

BROTHERS IN ARMS:

by
Noah Lukeman

Based on a True Story

WGA Registered: #1191786
Copyright 2007
Noah Lukeman

Contact: The Film Department 323-785-3700
Director: Marcel Langenegger

TFD Revisions December 5, 2007

"BROTHERS IN ARMS" - TFD REVISIONS 12/05/07

1 EXT. BRIDGE OVER THE RHINE DAY

1

SEVERAL HUNDRED AMERICAN SOLDIERS stand at attention on both sides of the captured bridge. They are lined up neatly, frozen in one mass salute. They wait.

TITLE: "Germany, March, 1945"

The FAINT RUMBLE of a convoy of jeeps. It grows louder, and into view come five jeeps.

TITLE: "Based on a True Story"

In the third jeep sits GENERAL GEORGE S. PATTON JR., 60s, riding proudly, his uniform glistening in the sun.

Patton taps his driver on the shoulder with his crop, and the five jeep convoy slows, then stops. They sit in the middle of the bridge.

Patton rises from his vehicle and walks over to the railing. He unzips his fly, and URINATES over the railing.

The soldiers remain frozen at attention, waiting.

Patton smiles broadly. Several beats. Near him is MAJOR ALEXANDER STILLER, in his 50s, short and wiry, with red hair and a tough, leathery face that looks like it's seen too much action. He carries a .45 on his hip engraved with notches of his kills. His uniform is covered with decorations going back to World War I.

Patton nods to him. They're old friends.

Patton finally re-zips his fly. He struts slowly down the bridge until he reaches the other side. He turns.

PATTON

Men. We are the only army to cross the River Rhine in 3,000 years. In my entire military career, what I am most proud of is having my name coupled with yours in this great event.

Patton sinks to one knee. He reaches out on either side of him and grabs a handful of earth in each hand, then slowly rises, raises his arms and lets the earth fall through his fingers.

(CONTINUED)

PATTON (CONT'D)
Thus, William the Conqueror.

Patton's eyes glaze over, staring into space with the look of a man living history.

2 EXT. HILL 427 - DAY

2

Dozens of German Tanks and HUNDREDS of elite infantry perform target practice on Hill 427.

TITLE: 60 Miles Behind German lines

An enormous white cross, over 100 feet tall, stands atop a hill on the horizon. The French built it after World War I to commemorate the enormous loss of human life in the area. *It will play a significant role in this story too.*

As the CAMERA CRANES OUT AND UP, higher and higher, over the hill, past the enormous white cross. Into view comes:

3 EXT. OUTSKIRTS HAMMELBURG - DAY

3

THREE DOZEN U.S. POWS march. Sickly and malnourished, every step is a battle. Their uniforms are ragged, and faces and hands glow with frostbite. Completely dejected, most of them don't even have the energy to look up.

But if they look bad, that's nothing compared to wreckage they walk through--the once charming town of Hammelburg is nearly in ruins.

This is the end of the empire, and it shows.

Allied bombardment has reduced a good bit of the town to rubble. Chaos, anxiety and confusion rule. Civilians scamper furtively from building to building. Rats rule the gutters.

We see in everyone's eyes an extraordinary sense of desperation. The terror of being in the wrong place at the wrong time governs their days, and more so their nights. At this point, the best rule of survival is to trust no-one.

Near the front of the group is U.S. LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN WATERS, 39, a tall, handsome, noble-looking officer with dark hair and blue eyes. He's the son of a Baltimore banker and a lifelong military man, trained at West Point, steeped in the tradition of "Duty. Honor. Country." Behind him a bit, three POWs talk quietly as they scuffle along.

U.S. POW 1
(to the next man)
You know who that is, right?

U.S. POW 2
Another upper-class waste of space?

U.S. POW 1
(shakes his head)
Lieutenant Colonel Waters. Also
known as Patton's son-in-law.

U.S. POW 3
Fuck me.

U.S. POW 1
Fuck us all if the Germans ever
find out.
(beat)
They won't. He's been a POW since
'43.

The procession reaches the top of a hill and a WHISTLE sounds. They stop and raise their heads.

Before them lies a massive POW camp, dozens of buildings enclosed by towering barbed-wire.

WATERS
(softly)
We made it.

He straightens, as do the other senior officers. No need to yell at his men or give them a rousing speech. Their form improves too. This leader commands attention quietly.

The men are clearly relieved: the prospect of spartan barracks behind barbed wire is a definite improvement for them. They'll be less cold. And they might even get fed.

4 EXT. HAMMELBURG POW CAMP DAY

4

SIX GERMAN GUARDS step forward and meet SIX OTHER GERMAN GUARDS at the gate. They open the massive gates to Hammelburg.

Waters and his contingent into the center of the camp, marching in very good form. Clearly he has his men's respect.

HUNDREDS OF POWS await them in the camp, in even worse shape than Waters' men. Unshaven, haggard and deathly malnourished.

ONE POW stares at a tree, mumbling to himself.

ANOTHER POW sits on a rock, head in his hands.

TWO MORE POWS argue loudly.

All of this slowly comes to stop under the quiet gaze of Waters. The long-term inmates look out at the group of newly arrived prisoners.

Waters observes the watchtowers. They are all manned by GERMAN GUARDS. MORE GUARDS circle the perimeter, leading dogs.

The POWS march neatly, in formation, and actually manage to look like a sharp Army marching unit.

The current POWS watch, in awe.

TWO DOZEN GERMAN OFFICERS await them, lead by GERMAN GENERAL VON GOECKEL, 60s, a proud, noble-looking officer. He has rings about his eyes, and is clearly worn-out.

The Americans come to a stop before Goeckel. Silence.

WATERS
United States Lieutenant Colonel
John Waters.

GOECKEL
General Von Goeckel. Welcome to
Hammelburg.
(beat)
I will not lie to you, Colonel:
Berlin has thrust you upon us. Food
is scarce, medical supplies close
to none, and we can barely maintain
current conditions for 1,500 men.
We simply have no resources for 400
additional prisoners. Rations will
have to be cut further. Several
prisoners will share a single bunk,
and there is no wood for heating.

After all the damage and desolation the Americans have seen in their March from Poland, nobody is surprised by this.

GOECKEL (CONT'D)
I do not tolerate insubordination.
Any prisoner attempting to escape
is shot on site. I assure you that
several are shot each week. No
prisoner has ever escaped from
Hammelburg, and no prisoner ever
will.

(Beat)
Follow our rules and we shall
coexist peacefully. Questions?

WATERS

We have marched from Poland. 45 days without adequate clothing or proper rations--through the coldest winter in 20 years. Many have died along the way, and many are close to death now. You'll have no trouble with us.

Goeckel nods back.

GOECKEL

Good. Very good. I think we shall get along pleasantly.

Waters raises his hands in a salute. Goeckel returns it.

5 EXT. GERMAN HILLSIDE NIGHT

5

CAPTAIN ABE BAUM, 24, 6-foot-two-inches tall and slim, a tough, stubborn soldier with a short mustache. He is our protagonist--a poor kid from the Bronx who is as driven as they come. He became an officer the hard way: by earning it. His rank should allow him the luxury of hanging back and barking orders, but he's almost always up front--in the middle of harm's way--driving his men forward.

He walks forward slowly, at a crouch, rifle in hand. He suddenly stops, signaling to the TWELVE U.S. SOLDIERS behind him.

They stop, too. Several beats, as they watch:

TWO U.S. SOLDIERS, about 50 feet in front of them, keep walking forward.

CLICK. The Two soldiers' faces are frozen with fear. Beat. An EXPLOSION blows them off their feet. They hit the ground, bloody, writhing in agony.

TWO SOLDIERS
Medic! Medic!!!

A MEDIC rushes up beside Baum.

MEDIC 1
Sir, I can't go in there. I'd get killed.

Baum gives the Medic a hard look. He removes his rifle and hands it to him.

MEDIC

Sir, what are you doing?

Ignoring him, Baum proceeds into the minefield, towards the SCREAMING soldiers. This is about bravery, to be sure. But it's more than that. It's about Baum having to prove he deserves his place every day.

He walks as gingerly as he can, gently placing one foot after the other. Every time he steps, LEAVES CRUNCH under him.

The Twelve Soldiers watch nervously.

Baum gets closer. About ten feet away from the wounded soldiers, Baum puts his foot down. CLICK.

Baum immediately wheels. These mines are nasty: when triggered, they fly up from the ground to the height of a man's balls, and then they go off: spraying metal fragments everywhere.

AN EXPLOSION hurls Baum forward, face first.

After a moment, he painfully collects himself. Because he wheeled, the shrapnel pierced his rear. He is injured, but able to move.

Through sheer force of will, he turns and crawls forward, toward the wounded soldiers.

He reaches a soldier and, panting, grabs him. He drags him back towards his men.

When he gets close, the Medic rushes out to meet him.

BAUM

Get the other one first.

Yup: that's a Bronx accent. The "r"s are soft.

The Medic looks at him, then goes off into the minefield, the path now cleared, for the other wounded soldier.

Baum's other men come rushing out to get him. He collapses.

Across a room full of hospital beds. The good news is that not too many of them are occupied at the moment. In the corner, we find Baum, fully awake, restless despite his injuries. He hears music and the sound of a crowd celebrating--from downstairs perhaps?

5A

CONTINUED:

5A

A nurse comes over to check on him.

BAUM

Hey Karen, wanna dance?

KAREN

(smiles)

Very funny. You're not even
supposed to stand up for another
week.

Baum promptly stands up. Clearly it's painful, but he's doing everything he can to cover it. His wry smile makes a well-timed appearance. He mock salutes her.

BAUM

What does a man have to do to get a
dress uniform around here?

Karen laughs. He's a pretty successful flirt. She's game.

KAREN

I'll be right back.

DISSOLVE TO:

5B

INT. US ARMY FORWARD HOSPITAL LOBBY NIGHT

5B

Downstairs, a crowd of soldiers and nurses has taken over the lobby for a makeshift celebration. We find them in full party mode. Booze pours freely. Couples dance. Much needed laughter abounds.

At the far door, we see a tall handsome man in uniform and his date enter the party. It's Baum and Karen of course.

BAUM

Let me ask you again: wanna dance?

KAREN

I'd love to.

And just like that, they're whirling through the crowd. It turns out they're both very good dancers.

He smiles. She smiles. He holds her close. They're both having a great time.

He dips her, twirls her. And as he reaches to pull her back to him, a grimace overtakes him.

(CONTINUED)

5B

CONTINUED:

5B

BAUM

I think I popped a couple of
stitches.

She winces, knowing how painful that can be.

He pulls her through the crowd by the hand into...

5C

INT. US ARMY FORWARD HOSPITAL BATHROOM NIGHT

5C

Baum clearly was prepared for this possibility. He retrieves medical tape from his pocket, takes off his coat and then his pants. And sure enough, he's popped a lot of stitches on his legs.

KAREN

Oh god, you popped a bunch of them.
(she counts)
Eleven.

Baum hands her the tape.

BAUM

No time for stitches in the field.
Can you make a butterfly?

She doesn't know what that is. He shows her: tape in the shape of a butterfly that pulls a wound together. Eleven times more, and he's as good as new (sort of).

BAUM (CONT'D)

Great. Let's get back out there

KAREN

(laughing)

You're insane!

BAUM

You're not the first one to tell me
that.

She laughs harder.

5D

INT. US ARMY FORWARD HOSPITAL DAY

5D

The next morning: Baum is in bed again. A doctor comes by to examine him. Lifts up the hospital gown and sees the carnage Baum has inflicted on his legs, and those 11 butterflies.

ARMY DOCTOR

Where have you been?

(CONTINUED)

5D

CONTINUED:

5D

BAUM
 (smiles)
 I never left the bed.

They both know he's lying through his teeth. But he's a charming liar. Plus the doctor knows what he's been through, and cuts him a break.

6

EXT. HAMMELBURG POW CAMP DAY

6

HUNDREDS OF POWS stand on a food line. Each holds a small bowl and spoon and eagerly watches the food being served.

On line stands Colonel Waters.

VOICE
 Sir?

Waters turns to find POW SECOND LIEUTENANT RICHARD BARON, 21, emaciated, six foot one and 130 pounds (he's lost 45 pounds). With him are THREE OTHER POWS, all emaciated.

BARON
 Lieutenant Baron, Sir. Any news from the outside?

WATERS
 Sorry, Lieutenant, I'm in the dark.

They are each doled out a ladelful of soup, and they all find a quiet place at the side of the mayhem.

Waters looks at his bowl suspiciously, mixing it with his spoon. Small chunks float in the green liquid.

POW 4
 Maggots.

Waters looks at him.

POW 5
 They call it "hornet soup." I just take em out.

POW5 pulls them out, one at a time. POW4 eats them.

BARON
 That's the big debate around here-- whether to eat them or not. Ya know, protein and all.

Suddenly, a SHOT rings out. All heads turn.

(CONTINUED)

A U.S. POW lies face first on the barbed wire fence, shot in the back. DOGS BARK and GERMAN GUARDS YELL orders.

