



# **WHEN TRUMPETS FADE**

**by W. W. Vought**

**REVISED - BLUE**  
**(w/Revised scene numbers)**  
**October 12, 1997**

**October 13, 1997**  
**2nd REVISION - PINK**

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FADE IN:

1 STOCK NEWSREEL FOOTAGE

1

The silence and blackness is abruptly shattered by the upbeat introduction to Lowell Thomas' famous Movietone News of the forties and fifties. After the introduction we are bombarded with images of Allied troops marching on toward victory while victorious headlines flash into view. Headline:

**ALLIES  
LIBERATE PARIS!**

LOWELL THOMAS  
(V.O.)

Paris is liberated, and French troops lead the way. The Allies march into the historic city after four years of Nazi occupation. The hard fighting French Second Armored Division, under Major General Jacques Leclerc, gets a welcome they will never forget as they enter their beloved Paris.

Headline:

**MONTGOMERY  
DRIVES INTO  
BELGIUM!**

LOWELL THOMAS  
(V.O.)

In a powerful drive to the north, British General Montgomery cuts off and bypasses the French coastal towns of Calais and Dunkirk, pushing on to capture the vital port of Antwerp.

Headline:

**PATTON RACES  
TOWARD GERMANY!**

LOWELL THOMAS  
(V.O.)

Meanwhile, the main body of Patton's army, re-supplied and rolling like a juggernaut, is slashing through the Saar. Nazi resistance appears to be crumbling, and it seems like nothing can stop our troops from driving into the heart of Germany.

CUT TO: \*

2 EXT. BURNT FOREST (TOOTHPICKS) - DAY

2

We are looking up at an overcast sky through the branches of large fir trees. The fall season has run its course, leaving the branches void of leaves as they sway and creak in a relentless wind.

Slowly our view moves downward from the top branches. We see now that some of the trees are burned, shattered, and stripped of life.

Our view continues to float downward.

Hanging from a branch of one of the trees is a dead American soldier, his body broken into horrible angles, exposed entrails dangling. An arm sways slightly in the wind.

The ground now rises into view, revealing twenty or so dead American soldiers and some Germans too. They cover the muddy ground like a shredded, tangled carpet, many of them bloated or mangled beyond recognition. The ground is also littered with American equipment. Weapons, belts, canteens, shell casings...it's all there.

All that is heard is the WIND BLOWING through the crippled trees.

After a long moment, the following is superimposed:

**HURTGEN FOREST  
1944**

The eerie calm of the wind is suddenly pierced by the CRY OF A YOUNG MAN in great pain.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Over the sound of the wind we can barely hear APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS and HEAVY BREATHING.

A pair of boots move into view, stepping over a body. Wrapped and tied around the boots are rags in defense against the cold. As the boots move, we follow along, listening to the strained, heavy breathing. The boots continue to maneuver over and around the countless dead.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

PRIVATE MANNING carrying the body of a WOUNDED SOLDIER over his shoulders. Private Manning is a muscular man in his late twenties to early thirties, a three day beard. His eyes have that sunken look of a man suffering from prolonged physical and emotional exhaustion.

The Wounded Soldier's name is BOBBY, and he is in serious trouble. His right pant leg is shredded, exposing coiled muscle. A massive amount of blood has saturated his groin and stomach area. A small portion of his intestines are visible.

BOBBY  
(through gritted teeth)  
I'm gonna make it.

MANNING  
(trying to catch his breath)  
You're gonna make it.

BOBBY  
I'm gonna make it.

MANNING  
You're gonna make it.

BOBBY  
My lucky day.

MANNING  
Your lucky day.

BOBBY  
I got the luck.

MANNING  
You got it, Bobby.

BOBBY  
This is nothing.

MANNING  
Walk in the park.

BOBBY  
Home.

MANNING  
What's that, partner?

(CONTINUED)

BOBBY  
Get to go home.

MANNING  
You're going home, Bobby.

BOBBY  
I'm going home.

MANNING  
God damn right.

BOBBY  
I'm going home.

MANNING  
You know it, Bob.

Bobby cries out from a sudden surge of pain. The cry lasts for several seconds, slowly turning into a groaning, whimpering combination.

MANNING (cont'd)  
Hang in there, Bobby.

BOBBY  
Hang in there.

MANNING  
You can do this.

BOBBY  
I can do this.

MANNING  
You're tough as nails.

BOBBY  
Nail.

MANNING  
That's not good enough, Bob.

BOBBY  
Nails.

MANNING  
What about nails?

BOBBY  
Tough.

(CONTINUED)

MANNING

That's right. They're fucking tough.

BOBBY

Ta...

MANNING

God damn you, Bobby! Stick with it!

BOBBY

Ta...

MANNING

Fucking dig in! Whose tough as nails?

BOBBY

Me tough.

MANNING

Yeah, that's right. You tough. Tough as what?

BOBBY

Nails.

MANNING

Then say it.

BOBBY

Tough as nails.

MANNING

You know it. Tough as nails.

BOBBY

Nails.

MANNING

Damn right.

BOBBY

(surge of pain)

Geeeeee...Gih...Gih...Gih...

MANNING

Stay with us, Bob.

BOBBY

Hurts!

MANNING

I know.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (4)

2

BOBBY  
Hurts bad.

MANNING  
Less than a mile. We got less than a  
mile.

BOBBY  
Too far.

MANNING  
No, it ain't! It ain't too far!

BOBBY  
Ain't gonna make it.

MANNING  
Can that shit!

BOBBY  
Gonna die.

MANNING  
You're gonna make it!

BOBBY  
I'm...I'm gonna...

MANNING  
You're gonna make it!

BOBBY  
Make it.

MANNING  
That's right.

Manning stops next to a large birch tree and leans his weight  
against it. He is exhausted.

MANNING  
(continues)  
I'm just gonna rest a minute, okay?  
(no reply)  
Okay, Bobby?

Again there is no reply from Bobby. Manning quickly sets  
Bobby on the ground on his back. Bobby's eyes are rolled  
back, and he is going into convulsions. Manning grabs Bobby  
by the shoulders and starts to shake him.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (5)

2

MANNING

(continues, while shaking  
Bobby)

Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!

Bobby continues his convulsive reactions. Manning slaps him across the face hard. Slowly Bobby's eyes focus on Manning as his convulsions stop. Bobby is breathing heavily.

MANNING

(continues, smiling)

Welcome back, motherfucker.

Manning lights a cigarette and places it in Bobby's mouth. Bobby takes a puff, and Manning removes the cigarette to take a puff himself.

BOBBY

Gotta promise. Won't pick me up no more.

MANNING

What?

BOBBY

Hurts. Don't pick me up.

MANNING

Listen to me, Bob. If I leave you here, ain't nobody gonna find you. You'll die out here, sure as shit. Now I know it hurts you real bad, but we don't have any other choice.

BOBBY

(grabbing Manning's arm)

Just sit here for a bit.

Manning looks around nervously, then turns back to Bobby.

MANNING

There's no way we can just sit here. The krauts will be crawling all over us. Now I'm gonna pick you up again, and we're gonna get out of here.

Manning starts to reach down for Bobby.

BOBBY

(panic stricken)

No!

(CONTINUED)

MANNING

Bobby...

BOBBY

(bursting into tears)

No more!

MANNING

Okay! I won't pick you up, but how am I gonna get you...

BOBBY

God! No more!

MANNING

Fuck, Bobby!

BOBBY

No more!

MANNING

Okay...okay...relax, Bobby. I'm not gonna touch you. I'm just gonna let you rest.

BOBBY

No more.

MANNING

Relax.

BOBBY

No more...

Bobby's eyes close.

MANNING

Relax.

Manning looks in all directions nervously. His eyes dart from one shadow to the next. He looks down at Bobby who appears to be sleeping. Again Manning looks around. Nothing but the dead. Again he looks down at Bobby. Bobby is staring at him. Manning is unnerved by this.

BOBBY

You're not gonna leave, are you?

MANNING

(a moment of silence)

Got no choice, Bob.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (7)

2

A look of deep sadness and understanding appears on Bobby's face.

BOBBY

Okay.

Manning and Bobby look at each other in silence. Manning stands up after placing the cigarette back in Bobby's mouth. He lets the strap of his Thompson machine-gun slide down from his shoulder and grips the weapon. He looks back down at Bobby. Bobby manages a smile.

BOBBY

(continues)

Good luck to you.

Manning is unable to reply. He stares down at Bobby in silence. After a moment, he nods to Bobby and walks away.

Manning looks down at the faces of the dead as he steps over and around them. He is starting to feel sick. After walking fifty feet or so, Manning leans against a tree and dry heaves.

BOBBY (O.S.)

(continues)

David?

MANNING

(softly)

Stop...Stop...

BOBBY (O.S.)

Don't leave me. Please?

Manning glances at the dead that are all around him and has to lean against the tree to gather his senses.

BOBBY (O.S.)

(continues)

Don't leave me like this.

Manning clutching the tree with both hands now, leans his head against the frozen bark and clamps his eyes shut as if to block out the world.

BOBBY (O.S.)

(continues)

Please don't leave me like this.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (8)

2

A low groan starts to escape from the pit of Manning's stomach. The groan changes to a long, loud cry of anguish. The cry echoes through the trees and over the dead.

BOBBY (O.S.)  
You can't leave me here!

CUT TO:

A BLACK VOID

BOBBY (O.S.)  
(fading echo to silence)  
You can't leave me here...You can't leave  
me here...You can't leave me here...

For a long moment we are left with silent blackness. The following is then superimposed:

NOVEMBER 7

The silence is broken by a LOUD, ECHOING, METALLIC SOUND as a pair of double doors open, exposing...

CUT TO:

3 EXT. A LARGE, OPEN FIELD OF WOUNDED - DAY

3

The black void was actually the back of a medical van, and its doors have now been opened from the outside by TWO MEDICS. The two Medics pull an empty stretcher from the medical van, and as they do so, we also leave the van, out into a dreary afternoon.

What we see is an endless world of dead and wounded American soldiers. Everywhere are medics and soldiers desperately trying to help the wounded and dispose of the dead. Bordering this macabre scene is the thick forest on one side and the Siegfried Line on the other.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A wounded soldier on a stretcher, crying through what is left of his blood soaked teeth.

Two soldiers throwing dead bodies into the back of a truck, which is nearly full of bodies.

Two soldiers setting down a stretcher, which holds a soldier with a horrible stomach wound. The wounded soldier grits his teeth in agony from the jostling of the stretcher.

(CONTINUED)

A young medic standing in the middle of the carnage, holding his head, unable to cope with the numbers.

A wounded soldier is being set down on a blood soaked stretcher. His eyes are rolled back into his head. There is a bullet in his forehead.

A jeep slowly moves through the field of wounded. There is a stretcher on the hood of the jeep and a stretcher on the back. Both are occupied by badly wounded soldiers. Walking alongside the jeep are medics holding up the blood plasma bottles.

Manning emerges from the trees behind the jeep. He looks over at a medic giving a shot of morphine to a screaming soldier whose face and hands are burned and bloody. Nearby is a SECOND MEDIC, splattered with blood, moving from one wounded soldier to another, looking as if he hasn't slept in days. Manning walks over to the Second Medic.

MANNING

You know where Charlie Company is?

SECOND MEDIC

You're kidding, right?

Manning continues walking, stopping at the back of an open truck.

Several wounded soldiers are sitting in the back of the truck. One of the wounded has his head totally bandaged. His hands shake uncontrollably from nerve spasms.

MANNING

Charlie Company?

The soldiers in the truck stare silently at Manning. Manning walks away, stopping next to a pile of dead bodies. He looks at the dead soldier laying on top of the pile. His eyes are open, staring blankly into the sky. The body is suddenly picked up by two soldiers and thrown into the back of a truck half full of bodies. Painted on the driver's door is:

HOME ALIVE IN '45

MANNING

Charlie Company?

FIRST SOLDIER

What?

(CONTINUED)

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3 CONTINUED: (2)

3

MANNING

Where's Charlie Company?

FIRST SOLDIER

How the fuck do I know? Get the fuck  
outta here!

The two soldiers go back to the pile for another body. As they continue their task, Manning looks around for help. He sees somebody he recognizes.

MANNING

(calling out)

Chamberlain!

Manning hurries over to CHAMBERLAIN, a medic in his mid twenties. Chamberlain is kneeling next to a WOUNDED SOLDIER on a stretcher. A young man with a bloody bandage over where his eyes once were. He is reaching into the sky with one hand, repeating something that we cannot hear as Chamberlain gives him a shot of morphine.

CHAMBERLAIN

(standing up)

Grab an end.

Chamberlain and Manning lift the stretcher and begin carrying the Wounded Soldier through the macabre chaos.

CHAMBERLAIN

(continues)

Captain Pritchett's got guys looking for  
anybody from your platoon.

MANNING

Where is he?

CHAMBERLAIN

Back to H.Q. I'll be driving past it if  
you want a lift.

We hear the SCREAMING OF AN INCOMING ARTILLERY SHELL, followed by a tree burst in the bordering forest behind Manning and Chamberlain, who then begin running with the stretcher. Another artillery shell lands in a row of wounded men, sending stretchers and bodies into the air.

We are suddenly backing into an open medical van just ahead of the stretcher. It is the same type of van we came out of at the beginning of the scene. The stretcher is slid into the van by Chamberlain and Manning, and the double doors are

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (3)

3

slammed shut from the outside, plunging us into near darkness.

The sound of the chaos outside is cut off by the shutting of the doors.

In the darkness we can barely see the Wounded Soldier, still reaching into the air with one hand. We can now hear what he is saying.

WOUNDED SOLDIER

Please, God, this can't be happening...  
Please, God, this can't be happening...  
Please, God, this can't be happening...  
Please...

The Wounded Man's voice is abruptly cut off by the LOUD ROAR of the medical van's engine starting.

CUT TO:

4 EXT. THE LARGE, OPEN FIELD - SIEGFRIED LINE / OPENING - DAY 4

The medical van is racing toward the tank traps to a section where dirt has been piled over the traps by bulldozer to form a bridge. The van makes it over the bridge and into a farmer's field as we hear another explosion somewhere nearby.

CUT TO:

5 INT/EXT. THE CAB OF THE MEDICAL VAN AT SIEGFRIED LINE - DAY 5

Chamberlain is driving the van with Manning sitting next to him. Both men are smoking cigarettes. Stacked neatly on both sides of the road are dozens of dead American soldiers. Manning watches the endless dead, stacked like cord wood. Most of them are covered by blankets, but the wind has blown many of them off, exposing the dead.

