some packages during the move. Trixie tries to help out, just like she used to do on the deliveries during the war. She's tangled in some wrapping tape.

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bill and Trixie coming home from work. They're both greeted by Norcie -now visibly PREGNANT - and they both give her a kiss.

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bill and Norcie are lying in bed. Trixie sleeps on the floor beside Bill. Bill's eyes are wide open, unable to sleep. He looks from Trixie to Norcie.

BILL

Do you know the most important  
thing I learned over there?

Norcie waits for the answer. Bill looks to her, then to Trixie, then back to Norcie.

BILL (CONT'D)

Love is love.  
(places a hand on Norcie's  
pregnant stomach)  
That's the only thing I want to  
teach her.

INT. BILL AND NORCIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bill's watching television. Trixie by his side. Totally at peace. On the television, General Patton is making a speech during a victory parade in Los Angeles. Staring blankly out into the air, Bill smiles.

Bill watches the speech, but doesn't pay attention, just white noise. He rocks back and forth for some odd reason, a smile plastered to his face.

DOLORES, Bill's infant daughter, sleeps peacefully in Bill's arms. Dolores in one arm, his other hand petting Trixie.

Bill changes the channel, much more content to watch something duller, something with a laugh track. Trixie and Bill just watch television. Not a care in the world.

On a mantel nearby, rests the beautiful HAND DRAWN SKETCH of the entire 369th that Noodle sketched. All smiling. Brothers. In the center of the photo is Trixie, tail in the air, head held high, she might even be smiling. Her and Bill are front and center, like they were the only two people in the world...

FADE OUT.

Over the black screen some PHOTOS appear.

A photo of the real William "Bill" Morris and the real Trixie in one of the supply trucks.

A photo of the real Bill and the real Norcie together with Trixie in front of their house.

A photo of the real Dolores Morris, age two, playing with Trixie.

SUBT: AFTER THE WAR, BILL, TRIXIE, DOLORES AND NORCIE LIVED HAPPILY TOGETHER IN STATEN ISLAND FOR FOURTEEN YEARS.

A photo of the real Trixie, mouth open, happy, excited. As the image of Trixie slowly fades away...

SUBT: TRIXIE PASSED AWAY IN JUNE OF 1959... BILL WAS BY HER SIDE.

A photo of the real 369th Harlem Hellfighters. In the center of the photo is the real Trixie posing with her unit.

FADE OUT.

"LOVE IS LOVE"

-- Bill Morris

THE END