BARON (CONT'D)
(eyes welling up)
Goddamn sons of bitches.

7 INT. US ARMY FORWARD HEADQUARTERS - DAY

7

General Patton walks down a hallway, Major Stiller at his side. Stiller speaks in hushed, reverent tones.

STILLER
Are you sure about this?

PATTON
This army may have millions of men.
But I've only got three kids--none
of them expendable.

(beat)
You've seen the intelligence.
They're starting to kill our
officers in the POW camps. If we
don't act now...

He doesn't even want to finish that sentence.

We can see Stiller is still resistant to the idea, but he's smart enough to know he had better just listen first.

PATTON (CONT'D)
How long have you known Bea?

STILLER
Since before she was born.

PATTON
Then you'll understand: with all
the power invested in me by the
greatest military machine in human
history, what am I supposed to tell
my daughter? "I'm very sorry honey,
I couldn't save your husband"?

STILLER
Sir...with all due respect,
Hammelburg is 60 miles behind enemy
lines--in the wrong direction.
We've never sent a task force that
deep without support.

(beat)
(MORE)

STILLER (CONT'D)

They could run into a full division. From a tactical point of view...it could be suicide.

Patton turns and looks directly at Stiller. He breaks into a grin.

PATTON

Then we're gonna need a damn good man to lead it.

Stiller thinks Patton has annointed him. He actually smiles.

STILLER

Yes sir.

Patton blows through the door into a room full of officers, Stiller trailing him.

We're in the office of LIEUTENANT COLONEL CREIGHTON ABRAMS, 30, Commander of the 4th Armored Division's Combat Command B, a battle-hardened leader with a broad, fleshy face. He stands behind his desk, chewing hard on the stub of a cigar. The man always has a cigar in his mouth, with the possible exceptions of meal and shower time.

Beside him stands LIEUTENANT COLONEL HAROLD COHEN, 40s, Commander of the 10th Infantry Battalion, wiry, good natured, but tough as nails. Steel-rimmed glasses, covered with grime, sit on his long and narrow face, and he pores over a map with Abrams. He's from Spartanburg, South Carolina--with a big Southern accent.

As tough as Abrams and Cohens are, they look kind compared to Major Stiller. And of course Patton inspires a bit of awe too.

Salutes all around.

PATTON

Where's Baum?

ABRAMS

(to Cohen)

Bring him in

Baum is ushered in through a side door. To say he's surprised is to underestimate considerably. Holy shit: General Patton. He salutes. Takes in a deep breath.

Abrams hands Patton a piece of paper: *clearly the dossier on Baum. Patton looks it over for a moment.*

PATTON

Captain Baum. You're one hell of an unusual officer...dropped out of a Bronx high school at 16 to work in a garment factory. Your folks lose their jobs?

Baum nods.

PATTON (CONT'D)

God-damned Depression.

(he glances at the paper)
No college degree. Didn't go to West Point. Enlisted under-age with parental consent. Note in the file from a training camp officer complaining about your lack of respect for authority. "A stubborn individualist," it says here.

A pause. It's getting tense in this room--Patton seems to be pointing out all of Baum's shortcomings. Abrams, Cohen and Baum might as well be holding their breath.

PATTON (CONT'D)

Vomited in front of your whole platoon during basic training. Then swore you'd never touch a never drop of alcohol until the war's over. Have you?

BAUM

First and last time for everything, sir.

Good answer. Patton understands.

PATTON

History of clashes with superior officers in the European theater, including one whose attempt to court marshall you was over-ruled.

Jesus. He's not sparing any of the gory details. And then Patton grins.

PATTON (CONT'D)

You'll be perfect...I like a man who has a lot to prove.

Baum breathes.

Now it's time for Patton to pay a compliment. We see yet another reason why he's such a great leader: he pushes, prods, screams, cajoles, flatters...whatever it takes to get the most out of his men.

PATTON (CONT'D)

You rose from private to captain in four years?

(doesn't wait for an answer)

I've been in this army one helluva a long time, and I don't believe I've ever seen that before. Well done, son.

It has the desired effect on Baum. He's a proud man, but never more so than now.

And then Patton's back to the task at hand.

PATTON (CONT'D)

Captain, you've been picked to lead a task force.

ON STILLER, *who suddenly realizes he's not leading this mission.* He's doing everything he can to hold in his anger. It's not quite working.

PATTON (CONT'D)

Take it 60 miles east, to Hammelburg, liberate 200 POWS and bring them back.

Baum stares at them, not sure if he's even allowed to speak. But the daunting nature of the proposal compels him. Here's a nice surprise: Baum may not have had many advantages growing up, but he's really smart, and articulate.

This is one charismatic, confident man.

BAUM

Sir, that's an awfully long way for a task force. A mission like that really needs at least a combat command--

ABRAMS

We've been down this road. We don't have 3,000 men. You've got 294. That's it.

Baum looks at them, registering just how crazy this sounds.

COHEN

(pacifying, points to map)
Intel reports almost no resistance
in this area. The Germans aren't
expecting us to come this way. And
you'll have air support...weather
permitting.

Even Cohen knows this doesn't sound promising.

ABRAMS

Are you up for leading this?

BAUM

Of course, sir. But the whole
brigade just came off 36 hours of
hard fighting. There's thousands of
guys out there who haven't slept.

STILLER

Tough shit.

They turn and look.

Stiller grins back and it's more like a frown, his face
breaking into a map of hard lines and wrinkles.

STILLER (CONT'D)

I haven't slept in three years.

BAUM

Who are you...sir?

PATTON

Major Stiller. My aide.

Baum looks at Abrams and Cohen, smelling something fishy;
they avert their eyes.

PATTON (CONT'D)

Very good, gentleman. I'll leave
you to work out the details.

And he's out the door. Baum has a million questions running
through his head. Most of them are not encouraging.

BAUM

Sir, may I ask: why a POW camp? We
came across one a few weeks back
that had 5,000 men, and we went
right by.

ABRAMS
 (not answering)
 Abe, we're wasting time.

Abrams gestures for everyone to follow him. They walk into:

8A INT. US ARMY FORWARD HEADQUARTERS - MAP ROOM DAY 8A

Baum takes his place between Abrams and Cohen, studying the map on the wall with them.

ABRAMS
 Speed is the key. You'll have to get there and back before they can organize a defense. Ya got 24 hours, max.

The map is a complicated tangle of roads, rivers, bridges and strategic points, heavily marked with military positions.

ABRAMS (CONT'D)
 Most of the German defenses are here, in Aschaffenburg. We're gonna help break you through the German line about a mile south of there, at a small town, Schweinheim. Intel says you might get a little flack in the center of town, but most likely you'll be through before they wake up.

BAUM
 We can't go around?

COHEN
 It's the only road...unless you'd prefer to get bogged down in a muddy field?

Cohen moves his finger along the map.

COHEN (CONT'D)
 Your first objective is finding the highway: 26. It's only eight miles from Schweinheim. It shouldn't be mined. If you can find that, you'll pick up good speed, and cruise all the way to Gemunden. After Gemunden, you'll need to find another highway: 27. It leads right to Hammelburg. At top speed, the whole run could be made in three hours.

BAUM
I don't see the POW camp.

Abrams and Cohen exchange a look.

ABRAMS
We don't know where it is.

Baum looks at them, dubious.

STILLER
Find a local. Choke it out of him.

They all turn and look; Stiller grins back.

They turn back to the map.

BAUM
All of these lines crossing
Gemunden. I don't like it. Looks
like rail lines. Could be a troop
depot.

ABRAMS
Intel says no resistance. You'll
have to go on that.

Baum points to the river.

BAUM
Did they say anything about whether
any of these bridges are still
standing.

COHEN
We don't know.

This gets worse by the minute. Baum paces the room,
thinking...and then he forges ahead.

BAUM
You said 200 POWS?
(beat)
OK. I'll need 30 half tracks to
bring em back.

COHEN
Done.

BAUM
I'll need a company of tanks--light
tanks to run point, and Shermans to
blast through when we need to.
(MORE)

8A

CONTINUED: (2)

8A

BAUM (CONT'D)

30 of each, at least. And a company
of infantry.

ABRAMS

Infantry, OK. But I can only spare
10 Shermans and 5 light tanks.

Baum stares back, not liking the sound of this, either.

BAUM

I'll need heavy guns. 105s. At
least 10 of them. Our Shermans
can't beat those Tigers.

COHEN

You got three.

Baum's anxiety rises. He's covering the best he can, but this
is sounding really bad.

BAUM

I'll need jeeps. For recon, and for
us. Half a dozen.

COHEN

Done.

BAUM

Ammo. At least 100 cases.

COHEN

Done.

BAUM

And fuel. 200 drums.

ABRAMS

I can only spare 100.

BAUM

That's not enough, sir. None of
those vehicles can make it 60 miles
and back without refueling.

ABRAMS

That's all we've got. Find a way.
Capture enemy vehicles--siphon.

Baum's anxiety jumps another 10 points. How the hell is he
supposed to get this done?

BAUM

We're gonna have casualties. I'll
need a medic station.

COHEN

Can't be spared.

Baum gives him a look.

BAUM

Then give me four surgeons and six
medics.

COHEN

You got two medics, that's it.

BAUM

What am I supposed to do with my
wounded?

STILLER

Clean em, dress em, and leave em on
the side of the road.

Baum stares at Stiller. That's just not human. This is the briefing from hell. Even Abrams is showing the tension: he's clamped down so hard on his cigar, and his hands are both balled into fists.

COHEN

(to Baum)

This task force can NOT stop. There
just isn't time.

Beat.

BAUM

I'll need the best men we've got. I
want Sergeant Graham on those 105s.

ABRAMS

Done. Who else?

BAUM

I want Hoffner on Recon. Nutto on
the Shermans. As for the rest, I'd
have to think about it.

STILLER

Don't think too long--this show's
outta here at 1800.

BAUM
(to Abrams and Cohen)
Tonight!?

Abrams and Cohen evade Baum's look.

BAUM (CONT'D)
How long until the division follows
us in?

Cohen and Abrams exchange an uncomfortable look. Abrams clears his throat.

ABRAMS
It's not.
(beat)
You're on your own.

Baum stares, flabbergasted. He now realizes just how impossible this mission is.

BAUM
Let me get this straight: you want me to take an under-manned, under-fueled, under-equipped task force 60 miles behind enemy lines. You want me to travel unknown, unmarked roads--at night--and find a camp whose location we do not know, rescue 200 men, and return within 24 hours--all with no divisional support. Is this correct, sir?

COHEN
(apologetically)
You'll also need to take one of those bridges.

BAUM
If there is one.

STILLER
Sounds like fun, huh?

They turn and look at him.

STILLER (CONT'D)
(smiling)
Don't worry. I'm coming with ya.

ABRAMS
Captain Baum is leading this task force. He gives the orders.

STILLER

I'm not disputing that, sir. It's
his show. I'm just coming along.

COHEN

What for?

Stiller breaks into an evil smile.

STILLER

For the laughs.

They stare at him, wondering if he's joking.

He's not.

STILLER (CONT'D)

You pull this off, Patton will give
you the Congressional Medal of
Honor.

BAUM

You don't need to bribe me.

The room is silent. Abrams and Cohen are now really
uncomfortable. Baum leads the way out of a tense situation.
He breaks into a grin.

BAUM (CONT'D)

If I didn't know better, I'd say
you boys were trying to get rid of
me.

On Stiller coming toward us in a hurry. He's trying to catch
up to the guy walking briskly in front of him--Baum.

Now that they're out of earshot of senior brass, Stiller is
going to piss all over Baum.

STILLER

Should we call your daddy and get
permission for you to go on this
mission too?

If Baum could kill Stiller right now, he would. But of course
he can't. Hitting an officer is an invitation to immediate
court martial. Baum needs to finesse his way into getting
some respect from Stiller, despite his youth.

BAUM

We don't have a phone in our apartment: it's the Bronx. But you probably know that already from my file.

Stiller acknowledges he's seen Baum's file with a nod. Baum is thinking about just the right way to verbally counter-punch. And then he lands on it...

BAUM (CONT'D)

One Sunday in the spring--must have been 1939--my father asks me to the come to the front window of our apartment. It was a beautiful day, except for one thing. We look down, and there's my older brother Bernie getting beat up--because he's Jewish.

(beat)

They're calling him "kike," hitting him in the head and kicking him, hard. It wasn't good. And the only thing my father says? "Don't ever let that happen to you."

Baum's eyes are ablaze, piercing with intelligence and street smarts.

BAUM (CONT'D)

My father was a giant of a man. So if I needed his permission to sign up because I wasn't yet 21, there's no shame in that; it's one of the proudest moments of my life.

And now Baum gets right up in Stiller's face--he's intimidating when he's mad.

BAUM (CONT'D)

Just so we're clear: once we're behind enemy lines, I don't need permission to do anything from anybody, least of all from you.

(really threatening)

If I tell you to wipe my ass, you damn well better do it.

Stiller gets the message.