MANNING

Why do they leave them there like that?

CHAMBERLAIN

The fucking brass. Can't waste those trucks on the dead. We still got guys to haul in for the slaughter.

MANNING

No more room in hell.

(CONTINUED)

CHAMBERLAIN

What the fuck are you talking about, Manning? There's plenty of room. All we gotta do is stack 'em higher.

MANNING

How many do you think?

CHAMBERLAIN

Hundreds of our guys got creamed in the last five days. How do you lose so many guys and still pretend to be a human being? I haven't seen one of those sick fucks over the rank of captain since I've been here. They're looking at points on a map. Not one of them has a fucking clue what's happening up here.

MANNING

Shit flows down.

CHAMBERLAIN

Regiment wipes their ass with battalion, battalion wipes itself clean with company, and we're left to lick the shit off them.

MANNING

You gotta just shrug it off.

CHAMBERLAIN

Shrug it off, huh? You mark my words, Manning. They'll just keep sending us in 'til the whole fucking division is gone.

MANNING

Not me, bedpan. I'll do what I gotta do to stay alive. And in one piece.

CUT TO:

6 INT. DAMAGED BUNKER (COMMAND POST) - DAY 6

The bunker is currently being used as an American company command post. Everyone in the post is exhausted. The lack of hope in this headquarters is suffocating.

Manning is escorted into the bunker by LIEUTENANT LUKAS, who motions for Manning to wait by the door. Lieutenant Lukas is different from the others. His determined walk and spotless

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

uniform tell us that he is new to the front line. Manning watches Lukas walk to the front of the bunker and begin talking to CAPTAIN PRITCHETT, who turns in Manning's direction for a quick glance. Captain Pritchett then walks over to Manning, followed by Lukas.

PRITCHETT

You Manning?

MANNING

I think so, sir.

LUKAS

Give him a straight answer, Private.

PRITCHETT

(to Lukas)

Relax.

Pritchett pulls a pack of Lucky Strike Green from his coat pocket, lights two cigarettes, and hands one to Manning.

PRITCHETT

(continues)

You can stop looking for your platoon.

MANNING

Sir?

PRITCHETT

They didn't make it.

PAUSE.

MANNING

(shaken)

What?

PRITCHETT

It looks like you're the only one who made it out. Your lucky day.

MANNING

Lucky day?

PRITCHETT

You're alive.

MANNING

Am I?

(CONTINUED)

LUKAS

If you don't put a sock in it, Private,  
I'm gonna...

MANNING

You're gonna what, sir?

PRITCHETT

Can it, both of you. Lieutenant, take a  
walk.

After a moment of hesitation, Lieutenant Lukas walks away,  
obviously angry.

MANNING

(under his breath)  
Fucking greenie.

PRITCHETT

You better get along with him. He's your  
new platoon leader.

MANNING

He'll be dead before the week's out.

PRITCHETT

Tell me something. Have you got it  
together?

MANNING

Sometimes.

PRITCHETT

What's that mean?

MANNING

Sometimes I got it together.

PRITCHETT

On the line?

MANNING

What's this all about, sir?

PRITCHETT

The entire battalion took a beating last  
night. I've heard seventy percent  
casualties, but that's just the talk.  
Whatever it is, it must have crippled us  
bad. We've been pulled back without  
capturing a single objective.

(CONTINUED)

MANNING

What's this got to do with me?

PRITCHETT

We're getting replacements in from the channel. Tonight you'll be fitted with a new squad. Congratulations, Private. You're a sergeant now.

MANNING

(scared)

I don't want it.

PRITCHETT

You'll get used to it.

MANNING

I don't wanna get used to it.

PRITCHETT

I don't give a damn what you want. I'll put up with that mouth of yours because after surviving a week up here, I figure you earned that right. You did not earn the right to question my orders.

MANNING

Sir, I am absolutely the wrong man to be put in charge of a pile of greenies.

PRITCHETT

That may be your opinion, Sergeant, but it's not mine. You've managed to stay alive for a week. That's something the rest of your platoon couldn't do. Call me crazy, but from where I am standing, that makes you qualified for the job.

MANNING

(trapped, desperate)

Sir, you're making a mistake. This ain't gonna work.

PRITCHETT

Your opinion is duly noted, Sergeant. Dismissed.

MANNING

(stumbling for words)

Sir...I've...In the woods...I've done things...

(CONTINUED)

PRITCHETT

Sergeant!

MANNING

Yes, sir.

PRITCHETT

Dismissed.

MANNING

Sir, request permission for a section eight. I'm fucked up. I can't even...I need out!

PRITCHETT

Listen to me, soldier. A week ago I had a company of almost two hundred men; now I've got fifty. As hard as this may be to swallow, your efforts to stay alive hold very little value at this particular time and place. What does hold value are the objectives. The longer it takes to obtain them, the more dead we'll be stockpiling at the side of the road. Now it's my job to obtain those objectives, and I will utilize anybody at my disposal to do so. That includes you, Sergeant. Now I'm just as sorry as hell about your bruised nerves, but you are out of your skull if you think I'm going to let you bail on a section eight! Is that clear?

MANNING

Yes, sir.

PRITCHETT

At fourteen hundred hours you will rendezvous with your squad. You've got till then to get your shit together. Now is that clear?

MANNING

Yes, sir.

PRITCHETT

Good. Now get your sorry ass out of my sight.

Manning starts to leave, then turns back to Pritchett.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (5)

6

MANNING

Sir? When I fuck this up, is it your  
fault or mine?

The two stare at each other in silence.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. THE DAMAGED BUNKER (COMMAND POST) - BASE - DAY 7

Manning leaves the bunker. Leaning against a jeep is  
SERGEANT TALBOT, who is just now lighting a cigarette.

TALBOT

Mind if I tag along?

MANNING

Suppose not.

Talbot and Manning begin walking side by side, across the  
road from the stacked dead.

TALBOT

Heard about your promotion.

MANNING

Yeah? Where did you hear that?

TALBOT

Pretty hard to keep news like that a  
secret.

MANNING

How come I just heard about it?

TALBOT

Pays to have friends.

MANNING

Got a smoke?

TALBOT

Yeah.

Manning quickly realizes Talbot is not about to give him a  
cigarette. This does not really come as a surprise to  
Manning.

TALBOT

(continues)

It's amazing really, when you stop to  
think about it. Whole platoon fingers

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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7 CONTINUED:

7

TALBOT (cont'd)

its way into the factory, but only one lucky slob walks out to talk about it. Twenty-five or thirty guys dead or dying, and this one guy makes it out without a scratch.

MANNING

I was lucky.

TALBOT

Lucky. Yeah, that's one way of looking at it.

MANNING

But not the only way, right Talbot?

Manning walks across the road to the stacked dead and begins swapping for a better pair of boots with one of the dead.

TALBOT

I can see the angles, tough guy.

MANNING

Is this conversation going somewhere?

TALBOT

(watching the boot swap)

There really isn't anything sacred with you, is there?

MANNING

Warm, dry feet.

TALBOT

How did you manage to get out, Manning? Did you get cut off from the rest of the platoon? Trees get pretty thick in there. Did you get lost?

MANNING

What's it to you?

TALBOT

Professional curiosity.

MANNING

Yeah, right.

TALBOT

So what happened?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (2)

7

MANNING

Look, you got something in that vat of yours, just spill it.

TALBOT

Okay, tough guy. It's like this. Your routine isn't as seamless as you think it is. Hanging back just a bit...never volunteering...doing just enough to keep out of trouble, but never enough to really help. It's like a stink you carry with you.

Manning finishes tying his new boots.

MANNING

You're kind of an emotional guy.

Talbot grabs Manning by the throat.

TALBOT

Get something straight. There's no fucking hang back now. You got a glob of greenies that are gonna be looking to you to keep them alive. If I find out one of them answered the last muster because of your yellow streak, I'll personally put a bullet in your brain.

Talbot lets go of Manning and walks away.

CUT TO:

8 EXT. SIEGFRIED LINE - DAY

8 \*

PRIVATE WARREN Sanderson is tentatively making his way toward the ominous dragon's teeth of the Siegfried line on a dirt trail. Warren's uniform is spotless, compared to the torn and soiled uniforms of the soldiers we've seen before. He suddenly sees movement within the dragon's teeth and realizes a group of unidentifiable soldiers are standing there. One of the soldiers sees Warren, and an instant later the other soldiers are looking in Warren's direction.

Warren is frozen with fear.

LONNIE

(calling out)

Hey, Sandy!

(CONTINUED)

Warren eases, recognizing the voice. He waves back to the group of soldiers and hurries over to them. Everyone in the squad knows Warren, and Warren knows them. All these young men are wearing new uniforms.

LONNIE

(continues)

Where the hell did you go? I looked for you.

WARREN

I got lost.

DESPIN

We thought you chickened out.

LONNIE

You thought he chickened out. Me, I know he's just a dumb fuck farmer from Wisconsin.

WARREN

Am I in trouble?

LONNIE

Hell no, we're still waiting for the sergeant.

DESPIN

How'd you get here?

WARREN

Guy in a jeep stopped about a mile back and said just follow the road.

BAXTER

I still don't get why they sent us in. The war's gonna be over by Christmas.

LONNIE

Who told you that shit?

BAXTER

It's the talk.

DESPIN

I heard the krauts got nothing but old men and children left in the line.

LONNIE

And you believe that shit?

(CONTINUED)

DESPIN

I'd like to.

Laughter from the squad.

LONNIE

What about you, Sandy? You believe that  
shit about old men and kids?

WARREN

I will if you will.

More laughter from the squad. There is a silence for a  
moment.

WARREN

(continues, referring to  
dragon's teeth)

So...what are these.

Louder laughter.

LONNIE

(lighting a cigarette)

How the fuck should we know?

MANNING (O.S.)

Put out that butt.

The squad stops laughing and turns to find Manning standing  
off to the side of the trail. The sudden presence of Manning  
makes the squad nervous. Lonnie drops his cigarette and  
stamps it out. Manning walks over to the squad.

MANNING

(continues)

Who called out?

The squad stands in silence, afraid to talk.

MANNING

(continues)

Someone yelled the name Sandy. Who was  
it?

LONNIE

(nervous)

I did.

Without warning, Manning viciously backhands Lonnie across  
the face, knocking his helmet off. The rest of the squad  
freezes. Warren picks up Lonnie's helmet and hands it to him.  
Lonnie is sniffing, trying to hide his tears.

(CONTINUED)

## MANNING

They're called dragon's teeth. Krauts use  
'em to stop our tanks. You're standing on  
the Siegfried Line. The other side is  
Germany. I suggest you remember that.

Manning begins walking through the dragon's teeth toward a  
thick forest. He does not look back to see if the squad is  
following him. The squad slowly begins to follow.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

9 EXT. FURTHER ALONG THE FOREST TRAIL (BEHIND AMERICAN LINES) 9  
- DAY

The squad continues to follow Manning. In the background we can now hear LOW, ROLLING ARTILLERY in the distance.

Manning is alert but appears to take no notice of the artillery. His eyes are trained on the trees on both sides of the trail. The rest of the squad is oblivious to what could be waiting for them in the trees. Their concentration is focused on the artillery, as if it could begin falling on them at any moment.

Manning stops walking, and the squad follows suit. For the first time the squad becomes aware of their surroundings.

Manning is staring at the trail just ahead of him. The trail forks sharply to the left and right, leaving a tree covered hill straight ahead. The trees have been stripped by artillery fire. Manning jogs cautiously over to the foot of the hill, looks around, and signals the rest of the squad to join him. The squad gathers around Manning, awaiting his every word.

MANNING

(a soft, deadly seriousness)

All right, listen up. Over this hill is the Front Line. You're gonna be in your foxholes with the krauts less than fifty yards away. Our line is thin, which means we're spaced far apart. Because of the fog you might not be able to see the guy nearest you. Now the krauts are gonna hear us moving you into position. They're gonna know you're replacements.

WARREN

How?

Manning looks at Warren threateningly for a moment. His eyes remain on Warren a bit longer before addressing the rest of the squad.

MANNING

The company lost over a hundred guys last night. They know we're hurting bad and have to bring in our replacements today. The only reason they don't make a push is

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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9 CONTINUED:

9

MANNING (cont'd)

they're hurting too. Now they know you guys don't know shit, and they're gonna use that to their advantage. They might call out to you in English. Try to spook you. Don't be surprised if they take a shot at you. The main thing you need to do is keep your shit together. You flake out, you're dead. The only thing you need to do is stay alive. Make no mistake. This is the real fucking deal.

(to Warren)

Name.

WARREN

Huh?

MANNING

Your name.

WARREN

Warren.

MANNING

Last name, greenie.

WARREN

Sanderson.

MANNING

You first, Sanderson. Stay right behind me.

WARREN

(terrified)

Okay.

MANNING

(to the squad)

Be back for the rest of you one at a time. Don't go wandering off now.

(to Warren)

I mean it, kid. You stay in my back pocket. Let's go.

Manning and Warren disappear over the hill, leaving the rest of the squad glancing at each other in silence. This is happening much quicker than they thought it would.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. THE FRONT LINE - WOODS - DUSK

10 \*

Warren follows Manning down into the foggy no man's land. Manning grabs Warren by the arm.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

MANNING

(whispers)

We crawl from here. Stay right behind me, and keep your fucking head down.

Manning begins crawling, and Warren follows suit.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. FURTHER ALONG THE FRONT LINE - FOX HOLES - DUSK 11

We are crawling with Manning and Warren, deeper into the tree stripped line. Warren is gripped by fear. He is breathing in short, uncontrolled gasps.

Rifle shots are heard nearby and far away. There is a burst of machine-gun fire off in the distance. The artillery sounds closer now, more distinct. Screams are heard from wounded soldiers. Explosions from grenades are heard every so often. There are angry shouts in German, followed by obscenities and small arms fire from American soldiers.

UNKNOWN COMMANDER

(O.S.)

Hold your fire! Hold your fire, God damnit!

The small arms fire fades away.

Manning and Warren continue to move deeper in the chaos until they stop next to a foxhole. The foxhole is occupied by Chamberlain. Laying next to the foxhole is a dead American soldier.

MANNING

(to Warren)

Get in.

Warren climbs into the foxhole next to Chamberlain, looking at the dead man.

CHAMBERLAIN

Sure took your sweet time getting here.

MANNING

For a bedpan commando, you spend a lot of time posing as a rifle man.

CHAMBERLAIN

(motioning to the dead man)

Came to help him.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

Two medics place the dead soldier on a stretcher, carrying him away. Warren watches as Manning and Chamberlain continue their conversation.

MANNING  
Anything notable?

(CONTINUED)

CHAMBERLAIN

Those fucking tanks again. They've been jamming their fucking barrels down our throats from that high ground for a week now. Air Corp. can't see 'em, artillery can't hit 'em. They better come up with a way of getting them fast.

MANNING

They? Who's this they you're talking about, Chamberlain?

CHAMBERLAIN

I'm serious, Manning. If we don't knock those things out, we're worm food.

MANNING

What about the 88s?

CHAMBERLAIN

They still got them too. Tanks on our right flank, 88 millimeter cannons on our left. Fucking army.

MANNING

Can that shit.

CHAMBERLAIN

I'd say the can is just about full, wouldn't you?

MANNING

(to Warren)

School's out now, kid.

Manning crawls away into the fog. A moment goes by. Chamberlain just stares at Warren

CHAMBERLAIN

Scared?

WARREN

Huh?

CHAMBERLAIN

You scared?

WARREN

Yeah. I don't know what I'm supposed to do.

(CONTINUED)

CHAMBERLAIN  
(smiles)  
You want me to tell you?

(CONTINUED)

WARREN

Yeah.

CHAMBERLAIN

Basically, you're a lookout. You're responsible for holding this section of the line. You've got a machine-gun nest protecting your right flank. Roughly twenty-five yards away. On your left is another rifle man. He's closer. Fifteen yards, maybe twenty. In front of you, you got the krauts. They're close. Thirty yards. Maybe a little more. The challenge is Hershey. The password is apple. If you don't get the right reply, you open fire. Don't think about it. Not for a second. You hesitate, you go home to your mama in a box. If the krauts make a push, you use your grenades.

WARREN

How do I know if they're making a push?

CHAMBERLAIN

If you hear a lot of screaming and shooting, and you see a bunch of guys running at you...

WARREN

Yeah?

CHAMBERLAIN

Then you know they're making a push.

WARREN

Oh...yeah.

CHAMBERLAIN

Any questions?

WARREN

Are all our guys on this side of the Siegfried line?

CHAMBERLAIN

No. Some areas we overran. This one the krauts still got. If you need to light up at night, lay on your back in the bottom of the whole.

(CONTINUED)

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11 CONTINUED: (5)

11

WARREN

I don't smoke.

CHAMBERLAIN

Still got your issues?

WARREN

Yeah.

CHAMBERLAIN

You will.

Chamberlain crawls out of the foxhole, then turns back to Warren.

CHAMBERLAIN

(continues)

Welcome to the Death Factory, kid.

Chamberlain crawls away, leaving Warren by himself. Warren looks out at the German positions, shaking uncontrollably. The macabre sound show continues all around him.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. THE FOXHOLE - FRONT LINE

- NIGHT

12

Bitter cold. A bright moon lights up the line. Warren is shaking violently even though he has his blanket wrapped around him. There is smoke coming from the stack of a German pillbox about seventy yards away. There is very little activity along the line because of the cold. Warren can now see a rifleman in a foxhole to his left and a two man crew of a machine gun nest to his right.

The following is superimposed:

NOVEMBER 8

Warren sees a German soldier in a foxhole ahead of him. The German soldier smiles and waves to Warren. Warren doesn't respond. The German soldier laughs.

Warren pulls out his pack of Lucky Strike Green and studies it. He opens the pack, placing one of the cigarettes in his mouth.

SEVERAL RIFLE SHOTS

Warren looks around. There is nothing to see.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

Warren lights the cigarette and immediately begins coughing. He holds the lit cigarette awkwardly as he looks out into the line, seeing the other soldiers noticing him. He takes another drag from the cigarette. Again he coughs. In disgust, Warren flicks the cigarette out of his foxhole.

We suddenly hear the LOUD SCREAMING of an artillery shell coming in fast. Warren dives to the bottom of the foxhole just as the shell explodes no more than fifty yards away. Chunks of dirt shower down on Warren.

The only thing we can hear is a QUIET RINGING. Warren doesn't move. Seconds go by. Slowly Warren raises his head from the foxhole and looks around. All is the same. The ringing noise continues as Warren sticks his finger in one of his ears. When he pulls his finger out again there is a small smear of blood on the end of it. Warren forces a cough. We hear the cough from inside Warren's head. The ringing continues. Slowly the ringing fades and is replaced by the sound of the WIND.

Warren lights his second cigarette. A RIFLE SHOT is heard off in the distance.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. THICK PINE FOREST - DAY

13

A hard, steady rain is pouring down into the forest. The ground is large water puddles and mud. The following is superimposed:

#### NOVEMBER 9

At first, the forest appears to be empty. Soon, however, there are figures approaching, barely visible. The falling rain conceals any noise they may be making.

#### CLOSE ON THE APPROACHING FIGURES

We can now see that the figures are Manning and his squad. They are walking in single file, with Manning in the lead. There is approximately fifteen feet between each man. Behind Manning is Warren. Behind Warren is Baxter.

Manning stops moving and signals the rest of the squad to stop and crouch down without looking back. The squad obeys. Manning slowly moves back to where Warren is standing.

(CONTINUED)

MANNING

(very quiet)

You got point. I've got you on a straight line course. I know it's your first patrol, but you've had time to watch what I've been doing.

WARREN

Yeah.

MANNING

Be alert. We've been behind the kraut line for the last thirty yards or so. We got no friends here.

WARREN

Okay.

Manning looks down at Warren's hands. Both hands are gripping the rifle tightly. Warren's finger is on the trigger.

MANNING

Ease up on the trigger finger.

WARREN

Yeah, right.

Warren stands looking into the darkness of the forest ahead of him. He is terrified.

MANNING

First big chance to stay alive, kid.  
Don't fuck it up.

Warren looks at Manning who looks sternly into Warren's eyes.

MANNING

(continues)

Now move, greenie.

Warren turns back to the darkness of the trees in front of him. After a moment, Warren takes that first step. Then another. Manning signals the rest of the squad to follow as he watches Warren slowly moving ahead.

One by one, the squad passes Manning until he meets up with Lonnie bringing up the rear. Manning slides into the last position.

At the front of the line, Warren slowly makes his way through the forest. The trees are getting closer together now.

(CONTINUED)

SEVERAL SHOTS of the other squad members moving through the trees. Everyone is tense.

Warren continues to move forward. He looks back to make sure he is not alone and sees Baxter appear from behind a tree. Unable to see the rest of the squad, Warren gives Baxter a questioning look. He then watches Baxter look behind him, and turn back, nodding for him to keep going.

Manning continues to bring up the rear of the squad, keeping a careful watch on the trees behind him.

Baxter continues to follow Warren. He watches as Warren moves through a gathering of evergreen trees and out of sight.

BAXTER  
(to himself, nervous)  
Slow down, Sandy.

Baxter picks up his pace a bit until he arrives at the evergreen trees. He cautiously pushes his way through to the other side of the trees and looks around.

WARREN IS GONE

Despin, who was the next man behind Baxter, has lost sight of Baxter. He stops moving, signaling the man behind him to do the same. Behind Despin we can see several other squad members stop and send the signal back.

Despin suddenly sees Baxter appear by the evergreen trees and make his way back.

DESPIN  
(whisper)  
What's going on?

BAXTER  
I lost Sandy.

Still bringing up the rear of the squad, Manning stops when he sees Lonnie standing still ahead of him. Lonnie looks back at Manning, shrugging his shoulders. Manning motions Lonnie to get low to the ground, and Lonnie does so. Manning begins making his way to the front of the squad, signaling each squad member to get low to the ground. He finally stops next to Baxter and Despin, who are crouched down low, staring into the darkness.

(CONTINUED)

MANNING  
(intense whisper)  
What's going on?

BAXTER  
We lost Sanderson.

DESPIN  
What's this we crap?

MANNING  
Shut up.

Manning looks off into the forest, slowly scanning from left to right. Nothing. Manning looks back nervously at the rest of his squad.

BAXTER  
What do we do, Sarge?

MANNING  
We wait. Hope he's got brains enough to come straight back.

DESPIN  
What if he doesn't know he's alone?

MANNING  
He knows.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. THICK PINE FOREST - ANOTHER PART - DAY

14

Warren continues trudging through the rain soaked forest as he turns to look behind him. He freezes. He looks in all directions. He's alone.

The rain stops...eerie silence.

After a moment of hesitation, Warren starts walking back in the direction he came from. Again Warren freezes.

Moving toward him from the left side are figures. Warren slowly lays down, on his stomach, under a fallen tree. He watches several German soldiers slowly make their way past him on both sides, unaware of his presence. They disappear in the forest behind Warren.

Warren sits up ever so cautiously. He looks around. His eyes widen.

(CONTINUED)

More figures are approaching. Many more than the first time. Warren watches in terror, not knowing what to do. The Germans grow nearer as their numbers increase. There are at least a dozen of them now. Warren lays back down. The Germans continue to approach. They are now less than one hundred feet away.

CUT BACK AND FORTH between the approaching Germans and Warren's laying on the ground.

The Germans are almost on top of him. Moving directly toward him is a RUGGED LOOKING GERMAN SOLDIER carrying a heavy machine gun with straps of ammunition draped over his shoulders. The soldier stops roughly fifteen feet from Warren's right side, unzips his fly, and begins relieving himself.

Warren carefully turns his head to the right, as a YOUNGER GERMAN SOLDIER stops twenty feet away and lights a cigarette.

HEAVY FOOT FALLS over Warren's head as two more German soldiers begin walking across the fallen tree. Two sets of boots suddenly splash down in the mud next to Warren as the two soldiers sit on the tree, facing the smoking soldier. Warren watches through the legs that now help conceal him as a ONE-EYED GERMAN SERGEANT hurries over to the smoking soldier and knocks the cigarette from his hand. The cigarette lands by Warren's face, the smoke burning his eyes. One-eye disciplines the smoker in a hushed but stern voice.

One look at One-eye, and we know he is a killing machine, unclouded by delusion of right and wrong. There is a scar running from his chin, through what was once his left eye, and into his forehead.

One-eye looks directly at Warren and points to him, whispering something in German. Warren's breath catches in his throat. A boot from one of the soldiers sitting on the tree crunches down on the smoldering cigarette, splashing Warren's face with mud.

One-eye motions for the other soldiers to continue their trek. Warren can hear foot falls close behind him, then another soldier walks across the tree above Warren. In a few moments, the Germans are gone. Warren's eyes are bulging. He is terrified

CUT TO:

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15 EXT. THICK PINE FOREST - DAY

15

Manning, Despin, and Baxter are still watching the trees.  
Silence for a while.

MANNING

All right, we're heading back.

(CONTINUED)

DESPIN

We're just gonna leave him out there?

MANNING

We can't afford to risk the entire squad

DESPIN

Yeah, but...

MANNING

What's your name, greenie?

DESPIN

Doug Despin.

MANNING

Well, Doug Despin, this is the second time I'm telling you to shut up. You follow?

DESPIN

Yeah.

Manning looks out into the trees again. A few moments pass.

MANNING

Let's go.

Despin and Baxter look at each other.

MANNING (cont'd)

I said let's move.

Warren suddenly appears through the trees, heading back toward the squad. Despin begins to call out to Warren excitedly but is stopped by Manning's hand wrapping around his mouth. The squad watches, silently relieved, as Warren approaches.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. THE DAMAGED BUNKER (COMMAND POST) - DAY

17

The following is superimposed:

NOVEMBER 10

Looking down at a large map on top of the hood of the jeep is the LIEUTENANT COLONEL. His face is leathery and covered with deep lines. His eyes are dark and unsympathetic. Also looking at the map are Captain Pritchett and two other captains.

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL

We're making another push. Our objective is to retake the town of Schmidt, four miles West of our present positions. To get there, we've got to secure this river crossing on the Kall Trail. We'll form a line from the bridge to the high ground. When we've secured this line, Second Battalion will take over and break through to Schmidt. Able and Baker Companies will advance through the forest toward the high ground. Rob, your boys are on the Kall Trail again. You are to retake and secure our Bailey bridge.

PRITCHETT

Yes, sir.

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL

G-2 says you'll have clear sailing all the way up to the bridge, but once you're there, it may get a little hot.

PRITCHETT

With all due respect, sir. Did G-2 forget about the tanks the jerries clobbered us with all week?

(CONTINUED)

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

Our artillery will keep those tanks  
silent during the advance.

PRITCHETT

You've been saying that for a week.

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

This time we're right.

PRITCHETT

(shakes his head in disgust)

What a bunch of chicken shit.

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

Have you got a problem, Captain?

PRITCHETT

What if those tanks are still firing,  
sir?

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

Then we deal with them.

PRITCHETT

(sarcastic)

Hey, no problem.

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

Captain Pritchett, if you feel you are  
unable to carry out these orders, I will  
relieve you and get somebody who can.

SILENCE

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

(continues)

The jump-off points will be along the  
Siegfried Line here, here, and here.  
There will be no opening barrage. We  
want surprise this time. You men will  
take and hold our objectives. We've been  
screwing up here too damn long. Any  
questions?

There is no reply. The Lieutenant Colonel focuses on  
Pritchett with a threatening look.

(CONTINUED)

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL  
(continues)  
Any questions, Captain?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (3)

17

PRITCHETT

No, sir.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. CHOW LINE - BASE / DAMAGED BUNKER (COMMAND POST) - DAY 18

A stream of hungry soldiers make their way through a chow line with hot food and coffee. There is lively conversation from these men. The hot food is a welcome surprise.

CUT TO:

19 EXT. MUDDY DRAINAGE DITCH - CHOW LINE / BASE - DAY 19

Sitting along the ditch is Manning and his squad. Manning is sitting apart from the others, watching Warren. The rest of the squad busies themselves eating and smoking cigarettes. Warren sits, staring out at nothing. Most of his food is sitting in front of him.

DESPIN

Hey, Sandy. You gonna eat that?

Despin starts to bend down to pick up Warren's food.

MANNING

Leave it alone.

Despin looks at Manning in surprise.

MANNING

(continues)

You want more, go wait in line.

(lights a cigarette)

Sanderson. Eat your food.

WARREN

I'm not hungry.

MANNING

That's not the point. Up here you eat when you can. Now eat it.

WARREN

What's the point in eating when you've got no appetite?

Manning looks hard at the rest of the squad for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

MANNING

The last time I had hot food was five days ago. Since then my entire squad was wiped out. In fact, the whole damn platoon. That's why you're here. You see, when we mangle a bunch of guys up here, we need greenies to fill in the gap. You know. Putty. That's you. You're just a bunch of guys in line to get shot, So they can send in a bunch of other guys to get shot. See how it works?