A huge convoy of German vehicles RUMBLES down the cobblestone streets. At its head rides GERMAN SS MAJOR VON LAMBERT, 20s, ruthless. He signals, and the convoy stops.

Von Lambert exits and a HALF DOZEN SS OFFICERS and A DOZEN SS SOLDIERS exit with him. Von Lambert approaches a house, his boots ECHOING off the cobblestone. He stops and looks up.

A white flag hanging from a window is quickly pulled indoors.

Von Lambert nods to a fellow Officer, who immediately runs into the building with Another Officer.

Von Lambert waits.

FAINT SCREAMING, followed by the sound of people SCRAMBLING DOWN STAIRS.

In the doorway appear the two SS Officers, dragging TWO ELDERLY GERMAN CITIZENS, a husband and wife. An SS Officer holds up the white flag and hands it to Lambert, who looks at it with disgust. The wife CRIES.

Von Lambert steps up, calmly raises his gun and with TWO QUICK SHOTS, shoots the Elderly Man and Woman dead.

Von Lambert looks up, craning his neck around him.

All of the town citizens watching from their windows immediately retract their heads back into their homes.

VON LAMBERT
(loudly)
Anyone who does not fight the
Americans will be shot on sight.

A NOISE, and Von Lambert turns. A group of TOWN CITIZENS, including small boys and elderly men, approach.

BOY
We will fight, sir!

ELDERLY MAN
Give us weapons.

The crowd CHEERS, becoming more emphatic.

Von Lambert smiles.

VON LAMBERT
Distribute grenades and rifles.

10

EXT. SCHWEINHEIM OUTSKIRTS DIRT ROAD SUNSET

10

DOZENS OF U.S. SOLDIERS work getting the Sherman tanks ready, tinkering beneath them, adjusting gun mechanisms.

Baum walks quickly across rough terrain. SERGEANT ELLIS WISE, 20s, follows, hurrying to keep up. Wise has been with Baum since they trained together in England. He's a brilliant map reader--no small thing when you're in a foreign land trying to find your way.

Stiller is right behind them. Baum looks at him over his shoulder, annoyed by his presence; but he lets it go, realizing he won't shake him.

11

EXT. SCHWEINHEIM OUTSKIRTS DIRT ROAD SUNSET

11

SERGEANT CHARLES GRAHAM, mid 20s, sits atop his tank turret, checking and re-checking the mounted machine gun atop his gigantic 105mm Sherman tank. He holds up the ammo and lets it fall gently in his hand, WHISTLING to himself. Here's an unusual man--seriously battle hardened, and really happy about it. Give him adversity, and he'll give you a smile. A Southerner. He may have very little formal education. But he's a brilliant technician who knows everything about his machinery, can fix damn near anything.

Graham takes off his shirt and puts on a fresh one.

TWO PRIVATES, 20s, watch him while scrubbing the sides of their tanks with grease.

PRIVATE 1
What's he doing?

PRIVATE 2
In case he gets hit.

Private 1 stares back, puzzled.

PRIVATE 2 (CONT'D)
Your clothes are what they'll stuff into ya if ya get wounded. Dirty clothes infect a wound.
(beat, smiles)
Might make the difference in keeping that leg.

Private 1 looks down at his leg. He turns pale.

PAN TO: Baum, Wise, and Stiller walk quickly over a dirt road and come upon the rear of the convoy.

(CONTINUED)

WISE

294 men and 53 vehicles in all, sir. As you requested, Sergeant Graham is bringing up the rear. His three tanks are equipped with our heaviest artillery: 105s.

A Soldier spots Baum's group and scrambles off his tank, at attention. Others catch on and do the same.

Graham looks up from his guns, and slides down the tank. He extends his hand, grinning.

BAUM

Sergeant Graham.
(with affection)
My favorite hillbilly. You ready for me?

GRAHAM

(serious southern drawl)
Wouldn't want to be anywhere else, sir. This beats the hell out of frying up short-orders at the Hotel Lexington grill.

Baum laughs.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

I heard you requested me, sir. I won't let you down.

BAUM

Some fine machinery here, Sergeant.

GRAHAM

You might want to try not being out in front of it for once, sir. In case you haven't heard, this god-damn war is almost over. Be nice if you lived through it.

BAUM

(smiles)
Nah, I'll just keep running around between the bullets.

Graham laughs. Baum moves on. As Graham watches him go, a Private approaches.

PRIVATE 3

(to Graham)
Waddaya know about him?

(CONTINUED)

Graham searches for the right way to say this.

GRAHAM

Let's just say he's not the team-building type. More like he pushes himself to do the impossible. And you damn well better follow.

(beat)

The last time he lead a task force it was to Bastogne. He was first man in--beat the whole goddamn army. Got in so fast that the Seventh was pissed he crossed into their territory; Patton had to order him back. If they'd let him stay, they wouldn't have been stuck.

(beat)

Get ready for a helluva ride, Private. Baum don't quit.

Baum and his group approach the next set of vehicles: the half tracks. They resemble massive pickup trucks, but are white and over 20 feet long and able to hold about 15 men in the back. On the hood of their cabs are mounted machine guns.

DOZENS OF SOLDIERS form a line, loading drums of fuel and shiny boxes of ammunition. Others sit patiently in the back, waiting, rifles in hand. A few soldiers eat; some take trips to piss. The air is tense.

WISE

The infantry and half tracks, sir, commanded by Captain Lange.

CAPTAIN ROBERT LANGE, 20s, new to this group and nervous about it. He approaches, flanked by THREE SOLDIERS. They salute and join Baum as he walks.

BAUM

Captain Lange. Welcome to the 10th Armored.

LANGE

Thank you, sir.

BAUM

No leg stretching and no piss breaks for your men, OK? If I say haul ass, we gotta haul ass.

(MORE)

BAUM (CONT'D)

There are 53 vehicles in this convoy, and you've got almost half of them. I can't have any delays whatsoever.

Lange nods. Baum can see he's nervous.

BAUM (CONT'D)

What is this, your second week on the front lines?

LANGE

My third, sir.

BAUM

You know how I've stayed alive all this time?

(beat)

I never freeze...it's a lot harder to hit a moving target.

Lange isn't quite sure what to make of what seems to be an overly simplistic solution to daunting circumstances.

BAUM (CONT'D)

That might seem obvious enough to us both standing here in the quiet of the night. But you get out there under heavy fire--and a fright comes over you that you aren't sure you can put down--and it's a damn good thing to remember.

(beat)

If you want to survive, you can't stop and think. You have to keep moving.

Lange gets it, and appreciates it. He's gained a bit of strength on the spot.

LANGE

May I ask a question, sir?

BAUM

Go ahead.

LANGE

I calculated it three times... I don't see how we have enough fuel to make it back.

BAUM

You're right, Captain. We don't.

12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

Lange stares. This is really bad news, and he knows it.

13 EXT. SCHWEINHEIM OUTSKIRTS DIRT ROAD SUNSET

13

Baum reaches the Sherman tanks. Enormous, armed with 75mm cannons, they make an impressive site. DOZENS OF SOLDIERS crawl beneath, adjusting various mechanisms. Others sit on the tanks, covering them like ants, checking their rifles. The mood here is more serious. A few tanks idle NOISILY.

Wise looks over a clipboard as they walk.

WISE

C Company, sir. Ten Shermans. The C.O. is Lieutenant Nutto.

SECOND LIEUTENANT WILLIAM NUTTO, 20s, Commander of the Sherman tank company. He's a Texan, whip smart and always ready with a joke. Would have finished law school by now if the war hadn't broken out. He's also something of a ladies man, which is a little tough to keep up in a war zone. He looks up at a soldier on a tank.

NUTTO

(Texas twang)

Swivel that cannon right again--it seems slow.

Baum's group approaches, and Nutto and Sutto offer quick salutes.

NUTTO (CONT'D)

Damn proud to be with you, sir.

Baum notices a nearby soldier, well on his way to getting drink.

BAUM

I thought I made it perfectly clear: no alcohol.

Nutto smiles.

NUTTO

That's my policy too sir. No alcohol for anyone.

A beat as Baum tries to square this pronouncement with the drunken soldier to his left.

NUTTO (CONT'D)

One exception: Private Benson. It turns out he's the best driver we've got--completely fearless--but only when he's loaded.

Baum likes that. It's the kind of ingenuity that wins wars.

BAUM

You're my muscle, Nutto. It'll be up to you to barrel through when I need it. Don't let us down.

NUTTO

I haven't yet, sir.

BAUM

We're running night lights only. And sirens. Make some noise, Lieutenant.

NUTTO

(sly, enjoying himself)
That's my specialty: terrorizing enemy infantry.

They both smile. They shake hands.

EXT. SCHWEINHEIM OUTSKIRTS DIRT ROAD SUNSET

Baum and his men reach a procession of jeeps.

WISE

And then we have the medical jeep, manned by medics Privates Zeno and Demchak.

MEDIC DAVID ZENO, 20s, and MEDIC ANDREW DEMCHAK, 20s, are bent over inspecting syringes. They turn and salute.

BAUM

(to Zeno and Demchack)

We have no doctor on this trip. We have no time, and we are not equipped to deal with the seriously wounded. Take care of my men as best you can.

ZENO AND DEMCHACK

Yes, sir.

ZENO

Sir? If I may ask, how long until the division follows us in? Leaving wounded roadside might work for a few hours, but if--

BAUM

It's not.

Zeno stares back, flabbergasted.

As Baum walks away, Zeno turns to Demchak.

ZENO

I've got a bad feeling about this.

EXT. SCHWEINHEIM OUTSKIRTS DIRT ROAD SUNSET

Baum and his entourage approach three more jeeps and NINE RECON SOLDIERS under the command of SECOND LIEUTENANT NORMAN HOFFNER, 20s, who nervously pace and smoke.

WISE

The final three jeeps are recon, sir, under the command of Second Lieutenant Norman Hoffner.

BAUM

(to Wise)

Recon is Purple Heart work and leading one is like playing Russian Roulette. Average burn out time is about eight weeks. Hoffner's been at it 9 months.

They reach Hoffner, who turns and salutes. He has deep, dark bags under his eyes.

BAUM (CONT'D)

How you holding up, Norman?

HOFFNER

Fine, sir.

Baum moves on. A recon soldier has just realized who's running this task force. He's terrified.

RECON SOLDIER 1

Oh shit, that nutjob Baum is running this? That's the kiss of death.

HOFFNER
Not in my experience.

The recon soldier realizes that the mythology about Baum and the truth may not be one and the same.

RECON SOLDIER 1
Ya ridden point for him before?

HOFFNER
Since the war started. Baum is
always first in. Given his rank, he
shouldn't be.
(beat)
He's one of us.

16 EXT. SCHWEINHEIM OUTSKIRTS HILLTOP SUNSET

16

Baum, Wise and Stiller have reached a small hilltop, overlooking the outskirts of Schweinheim. From here we can see for miles: the small, German country towns and rolling hills look idyllic in the sunset.

Positioned about a half mile before them is a huge contingent of U.S. tanks and troops, sitting quietly in an orchard, waiting to attack Schweinheim.

Baum looks out across the river.

BAUM
We've gotta get there before dawn.
At first light the Germans will see
how small we are. They'll send a
battalion and have us surrounded
within an hour. We don't have 24
hours. We've got 10.

Baum looks at his watch. The minute hand is approaching the top of the hour--just about time to move out. He storms off down the hill. Stiller follows, as usual.

17 EXT. SCHWEINHEIM OUTSKIRTS DIRT ROAD SUNSET

17

Sergeant Graham and Captain Nutto, sit atop a tank, smoking, quietly awaiting the action they know will come. Zeno's there. Lange is there too--the new guy with questions. They all have the requisite fear that inevitably rises just before a battle begins. Lange has it worst, by far. They talk to try to quell the rising anxiety.

LANGE
Have you guys been together long?

Nutto nods. Graham too.

ZENO

Our unit's an experiment, Captain. Quite a few of us--Baum included--are Jewish.

(beat)

The brass decided to put a bunch of us together. See how we'd do. The thought was we'd be more motivated, with Hitler and all.

LANGE

Has it worked?

GRAHAM

(nods)

They've got more kills and more medals than just about anyone else.

NUTTO

The stakes are higher. If the Germans catch you, they'll put you in a POW camp. They catch a Jewish soldier, he gets shot on the spot.

LANGE

What about the tags?

(gestures)

The dogtags. The Germans would know.

ZENO

We don't hide it. We'd rather get killed being Jews than go down otherwise.

NUTTO

Baum has it twice as bad. The Germans like to shoot commanding officers on sight too.

Lange is amazed. He sees Baum coming, trailed as ever by Major Stiller.

LANGE

Is Leatherface on the team?

They all laugh.

NUTTO

Major Stiller? No chance.

(beat)

(MORE)

17

CONTINUED: (2)

17

NUTTO (CONT'D)

He fought with Patton in World War I. After that, he was a Texas Ranger. Rumor has it, when the war broke out, he showed up at Patton's door wearing his old World War I uniform and helmet!