The entire squad is silent, staring at Manning. Manning laughs.

MANNING

(continues)

Now, once you understand that, you begin to realize just how important a last hot supper is.

Manning stands up, putting out a half smoked cigarette on his coat and pocketing what is left.

MANNING

(continues)

Don't go wandering off. I want you all right here where I can find you. We'll be making a push today.

The entire squad is suddenly alert.

LONNIE

We get orders, Sarge?

MANNING

We will.

BAXTER

If we didn't get orders, how do you know we'll be making a push?

MANNING

Hot food? Coffee? Cigarettes? We're making a push, sure as shit.

Manning climbs out of the drainage ditch and walks away.

BAXTER

(nervous)

He's full of it. You think he's full of it?

(CONTINUED)

Nobody answers the question. Baxter nervously lights a cigarette.

BAXTER  
(continues)  
He's full of it.

DESPIN  
When did you start smoking?

BAXTER  
What's it to you?

DESPIN  
Sorry I blew up.

BAXTER  
Shut up.

LONNIE  
Come on, Baxter. Sit down and relax.

A hush falls over the squad. Baxter sits down but is still keyed up. Warren picks up his food and slowly begins eating as Despin lights up a cigarette. Baxter looks at Despin.

DESPIN  
Yesterday morning for me. Getting pretty good at it too. Warren, I bet you lit up.

WARREN  
(nodding with a smile)  
First day.

DESPIN  
(laughing)  
You too, huh?

WARREN  
I was freezing out there!

Everyone in the squad begins laughing as they all light up.

LONNIE  
Hey, check this out.

Lonnie climbs out of the drainage ditch and pulls his pants and underwear down to his boots while his back is to the rest of the squad.

(CONTINUED)

DESPIN

What the fuck are you doing, Lonnie?

BAXTER

You fart, I'll blow your ass off.

Lonnie takes his lit cigarette and holds it by his butt as if his butt were smoking it. He then turns his head and blows smoke out of his mouth.

LONNIE

Only assholes smoke.

Lonnie places the cigarette in his mouth. Groans and laughter erupt from the squad. Lonnie pulls up his pants and jumps back into the drainage ditch next to Despin.

LONNIE

(continues, to Despin)

Cigarette?

Despin takes a drag off the cigarette, getting even more groans and laughter from the squad.

DESPIN

Tastes like shit.

More laughter. The laughter dies away, replaced by silence. They all smoke their cigarettes, lost in their own thoughts.

BAXTER

Hey, Sanderson. Out in the woods, with all those krauts. What was it like?

WARREN

It was like...drowning. This is gonna get bad.

CUT TO:

20 EXT. FRONT OF A LATRINE - BASE - DAY

20

Manning is walking toward the outdoor latrine as Lukas is leaving. Chamberlain is seated on one of the toilet openings, smoking a cigarette.

LUKAS

I've been looking for you, Sergeant.

MANNING

Can it wait, Lieutenant?

(CONTINUED)

LUKAS

No, it can't. I wanna know what happened out on that patrol yesterday.

MANNING

It's like I told you.

LUKAS

Tell me again.

MANNING

We infiltrated about a hundred yards, our point man spotted a kraut troop movement, we came back.

LUKAS

That's it?

MANNING

Yeah, that's it.

LUKAS

I heard your point man got separated from the squad.

MANNING

They're still learning.

LUKAS

No shit. What the hell were you thinking, putting a replacement at point on his first patrol?

MANNING

Lieutenant, I've got nothing but replacements in my squad.

LUKAS

Why didn't you take point?

MANNING

I did take point, for the first fifty yards.

LUKAS

You should have stayed at point, Sergeant.

MANNING

Listen, I don't have time to wet nurse these guys. This patrol was the perfect  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MANNING (cont'd)

opportunity to give at least one of them some experience.

LUKAS

Are you sure experience is the reason for putting that kid on point? Or is it you're still just trying to save your own butt?

MANNING

I told you guys I was the wrong man for this job.

LUKAS

So what's that mean? You got an excuse to get these guys killed? Get with the program, Manning. These kids don't know anything.

MANNING

And you do?

LUKAS

No, I don't! I never did this before. For four days I've been watching these mangled guys being carried out of the woods, knowing that real soon I'm going to be expected to lead a platoon in there. Nobody's telling me anything! I just walk around trying to look like a lieutenant. So, you're right. I don't know anything. In fact, the only one in this platoon who does is you. You get it now? Is it starting to sink in?

MANNING

What do you want from me, Lieutenant?

LUKAS

I want your help! I need your help. I mean...I got this...What if I'm not good enough to keep these guys alive? What if they're all dead in the morning?

After a moment's pause, Manning steps toward Lukas, looking straight into his eyes.

MANNING

I'm gonna do everything I can to stay alive. Now if I can help in any way without endangering my own life, I won't hesitate. If you want my opinion or  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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20 CONTINUED: (3)

20

MANNING (cont'd)

suggestion, I'll give it to you. But I won't take a bullet for anybody.

LUKAS

That's not good enough.

MANNING

That's as good as it gets.

Lukas and Manning stare into each other's eyes, neither one backing down. Lukas finally walks away in silence. As Manning turns to the latrine, he is startled by Chamberlain standing in front of him.

CHAMBERLAIN

(coldly)

I tell ya what, Manning. When you're laying out in the middle of a firefight, torn open...screaming for a medic. If I can help in any way...without endangering my own life...I won't hesitate.

Chamberlain walks away, making Manning move out of the way.

CUT TO:

21 EXT. SIEGFRIED LINE - STAGING POINT / TANK TRAPS - DAWN

21

It is very quiet. Hundreds of American soldiers are crouched down behind the dragon's teeth. There is a high level of tense expectation all along the ranks. Not hopeful expectation. More like dread.

Our attention shifts to Warren, deep in his own thoughts. Next to him is Lonnie, mumbling the twenty-first Psalm. Warren's eyes dart over to Lieutenant Lukas making his way along the dragon's teeth toward Manning. All eyes of the squad focus on Lukas saying something to Manning that they cannot hear. Manning nods grimly.

LONNIE

(mumbling)

No, God...No, God...No, God...No, God...

Warren watches Manning as Manning says something to the soldier crouching next to him. That soldier says something to the next soldier. Slowly the word gets passed along the squad till it reaches Despin who is sitting next to Warren.

DESPIN

(whispers)

Two minutes. Nobody dies.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

Warren turns to Lonnie.

WARREN

Two minutes. Nobody dies.

Lonnie looks at Warren. He says nothing. He is terrified.

WARREN

(continues)

Say it, Lonnie. You gotta say it.

LONNIE

Nobody dies?

WARREN

Nobody dies.

SEQUENCE OF SHOTS showing individual soldiers waiting for the signal to move out. Manning looks at his watch, then turns his head up to the sky, taking a deep breath to calm his nerves.

Captain Pritchett stands within the dragon's teeth, a whistle in his mouth, looking into the thick, dark forest. Pritchett blows the whistle. \*

PULL BACK

The lieutenants and sergeants maneuver through the dragon's teeth and start to move forward. They are immediately joined by the rest of the soldiers. Nobody talks. All that is heard is their feet sloshing over the muddy ground, and the clinking of their equipment. At first their movement is at walking speed, but soon changes to a cautious trot. \*

A21 EXT. MINE FIELD - FOREST - DAWN A21 \*

We are now in a group of no more than twenty-five soldiers. Warren included. Sudden explosions as soldiers trip land mines, which sets off several more. More mines are tripped as we hear screams from the wounded. \*

22 EXT. BATTLE FOREST - DAWN 22 \*

Quickly they are in the thick forest. Branches scratch at the faces and hands of the soldiers.

Our attention zeroes in on Warren, who is surrounded by his frightened peers as they continue forward as one. The ground is now edging upward. Already the cold air makes breathing an effort. The grade gets steeper. Soldiers are slipping on the muddy ground. Lots of heavy breathing now.

(CONTINUED)

At last the ground evens out. The advance continues into the darkness of the trees.

Another explosion from a land mine. Warren moves past Chamberlain, who is helping a screaming soldier. The soldier is missing both of his feet.

Off in the distance we hear the muffled pops of ARTILLERY. At the sound of the POPPING, the soldiers shift to an all out run. The muffled popping continues as a new, more terrifying sound is added. It is the LOUD SCREAMING OF INCOMING ARTILLERY.

Shells burst in the trees overhead, sending down deadly fragments on the running soldiers. Men begin to fall all around Warren.

Still the soldiers run forward.

Shells are now dropping on top of them.

Screams are heard. Too many screams.

A large explosion goes off in a group of soldiers in front of Warren. Blood sprays onto Warren, coating his uniform and face like paint. Warren is screaming as he runs, tears of terror washing down his face, mixing with the blood.

More shelling. More death.

An artillery shell lands in a group of soldiers ahead of Warren, sending a soldier into the air. The soldier's severed leg slams into Warren's chest, knocking Warren to the ground. Warren starts to get up, but another soldier trips over him, sending him to the ground again. Other soldiers fall on top of Warren.

WARREN

(screaming)

Get off! Get off!

In the chaos, Warren struggles free from the pileup and continues running forward. Soldiers are now running past Warren in the opposite direction, some without their weapon. Violent explosions throw soldiers into the air, smashing them against trees. A few of the bodies are lodged into the branches and hang at horribly broken angles. Bloody entrails also hang from the branches along with equipment and kit. Most of the bodies fall on top of other soldiers who are now running in all directions.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (2)

22

Dead soldiers are thrown back into the air by new explosions. The screaming of the shells is deafening.

Warren and the other soldiers are now running in the opposite direction. Wounded cry out for help as soldiers run past them, sometimes stepping on top of them. The madness goes on and on.

Warren is running straight at us now. His face takes up the entire screen. He is screaming with pure terror in his eyes.

WARREN'S FACE FREEZES, but his screaming continues. The screaming takes on an unreal quality as the scene begins to FADE TO BLACK.

The screaming fades to silence a second or two after total blackness.

CUT TO:

23 EXT. A DEAD TREE - DIRT ROAD - FOREST HILL - DAY

23

We are in close on a sign painted on a torn piece of cardboard. The cardboard has been pierced onto a short twig sticking out of the trunk of a scorched, dead tree. It is roughly four feet from the ground. It reads:

**THE DEATH FACTORY  
FINAL RESTING PLACE OF THE  
BLOODY BUCKET**

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

A narrow dirt road sloping down a forest hill. Moving down the road is that familiar parade of wounded. Some are carried on stretchers. Some make their way on their own or with the help of others.

Lining both sides of the road are soldiers that are totally spent. They don't eat or talk. They have nothing left. Among these soldiers, sitting together in a group, are Warren Manning, Lonnie, Baxter and Despin. They are the only ones left of the eight man squad. Warren's face is smeared with dried blood from the night before.

Lonnie has a cigarette hanging from his lips. His eyes are open, but he still appears to be asleep. The cigarette hanging from his mouth is nearly one long ash. Any moment the lit cherry will start burning his lips.

Warren catches sight of Chamberlain, the medic, helping a wounded man down the road. The wounded man is missing a

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

foot. Chamberlain doesn't see Warren as he passes by.  
Warren says nothing. He is already looking at someone else

(CONTINUED)

on the other side of the road. It is Lieutenant Lukas. Lukas is sitting alone, shaking. His face is also coated from dried blood.

Chamberlain passes Captain Pritchett, who is walking up the road, past the wounded. Pritchett wears the same exhausted face and haunted eyes as the rest of his men. As he walks he takes in the sight of the soldiers sitting along both sides of the road. He then sees the sign on the tree.

Immediately Pritchett is struggling to control a sudden rush of anger, frustration and sadness. He looks back at the soldiers who don't even see him, even though he's standing in front of them, on the middle of the road.

Pritchett sees Manning and walks over to him. For a few seconds Pritchett stands over Manning, looking down at him, until finally Manning looks up.

MANNING

What?

PRITCHETT

We're making another push.

MANNING

You gotta be shitting me, sir.

Pritchett sits down next to Manning, pulling out a small map from his coat pocket.

PRITCHETT

(referring to his map)

Our company is to try to retake the bridge on the Kall Trail again and hold it. The kraut 88s on this ridge are gonna have us right on the chopping block.

MANNING

Fuckers.

PRITCHETT

(continues, referring to map again)

There's a road that leads up to the ridge from the north side. I figure a single squad with flame throwers might have a shot at taking them out. Their gun crews would be firing at us.

MANNING

What about their infantry support?

(CONTINUED)

PRITCHETT

Krauts are holding their manpower back about a mile behind the ridge. Apparently they're having a hard time finding replacements so they're relying on their 88s to wipe us out.

PAUSE

PRITCHETT

I need a squad to volunteer.

PAUSE

MANNING

Well, good luck.

PRITCHETT

I got two guys in this company worth considering for this kind of shit. That's you and Talbot. Talbot's good, but he's not like you.

MANNING

Forget about it.

PRITCHETT

You take out those guns, I'll get you that Section Eight you were begging for.

For a moment Manning simply stares at Pritchett. Then he smiles, reaching out to shake Pritchett's hand.

MANNING

You gotta deal.

PRITCHETT

You smile at me again, I'll kick your teeth out.

Pritchett walks away without shaking Manning's hand. Manning turns to see Warren staring at him. For a moment their eyes lock before Manning turns away.

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A23 EXT. DEAD TREE - DIRT ROAD - FOREST HILL - DAY

A23

Pritchett looks around at his jaded men. We can see that he is struggling to bring himself to say something.

PRITCHETT

All right, let's move out. We still got a job to do.

None of the soldiers respond. It is as if they didn't hear him.

PRITCHETT

(continues)

Let's go, get up.

No words are exchanged as the soldiers struggle to their feet. They can barely get up. And when they do get up, they can barely walk. But they do. Slowly they make their way in the opposite direction of the wounded, past the sign on the tree...back into the Death Factory.

Pritchett bites down on his lower lip as he watches. He is near tears but refuses to cry.

Pritchett looks up at the sign hanging from the dead tree. He reaches up and yanks the sign from the tree, dropping it in the mud.

CUT TO:

24 EXT. RUGGED FOREST - FIRE BREAK - DAY

24

We are looking down at Manning's muddy boots as they run across rugged terrain. The only thing we hear is his STRAINED HEAVY BREATHING, which slowly fades away into silence. That silence is then broken by MANNING'S SUBDUED VOICE.

MANNING (V.O.)

High above the Chattahoochee,  
Near the Upatoy,  
Stands an old abandoned brick house,  
Benning School for boys.

Onward ever, backward never,  
Follow me and die,  
To the port of Embarkation,  
Just kiss your ass good-bye.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

Manning running through the forest, leading the way for his four man squad. Warren and Baxter are next in line, both of them with flame-throwers strapped to their backs. The weight of the flame-throwers makes running difficult. Behind Warren and Baxter are Lonnie and Despin. We can now hear the firing of cannons somewhere in the distance. Manning and his squad take cover behind a fallen tree. Manning looks at the four terrified faces of his squad. He smiles.

## MANNING

Just remember, shitting your pants is the least of your problem.

The squad tries to smile, but their terror crushes the attempt.

Manning slowly raises his head to see over the fallen tree. In front of the tree is a dirt road which leads up the back of the ridge where the German artillery is firing from. Manning looks through his binoculars.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. GERMAN 88MM BATTERY (MANNING'S POV) - DAY 25

Through Manning's binoculars we see the German artillery crews firing two 88 millimeter guns in the opposite direction. The guns are covered by camouflage netting. Nearby is a German half-track and the wheeled chassis for hauling the cannons on the road.

CUT TO:

26 EXT. GERMAN 88MM BATTERY - DAY 26

The firing of the artillery is much louder now as the German artillery crews work desperately to load and fire their guns as fast as they can.

CUT TO:

27 EXT. RIVER - BRIDGE / PILLBOX - DAY 27

A Bailey bridge next to a destroyed stone bridge supports a narrow road across a small river. On one side of the bridge is a concrete bunker, already reduced to rubble, and a view of a ridge in the distance. On the other side is the forest with another concrete bunker, this one is intact.

The entire area is being shelled by the German artillery located on the distant ridge as American soldiers take cover anywhere they can. Some soldiers are being thrown into the air, screaming.

(CONTINUED)

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27 CONTINUED:

27

The following is superimposed:

**NOVEMBER 11**

Lieutenant Lukas is cowering in the water under the Bailey bridge, terrified. Soldiers and entrails are floating in the blood stained, stagnant water all around him, including his

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (2)

27

radio man floating on his stomach. Lukas is the only man alive in the river. He slowly grabs the receiver of the radio secured to the dead man's back. The dead man's body shifts a bit in the water. Entrails surface from under the body. Lukas starts to scream.

Talbot suddenly splashes into the water, taking cover next to Lukas.

TALBOT

We're fucking dead meat here, Lieutenant!  
(no reply)  
Lieutenant!

Lukas continues scream. The screams don't stop.

CUT TO:

28 INT. PILLBOX BUNKER - DAY

28

Taking cover inside is Captain Pritchett, a RADIO MAN and a FIRST SERGEANT. They too are cowering from the artillery fire. The Radio Man hands the receiver of the SCR 300 radio to Pritchett.

PRITCHETT:

(into radio)  
This is Pritchett, sir. We've got the bridge, but we're getting our asses reamed!

CUT TO:

29 INT. DAMAGED BUNKER (COMMAND POST) - DAY

29

The Lieutenant Colonel is standing over a dust covered map on a table, holding the receiver of a radio. ARTILLERY FIRE is heard dropping all around the bunker, shaking the dust saturated structure. Several other staff officers are frantically dealing with a situation gone bad in the background.

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL

(into radio)  
Those damn tanks! They're decimating Able and Baker Companies.

CUT BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN PRITCHETT AND THE LIEUTENANT COLONEL

PRITCHETT

Sir, request permission to pull back!

(CONTINUED)

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

Negative! Do not pull back!

PRITCHETT

My men are getting cut to pieces up here!  
We're pulling back!

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

You hold that bridge, Captain! That's an  
order!

PRITCHETT

I've already lost thirty men!

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

This is not a debate, Pritchett! You  
hold that God damned bridge!

PRITCHETT

THIS IS SUICIDE!

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

THAT'S AN ORDER!

CUT TO:

30 EXT. FIRE BREAK - EDGE OF WOODS (TO 88MM BATTERY) - DAY 30

Manning finishes looking through his binoculars and crouches  
down to talk to his squad.

MANNING

All right, listen up. From what I can see  
they got no infantry support. Now those  
gun crews got their backs to us. We're  
gonna run right up that road, and Baxter  
and Sanderson are gonna burn 'em out. Now  
let's move.Manning and his squad climb over the trees and start running  
up the road toward the German guns.

CUT TO:

31 EXT. RIVER - BRIDGE - DAY 31

Talbot is still watching Lukas. The artillery is still  
pouring down mercilessly.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

TALBOT  
(yelling)  
God damn you, Lieutenant!

Still no reply from Lukas. Talbot grabs the radio receiver off the back of the dead floating radio man.

TALBOT  
(into radio)  
Rover Three to Rover One! Rover Three to Rover One!

PRITCHETT (V.O.)  
(over radio)  
This is Rover One, over.

TALBOT  
This is Sergeant Talbot, sir. Lieutenant Lukas has fucking lost it!

32 INT/EXT. PILLBOX BUNKER - DAY

32

CUT BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN TALBOT AND PRITCHETT

PRITCHETT  
That puts you in charge over there, Sergeant, now listen up. I need you to pull your platoon back to this side of the river.

TALBOT  
You expect me to get these guys to leave cover in this?!

PRITCHETT  
If you don't get that platoon to move, they'll all be dead in ten minutes! Now haul ass!

An artillery shell suddenly explodes on top of the bunker. The concussion from the explosion slams Pritchett, the First Sergeant, and the Radio Man to the floor. Thick dust engulfs the bunker as Pritchett struggles to his hands and knees. He is bleeding from the ears and nose. He looks down at the First Sergeant, out cold and bleeding the same way as Pritchett. The Radio Man is laying next to the First Sergeant, dead.

CUT TO:

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33 EXT. FIRE BREAK - EDGE OF WOODS (TO 88MM BATTERY) - DAY 33

Manning and his squad continue their advance up the road.  
They are now forty yards from the ridge.

CUT TO:

34 OMIT

34 \*

35 OMIT

35 \*

36 EXT. EDGE OF WOODS - 88MM BATTERY - DAY 36

Manning stops in his tracks. He is roughly twenty yards from the ridge. Mortar shells explode around the battery.

A GERMAN ARTILLERY COMMANDER yells out an order, and his crews hurry back to firing their guns. Suddenly the German Commander sees Manning and draws his sidearm, but before he can fire, Manning shoots him with his Thompson. The German Commander falls to his knees, dropping his sidearm to grab his chest and stomach wounds. There is a look of astonishment on his face.

Several German crewmen pick up rifles as Manning takes cover behind a tree. Small arms fire ensues from both directions.

The German Commander begins to fall forward. He is already dead. He falls face first in the mud.

37 EXT. EDGE OF WOODS - 88MM BATTERY - DAY 37

One of the 88 millimeter guns is swiveled around and aimed down the road toward Manning's squad. The remaining gun continue its bombardment of the bridge. The defending 88 fires, taking out the tree that Warren is hiding behind.

Warren is thrown into a backward flip and lands on his stomach, knocking the wind out of him. Blood pours off Warren's face and into the dirt at an alarming rate. Warren and Baxter's eyes meet. Warren watches as Baxter curls into a fetal position.

MANNING

Baxter!

BAXTER

(crying)

No fucking way! No fucking way!

Baxter clenches his eyes closed and covers his head with his hands. Warren raises himself to his hands and knees. Lonnie and Despin continue to return rifle fire to the Germans on the ridge.

MANNING

(continues)

Get up there, Baxter!

Baxter stands up and begins firing his flame thrower at the Germans, but he is too far away to do any good. Several

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

rifle shots strike a tree near Baxter's chest and head. Without taking his finger off the trigger of the flame thrower, Baxter turns to run. The liquid flames ignite the trees near Despin and Lonnie, who are forced to dive to the ground to keep from being burned. Baxter is now running as fast as he can away from the battle. Lonnie sees this and takes his first step to running with Baxter. Warren turns to follow them.

MANNING

(continues)

God damn you, Baxter!

Manning aims his Thompson at Baxter.

WARREN

No!

Manning shoots the flame-thrower tank on Baxter's back, and the tank explodes, casting a blinding light over the road and ridge. Baxter is on the ground screaming.

LONNIE

Jesus Christ!

38 EXT. EDGE OF WOODS - 88MM BATTERY - DAY

38

Baxter is dead now, his body still burning in the middle of the road.

MANNING

Sanderson! Get up there now!

Warren turns on the gas valve on his flame-thrower and struggles to his feet. Manning, Lonnie and Despin keep the blinded Germans pinned down as Warren, weak from the loss of blood, moves up the road with the heavy tank strapped to his back.

Warren is close enough now. He fires the flame-thrower, igniting a box of artillery shells. A bright ball of fire shoots into the air, taking the defending 88 millimeter gun with it in pieces.

MANNING

(continues)

Fry 'em!

Warren sprays the cannon crews in a back and forth motion. Screams are heard from Germans covered in the sticky flames. Warren is screaming as he continues to fire

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

the flame-thrower, his face covered with dripping blood. More ammunition explodes.

LONNIE

Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!

The entire ridge is now in flames.

CUT TO:

39 EXT. PILLBOX BUNKER (AFTER SHELLING) - DAY

39 \*

There are no longer shells exploding. Pritchett, sitting against the outside of the bunker is looking into the calm sky. His eyes are cloudy. Dried blood from his ears and nose stain his dusty face. He is in shock.

PRITCHETT

(to himself)

He did it!

40 EXT. RIVER - BRIDGE - DAY

40

SEQUENCE OF SHOTS showing American soldiers staring into the sky in silence. Our attention then shifts to Talbot in the river, also looking into the sky.

TALBOT

I'll be a sonofabitch!

CUT TO:

41 EXT. EDGE OF WOODS - 88MM BATTERY (BURNT OUT) - DAY

41

Manning quickly gathers his squad in a huddle on the road.

MANNING

This ain't over till we're outta here. You know the krauts are coming. So keep it together, and follow me. Sanderson, take that torch off.

Warren unstraps the flame-thrower and sets it on the road as Despin hands Manning the radio. Warren, Despin and Lonnie are all trying to digest what just happened. Their eyes dart at each other.

MANNING

(continues, to Warren)

You gonna be able to run?

WARREN

I think so.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

MANNING

That's no answer!

Manning's face and helmet are splattered with brain matter as Despin falls dead from a rifle shot to the head.

The One-eyed German Sergeant and several other German soldiers appear twenty yards behind Manning's squad, firing their weapons.

MANNING

(continues)

Let's go! Now! Now!

42 EXT. FIRE BREAK - RUGGED FOREST - DAY

42

The three men scurry into the trees. The Germans, over a dozen of them now, run down the road in pursuit. Manning and his men open fire on the road from from the cover of the trees, killing two German soldiers. Before the Germans can return fire, Manning and his men disappear into the thick growth of the forest.

43 EXT. RUGGED FOREST - DAY

43

Rifle shots pierce through the branches, past the retreating Americans as they take cover behind trees. The Germans rapidly approach. Manning's squad opens fire at the approaching Germans, who take cover and return fire. Bullets are hitting the trees dangerously close to both Americans and Germans.

Lonnie shoots a German soldier in the leg. The soldier drops his rifle, grabbing his wounded leg with both hands and begins calling out for help. Another German soldier runs to help the fallen soldier and is shot.

Lonnie and Warren begin running from the fire fight. They are being pursued by One-eye. Lonnie turns to fire his rifle, but One-eye shoots first.

Lonnie's bottom jaw explodes away from his face. He falls to his hands and knees. Lonnie screams. His scream has an unnatural, hollow sound. Blood gurgles in his throat as he chokes for his next breath.

WARREN

God! Lonnie!

(CONTINUED)

Warren bends down to help Lonnie. He turns him over on his back. Lonnie's face is unrecognizable. Warren screams.

The shooting continues. More intense now. More German soldiers move forward. Manning shoots a German soldier in the knees with a burst of machine-gun fire. The German soldier falls to the ground, grabbing his shattered knees with both hands. He begins screaming like a wounded animal. His screaming continues throughout the rest of the scene.

Warren is struggling to get Lonnie to his feet, but Lonnie is no longer functioning. Wrapping one of Lonnie's arms around his neck, Warren begins carrying him away from the shooting. Lonnie's feet simply drag behind. A gurgling sound is coming from Lonnie's throat.

WARREN

(continues, crying)

It's not that bad, Lonnie! I swear to Christ it's not that bad!

A bullet slams into the back of Lonnie's left calf. A gurgling scream escapes his throat.

WARREN

(continues, screaming)

Stop it! Stop it!

Manning fires a long burst of his Tommy gun as a scream of rage escapes his throat. The bullets riddle two German soldiers.

Warren continues to drag Lonnie, but he is moving much slower. Bullets are screaming past the two of them.

WARREN

(continues)

Manning! Help me!

A bullet scrapes the side of Warren's neck.

WARREN

(continues)

HELP ME!

Manning hesitates. We can see he wants to run. Backing away, he stumbles over a tree root, landing on his side. Bullets tear up the ground near Manning's head. The Germans continue to advance.

Manning pulls the pin on one of his grenades and throws it.

(CONTINUED)

## EXPLOSION

Several German soldiers are shredded by shrapnel. The screams from these wounded join the screams of the soldier with the shattered knees.

Manning springs to his feet and looks toward Warren and Lonnie. Again he hesitates.

WARREN (O.S.)

Don't leave me here!

Manning's paralysis breaks, and he runs over to Warren, who is now dragging Lonnie's body by one arm. Lonnie is leaving a massive blood trail.

MANNING

Just leave him!

Warren continues pulling Lonnie's body.

WARREN

He can make it!

MANNING

He's dead!

WARREN

No he's not!

Manning grabs Warren by the back of the collar and roughly shoves him forward, away from Lonnie's body.

MANNING

God damn you! Move!

CUT TO:

Artillery fire can be heard in the distance.

Soldiers are picking up weapons, ammo, and other useful equipment from the battlefield. They move forward, as other soldiers help the wounded. Pritchett is sitting against the still intact bunker, his faculties still not functioning properly, and the First Sergeant is carried away on a stretcher, barely conscious.

(CONTINUED)

Lukas is standing on the bridge in shock. Talbot walks up to Lukas, holding a fist full of bloody dog tags.

TALBOT

Lieutenant?

Lukas stares out at nothing, oblivious to Talbot. Talbot shakes Lukas' shoulder, and Lukas slowly looks at him. Talbot takes Lukas' hand, places the dog tags in it, and closes the fingers in a fist around them. Lukas stares at the bloody dog tags.