LANGE

Why is he coming?

NUTTO

Nobody knows. But it damn sure isn't "just for the laughs."

GRAHAM

Watch yourself around Stiller, Captain.

Lange appreciates the advice

NUTTO

(extra Texas twang)

Just because he's from Texas doesn't mean he isn't an asshole.

They all laugh.

18

EXT. SCHWEINHEIM OUTSKIRTS NIGHT

18

BAUM

(loud)

Pancake!

CAPTAIN RICHARD PANCAKE, 40s, a capable Captain from West Virginia, turns toward us. He is surrounded by a contingent of tanks, with INFANTRY milling about.

BAUM (CONT'D)

I know you're not following us all the way. But I'm fucked if you don't blast a clean hole through the line. We have to be through this village in half an hour. Can you do it?

CAPTAIN PANCAKE

(West Virginian accent)

I don't know why not. Main road can't be more than half a mile long. Intel says no resistance. Probably a bunch of old ladies hiding in their cellars.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

33.

18

CONTINUED:

18

CAPTAIN PANCAKE (CONT'D)

Shit, you might have this village
in ten minutes.

BAUM

(grabs him close)

I can not be late.

Baum turns and runs off.

Pancake looks after him, wondering. He turns to his men.

CAPTAIN PANCAKE

All right, you hot shots, light em up.

A CACOPHONY OF TANK IGNITIONS.

19

EXT. SCHWEINHEIM OUTSKIRTS HILLTOP SUNSET

19

Just as Baum reaches his waiting men, a HUGE EXPLOSION forces him to stumble.

The sky lights up as dozens of U.S. tanks fire at the small village of Schweinheim.

20

EXT. SCHWEINHEIM NIGHT

20

A horrific hail of FIRE from U.S. tanks lands squarely upon the small village of Schweinheim.

The corner of a building is BLOWN to pieces.

A second story window is SMASHED.

A massive church door is BLOWN to bits.

The barrage dies down, and the night becomes eerily silent. Smoke and dust linger in the air.

Nine U.S. tanks break from the contingent and slowly advance.

There is no reaction from Schweinheim whatsoever. All that can be heard is the eerie SQUEAKING of the U.S. tanks, as they inch their way forward.

The tanks are almost upon the village when a GERMAN SOLDIER appears in the middle of the road, popping up out of a hole in the ground. With perfect discipline, he steadies himself on one knee and calmly raises a Panzerfaust (a German bazooka) to his shoulder. He takes aim and FIRES.

21

INT. LEAD U.S. TANK NIGHT

21

The driver spots the enemy, but too late.

(CONTINUED)

21

CONTINUED:

21

U.S. DRIVER

Holy shit!
 (to his men)
 INCOMING!

They all brace themselves.

22

EXT. SCHWEINHEIM NIGHT

22

The missile sails through the night and lands squarely on the U.S. tank. A loud THUD. Beat. It EXPLODES.

The tank catches fire and stops, blocking the narrow main street. The entire U.S. motorcade is stuck behind it.

Suddenly, DOZENS OF GERMAN SOLDIERS poke rifles and machine guns out of windows and cellar hatches, FIRING.

Young men appear on rooftops, firing Panzers. Old women appear at windows, dropping grenades.

SEVERAL U.S. INFANTRY, accompanying the tanks, are hit. Others take cover and return FIRE, but many Americans fall.

23

EXT. SCHWEINEHIM OUTSKIRTS NIGHT

23

Pancake stands in his jeep, watching the scene.

CAPTAIN PANCAKE

Why the hell aren't they moving?
 (into CB)
 Get that goddamn tank out of the road! It's blocking the entire platoon!

24

INT. U.S. TANK NIGHT

24

CAPTAIN PANCAKE

(voiceover)
 Do you copy!?

Four out of the five soldiers in the tank are dead. The fifth, bloody, moves to the steering wheel, shoves the tank into gear and accelerates.

25

OMITTED

25

26

OMITTED

26

27

OMITTED

27

28	EXT. SCHWEINHEIM OUTSKIRTS NIGHT	28
	A CHEER in the U.S. camp as they watch the tank move and the road start to clear. Pancake chews roughly on his cigar.	
29	EXT. SCHWEINHEIM NIGHT	29
	The tank, still in flames, goes to the side of the road.	
	The street is now clear. The other tankers advance, FIRING. German soldiers start to fall.	
	Grenades are dropped out of house windows on infantry.	
30	INT. U.S. TANK NIGHT	30
31	EXT. SCHWEINHEIM OUTSKIRTS HILLTOP NIGHT	31
	Baum stands in his jeep, watching through his binoculars.	
	On the horizon, the firefight continues to rage in Schweinheim.	
	Agitated, he checks his watch: 24:00. He snatches the CB from Wise's hands.	
	<p style="text-align: center;">BAUM</p> <p>Goddamn it, Pancake, I need to get through that town now!</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">PANCAKE (VOICEOVER)</p> <p>Can't give ya what we don't got. Still too much resistance.</p>	
	Baum hurls down the CB. He is red in the face. Major Stiller comes up beside him.	
	<p style="text-align: center;">STILLER</p> <p>What's the problem?</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">BAUM</p> <p>Intel said no resistance and those boys are getting picked apart. We should've been through that town four hours ago. That's four hours of daylight. Our cover is now officially blown.</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">(beat)</p> <p>The problem is your boss' goddamn plan isn't working.</p>	

STILLER

That's cause ya haven't started it yet.

BAUM

And what the hell do you expect me to do, Major!? That town's one big wall of fire.

STILLER

I've been through worse. Have you?

Baum stares him down.

BAUM

(cold and hard)

My record speaks for itself, Major.

STILLER

I'll believe it when I see it.

A backup platoon of U.S. tanks descends on Schweinheim, FIRING. Buildings BLOW up. Germans fall.

U.S. infantry pour into the scene, ahead of the tanks. They run into the village, firing from the hip.

But the fighting is bloody. The Germans shoot from well-concealed hiding places deep inside of narrow windows, houses and alleyways. For every German that falls, a U.S. soldier falls too. It is hand-to-hand.

U.S. SOLDIER 1 removes a grenade from his vest and throws it into a window. It EXPLODES. He removes another and throws it into the second floor window. It EXPLODES.

Baum is pacing like a caged animal. He checks his watch.

The men watch him; they see how enraged he is, and dare not approach. Baum finally marches towards his jeep.

BAUM

(into CB)

Pancake, we're coming through.

PANCAKE
 (voiceover)
 The town's not clear. I need
 another hour.

BAUM
 I'm not saying it again. You get
 your men out of my way. I'll be
 there in five minutes.
 (SCREAMING to his men)
 TURN EM OVER!

A CACOPHONY OF IGNITIONS.

Stiller's jeep pulls up alongside Baum's.

STILLER
 Pancake said the town isn't clear?

BAUM
 (fiddling with his pistol)
 That's right. And I'm going first.

Stiller breaks into a grin. Baum may never give up thinking he has to prove himself, and that suits Stiller just fine.

STILLER
 It's about time.

A TREMENDOUS WAIL OF SIRENS fills the air, and Task force Baum, 53 vehicles in all, Baum in the lead, RUMBLES across the hillside, heading towards Schweinheim in the dark.

BAUM
 (into CB)
 Full Speed!

The vehicles pick up, bouncing on the rough terrain.

U.S. tanks and infantry hurry to the side of the narrow streets. The German FIRE never ceases, and some U.S. soldiers fall.

A great noise GROWS on the horizon. The U.S. soldiers stop and look up.

Into the town of Schweinheim RUMBLES task force Baum, SIRENS BLASTING. The convoy takes heavy FIRE.

The bullets mostly bounce off the armor, and the infantry clinging to the tanks and on the half tracks manage to stay mostly out of the line of fire. They're rolling through so fast that little real damage is done.

Baum's jeep is almost out of the town now...

Suddenly, a Panzerfaust WHISTLES through the night. The rocket rings past Baum's head, missing him by a few feet.

It smashes into a building, EXPLODING, sending shrapnel everywhere.

A soldier in Baum's jeep SCREAMS and clutches his face. Baum reaches up and pulls back the soldier's hands: his face is bloody. Shrapnel has torn it apart.

The soldier falls, convulsing, in the back seat.

BAUM

Get the medics up here.

DRIVER

(into CB)

We need a medic up here now!

Baum holds the soldier's face, trying to staunch the blood. The trauma prompts Baum to lose his composure for just a second. He covers:

BAUM

You're gonna be all right.

Sergeant Graham rides in the open hatch of his tank. He spots the source of the rocket fire: a lone GERMAN SOLDIER positioned in a tower.

Graham expertly positions his gun, taking his time. He FIRES, holding with both hands as his machine gun shakes violently.

The German falls from the tower, SCREAMING, and lands with a THUD.

Baum & Co roll out of town and into the countryside.

The convoy slows and the medic jeep pulls up next to Baum's without stopping. So does Stiller's.

Medic Zeno jumps down from his jeep and hops into Baum's.

ZENO
You hit, sir?

Baum shakes his head, and Zeno examines the dying Soldier.

Zeno turns to Baum and shakes his head. Stiller eyes Baum carefully, looking for a misstep.

BAUM
(to Zeno)
Fix him up the best you can and
leave him on the side of the road.
Maybe the Germans will find him.

ZENO
What if they don't?

Baum and Zeno both know it's likely nobody will find this soldier before he dies. But neither dares say it.

We see clearly in Baum's face that this is so wrong. War is full of loss. But losing a man this way--because you're forced to leave him like a dying dog on the side of the road--is completely unnecessary.

The moment has a surprisingly big impact on Baum: now more than ever, he can see that it's not enough to fearlessly drag his men into harm's way. He needs to protect them too.

Zeno picks up the soldier and exits the jeep. He lays him by the side of the road, administering to him.

Baum turns to Stiller.

BAUM
You still here for "the laughs"?

Stiller stares back, not giving Baum an inch.

The convoy suddenly stops when it reaches a fork in the road. HEAVY FIRE now rains on them from all sides.

The hatch opens in the lead tank and out pops Graham, looking from a crumpled map to the confusing, twisting streets.

Baum pulls up beside them.

Graham, confused, looks over to Baum. Baum, in turn, looks to Wise, who rapidly scans his map.

WISE
Right. I'd say right.

40.

38 CONTINUED: (2)

38

The convoy comes back to life, making a sharp right.

39 EXT. SCHWEINHEIM ELSEWHERE NIGHT

39

The convoy makes a turn, and the countryside spreads before them. They've made it.

The infantry riding on the lead tanks CHEER, and the vehicles behind them flash their lights and sound their HORNS.

40 INT. BERLIN HEADQUARTERS MORNING

40

A frantic control room. FOUR GERMAN OFFICERS AND SIX AIDES rush about in every direction. Lights blink everywhere; PHONES ring off the hook; maps are sprawled about on tables.

A GERMAN COMMANDING GENERAL, 60s, stands holding the phone, flanked by his subordinates. He removes his glasses, clearly agitated, and hands the phone to his Aide.

With a somber face he reaches across the map and moves several small arrows across the German lines.

The others look at him with grave expressions.

COMMANDING GENERAL

Patton's broken through. It may be the entire Third Army.

GERMAN GENERAL 1

But why there?

COMMANDING GENERAL

He's positioning himself for Berlin. He's trying to flank us.

He takes the icons representing German forces and positions them south. His men look up.

COMMANDING GENERAL (CONT'D)

We're going to meet them with the entire strength of the German army.

41 EXT. HAMMELBURG TOWN NIGHT

41

GERMAN HAUPTMANN KOEHL, 50s, a battle-scarred veteran, poorly shaven, sits by himself on the porch of his barracks, awake in the middle of the night, staring into space, smoking.

An AIDE rushes to him, phone in hand.

(CONTINUED)

41.

41

CONTINUED:

41

Koehl takes it, listens, then hangs up. He gets up slowly and heads to the door of the barracks, casually picking up a metal garbage can and lid on the way.

42

INT. HAMMELBURG BARRACKS NIGHT

42

Koehl flips on the light, revealing rows of sleeping GERMAN SOLDIERS--most of them really old, or really young. It's the end of the war, and everyone's been drafted.

Koehl holds out the metal can close to a soldier's ear and SMASHES the metal lid into it.

The Soldier jumps up in bed, as do all the others.

Koehl has a huge, bloodthirsty smile on his face.

KOEHL

The Americans are coming!

Koehl seems to welcome the onslaught. His new recruits look on in abject terror.

43

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD OUTSIDE SCHWEINHEIM NIGHT

43

It's QUIET now, the sirens cut off, and the terrain becomes increasingly rural. The country road rises and falls as they pass sprawling orchards and small farms. It is pitch black, the night lit only by the headlights on Baum's vehicles.

The convoy starts to slow, then comes to a stop.

Baum stands in his jeep (we'll see this a lot--even in battle). He signals to his driver and they pull out and speed to the front.

They screech to a stop beside the lead tank.

Hoffner holds a flashlight to his map, confused.

HOFFNER

It's not marked.