TALBOT (cont'd)

That wasn't so bad, was it?

There is a new sound seeping through the not too distant artillery fire. It is the sound of APPROACHING TANKS.

PRITCHETT

(calling out)

Tanks! Take cover! Move it!

Two German Panzer Mark IVs, painted in ambush scheme and fitted with side skirts and turrets girdles, suddenly appear around the bend in the road, the front tank firing its hull machine gun.

Soldiers are running frantically toward the bridge as Talbot and Pritchett coax them forward and lay cover fire. Some of the soldiers make an effort to add to the cover fire, but most are running for their lives. Several soldiers are gunned down by machine gun fire as the two tanks crush dead bodies that lay in their path to the bridge.

The lead tank fires its cannon, disintegrating a running soldier.

Talbot is now running across the bridge, pulling the dazed Lukas with him. Just as they make it across, a tank shell explodes on the bridge, sending two soldiers into the river, one of them blown in half. It is total chaos as soldiers run across what's left of the Bailey bridge and wade across the river, disappearing into the forest.

44(i) INSERT

44(i)

CLOSE ON A TANK BARREL as it fires.

CUT TO:

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A44 EXT. LOWER FOREST - DAY

A44

Wounded American soldiers are being carried through the forest. Some of the wounded are on stretchers while the others are walking wounded. One of the stretchers is carried past Chamberlain. The WOUNDED MAN grabs Chamberlain's arm, forcing the stretcher carriers to stop.

CHAMBERLAIN

Whatsa matter?

WOUNDED MAN

Did I buy a ticket?

CHAMBERLAIN

Gimme a break.

WOUNDED MAN

I need to know right now! You gotta tell me right now!

CHAMBERLAIN

Easy, kid.

WOUNDED MAN

Tell me.

CHAMBERLAIN

I don't make that decision.

WOUNDED MAN

You know what they'll say. What are they gonna say?

CHAMBERLAIN

(looking at wound)

You'll be back on the line in three weeks.

WOUNDED MAN

But I wanna go home. Talk to my ma. I wanna see her.

CHAMBERLAIN

There's nothing I can do.

Chamberlain nods to the stretcher carriers, who start to walk away with the stretcher. The Wounded Man grabs Chamberlain's arm again, and the stretchier carriers stop.

WOUNDED MAN

You can make it worse.

(CONTINUED)

CHAMBERLAIN

What are you talking about.

WOUNDED MAN

My wound. You can make it worse. These guys won't say anything. You can use my bayonet.

CHAMBERLAIN

You're outta your mind.

WOUNDED MAN

Out of my mind? I wanna get outta here! I wanna go home!

CHAMBERLAIN

(to the stretcher carriers)

Get him the fuck outta here.

The two stretcher carriers hurry the Wounded Man away.

WOUNDED MAN

(yelling back to Chamberlain)

You think you're God or something? You think you're fucking God? You're dead! You're a fucking dead man! I'll be laying in a nice, warm bed, and you'll be dead! You hear me?! You fucking pig! You're dead!

Chamberlain watches the Wounded Man as he is carried away. Another MEDIC walks up to Chamberlain from behind.

MEDIC

Somebody call a break, Chamberlain?

CUT TO:

B44 EXT. DAMAGED BUNKER (COMMAND POST) - BASE - DAY B44

(SCENE 47 WAS MOVED UP AND BECAME SCENE B44)

Pritchett is walking out of the bunker, carrying his backpack, as a jeep pulls up in front of him. Sitting next to the driver is the Lieutenant Colonel. In the back of the jeep is Captain Zenek. Salutes are exchanged. The Lieutenant Colonel gets out of the jeep, followed by Zenek.

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

How are you doing, Rob?

(CONTINUED)

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B44 CONTINUED:

B44

PRITCHETT  
I'm fine, sir. I can stay.

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL  
You're due for a rest, Captain.

PRITCHETT  
Everybody here needs a rest.

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL  
This conversation was over the first time  
we had it, and it's just as over now.  
You're wounded. You need a rest.

ZENEK  
A fresh point of view may help break  
things open here, Rob.

PRITCHETT  
(cold)  
Do I know you?

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL  
Is the staff inside?

PRITCHETT  
Yes, sir.

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL  
Captain Zenek, I suggest you take this  
time to acquaint yourself with your team.

PRITCHETT  
Sir, shouldn't I be involved in the  
briefing? The captain here will need  
every piece of advice he can get.

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL  
Negative. I don't want the same mistakes  
as before.

PRITCHETT  
(stunned)  
What mistakes are those?

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL  
You tell me.

(CONTINUED)

Pritchett is frozen where he stands, looking as if he has just been slapped in the face. The Lieutenant Colonel's eyes remain on Pritchett. Zenek looks at the ground, feeling extremely uncomfortable.

Pritchett silently climbs into the jeep.

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL

(continues, to the Driver)  
This man needs a doctor, Corporal.

DRIVER

Yes, sir.

The jeep drives off. The Lieutenant Colonel looks over at Zenek, who still seems a bit embarrassed.

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL

Why are you still standing out here?

Zenek salutes clumsily, then hurries into the bunker.

Our attention stays with the Lieutenant Colonel. Once alone, his facade drops like a lead weight. He suddenly looks exhausted. He looks across the road at the stacked dead. In his eyes there is a hint of something we haven't seen before. Fear.

CUT TO:

45 EXT. LOWER FOREST - ROAD - DAY

45

Sitting and laying in the woods are the soldiers of Lukas' platoon. They are exhausted. Many are asleep. There is no hope here. Just men waiting for their turn to die. Manning is leaning against a tree, smoking a cigarette, watching Warren who is sitting ten yards away by himself. Warren's face is now bandaged.

Sergeant Talbot takes a seat next to Manning.

TALBOT  
Rough one, huh?

MANNING  
Rough one.

TALBOT  
Where's your squad?

MANNING  
(pointing)  
Over there.

Talbot looks over at Warren.

TALBOT  
That's it?

MANNING  
That's it.

TALBOT  
Was it worth it?

MANNING  
You mean the ridge?

TALBOT  
I mean the Section Eight.

MANNING  
I don't know what you're talking about.

TALBOT  
You really are a fucking piece of shit,  
aren't you?

MANNING  
That's right, Talbot. I'm a piece of  
shit. Happy?

(CONTINUED)

Manning throws his cigarette down in anger.

TALBOT

So you went up that ridge with four other guys and came back with one.

MANNING

What's your point?

TALBOT

Do I have to have a point?

MANNING

Fuck you, Talbot! You weren't fucking there!

TALBOT

Lucky for me, huh?

MANNING

Jesus Christ!

Several soldiers look over at Talbot and Manning, and the two men fall silent. A long moment passes.

TALBOT

(lighting cigarette)

I've been keeping an eye on you, Manning. At first I thought you were just turning yellow. But I think I was wrong. I suppose I should apologize to you for that.

MANNING

Forget about it.

TALBOT

Now I think you're just slipping. Are you? Slipping?

MANNING

If I was slipping, do you think I'd volunteer for a suicide mission?

TALBOT

Cut the shit, Manning. We all know about the Section Eight deal you cut with Pritchett. Anything to save your own ass.

MANNING

That's right.

(CONTINUED)

TALBOT

Too bad Pritchett won't be around to hold up his end of the deal.

MANNING

What the hell are you talking about?

TALBOT

He got wounded. They're pulling him off the line today.

MANNING

Shit.

TALBOT

(laughing)

Life's a bitch, ain't it?

Manning doesn't answer.

The Lieutenant Colonel and Captain Zenek, a new man to the front, make their way over to the resting platoon by jeep. None of the platoon members acknowledge their presence. The Lieutenant Colonel sees Manning and Talbot sitting under a tree, barely awake, and walks over to them.

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

Where is Lieutenant Lukas?

TALBOT

Nobody knows, sir. Pretty rough on him.

ZENEK

Is that him?

ANOTHER ANGLE

Moving toward the Lieutenant Colonel from roughly twenty yards away is Lukas. In his right hand is the tangled mess of twenty dog tags, many of them bloody. Lukas is holding them out in front of him as he moves toward the Lieutenant Colonel. He is having difficulty walking due to the thick mud caked to his boots.

Lukas is choking on sobs. His eyes are bulging from their dark, sunken sockets.

(CONTINUED)

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL

What is the status of your platoon,  
Lieutenant?

Lukas continues to move toward the Lieutenant Colonel. His choking sobs are turning into something more disturbing. As if he is trying to scream, but is unable to. Several soldiers watch Lukas with interest.

Manning looks up at Lukas. He then looks down at the ground, shaking his head.

Lukas is now only ten yards from the Lieutenant Colonel. He is shaking uncontrollably as he walks.

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL

(continues)

Whatever your problem is, Lieutenant, I  
suggest you get it under control.

Lukas continues to move toward the Lieutenant Colonel. There is a hint of threat in Lukas' advance. Most of the platoon is watching now. Manning lights another cigarette, still looking away from the situation.

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL

(continues)

Put it together, Lieutenant!

The scream in Lukas' throat is beginning to surface. A slow, disturbing build.

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL

(continues)

Damn you, Lukas!

Lukas lets out a blood curdling scream as he grabs the Lieutenant Colonel with his free hand. Zenek quickly grabs Lukas and tries to pull him off the Lieutenant Colonel. The Lieutenant Colonel stumbles backward onto the ground. Lukas and Zenek fall on top of him as Lukas continues to scream while trying to cram the dog tags down the Lieutenant Colonel's throat. Several soldiers pull Lukas off, the dog tags falling from his grip.

The Lieutenant Colonel struggles to his feet. There are several scratches bleeding on his face around his mouth.

(CONTINUED)

ZENEK

(to the soldiers holding Lukas)  
Get him out of here!

The Lieutenant Colonel watches as Lukas is led away. He then notices the entire platoon staring at him. His eyes dart from one soldier to another. There is no emotion on the faces of the men. No rage, no sadness. Just a strange ghost-like appearance as they wait to see the Lieutenant Colonel's next move. The Lieutenant Colonel is unnerved by this. Manning picks up the dog tags from the mud and hands them to the Lieutenant Colonel.

MANNING

You wanted to know the status of his platoon.

Manning begins to walk away.

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL

Just a minute, soldier.

(Manning turns)

You're treading dangerously close to a court-martial.

MANNING

Will that get me out of here? Sir?

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL

(realization)

You're Manning, aren't you?

MANNING

That's what they tell me.

TALBOT

Easy, Manning.

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL

(to Talbot)

Stay out of this, Sergeant.

The Lieutenant Colonel pulls a folded sheet of paper from his coat pocket.

(CONTINUED)

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

(continues, reading)

Sergeant David Manning.

MANNING

You got a sheet on everybody?

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

Just you, Sergeant.

(reads)

Sergeant Manning has an excellent, innate understanding of battlefield conditions. His ability to react to aggressive situations is unmatched by anybody in the company. His disrespect for authority is unable to hide his ability to lead. I strongly suggest he be considered for the next platoon leader when and if the situation presents itself.

Captain Robert Pritchett.

(to Manning)

If I'm not mistaken, the situation has presented itself, Sergeant.

Manning looks blankly at the Lieutenant Colonel.

MANNING

(controlling panic)

May I remind you, sir. I'm a non-com.

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

(getting into the jeep)

I know what you are, Sergeant. I also know what your capabilities are.

MANNING

I was a buck private three days ago!

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

This isn't up for discussion.

MANNING

I can't do this!

LIEUTENANT

COLONEL

You've got no choice. And as it is, neither do I.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: (4)

46

The Lieutenant Colonel rides away. Manning turns to look at the members of the platoon. They are all staring at him.

ZENEK

Pick out a new squad leader to take your place.

(no reply from Manning)

Sergeant!

MANNING

I got nothin' left.

ZENEK

Just gotta dig deeper.

MANNING

I got nothin' left.

CUT TO:

47 OMITTED

47 \*

(MOVED AND BECAME SCENE B44)

\*

CUT TO:

\*

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48 EXT. FOXHOLE - THICK PINE FOREST - NIGHT

48 \*

Warren is sitting low in a foxhole, completely alone in the dark. The wind is howling loudly through the trees. Warren clings tightly to the blanket wrapped around him.

There is something moving in the darkness ahead of Warren. Warren strains his eyes to see. For a moment the movement stops. Warren ever so carefully reaches for a grenade. He pulls the pin.

A pig suddenly emerges from the darkness. Warren lets out a sigh of relief. The pig limps around sniffing the ground. Its left hind leg is covered in blood. Warren watches as he places the pin back in the grenade and lays it in front of him.

The pig starts to edge its way to the left of the foxhole, roughly ten yards away.

EXPLOSION

The pig is gone. Land mine casualty.

49 EXT. FOXHOLE - THICK PINE FOREST - NIGHT

49

SUDDEN SOUND OF MOVEMENT

Warren grabs the grenade and swings himself around in the foxhole so he is facing in the opposite direction. More movement. Warren pulls the pin from the grenade.

WARREN  
(calling out)  
Java!

(CONTINUED)

CHAMBERLAIN  
(O.S.)

Baseball!

Chamberlain runs into view, keeping low to the ground, and jumps into the foxhole next to Warren. Both men talk in whispers.

CHAMBERLAIN  
(continues)  
Who tripped the mine?

WARREN  
A pig.

CHAMBERLAIN  
No shit?

WARREN  
No shit.

CHAMBERLAIN  
Manning wants to see you at platoon headquarters.

WARREN  
What's going on?

CHAMBERLAIN  
I was hoping you could tell me.

WARREN  
Tell you what?

CHAMBERLAIN  
I don't know. Nothing.

Warren starts to crawl out of the foxhole but is stopped by Chamberlain.

CHAMBERLAIN  
(continues)  
Wait a minute. Look. Manning being promoted to Lieutenant has got some of us spooked.

WARREN  
(weary)  
Who is us?

(CONTINUED)

CHAMBERLAIN

Sergeant Talbot and me. We think Manning slipped off the deep end, only different somehow. We think he's dangerous.

WARREN

What are you talking to me for?

CHAMBERLAIN

Why would he want to see you? He's the platoon leader now. He doesn't need to concern himself with you. Are you his friend?

WARREN

No.

CHAMBERLAIN

Then why?

WARREN

How the hell should I know?

CHAMBERLAIN

If you know something, spill it.

WARREN

I don't know anything!

CHAMBERLAIN

When your squad took out the 88s, what happened?

WARREN

I don't want to talk about it.

Chamberlain studies Warren for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CHAMBERLAIN

What are you hiding?