They all get out and walk to the intersection. It is a giant circle, roads leading out of it in every possible direction. There are no signs.

Stiller pulls up in his jeep beside them.

STILLER

What's the story?

(CONTINUED)

Baum ignores him, and instead steps forward and studies the intersection, turning in place.

WISE

(to Stiller)

We're looking for the main highway to Hammelburg, sir. Without it--

BAUM

Without it, we're fucked.

They all look back down at the map. It is old and complicated, very hard to read.

Zeno and Demchak are close enough to overhear.

ZENO

Ya know, I grew up there.

Demchak looks at him.

ZENO (CONT'D)

Hammelburg.

DEMCHAK

No shit.

ZENO

My people lived there 200 years-- then Hitler came to power and our neighbors suddenly hated us for being Jews.

(Beat)

Shit, it's like coming home. My father taught half the Germans around here how to shoot. That's what Hammelburg really is: a giant training ground. They use the whole area for target practice.

(beat)

I got a real bad feeling about this.

Several beats. Baum & company are still looking at the maps. There's no clear answer. Baum will have to go on a hunch.

BAUM

(to Graham)

Back up your tanks and head left.

STILLER

Shouldn't we send out recon first?

43.

43 CONTINUED: (2)

43

BAUM
No time.
(to others)
Move out.

They jump back in their jeeps, and the vehicles ROAR to life.

44 EXT. RURAL ROAD NIGHT

44

Increasingly rough terrain, as the pitted road narrows. Baum and Wise look out at the road, increasingly worried.

A HONKING up ahead. A rough bump, and the terrain changes to smooth pavement. A large sign reads: "26."

Baum smiles.

WISE
Good work, sir.

BAUM
We're not there yet. Top speed.
(into radio)
Full speed ahead.

All of the vehicles begin to gain speed.

45 EXT. OUTSKIRTS SMALL GERMAN VILLAGE NIGHT

45

The convoy cruises at good speed. Suddenly, it slows.

BAUM
(into CB)
What now?

VOICEOVER
We're approaching a village, sir.

Wise checks the map with the flashlight.

BAUM
(into CB)
No slowing. Don't fire unless
you're fired upon. Return fire on
the run.

The convoy gains speed again.

46 EXT. GERMAN VILLAGE NIGHT

46

The village is quiet. Baum studies the buildings. This town looks exactly as sleepy as the last one did--and we know what a nightmare that turned into.

(CONTINUED)

If Baum and everyone in the task force has a fair amount of anxiety, we understand it completely.

Approaching the front of the village...

ON BAUM...still all quiet from the village. Will the noise of the American convoy wake the Germans? Are they already lying in wait?

The Americans blow through to the middle part of the village. More vulnerable here than anywhere else. Baum damn near holds his breath. But still no fire.

They race through the far end of the village, and out into the countryside again. Not a single shot fired. Relief all around. That was better.

First light appears on the horizon. Daybreak.

The convoy ROARS on.

Baum checks his watch: 0:500. He rubs his eyes, exhausted.

NUTTO
(on the CB, false cheer)
Good morning, Captain Baum.

Baum smiles. Nutto's great at breaking up tension.

BAUM
What's so good about it?

NUTTO
(smiles)
I was hoping you could tell me.
(beat)
You sure are cranky when you don't get enough sleep.

Baum laughs.

Nutto, riding in the open hatch, raises his binoculars.

A convoy of ten German trucks heads toward them.

NUTTO (CONT'D)
(down into tank)
Enemy movement! Ten O'Clock!

The cannons on the tanks swivel, and the infantry cock and raise their rifles.

48 INT. U.S. TANK MORNING

48

Nutto drops down into the tank. He grabs the CB.

NUTTO
(into CB)
Sir, we've got enemy coming our
way. At least ten vehicles. I can't
tell if they know we're U.S.

49 EXT. CONVOY MORNING

49

Baum's raises his binoculars and studies them.

BAUM
They don't.
(beat)
Let em get close. Then fire at will.

50 EXT. TANK MORNING

50

Nutto watches with his binoculars.

The tanks are 100 yards away and closing fast, their SOUND
rising. The Germans HONK twice, cheerily, as they approach.

51 EXT. CONVOY MORNING

51

BAUM
Not yet....

52 EXT. TANK MORNING

52

The tanks are yards away.

NUTTO
Fire!

A TREMENDOUS SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS, as the U.S. tanks FIRE
their cannon at point blank range into the convoy of trucks.

The trucks are blown to bits, German soldiers falling out in
every direction.

The U.S. infantry open fire and massacre whoever's left.

A U.S. soldier in the rear suddenly stops firing.

The German soldiers, now nearly all dead, are actually
teenage girls, dressed in German uniforms. They crawl,
bloody, their light blond hair spilling out from their caps.

The U.S. Soldier leans over the side and VOMITS.

53 EXT. CONVOY MORNING 53

Baum's jeep passes, and he surveys the scene.

BAUM
(to Wise)
Flak girls. Hitler uses them to man
anti-aircraft artillery.
(shakes his head)
Goddamn war.

54	OMITTED	54
55	OMITTED	55
56	OMITTED	56
57	OMITTED	57
58	OMITTED	58
59	OMITTED	59
60	OMITTED	60
61	EXT. OUTSKIRTS GEMUNDEN MORNING	61

The convoy rolling smoothly through the countryside, then slows as it approaches a small city.

This city is criss-crossed with railroad tracks and has a river running through it. All the shutters are closed tight. The SILENT town seems deserted in the early morning light.

The men look slowly about, looking for a trap. Behind them, on the horizon, black smoke rises in huge clouds.

BAUM
(into CB)
Stop here.

The entire convoy comes to a stop and they all survey the bridge on the far side of the city. Lange comes up to Baum.

LANGE
I'll cross first, sir.

BAUM
I appreciate that, Lange. But we need tanks first. And recon before that. Hoffner!

Hoffner comes running up.

BAUM (CONT'D)
 Check the bridge. Make sure it's
 not mined. And hurry back. I don't
 like this place.

Hoffner's three recon jeeps race forward.

BAUM (CONT'D)
 (to Sidles)
 Radio for air support.

Sidles furiously taps out the morse code radio message.

Stiller's jeep pulls up beside Baum.

STILLER
 Why are we stopping?

BAUM
 (not looking at him)
 Recon.

STILLER
 What for? We're losing time. We
 have to take that bridge.

BAUM
 That's exactly what for. It could
 be mined.

STILLER
 There's no choice--it's the only
 way.

Baum turns and stares Stiller down.

BAUM
 This is *my* task force, Major.

Stiller stares back, but less defiantly this time. He's seen Baum in action now, and is beginning to respect the man. Baum senses this, opens up a bit.

BAUM (CONT'D)
 We've already lost the element of
 surprise...I never hated a sunrise
 more in my entire life.
 (beat)
 So we definitely can't afford to
 lose this bridge. It's the only
 direct route to our target.

STILLER
Fair enough.

Baum is pleasantly surprised. Maybe he won't have to fight Stiller the whole way to Hammelburg and back.

BAUM
This whole thing makes zero sense to me. We are always asking men to take risks, but they are calculated risks. We know we have a chance.
(beat)
Who was asleep when they calculated these odds?

Stiller doesn't engage. In fact, he doesn't even look over to Baum. Nonetheless, Baum keeps prodding, trying to get something out of Patton's aide.

BAUM (CONT'D)
The target is not militarily significant. We're seriously undermanned. And we've gone in alone.
(beat)
Any time anyone goes behind enemy lines, the division follows, and in force.

Stiller has to acknowledge that Baum is right. He's also mindful of all the men the task force has lost (and probably will lose). Plus, they're a long way from the prying oversight of General Patton. Stiller decides to trust Baum.

STILLER
You ever heard of Lieutenant Colonel John Waters?

BAUM
(impatient)
No.

STILLER
It's a name you won't want to forget...Patton's son in law.

All of a sudden, the whole insane mission makes sense to Baum. And yet, of course, it's senseless: hundreds of soldier's lives are being seriously endangered to save one man.

BAUM
You know him?

STILLER
I was at the wedding.

Baum deflates. He can't help it. Stiller notices.

STILLER (CONT'D)
What are you gonna do about it?

BAUM
I'm going to tell the men.

Stiller is shocked. This just isn't done. Soldiers are given orders. And those orders are to be followed. Rationales and reasons: those are things to be kept among commanders.

STILLER
What?

BAUM
The war will be over in a month--
two at the most, right?

Stiller agrees.

BAUM (CONT'D)
So that makes this the worst
mission at the worst possible time.
They won't quit, but--for what
they're going through--they deserve
to know.

CUT TO:

61A EXT. OUTSKIRTS GEMUNDEN MORNING

61A

The camera takes Baum's point of view, panning across his key men. Clearly he's just told them the truth:

ON LANGE: in shock

ON HOFFNER: unhappy, but too exhausted to summon a strong reaction.

ON WISE: unbe-fuckin-lievable.

ON GRAHAM: ready to shoot someone.

And then to...

50.

61A

CONTINUED:

61A

NUTTO
(gallows humor)
If Stiller was in Texas right now,
I'd make sure he got the death
penalty.

Graham pulls out his pistol and cocks it.

GRAHAM
We don't have to go to Texas to get
that done.

The men laugh.

BAUM
This is the mission we've been
given. I know you all will help me
get it done.

And with that, the bond of trust between Baum and his men is sealed.

62

EXT. GEMUNDEN BRIDGE MORNING

62

Hoffner's jeep crawls forward, two other jeeps beside him. They stop about twenty yards short of the bridge.

He gets out and his men follow, hurrying to the side of the road.

SOLDIER1
Looks clear, sir.

HOFFNER
It's not.
(points)
There.

In the dirt at the base of the bridge is a slight bulge.

HOFFNER (CONT'D)
Mined.

The Recon Soldiers all stare.

HOFFNER (CONT'D)
We could shoot them from here. But
it would ruin the road. We'll have
to pry them out.

The Recon Soldiers look terrified.

(CONTINUED)

HOFFNER (CONT'D)

(points)

You two with me. These mines are sturdy, but not that stable. Grab em hard and quick. Use both hands. Take em to the side of the road and hurl em down that ravine.

The Two Recon Soldiers stare, swallowing.

HOFFNER (CONT'D)

The rest of you provide suppressing fire, and throw these.

(handing it to them)

Smoke grenades. Don't stop throwing until we're back. Let's move.

Hoffner rises, hurling a smoke grenade far into the bridge.

It lands with a HOLLOW THUD. Smoke begins to pour out of it.

Hoffner runs for the bridge, followed by Soldiers 1 and 2.

The other Recon Soldiers throw smoke grenades furiously. When they're empty-handed, they raise their rifles and begin to fire at the structure at the far side of the bridge.

Hoffner and his men squat in the middle of the road, prying the round, heavy mines from the dirt.

Suddenly, German FIRE begins to hail down on them.

Recon Soldier 1 stops, raises his rifle and takes aim.

HOFFNER (CONT'D)

Leave it! Deal with the mines.

Recon Soldier 1 re-straps his rifle, flinching every time a bullet whizes by; with shaking hands, he pries at the mines.

The Other Recon Soldiers FIRE back at the structures.

Hoffner finally extracts a mine. Holding it with both hands, he runs awkwardly to the side of the road and hurls it down the ravine. It EXPLODES.

He runs back to work on the next one, but the smoke's beginning to lift.

HOFFNER (CONT'D)

Goddamn it, more smoke!

The Other Soldiers nervously reach down and fumble with their smoke grenades. One of them drops his.

Soldier1 SCREAMS and falls. He's hit. The German fire INTENSIFIES.

Baum pulls up to the base of the bridge. He immediately surveys the situation and jumps out and runs, under FIRE, to Hoffner and his men.

Baum runs up next to Hoffner, takes a knee and quickly pries out a mine. He hurries to the side of the ravine and chuck it. It EXPLODES.

Hoffner pries loose the last one, and does the same. EXPLOSION.

Baum grabs the wounded soldier by the shirt collar and pulls him as they all run back to the jeeps.

BAUM

I got you, soldier!

This is a welcome change in Baum--definitely an improvement over the expected "get your ass back in the god-damn vehicle, soldier." Several men notice the difference.

Hoffner has seen Baum's bravery before--and always admired him. But he likes the team approach even better.

BAUM (CONT'D)

(to Hoffner)

Take positions on the side of the road and pin down the enemy.

HOFFNER

Yes, sir.

BAUM

(into CB)

Nutto: Get your tanks up here now!

Lange: Get your infantry up here!

Lange puts down the CB, looking very pale.

LANGE

Shit. It's always us.

Stiller hurries over to Baum, grabs his arm and pulls him aside.

STILLER

Don't you pull a stunt like that again, Captain. You are Commander of this mission, not a recon soldier.

Baum knows Stiller is right. But he's been up front the whole war. Nobody, least of all Baum, is at all confident that he can lead any other way.

The tanks RUMBLE UP. Baum walks forward and waves them on. Nutto's Sherman tanks RUMBLE towards the large bridge, joined by Lange's company of INFANTRY, who walk cautiously, rifles raised, alongside the tanks.

The Shermans reach the bridge and begin to cross. Nutto, bringing up the rear, just reaches the base of the bridge. He rides in the open hatch, and looks out.

Many large buildings sit on the other side. But, ominously, no sign of life.

The tanks crawl across the bridge, SQUEAKING.

PANZERFAUST FIRE. German rockets explode all around the Americans. Several infantry fall, wounded and dead. Worse, the lead tank is hit. It burns and blocks the way.

Dozens of German troops now pour out of the buildings.

NUTTO

Holy shit.

Several U.S. SOLDIERS scurry out of the lead tank, all bleeding and dazed, abandoning it.

The burning tank has created a bottleneck effect--the rest of the convoy is stuck, sitting ducks.

Lange, though, continues forward and waves his men on, continuing fearlessly forward.

LANGE

MOVE!

Lange's infantry keep moving under his leadership, continuing to cross the bridge on foot under HEAVY FIRE and without without the protection of the tanks.

But the German FIRE is too intense, and they begin to fall.

Nutto jumps down and grabs a retreating U.S. Soldier.

NUTTO
Get back there and move that tank!!

U.S. SOLDIER
I quit! I quit!

The Soldier runs past a disbelieving Nutto.

EXPLOSION. Baum and Nutto are both blown off their feet.

They both lie on the ground, covered in blood.

A wounded Baum struggles to his knees and stares at his right hand in disbelief. A huge piece of shrapnel sticks all the way through it, cutting it to the bone.

Medics Zeno and Demchak rush to Baum and Nutto's side.

Baum holds up his bloody and shaking hand.

BAUM
(through clenched teeth)
Yank it out.

ZENO
Sir?

BAUM
Do it!

Zeno pauses, then reaches down and with one hand on Baum's shoulder, yanks the shrapnel out.

Baum SCREAMS, and Zeno wraps the bleeding hand in bandages. Baum slowly breathes.

BAUM (CONT'D)
Good. Now get me on my feet.

Zeno places a hand under Baum's shoulder and yanks him to his feet. Baum reels in pain and looks down to see another piece of shrapnel has gone through his right knee, to the bone.

BAUM (CONT'D)
Again.

Zeno gives Baum a worried look, then sinks to his knees and grabs the piece of Shrapnel. Wise comes up behind Baum and holds him steady.

Zeno yanks. Baum SHRIEKS. Zeno wraps the bleeding knee.

Baum is unsteady, but standing. He gets control of his breathing, then looks over and sees Nutto on the ground, Demchak by his side.

DEMCHAK

He's hit bad, sir. I count ten pieces of shrapnel, at least.

Baum crouches down by him. Nutto has shrapnel in his legs, his arms, his chest and his neck. It doesn't look good, and Nutto can see the look in Baum's eyes.

Nutto tries to cover a rising concern that he's about to die. Ever the ladies man:

NUTTO

Damn it, I never screwed a girl with big tits.

Baum laughs in spite of everything.

BAUM

If that's your motivation, you're gonna live.

Baum lifts him up by his shoulders. Nutto tries to walk--it's not going well. Blood oozes out from under his combat jacket.

BAUM (CONT'D)

You've had enough.

(to Demchak)

Get him back to the half tracks.

The German FIRE intensifies, and Baum surveys the bridge, and sees some of the infantry have managed to cross it.

BAUM (CONT'D)

Where the goddamn hell is our air support?

As if in answer to the question, Germans toss grenades out of nearby buildings (from the upper floors). They land amidst the task force. More carnage.

Four U.S. tank crew members hear the grenade EXPLOSIONS, which sound exactly like...

TANKER

PANZERFAUST! EVACUATE!

The Americans climb out of the tank as fast as they can go.

64A

CONTINUED:

64A

As soon as they touch ground, a German soldier appears in a second-floor window. He jumps down onto the tank. Jumps in. Slams the lid tight.

The German turns the US tank turret around--and starts firing on the Americans with their own tank!

This lasts for about a minute before the Americans blow the tank to bits.

And that's when things get really bad: Suddenly, the entire bridge BLOWS UP!

Several U.S. Infantry fly through the air, instantly dead, and the three tanks on the bridge plunge into the ravine, with several more Infantry SCREAMING on the way down.

There is a momentary lull in the fighting, everyone in shock.

BAUM
 DISENGAGE! 500 yards back!
 (to Wise)
 Get me a goddamn prisoner! Go into
 homes if you have to.

65

EXT. FAR SIDE OF GEMUNDEN BRIDGE DAY

65

A dozen American infantry find themselves completely surrounded by three times as many German Soldiers, guns pointed at them. Realizing the futility, they raise their hands in surrender.

66

EXT. MID CONVOY DAY

66

Baum stands beside his jeep, a map laid out in front of him. He bleeds all over the map, clearly in pain.

Stiller studies the map with him, while Zeno looks worriedly at Baum's hand.

ZENO
 (softly, to Baum)
 You've lost a lot of blood, sir.
 You need medical attention. If you
 continue in this condition you'll
 risk damaging your nerve endings--

BAUM
 (ignoring him, looking at
 map)
 There's no other bridge on this
 map. How can there be no other
 bridge?

ZENO
Sir--

BAUM
(wheels, annoyed)
I heard you, and I don't quit.

WISE and THREE U.S. SOLDIERS approach, dragging a GERMAN CIVILIAN.

U.S. SOLDIER
We broke into a house and dragged him out. As far as we know, he wasn't engaged in the fighting.

Baum looks at the German viciously; Baum seems a little crazy--his wounds and exhaustion have gotten to him. He gets close to the German.

BAUM
What is this place? A marshalling yard?

Zeno TRANSLATES. The terrified German answers in a rush.

ZENO
(straining to understand)
This is where they drop off the soldiers...they come by train...

BAUM
How many?

The German speaks quickly.

BAUM (CONT'D)
(more firmly)
How many soldiers are on the other side of that river?

ZENO
This is where they come together--

BAUM
HOW MANY!?

ZENO
(beat)
Ten thousand.

Baum and Stiller exchange a look. There is a moment of paralyzing silence.

BAUM
Where's another bridge?

Zeno repeats in German. The terrified German answers in a rush, clearly protesting his ignorance.

ZENO
He says he doesn't know of any bridge...the bridge was in this town...we destroyed it...he is peaceful...not a fighter--

BAUM
Aw, Christ--

Baum pulls out his pistol, COCKS it and holds it to the German's face.

BAUM (CONT'D)
WHERE THE GODDAMN HELL IS A
BRIDGE!?!?

The Civilian is visibly shaking.

BAUM (CONT'D)
WHERE!?!?

Baum's eyes are bulging open; he seems as if he's lost it.

Beat. A heavy, tense silence.

The German, crying, feebly points north.

GERMAN CIVILIAN
...*Burgsinn*.

The German collapses to the ground, crying.

Baum quickly turns to the map and traces it with his finger.

BAUM
Burgsinn....It's ten miles north.

Baum turns to the German.

BAUM (CONT'D)
You better not be jerking us off.
If you are, so help me god, I'll
shoot you myself.
(to Wise)
Tie him to a tank.

Baum hurries off towards his jeep, flanked by his men, BARKING orders as he goes.

BAUM (CONT'D)

I want this entire convoy backed up 200 yards. All men inside the half-tracks, ready or not.

Wise comes up beside Baum.

WISE

(softly)

Sir. Ten thousand.

Baum doesn't curse out Wise, which is almost certainly what he would have done in the past. He's holding his temper, searching for a solution.

BAUM

This is not a kamikaze run, Lieutenant. We'll fail if we don't find a way to protect ourselves.

Wise appreciates Baum's new approach: this kind of leadership cements loyalty.

A flurry of activity. Blinking lights and RINGING phones everywhere. Aides rush about, answering phones, carrying papers, hanging new maps and taking down old ones.

Patton stands over a map table, flanked by Six Aides. He looks distracted.

PATTON AIDE 1

Sir, both divisions are on a collision course. If we don't do something by--

PATTON

(turns to other Aide)

Tell me, Major, what have you heard from Task Force Baum?

The Aides around the table look at each other; they fall silent.

PATTON AIDE 2

Nothing, sir.

Beat.

PATTON AIDE 1

We have received reports of enemy movement in that area.

PATTON

What kind of movement?

The Aides look at each other, afraid to say it.

PATTON (CONT'D)

Well!?

PATTON AIDE 2

A division, sir. Maybe two.

Very bad news. Patton stares into space, ignoring all the activity around him.

The convoy climbs a steep road, flanked by dense, dark woods. The tanks GROAN as the incline gets steeper.

The light tanks lead the way, and tied to the front sits the German Civilian, hanging on for dear life, looking terrified.

The column nears the top of the hill when suddenly a small caravan of official-looking German cars appears. They stop short at the sight of the Americans.

The lead tank stops, and Sergeant Graham pops his head out of the hatch. The entire convoy grinds to a halt behind him.

Before them sit two German jeeps and a long black limousine, covered with swastikas. The German soldier in the lead jeep, young and nervous, raises his rifle.

Graham smiles. He casually moves his fixed machine gun side to side, gesturing as if to say anything other than surrender would be a bad idea.

The German drops his gun and raises his arms.

The door opens to the German vehicle, and out comes a GERMAN GENERAL 2, dressed in a long, black leather coat with Nazi insignias and medals. He slams the door, BARKING REPRIMANDS at his men, and removes his gray gloves and haughtily approaches Baum's contingent.

Baum pulls up.

The General, upon seeing Baum, walks right up to him, YELLING indignantly in German.

ZENO

He says he demands to speak to the commanding officer...he expects treatment befitting his rank...he is one of The Fuhrer's personal--

BAUM

I'm not interested.

The General falls silent.

BAUM (CONT'D)

(to Graham)

Mount him as a hood ornament. Maybe the Germans will think twice before shooting.

GRAHAM

(smiling)

Yes, sir.

Baum approaches the German civilian tied to the tank.

BAUM

(to Civilian)

This goddamn bridge of yours better come soon.

The Civilian looks more scared than before.

Graham's men grab the arms of the indignant General and place him squarely on the front of the tank, tying him down.

The General is shocked. He looks over, and sees beside him the German civilian. The Civilian smiles and salutes weakly.

The convoy continues on the narrow, rural road.

Suddenly, the Civilian SPEAKS excitedly in German, pointing.

In the distance, behind a crop of trees, covered in moss, lies a small, ancient bridge.

Graham breaks into a huge smile.

The Civilian is also smiling. The German General turns to the Civilian, scorning, and slaps him with his glove. The Civilian is at first shocked. Then he reaches back and slaps back the General, who is even more shocked.

They come to a stop before the small, stone bridge.

Baum pulls up and walks onto the bridge. The convoy watches.

BAUM
Get Lieutenant Wrolson up here.

Wise rushes off.

Baum walks up and down the bridge, inspecting it.

A jeep pulls up and Wrolson jumps out and runs to Baum.

Wrolson looks closely at the bridge. He takes several steps backward, looking from side to side. He scurries down the bank of the river, and examines it from below.

The underside of the bridge hangs with moss.

BAUM (CONT'D)
Will it hold?

WROLSON
The jeeps and half tracks will be fine. Light tanks, too. It's the Shermans I'm worried about.
(beat)
It's a risk.

BAUM
How much of a risk?

WROLSON
Hard to say. Depends on the support beams. They look sturdy, but with this kind of growth, it's impossible to tell.

Baum takes another look up and down the bridge.

Sitting on the far side is a small sign: "Hammelburg, 17k."

Baum comes to a decision.

BAUM
Get the Shermans up here.

Graham's tanks move to the side, making room for the six heavy Sherman tanks, which RUMBLE forward.

Nutto, wounded, bleeding, wrapped in bandages, pops his head out of the open hatch of the lead tank.

Baum is shocked. Nutto smiles.

NUTTO
Couldn't let you boys have all the fun.

Baum shakes his head in admiration.

BAUM
Send one of your men across first.

NUTTO
That'll be me.

Despite Baum's protest, Nutto's own tank rolls forward, he smiling as it RUMBLES across. The bridge GROANS and bends in protest, and the entire convoy watches in suspense. Beat.

But it keeps going. Soon, it is over the bridge.

The entire convoy CHEERS.

BAUM
All right, move it out. One at a time.

70 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD DAY

70

The vehicles rise and fall on a small country road. Up and down rolling hills, they pass farms and endless cows.

As they come to the top of a hill, they see a small country village spread out before them.

71 EXT. GRAFENDORF DAY

71

They approach to an odd sight: 30 RUSSIAN SOLDIERS work the fields with hoes, guarded by a DOZEN GERMAN GUARDS. The Russians are emaciated and sickly, dressed in rags. Baum has seen a lot in this war. But this hits him hard.

They all stop and stare up at the Americans.

When they see the size of the American force, the German Guards lower their weapons and raise their hands.

Baum pulls to the front. Stiller does, too.

BAUM
(to Zeno)
Tell them to drop their weapons.