(no reply)

Listen, kid. When you been on the line long enough, you learn there's no black and white. Only shades of gray. You learn to survive within those shades. Now, whatever guilt or shame you're carrying... whatever you think you've done wrong... It's just the same shit we all carry in our gut. But Manning's a different animal. His grays are starting to look a whole lot darker than ours.

Warren looks off into the night, afraid to talk.

CHAMBERLAIN

(cont'd)

What happened out there?

WARREN

(fighting off tears)

Baxter ran during the fire fight. I ran too.

Warren silently sobs. Chamberlain gives Warren a few short moments as Warren composes himself, still looking off into the night.

CHAMBERLAIN

So what did Manning do?

Warren slowly looks at Chamberlain. There is fear in Warren's eyes.

CUT TO:

CUT TO:

50 INT. BOMBED OUT LOG BUNKER - NIGHT 50

Talbot is sleeping in one of the dark corners of the bunker, his service side arm in his hand. Chamberlain enters the bunker to find Talbot immediately wide awake, his side arm pointed at Chamberlain's head. Talbot lowers the weapon when he sees it is Chamberlain.

CHAMBERLAIN

We need to talk.

CUT TO:

51 EXT. FOREST - FIRE BREAK - DIRT ROAD - NIGHT 51

Manning is handed a map case by the First Sergeant. The two salute each other and part ways. Manning begins walking when he is suddenly met by Chamberlain.

CHAMBERLAIN

Hey, Lieutenant, I'll carry that for you.

Chamberlain grabs the map case before Manning says anything. Talbot suddenly appears on the other side of Manning and places his arm around his shoulder.

TALBOT

Hey, Manning. How's it been going, Lieutenant?

MANNING

What do you guys want?

CHAMBERLAIN

Just talk.

TALBOT

Yeah, buddy. We just wanted to talk to you.

(CONTINUED)

MANNING

Fuck off.

With his arm still around Manning's shoulder, Talbot punches Manning in the nose, drawing blood from both nostrils. Talbot lets Manning fall to his knees.

CHAMBERLAIN

I suggest you talk to us, Dave.

Talbot pushes Manning to the ground with his boot. Chamberlain shoves Talbot away from Manning.

CHAMBERLAIN

What the hell are you doing?

TALBOT

He's a dirt bag.

CHAMBERLAIN

Cool off, mother fucker!

TALBOT

Not gonna take that mouth of his. Not now.

CHAMBERLAIN

Listen to me, Manning, we got some questions, and we want some straight fucking answers.

Chamberlain tries helping Manning to his feet, but Manning is unable to get up.

CHAMBERLAIN

(continues, to Talbot)

You gonna help me here, or what?

Talbot and Chamberlain pull Manning up to his feet. They remain holding him so he doesn't fall. Talbot yanks Manning's head back by the helmet.

CHAMBERLAIN

(continues)

Knock that shit off!

TALBOT

Shut-up.

(to Manning)

Okay, tough guy. Now why don't you tell us what the hell happened out there?

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: (2)

51

CHAMBERLAIN

Can we at least take him out in the woods?

TALBOT

We're gonna go for a little walk, okay, tough guy?

52 EXT. COVER OF TREES - FOREST FIRE BREAK - NIGHT

52

Talbot and Chamberlain take Manning into the cover of trees. Once out of sight from the road, Talbot and Chamberlain let him fall to the ground.

TALBOT

(continues)

Tell us what happened out there, and it better be the truth. Talk!

CHAMBERLAIN

Keep it down, for chrissake!

TALBOT

You don't got the stomach for this, beat it.

CHAMBERLAIN

No way in hell I'm leaving him out here alone with you.

TALBOT

Then just stay outta my way.

Manning has managed to rise to his hands and knees and is trying to crawl away. Talbot grabs his feet and yanks Manning onto his stomach.

TALBOT

Where do you think you're going, fucker?

Talbot reaches down and turns Manning onto his back.

MANNING

You better back off.

Talbot pulls out his service sidearm and aims it at Manning's head.

(CONTINUED)

CHAMBERLAIN

Put that gun away.

TALBOT

Talk, you piece of shit.

CHAMBERLAIN

Put that goddamn gun away, Talbot!

TALBOT

You left that Lonnie kid out there to die, didn't you?

MANNING

He was already dead, dick head.

TALBOT

And what about Baxter?

MANNING

I did what I had to do!

TALBOT

You executed him!

MANNING

You're fucking right I did! Who the fuck...? You righteous piece of shit, Talbot! You two assholes are alive because those 88s were taken out. They were taken out because I had the fucking balls to put that little fucker down!

(beat)

You woulda done it too.

Talbot kicks Manning in the side.

CHAMBERLAIN

Jesus Christ.

TALBOT

Don't back down on me here, Jim.

CHAMBERLAIN

Just calm down. Kevin!

TALBOT

Fuck calm. This piece of shit is dead!

Talbot straddles over Manning, placing the barrel of the gun on Manning's forehead. Manning looks at Chamberlain in desperation. Chamberlain turns away, unable to watch.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (2)

52

Manning looks back at Talbot as Talbot pulls the hammer of the gun back.

TALBOT  
(continues)  
Just one more dead G.I. for the pile.

(CONTINUED)

MANNING

You kill me, you'll all be dead by  
nightfall tomorrow.

Talbot and Chamberlain look at each other, then down at  
Manning.

TALBOT

I'm listening.

MANNING

We're making a push at dawn. Right up  
the middle again.

TALBOT

You're full of shit!

MANNING

Am I? Check the map case if you don't  
believe me.

CHAMBERLAIN

Slow down, Talbot.

TALBOT

So what if we are? ;

MANNING

The kraut tanks are still in position on  
the high ground. They'll tear us a new  
asshole as soon as we move. The orders  
are we retake Schmidt at all costs.

CHAMBERLAIN

That's bullshit! There's no way they'd  
send us against those tanks on an all  
coster.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

MANNING

You think so, huh?

(beat)

I know roughly where those tanks are. We  
can take 'em out tonight.

Talbot and Chamberlain look at each other.

MANNING

(continues)

Think about it. Without those tanks we  
might make it to Schmidt alive.

MORE SILENCE

MANNING

(continues)

The clock is ticking, boys.

CUT TO:

53 INT/EXT. BOMBED OUT LOG BUNKER - NIGHT

53

A lantern in the center of the bunker on the ground. The flame of the lantern has been turned down very low, leaving the edges of the bunker in shadow. Manning, Chamberlain, and Talbot are sitting on the dirt floor around the lantern, smoking cigarettes. The low light gives the three men a ghost-like appearance.

The sheet of canvas covering the entrance is pulled away, revealing Warren.

MANNING

Come on in.

Warren enters the bunker. He is obviously confused to see these three men sitting together.

WARREN

You wanted to see me, sir?

MANNING

Smoke 'em if you got 'em.

Warren lights a cigarette. The four smoking ghosts eye each other up in silence for a moment.

MANNING

(continues)

You look like you've seen a ghost.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

53

WARREN  
I'm not sure I haven't.

TALBOT  
There's been a change in plans.

MANNING  
We've got some tanks to knock out.

Warren stares at the three men blankly.

CUT TO:

54 INT. BOMBED OUT LOG BUNKER - NIGHT (LATER)

54

We are looking down at a simplified map drawn into the dirt floor. Manning's hand is using a stick to refer to the map as he talks.

MANNING (O.S.)  
The whole plan depends on us getting through this mine field here, and up to the high ground here, by dawn.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL ALL FOUR MEN

TALBOT  
Cross a mine field at night?

MANNING  
Don't have any choice. At dawn the division is making its push and that push starts off with an artillery bombardment. We've got to get to those tanks before that artillery lets lose.

TALBOT  
That's the plan?

MANNING  
Yeah.

TALBOT  
How the fuck are we gonna get up there by dawn?

MANNING  
We'll have to be quick.

TALBOT  
You're outta your mind!

(CONTINUED)

CHAMBERLAIN

If we are late, that artillery will drop  
right on our heads.

(CONTINUED)

MANNING

That's the chance we'll just have to take.

TALBOT

Fucked up beyond belief.

WARREN

Why not let our artillery take out their tanks?

MANNING

Ever throw stones at a turtle?

TALBOT

This is fucked, Manning.

MANNING

We gonna do this thing or what?

CHAMBERLAIN

I'm not thrilled about the odds, but it's better than following a whistle.

TALBOT

Let's do it.

55 OMITTED

55

CUT TO:

56 EXT. WOODS - BEHIND AMERICAN LINES - NIGHT

56

Manning, Talbot, Chamberlain and Warren are coming out of the forest. Manning and Talbot are armed with Tommy guns, Warren and Chamberlain carry bazookas. All four men have smudged their hands and faces with dark mud. Manning, Talbot, and Chamberlain each have a demolition charge strapped to their backs.

Manning looks out at the American held Siegfried Line.

MANNING

When we get past our guys, I'm in charge. What I say goes. No matter what. If anybody fucks with me your mothers get telegrams.

(to Talbot)

You know I can do it too.

TALBOT

The tanks, Manning. Just get us to the tanks.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

MANNING

Let's go.

Manning starts to leave the trench.

WARREN

Manning.

(Manning turns around)

Nobody dies.

Manning leaves the trench without replying, making his way toward the Siegfried Line.

TALBOT

Nobody dies, Sanderson.

WARREN

(convincing himself)

Nobody dies

CUT TO:

57 EXT. SIEGFRIED LINE - STAGING POINT / TANK TRAPS - NIGHT

57

Manning leads the other three men through the tank traps and American held positions.

WARREN

(whispers to Manning)

What if somebody stops us?

MANNING

They won't.

CHAMBERLAIN

We're just another sorry ass patrol, kid.

Manning and his squad disappear into the forest.

58 OMITTED

58

CUT TO:

59 EXT. FIRE BREAK CLEARING - FALLEN TREES - DAWN 59 \*

There is a hint of the coming morning in the sky. We slowly see Manning's head peer over the fallen tree and scan the area ahead of him. \*

MANNING

Check it out.

Talbot, Chamberlain, and Warren peer over the fallen tree trunks.

CUT TO:

60 EXT. RAZOR WIRE JUNGLE - MINE FIELD/STEEP HILLSIDE (POV) 60 \*  
- DAWN

As seen from the squad's point of view. On the other side of the fallen tree is what was once forest. Now it is merely blackened ground and scorched, fallen trees at least one hundred yards deep to the base of the high ground. Running along the base of the high ground is a chaotic tangled wall of concertina wire, roughly four to five feet high. Mist hangs on the battlefield like a ghost. \*

CUT TO:

61 EXT. FIRE BREAK CLEARING - FALLEN TREES - DAWN 61

Manning and his squad sit down behind the tree. Tension is high.

TALBOT

We're almost out of time Manning. We better abort. \*

MANNING

Fuck that. We re going all the way. \*

CHAMBERLAIN

(sarcastic)

That sounds reasonable. \*

MANNING

All right, listen up. Single file, twenty feet apart. Let's go. \*

Manning cautiously pulls himself over the log. \*

62 EXT. RAZOR WIRE JUNGLE - MINE FIELD - DAWN

62

Manning crawls forward, probing the ground for land mines with his bayonet. He looks behind him to see Warren crawling over the tree about twenty feet back. Manning continues forward, maneuvering around fallen trees, Warren, Talbot and Chamberlain follow with twenty feet between each man.

The tip of Manning's bayonet makes contact with something metal. Manning freezes, then gives a quick hand signal to Warren. Warren stops and passes the signal to Talbot, who passes it back to Chamberlain.

Manning cautiously brushes the dirt away from the three pronged detonator of the land mine and unscrews it from the mine. He then signals the others to continue following.

SERIES OF SHOTS showing each individual squad member crawling deeper into the bowels of the Death Factory.

Manning's bayonet strikes another mine. He signals the others to stop, then brushes the dirt away, and tries to unscrew the detonator, but the detonator is jammed.

The mine is very close to the surface, and Manning is able to find its circumference quickly. He digs the dish-shaped bomb from the ground, and begins to lift it up. Before he realizes the mine is attached to a wire, the wire tightens from the mine being lifted. Several land mines detonate in rapid succession.

Machine gun fire from the foxholes and trenches begins sweeping back and forth across the ground. The machine gun fire falls silent, and a moment later, a flare is shot into the air. Talbot, Chamberlain, and Warren hug the ground, their eyes bulging. Manning continues to hold the mine with shaking hands. He is terrified.

The four men seem naked in the light of the flare until it falls to the ground and goes out. Manning carefully sets down the mine, then closes his eyes to gather his nerves. Finally, he continues until stopping roughly twenty yards in front of one of the lengths of tangled wire. Manning studies the wire, his eyes moving slowly from left to right.

MANNING

(to himself)

Lucky day. Lucky day. Lucky, lucky,  
lucky.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

62

Manning motions the others to come forward, then waits motionless until the others join him.

TALBOT

What about the wire?

MANNING

Three possible gaps.

Manning holds out a clenched fist, and is joined quickly by clenched fists from Talbot and Chamberlain. Warren raises a fist when he realizes the others are waiting for him. The four men move their fists up and down in unison with Manning's counting.

MANNING

(continues)

One...Two...Three!

On three, the four men raise two fingers each in unanimous vote. \*

Manning looks out toward the wire, scouting the misty darkness. \*

MANNING

We're clear to the wire.

Manning climbs over the fallen tree and runs to the wire, keeping as low to the ground as possible. Again he gives the signal to follow, and is joined by the others. Manning removes a coil of rope from his belt and throws an end to Talbot. Talbot removes his own coil of rope and ties it to the end of Manning's. Manning ties the other end of his rope around his waist and gives Talbot the thumbs up sign. \*

63 EXT. RAZOR WIRE JUNGLE - DAWN

63

Manning crawls into the jungle of razor wire as Talbot leads out rope to him. Inside the wire Manning quickly loses sight of the others. His probing leads him to two dead ends before finding himself with only a single coil of wire keeping him from the other side. Manning removes a wire cutter from his belt and snips through the wire.

The wire snaps wildly, slashing Manning's face. Blood flows down his cheek as he silently watches for alerted Germans. After a long moment, Manning clips a hole in the wire big enough to crawl through, unties the rope from his waist, and fastens it to the wire by the opening.

Manning begins crawling, following the rope back in the direction he came.

CUT TO:

64 EXT. RAZOR WIRE JUNGLE - MINE FIELD - DAWN

64

Talbot is crouched down low, looking into the gap in the wire. He is in deep concentration, listening for Manning. Chamberlain and Warren have taken lookout positions twenty feet from Talbot on both his left and right side. All three men are facing away from each other, each in their own world. A long moment passes. Nobody moves. Total focus.