ZENO
(using a loud speaker, in German)
Drop your weapons.

The German guards do as they're told.

As freedom dawns on them, the Russian POWS break into a SHOUT OF JOY. They run for the Americans, grabbing and kissing them.

The Americans are at first shocked, then smile back, trying to politely fend off the emotional Russians.

RUSSIANS
Amerikanski! Amerikanski!

The German Guards turn and begin to run for the forest.

Several Russians chase after them, hoes held high.

The Russians speak effusively to Baum.

ZENO
(to Baum)
They say they want to help
us...they hate the Germans...they
want to fight....weapons....

BAUM
Tell them to raid the local police
station and do whatever damage they
can.

Zeno translates. The Russians say something back.

ZENO
They want the General.

Baum looks over at the German General.

The German General scowls back at him.

Baum grabs him by the collar and hurls him off the tank.

The Russians CHEER, grabbing at the General.

BAUM
(to German civilian)
How far to Hammelburg?

ZENO
Past Grafendorf...about 7 kilos.

Zeno turns to Baum, smiling.

ZENO (CONT'D)
I think we might actually make it.

Baum smiles. He agrees.

The German civilian says something to Zeno.

ZENO (CONT'D)

(to Baum)

Sir, he says his wife is very pregnant, due any day now. And he promises to keep our secret.

BAUM

Boy or girl?

The German seems to understand this.

GERMAN CIVILIAN

Junge.

BAUM

(nods)

If the SS finds out what he's done, they'll kill him, his wife and his unborn son.

(beat)

Let him go.

Zeno unties the German Civilian, who nods in thanks and runs off.

The convoy ROARS back to life. The Russians cheer. As his jeep departs, Baum turns back to see the Russians beating the shit out of the German general. Given everything the Germans did to the Russians in the last four years, this particular dose of Russian rage is understandable. But that doesn't make it pretty. The German general is on the ground now--getting kicked viciously from all sides. A Russian raises a hoe and brings it down into the General's skull. War is indeed hell.

They enter thicker and thicker countryside.

Baum watches the woods carefully, when suddenly his jeep SLAMS to a stop. He hits his head hard on the windshield.

BAUM

What the hell!?

WISE

I don't know, sir. There must be--

BAUM
(raising his hand)
Wait!

Baum cranes his neck, listening. A FAINT ROAR.

On the horizon, a tiny German plane comes into view.

BAUM (CONT'D)
(screams)
SPOTTER PLANE!

From the tankers to the infantry to the wounded, every man raises his gun and FIRES at the approaching plane.

But the weaving plane flies too high, and is going too fast. They all miss. A black and white cross can be seen beneath the plane's wings as it flies off into the horizon.

Baum is crestfallen. Stiller pulls up beside him.

STILLER
Now they know how small we are.

BAUM
(irritated)
They don't need a plane for that.
Now they know where we are.

They ponder the ramifications, none of them good.

The room is frantic with activity, AIDES rushing about, answering PHONES. OBERST HOPPE, a German officer in his 40s with a youthful face, intense eyes and thin lips, is in charge. He stands calmly amidst the chaos, scanning a large map laid out on a table. Several AIDES stand beside him and look down as Hoppe rests his finger on a spot. Hoppe puts a marker--a small U.S. flag--in the place. There are a string of U.S. markers across the map, starting from Schweinheim.

HOPPE AIDE1
It could be a reconnaissance mission.

HOPPE AIDE2
Perhaps they are spearheading a second front.

HOPPE AIDE1
It looks like they are heading North.

Hoppe stares. They all look at him, waiting.

HOPPE

No.

(beat)

They're not heading North. They went North because they couldn't find a bridge. They're heading East.

All eyes look east. Hoppe runs his finger along the map.

HOPPE (CONT'D)

They're coming here.

AIDE2

But why?

HOPPE

Call up a division from Gemunden. Have them coordinate positions with the division Berlin ordered. We will completely encircle the Hammelburg area.

(beat)

Patton might beat us to Hammelburg, but there's no way he's getting out.

The Aides hurry off. Hoppe turns to the window and stares out the glass.

HOPPE (CONT'D)

(to himself)

200 men against 10,000.

(shakes his head)

Suicide!

Baum's convoy continues up and down rolling country hills. As they dip down another hill, the CAMERA CRANES UP TO REVEAL:

On the horizon, THOUSANDS OF GERMAN SOLDIERS and hundreds of tanks mobilize in a massive column, slowly but surely heading south.

Koehl inspects his company of FIFTY GERMAN SOLDIERS, who stand at attention in front of their tanks. Koehl walks up and down the line slowly, looking them over from head to toe: scared, lanky teenage boys, dressed in uniforms too big for them, with shocks of blond hair.

And very old men: in their 70s. This is the desperation that comes with the end of a war.

In the background, DOZENS OF HAMMELBURG CIVILIANS run through the streets, hurrying into buildings and closing doors and windows tight behind them. The town bell RINGS as the streets empty out.

Koehl is oblivious, focusing on his men.

KOEHL

Many of you have never seen battle.
But I know your hearts. They are
the same hearts that have lead
Germany to victory for 2,000 years.

(beat)

Today will be a day you shall look
back on and say: even in our
darkest hour, even as the
Fatherland buckled under the wave
of Americans, one village had the
courage to make a stand.

The convoy reaches the top of a hill and stops.

Baum pulls to the front and raises his binoculars.

The idyllic, empty town of Hammelburg lies stretched out before them. On the horizon sits the enormous white cross we saw at the beginning of the film. The view is commanding.

Graham pops out of the hatch in the tank beside him. Stiller pulls up.

GRAHAM

Where's the camp, sir?

Baum lowers his binoculars and points to a small dirt road leading out of town. On top of a far hill sits a massive barbed-wire fence guarding the Hammelburg POW camp.

STILLER

Town's quiet. Think it's a trap?

BAUM

Yes.

(beat)

But we've got no choice.

The tanks RUMBLE back to life, and start down the hill.

77 INT. KOEHL'S TANK HAMMELBURG AFTERNOON 77

Koehl sits in his tank, sweating, watching Baum's convoy approach. Beside him, on their guns, sit THREE TEENAGE GERMAN SOLDIERS, sweating and nervous.

KOEHL
(whispering)
Steady...steady...

78 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE AFTERNOON 78

Baum looks about warily as the convoy approaches the town.

79 INT. KOEHL'S TANK HAMMELBURG AFTERNOON 79

KOEHL
Wait...wait...

The poorly-greased white star of a Sherman comes into view. The long German 88mm cannon SWIVELS into place.

TEENAGE GERMAN SOLDIER
(nervous, whispering)
Hauptmann Koehl? What did you do
before the war?

KOEHL
I was a priest.
(screams)
FIRE!

Koehl braces himself and his Gunner pulls back the firing mechanism. It EXPLODES with a ROAR, and the kickback knocks the unprepared Teenage Soldier off his feet.

80 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE AFTERNOON 80

The German shell lands 20 feet short of the first American tank, sending mounds of earth high in the air and showering the U.S. tanks with dirt.

The convoy grinds to a sudden halt.

81 INT. KOEHL'S TANK HAMMELBURG AFTERNOON 81

KOEHL
Sheisse!

He SLAPS the closest German Soldier hard on the head.

82

INT. POW BARRACKS AFTERNOON

82

DOZENS OF POWS, including Baron, race to the windows at the sound of the explosions, pressing up against the glass.

BARON

They're coming for us!

The whole room CHEERS.

83

INT. VON GOECKEL'S OFFICE HAMMELBURG MORNING

83

Waters is lead into a large General's office, the walls covered with German memorabilia. Von Goeckel sits behind his desk, looking old and worn out.

Waters notices that something is different: Goeckel's steel helmet now sits on his desk, and he wears a Luger on his hip. The door is CLOSED behind them, leaving just the two of them.

VON GOECKEL

(softly)

Sit, please.

Waters sits.

VON GOECKEL (CONT'D)

Not many Generals are assigned to administer prisoner camps-- especially in a desperate Germany. Haven't you wondered?

WATERS

I did. But I didn't think it fit to ask.

VON GOECKEL

It's my lung. A chest wound in the trenches of World War One. I've been assigned to desk duty ever since.

(beat)

I've served my army 37 years, and I've seen a great many German governments come and go in that time. And yet I'm still here.

He smiles weakly, and Waters back.

VON GOECKEL (CONT'D)

This government, too, has numbered days. Yet I don't think I shall survive this time.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VON GOECKEL (CONT'D)

(beat)

It's true, yes?...that General
Patton is sending the entire Third
Army our way?

Waters doesn't know what to say.

Von Goeckel suddenly stands and puts on his helmet.

VON GOECKEL (CONT'D)

(formally)

I shall be sounding the air raid
sirens shortly. I advise you to
prepare your men. The Americans
will be firing in your direction,
too, when they fire at us.

Von Goeckel steps in close.

VON GOECKEL (CONT'D)

(softer)

You are my prisoner now, but very
shortly I may be yours. If that
should happen, I hope I could
expect the same courtesy and
respect I have shown you.

Beat. Von Goeckel raises his hand in a salute.

Waters, instead, extends his hand. Von Goeckel slowly reaches
out and takes it.

Baum, using his binoculars, spots the hidden German tanks in
the forest.

BAUM

Jesus Christ.

(into Radio)

Graham: disengage. Lange: get your
half-tracks, the light tanks and
jeeps up that hill. Go straight for
the camp. Shermans in the lead--
now! Graham: take out that
sonofabitch.

The vehicles in Baum's convoy re-align in new formation. The
heavy Sherman tanks ROLL to the front, face off against the
German tanks. The rest of the convoy--several half-tracks,
light tanks and jeeps--fork away from the battle and head up
the steep hill, straight for the Hammelburg POW camp.

A Sherman FIRES at the lead German tank, and it's a direct hit.

But the shell merely BOUNCES off the thicker German armor.

Baum's face drops in disbelief.

The German tank swings its massive 88mm cannon. It FIRES back and hits the Sherman, which EXPLODES.

FIVE AMERICAN SOLDIERS jump out of the burning tank. They run several yards, on fire and SCREAMING, then collapse.

85 INT. KOEHL'S TANK HAMMELBURG AFTERNOON 85

Koehl and his men CHEER.

86 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE AFTERNOON 86

Graham, riding in the open hatch, stops at the top of a knoll and raises his binoculars.

GRAHAM

Range 1,000 yards. Fire at will.

The huge cannon on his tank SWIVELS into place. It FIRES.

Smoke shells EXPLODE in front of the German tanks, creating a dense fog.

The other U.S. tanks use the cover to get into position. German shells EXPLODE all around them.

Baum has had enough: every request he makes for air support through morse code signals via Sidles is getting them nowhere. He opts for risky, direct radio contact. And he's screaming. We can only hear his side of the conversation.

BAUM

(into radio)

We're in Hammelberg, no thanks to you.

(beat)

Yes, we are 60 miles behind enemy lines.

(beat)

How can you possibly not have strike authorization? Call Lieutenant Colonel Creighton Abrams at Third Army headquarters. He can damn-well confirm it.

(beat)

(MORE)

73.

86

CONTINUED:

86

BAUM (CONT'D)

And if that doesn't work, call General Patton, cause he was in the room too. Just get me some fire power, god-damn it.

He slams down the receiver.

The Soldiers around Baum look at each other, their expressions showing that, for the first time, they realize the air support will not come.

87

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE AFTERNOON

87

The smoke lifts, and the Germans FIRE again. A direct hit: another Sherman EXPLODES.

A Sherman FIRES back. Again, it's a direct hit, but again the shell merely BOUNCES off the thicker German tank.

An EXPLOSION comes from the other direction and Baum turns to see one of his half-tracks on the hill on fire. He wheels and sees a German tank pointing its cannon in that direction.

88

EXT. ELSEWHERE COUNTRYSIDE AFTERNOON

88

Lange is seated in the passenger seat, rifle raised, FIRING, as his half-track races up the hill, swerving left and right, narrowly avoiding EXPLOSIONS.

Lange stands in his seat and aims his rifle.

EXPLOSION. Lange's half-track is blown on its side, sending him and all his men in the back flying hard onto the ground. Many are dead on impact. Lange is unconscious and bloody.

89

EXT. ELSEWHERE COUNTRYSIDE AFTERNOON

89

BAUM

(into CB)

Zeno, Demchack: up that hill now!

90

EXT. HILLSIDE AFTERNOON

90

Zeno and Demchak race their jeep up the hillside and jump out beside the wounded Americans.

Suddenly, FIRE hails down on them from the top of the hill.

TWO HUNDRED GERMAN SOLDIERS, positioned at the base of the Hammelburg POW camp, fire down.

Zeno and Demchak ignore the bullets, crouching low and attending to as many wounded as they can.

(CONTINUED)

90

CONTINUED:

90

For each man, they quickly cut his clothing, sew the wound, give him a shot of morphine, and raise his head and give him a sulfur tablet with water. Then they move on.