Without taking his eyes from the gap in the wire, Talbot pulls out a stick of chewing gum and slips it in his mouth. Seconds go by. Talbot glances at his watch then focuses on the wire again. Chamberlain crawls over to Talbot.

CHAMBERLAIN

You think he ditched us?

TALBOT

(still watching the wire)

I don't know.

There is a sound from inside the wire, and Manning's head pops out.

MANNING

Other side of the rainbow.

CUT TO:

65 EXT. RAZOR WIRE JUNGLE - DAWN

65

Manning is leading the other three through the wire, following the rope. Warren is following Manning about five feet back. He is starting to fall behind because of the awkwardness of getting through the wire with a bazooka on his back. Talbot and Chamberlain are right behind him.

TALBOT

Pick up the pace, Sanderson. Jesus Christ.

Several drops of blood splash onto Warren's face. He looks up.

A dead German soldier is silhouetted in the wire above Warren.

WARREN

(to himself)

Keep it together, Sandy.

Warren continues forward.

CUT TO:

66 EXT. RAZOR WIRE JUNGLE - CUT OPENING - DAWN

66

Manning crawls through the opening, removes a handkerchief from his pocket, and ties it to the wire to mark the opening. Warren crawls through the opening, followed by Talbot and Chamberlain.

67 EXT. TRENCH - STEEP HILLSIDE - DAWN

67

In front of them is a trench connecting the rear entrances of all the log pillboxes. On the other side is the base of the steep, forest covered hill that is the high ground of the Hurtgen Forest. The four men stare silently up the hill. Chamberlain notices Manning's hands shaking.

CHAMBERLAIN

You okay?

MANNING

Fine.

TALBOT

What's going on?

(CONTINUED)

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67 CONTINUED:

67

Manning looks into the sky, which is now nearly full daylight.

MANNING

This isn't good. Our guys are probably on the move already.

CHAMBERLAIN

We're never gonna get up there in time.

MANNING

Let's go.

A67 EXT. STEEP HILLSIDE - UNDER TANK POSITION - DAY

A67

The squad follows Manning up the hill at almost a run.

SERIES OF SHOTS of Manning and his squad moving up the hill. The ground is steep and the going is exhausting. All four men are breathing heavily.

SOUND OF FOUR TANK ENGINES STARTING UP.

TALBOT

Shit.

MANNING

(running faster)

Come on!

Manning and his squad are nearing the top. As they run, they watch the barrels of four tanks appear above them, adjusting for aim. The tanks begin firing as Manning and his men continue running.

B67 EXT. COVER OF TREES - BEHIND TANK POSITION - DAY

B67

Manning leads his men around the tanks until they are behind them in the cover of trees.

CUT TO:

68 OMITTED

68 \*

A68 OMITTED

A68 \*

69 EXT. TANK POSITION - REAR (POV. THRU BINOCULARS) - DAY 69

We are looking at the rear of the position through Manning's binoculars. Four Panzer Mark IV tanks are parked in individual, raked trenches for easy access, with their barrels protruding through the camouflage netting that conceals the entire position. The netting, combined with the forest hemming it on all sides makes it obvious why it cannot be seen from the American line. There are also machine gun emplacements on both sides of the position for added protection.

Tables with maps and radios are spaced between some of the tanks. Inside and around the position are at least fifteen soldiers, but none of them are in an attentive state. It is obvious they have no fear of Americans being in their vicinity. It is simply business as usual.

CUT TO:

A69 OMITTED

A69

70 EXT. COVER OF TREES - BEHIND TANK POSITION - DAY

70

Manning is on his stomach, looking at the position through his binoculars. The rest of the squad is next to him, also in the prone position. Manning hands his binoculars to Talbot.

MANNING

Look at those fucking things.

TALBOT

(looking through binoculars)

Christ. We can't get near them.

(handing binoculars to Chamberlain)

Any bright ideas, Manning?

MANNING

Working on it.

CHAMBERLAIN

(looking through binoculars)

You gotta be kidding.

WARREN

Lemme see.

CHAMBERLAIN

(handing binoculars to Warren)

We're dead if we try this.

TALBOT

Come up with anything yet?

MANNING

Still working on it.

WARREN

(looking through binoculars)

God.

Manning takes the binoculars back from Warren, and looks through them at the position again.

CUT TO:

Revised/Blue 10/09/97

A70 EXT. TANK POSITION - ROAD/REAR (THRU BINOCULARS) - DAY A70 \*

Through Manning's binoculars we see an open supply truck loaded with fuel and crates of ammunition stop on the road next to the position. The truck begins to back down the sloped trench, directed in by a soldier. When it stops, a number of soldiers begin emptying ammunition crates out of it.

Our view suddenly blurs from the fast movement of the binoculars to the right. Our vision focuses again on another supply truck approaching the position from a distance.

CUT TO: \*

B70 EXT. COVER OF TREES - TANK POSITION - DAY B70 \*

Manning lowers his binoculars.

MANNING \*

All right, listen up.  
(to Warren, referring to  
bazooka)  
Can you use that thing?

WARREN \*

Yeah.

MANNING \*

Good. Chamberlain, you and Sanderson take out the two tanks closest to us. I'll take out the others. When you see Talbot signal, take them out.

CHAMBERLAIN \*

You got it.

Chamberlain and Warren move out, keeping low to the ground as they run.

MANNING \*

(to Talbot)  
Cover me.

Manning looks toward the road to find the truck almost to the position.

CUT TO: \*

71 EXT. TANK POSITION - ROAD/REAR - COVER OF TREES - DAY 71 \*

As the truck approaches the position, Manning crouches low as he runs toward the side of the moving truck, hidden from the position. As the truck slows, Manning runs along the side, near the back end. The truck slows to a stop. The Driver gets out. Manning grabs the driver from behind and stabs him with his bayonet. He holds his hand over the dying Driver's mouth as he jerks up on the bayonet to finish him off. \*

Talbot is in a prone firing position with his Thompson, ready to open fire. He watches as Manning drags the dead Driver to some nearby foliage and hides it. Manning then moves to the blind side of the truck. \*

CUT TO: \*

A71 EXT COVER OF TREES - ANOTHER AREA BEHIND TANKS - DAY A71 \*

Our attention shifts to Chamberlain and Warren, who are kneeling behind two trees, aiming their bazookas.

CHAMBERLAIN

Hit it directly in the ass. The sides and top won't do it. When we hit them, we'll reload and hit them in the ass again to be sure.

72 EXT. TANK POSITION - ROAD/REAR - COVER OF TREES - DAY 72 \*

Manning signals to Talbot and Talbot signals to Chamberlain and Warren. Talbot then opens fire with his machine gun, killing and wounding over half a dozen surprised German soldiers. The remaining German soldiers locate Talbot's position and return fire.

A72 EXT. COVER OF TREES - TANK POSITION - DAY A72 \*

Chamberlain fires his bazooka, hitting the back of one of the tanks on the left side of the position and a moment later Warren takes out the tank next to the already burning tank. Chamberlain tries to re-load Warren's bazooka, but the two are forced to retreat from small arms fire, with Chamberlain running toward Talbot's position and Warren disappearing into the thickness of the forest.

B72 EXT. TANK POSITION - DAY B72 \*

Manning pulls the fuse of both demolition charges, runs out into the open, throwing one of the charges under the truck backed inside the position. He then runs back toward the other truck, throwing the last demolition charge in the back end.

C72 EXT. COVER OF TREES - TANK POSITION - DAY C72 \*

Talbot continues giving cover fire from the trees until a rifle shot smashes his forehead open. Warren suddenly appears behind Talbot and takes over his cover position with Talbot's Thompson.

73 EXT. TANK POSITION - ROAD/REAR - COVER OF TREES - DAY 73 \*

A SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS as the ammunition in the truck parked inside the position completely destroys it, killing most of the German soldiers, and taking out the last two tanks. Manning is thrown into a ditch near the truck on the road, knocking the wind out of him. Chamberlain starts running over toward Manning to help him. \*

MANNING \*

(yelling to Chamberlain) \*

Nooo! \*

HUGE EXPLOSION \*

The supply truck parked in the road bursts into a huge fire ball from the fuel drums, killing the rest of the German soldiers. \*

Soon we are left with dust and eerie silence. Slowly the dust clears. Manning peers out of the ditch and sees Chamberlain's charred body laying in the road. \*

Our attention shifts to Warren, who is standing now, staring at the destroyed position. \*

WARREN \*

We did it! We fucking did it! Hey Manning! \*

Warren notices Manning standing over Chamberlain's dead body. \*

CUT TO: \*

A73 EXT. SIEGFRIED LINE - DAY A73 \*

It is very quiet. Hundreds of American soldiers are crouched down behind the dragon's teeth. Our attention shifts to Captain Zenek as he blows his whistle. \*

The soldiers maneuver through the dragon's teeth and start to move forward. \*

CUT TO: \*

95A

2nd Revision/Pink 10/13/97

B73 INT. DAMAGED BUNKER (COMMAND POST) - DAY

B73

LIEUTENANT  
COLONEL  
(into radio)  
Commence firing!

CUT TO:

C73 EXT. AMERICAN ARTILLERY BATTERY - DAY

C73 \*

SERIES OF SHOTS of artillery firing from concealed positions.

CUT TO:

74 EXT. TANK POSITION (DESTROYED) - STEEP HILLSIDE - DAY

74

Warren walks over to Manning, who is still standing over Chamberlain's body. They look at one another.

Off in the distance we hear muffled pops of artillery.

MANNING  
Artillery!

Manning and Warren run past the destroyed position and start down the steep slope from the high ground, where the trees have been cut down for a clear line of fire for the now wrecked German tanks.

75 EXT. STEEP HILLSIDE -DAY 75 \*

We now hear the LOUD SCREAMING OF INCOMING ARTILLERY, as it sails over the heads of Warren and Manning, exploding on top of the high ground. Some shells fall short, exploding on the slope. Manning and Warren continue to run, their momentum getting away from them because of the steep slope. An explosion pushes them forward suddenly, their feet leaving the ground as they scream. \*

CUT TO: \*

A75 EXT. STEEP HILLSIDE (UPSIDE DOWN) -DAY A75 \*

DISTANT RUMBLE OF ARTILLERY \*

We see the steep slope as if we were hanging upside down. \*

B75 EXT. STEEP HILLSIDE -DAY B75 \*

We are now looking at Warren on his back, his head in a low spot so his perspective is upside down. Dried blood on his face from his ears and nose. He turns his head to one side to find Manning leaning against a tree, holding his side with both hands. An alarming amount of blood is pumping between his fingers. \*

MANNING \*

Hey, kid. \*

Warren slowly climbs to his knees, facing Manning. \*

WAPREN \*

(referring to Manning's wound) \*

That's bad. \*

MANNING \*

No shit. Took the sharp end of a branch. \*

Actually hung there for a second or two. \*

WAPREN \*

We gotta stop that bleeding. \*

Warren removes his coat and undershirt and uses the undershirt to start bandaging Manning's wound. \*

MANNING \*

Where's my weapon. \*

WAPREN \*

I don't know. \*

(CONTINUED)

B75 CONTINUED:

B75

MANNING

Christ.

WARREN

You think more will come?

MANNING

You better haul your ass outta here, kid.

(CONTINUED)

WARREN

As soon as I get this bandaged, I'm hauling you out of here with me.

MANNING

Bullshit. We'll never get across the line.

WARREN

Well, we'll see when we get there, won't we?

Manning cries out through gritted teeth from a sudden surge of pain.

MANNING

Shit!

WARREN

Hang in there, Lieutenant.

Warren finishes dressing the wound and puts his coat back on.

MANNING

Fuck. I don't think I'm gonna make it.

WARREN

Trust me, Lieutenant. I'll get you outta here.

MANNING

That's right, kid. You've got to accentuate the positive.

WARREN

Ready?

MANNING

For what?

WARREN

For me to pick you up.

MANNING

Forget it.

WARREN

I'm not gonna leave you here.

MANNING

Listen to me. I'll be dead before you get back anyway. Just get your ass outta here.

(CONTINUED)

WARREN

Bullshit.

Warren reaches down and maneuvers Manning over his shoulders.  
Manning cries out in agony.

CUT TO:

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

76 EXT. BURNT FOREST (TOOTHPICKS) - PUDDLES - DAY 76 \*

ARTILLERY IN THE DISTANCE \*

HEAVY RAIN \*

Then we see Warren carrying Manning in the distance. \*

CLOSE ON WARREN AND MANNING

Warren is struggling over the rough terrain, still carrying Manning. Manning is barely conscious now. \*

MANNING \*

I'm losing too much blood. I ain't gonna make it. \*

WARREN \*

You're gonna make it. \*

MANNING \*

Fucking idiot. \*

WARREN \*

You're gonna owe me big time, Lieutenant. \*

MANNING \*

I won't owe you shit. \*

They both laugh faintly. Manning coughs up blood. \*

WARREN \*

Less than a mile. We got less than a mile. \*

MANNING \*

Too far. \*

WARREN \*

It ain't too far. \*

WARREN \*

(continues)

What's so funny? \*

MANNING \*

You. \*

WARREN \*

Me what? \*

MANNING \*

What goes around, kid. \*

(CONTINUED)

98A

76 CONTINUED:

2nd Revision/Pink 10/13/97

76

WARREN

What?

MANNING

Forget it.

WARREN

I'm taking you home, Dave.

MANNING

Sure.

WARREN

You're going home.

Manning laughs faintly then dies. Warren doesn't know. He keeps walking. All we can hear now is the swirling wind and rain.

77 EXT. BURNT FOREST (TOOTHPICKS) - WIDE - DAY

77

ANOTHER ANGLE

We are now watching Warren crossing the scorched ground, Manning still over his shoulder, from a long way off. In the foreground is a burned, fallen tree. Sticking out from behind the tree is a charred hand reaching out for mercy. Rain water continues to drip from the fingers.

MANNING (V.O.)

High above the Chattahoochee,  
Near the Upatoy,  
Stands an old abandoned brick house,  
Benning School for boys

Onward ever, backward never,  
Follow me and die,  
To the port of Embarkation,  
Just kiss your ass good-bye.

Warren carries Manning out of the picture. We hold on the charred hand in the rain.

FADE TO BLACK.

We continue to hear the rain.

LOW, ROLLING THUNDER

The following is superimposed on the dark screen:

**For the over one quarter of a million American  
servicemen killed during the Second World War**

**We remember you.**

FADE OUT.