With several vehicles on fire and caught in a crossfire, the convoy heading up the hill grinds to a halt. Most of the infantry jump out and take positions on the ground. Some fire up the hill at the Germans. A few turn and fire helplessly back at the German tanks.

91

EXT. BAUM'S JEEP AFTERNOON

91

BAUM

(picks up CB)

Lange, we need your men back in those vehicles and up that hill, now!

(beat)

Lange!

92

EXT. HILLSIDE AFTERNOON

92

Lange lies unconscious, his Driver dead beside him.

BAUM'S VOICEOVER

LANGE!!!

93

EXT. BAUM'S JEEP AFTERNOON

93

Baum throws down the CB.

BAUM

(to his driver)

We've got to get up that hill!

94

EXT. HILLSIDE AFTERNOON

94

They take off up the hill, amidst EXPLODING German shells.

They pull up alongside a U.S. soldier who sits beside a half-track, cowering, holding his helmet with both hands.

Stiller is with him--providing cover in the thick of the action--shooting back for all he's worth.

Baum jumps out and runs up beside the soldier.

BAUM

Let's go soldier. We're gonna get there.

Baum grabs the Soldier and runs with him back into the cab of a half-track. The soldier starts it and drives up the hill.

(CONTINUED)

75.

94

CONTINUED:

94

Baum continues up the hill, grabbing soldiers and helping them back into the back of the half-tracks.

BAUM (CONT'D)

Get back into your vehicles! Now!

Suddenly a German shell hits the half-track carrying the gasoline, and there is a TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION, knocking Baum back off his feet.

Dazed, covered in soot, Baum gets back on his feet and continues up the hill; he hurries to an abandoned jeep and grabs the CB.

BAUM (CONT'D)

Graham! Take out those goddamn tanks!

95

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE AFTERNOON

95

Graham needs no prodding; he has just finished positioning his canon and FIRES one of his monstrous 105mm shells.

It connects with a German tank, which EXPLODES.

Graham FIRES again, and another German tank EXPLODES.

96

INT. POW BARRACKS AFTERNOON

96

The POWs cheer.

97

EXT. HILLSIDE AFTERNOON

97

BAUM

(into CB)

Graham! Three O'Clock!

98

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE AFTERNOON

98

Graham turns and sees a convoy of German supply vehicles, heading for the German tanks.

Graham repositions his cannon. He FIRES.

A German gas truck EXPLODES which a tremendous shock wave, causing all six German vehicles to EXPLODE. AMMUNITION goes off in every direction.

99

INT. KOEHL'S TANK HAMMELBURG AFTERNOON

99

Koehl, dripping with sweat, contorts with rage.

KOEHL

Sheisse! SHEISSE!!!!

100 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE AFTERNOON 100

BAUM
(voiceover)
Graham! We need you up here now!

Graham FIRES several smoke missiles, creating a large cloud in front of the German tanks, and then turns for the hill.

Left behind in the carnage are five smoldering Sherman tanks and dozens of U.S. bodies.

101 INT. KOEHL'S TANK HAMMELBURG AFTERNOON 101

The Teenage German Soldiers interpret Graham's retreat as a victory, and CHEER, joyously grabbing each other.

The battle over for now, Koehl sits back and with shaking hands takes out a pack of crumpled cigarettes. He fumbles to get one out and lights up, exhaling deeply. Surveying the damage, he allows himself a small smile.

102 INT. POW BARRACKS AFTERNOON 102

Artillery SMASHES a piece of the wall, sending shrapnel everywhere. Several POWS take cover; Waters stands at the window, and merely flinches.

The door flies open, and in marches General Von Goeckel with his aide, HAUPTMAN FUCHS.

VON GOECKEL
The Americans will kill us all! You must stop them!

WATERS
How?

VON GOECKEL
It is against the rules of the Geneva Convention to fire on a POW camp!

WATERS
Then surrender.

VON GOECKEL
I am surrendering. To you.
(removes holster and gun
and hands it to him)
I am your prisoner. The camp is in your control. This is now your responsibility.

An EXPLOSION shakes the building.

U.S. OFFICER
We'll get killed if we go out there!

The Americans all look at each other, unsure what to do.
Waters is the only one who lacks uncertainty. His job is to save lives, even if it means risking his own.

WATERS
I'll go.

He begins to head out of the room. One American (POW 6) stands to join him.

FUCHS
I'll go too.

Waters wonders: can he be trusted?

FUCHS (CONT'D)
You'll need a translater.
Otherwise, they'll shoot you.

Waters removes a hidden American flag from under one of the bunks, and they head out.

Waters, Fuchs and one pow march through the camp, shells EXPLODING all around them, Waters clutching the American flag.

In the distance looms the huge barbed-wire fence, with 200 GERMAN SOLDIERS dug in, firing at the Americans.

Suddenly, a GERMAN SOLDIER marches directly towards them. He SCREAMS IN GERMAN at Waters, and raises his rifle. Waters holds up the flag to indicate they are on a peaceful mission.

The Soldier suddenly raises his rifle and FIRES at Waters, hitting him point blank. Waters goes flying backwards through the air and lands on his back.

The Soldier now turns to Fuchs. Fuchs is terrified. He SCREAMS frantically back at the Soldier in German. The Soldier finally lowers his gun.

Fuchs and POW 6 run over to Waters, who is bleeding badly from the leg. POW 6 staunches the wound as best he can.

FUCHS
We must turn back. This Soldier is out of his mind.

103

CONTINUED:

103

Fuchs and the POW each grab Waters and carry him towards the barracks. The American flag lies abandoned on the ground, covered in blood.

104

EXT. HILLSIDE SUNSET

104

The U.S. convoy is still stuck on the hill, under withering FIRE, with infantry still scattered about, out of their vehicles.

Baum runs up the hill, grabbing infantry by the arms and prodding them; he guides about a dozen soldiers into the back of a half track. Baum then jumps into the cab, starts it up himself, and PEELS OUT, speeding straight for the POW fence.

FIRE intensifies on both sides as Baum leads the charge, the soldiers in the back FIRING like crazy. Soldiers all up and down the hill see what Baum's doing, and they rally, all suddenly charging, too.

Suddenly, there is a huge EXPLOSION in the POW camp and several GERMAN SOLDIERS go flying in the air, dead.

Graham and his 105s have arrived. They are spread out, in desert formation, with packs of infantry clustering behind them. Weaver's tanks join them, and they all fire into the POW camp.

EXPLOSION after EXPLOSION.

GRAHAM'S AIDE
Almost out of ammo, sir.

GRAHAM
(smiling)
This war's too damn short! FIRE!

He loads a huge shell into the 105mm cannon, aims and fires.

105

OMITTED

105

106

EXT. HILLSIDE SUNSET

106

Baum drives his half-track right into the barbed-wire fence, soldiers FIRING point blank at each other. The massive fence bends, but won't give.

Graham's tanks pull up beside him, and together, they mow down the fence.

The remaining German Soldiers run, but don't get very far. Most are shot in the back.

107	INT. POW BARRACKS SUNSET	107
	A great CHEER, and all the POWs storm out.	
108	EXT. POW CAMP SUNSET	108
	The American POWs come running out. A few of them grab rifles off the dead bodies and FIRE at the fleeing Germans.	
	The rest of them are CHEERING WILDLY, storming the American forces. They crawl all over the tanks, and jump into jeeps. They hug and kiss every American soldier they can find.	
	The American soldiers are at first pleasantly surprised, but then completely overwhelmed: they are so swarmed with prisoners, they literally cannot move.	
	A major logjam, with nearly 1,500 POWs descending on the small task force.	
	<i>The Nazi flag is hastily lowered, and the American flag (the same bloody one left behind when Waters was wounded, is raised on the pole).</i>	
109	INT. MESS HALL SUNSET	109
	Some POWs storm the kitchen. A lone GERMAN CHEF, 50s, tries to keep them back, but they beat him down.	
	They grab box after box of food--rations, medical supplies, canned foods, red cross packages. They throw them around, tear them open and eat what they can on the spot.	
110	EXT. POW CAMP SUNSET	110
	Baum's jeep pulls up into the mayhem, Stiller beside him.	
	<u>Baum stands in his jeep. Stiller does, too. They are both horrified by the number of prisoners--and by their condition.</u>	
	BAUM (yelling over the din) 200 prisoners? There's more than a thousand here.	
	Baum is nearly sick over this situation: the impossibility of success just became all the more clear.	
	STILLER (shrugs) You work with the intel you got.	

BAUM

How do you propose we get all these men back? When we had all our vehicles--which we don't--we had room for 200.

STILLER

They can walk.

BAUM

No they can't. Look at them.

STILLER

(shrugs)

Then they'll have to stay.

POWs rush their jeeps, hugging them. The POWs are frighteningly skinny, their faces starved and covered in blisters.

Stiller jumps down from his jeep.

BAUM

You're sure you'll recognize him?

STILLER

I'll find him.

Stiller marches off into the mayhem, elbowing his way through the crowd. This time, Baum follows.

Stiller grabs a POW by the arm.

STILLER (CONT'D)

Where is Colonel Waters?

POW 7

No idea, Major. Ya got any cigarettes?

Stiller brushes him aside and grabs another one.

STILLER

Colonel Waters--where is he?

POW 8

Check the Officer barracks.

(points)

That way.

111 INT. POW CAMP OFFICER BARRACKS NIGHT

111

Stiller rushes into the room, and is shocked at the sight.

On an operating table lies Colonel Waters, blood everywhere, unconscious. MAJOR ALBERT BERNDT, 37, an orthopedic surgeon from Portsmouth, Pennsylvania, stands over him, having just sowed up his leg. He looks up at Stiller.

Beat.

STILLER
(to Baum)
That's him.

Baum is horrified: all this way to rescue a man who's about to die before their eyes.

Stiller is equally on edge.

STILLER (CONT'D)
Will he make it?

A very long pause.

BERNDT
I don't know.

STILLER
What are the odds?

BERNDT
It's difficult to say.

Clearly, it's difficult because Berndt isn't at all confident that Waters will survive.

STILLER
(screaming)
God-damn it--I'm getting a
prognosis out of you if it's the
last thing you do in this life!

Berndt is shocked by the outburst. But he knows he had better say something specific.

BERNDT
An inch higher and he would've lost
the leg--and perhaps his life--on
the spot. He's lucky. But he's
still bad off. There's a serious
risk of infection.

(CONTINUED)

STILLER
 (screaming again)
 What are his fucking chances?

BERNDT
 70-30, against.

Stiller deflates. It's much worse than he thought.

STILLER
 How soon can we move him?

BERNDT
 You move him now, and you're
 signing his death certificate. *If*
 he pulls through...he can't be
 moved for at least a week.

Stiller's face drops. Baum looks even worse.

Baum jumps up on the hood of a jeep, surrounded by hundreds of POWs. The crowd QUIETS.

BAUM
 We've fought for 24 hours straight
 to get to you.

The crowd CHEERS.

BAUM (CONT'D)
 We lost a lot of good soldiers on
 the way. We also lost a lot of
 vehicles. And unfortunately, the
 Third Army is not right behind us.

He points west.

BAUM (CONT'D)
 They're about 60 miles that way.

The crowd of POWs suddenly realizes: this isn't the end of
 the war for them. Spirits deflate on the spot.

BAUM (CONT'D)
 We can't stay. And the bottom line
 is: we can't fit you all.
 (beat)
 Believe me I want to.

Several of Baum's crew note that new touch of humanity.

BAUM (CONT'D)
But we've only got room for 75 men--

The crowd GASPS and MUMBLES.

BAUM (CONT'D)
(louder)
--each of you has a decision to make: leave now with us, try to escape on your own, or stay here and wait for liberation. Those of you who are malnourished--and that's a lot of you--must stay put.
(beat)
If you come with us, you've got to be strong: we're going to have to fight our way out.

Baum steps down from the jeep, and there is general confusion and chaos, as the POWS MUMBLE amongst themselves.

Baron and FOUR POWS huddle.

POW 4
You gonna fight?

BARON
Hell yes.

POW 5
That's nuts. You'll get killed.

BARON
They came all this way for us--I'm gonna help em make it back.

HUNDREDS OF POWS storm the tanks, fighting for a spot.

Baron finds a spot on top of one of the lead tanks. His friend, POW 4, is stuck in the mass of bodies below; Baron reaches down and helps him up.

At the same time, hundreds of the weaker prisoners file back into the camp. They're heeding Baum's suggestion: if they want to live, they had better stay put.

Baum heads to his jeep and lays out his map on the hood with his bandaged hand. His surviving officers--Stiller, Graham, Nutto, and Hoffner--come up beside him. Wise is there too.

A NOISE, and from the other direction a badly wounded Captain Lange approaches, limping. They all turn and look, as if staring at a ghost.

LANGE
 (smiling weakly)
 I can fight, sir.

Baum shakes his head in admiration.

BAUM
 Good to have you back.

Baum puts his arm around Lange's shoulders. The difference in Baum's behavior isn't huge, but the impact on the men is.

BAUM (CONT'D)
 (checks his watch)
 We lost a lot of time here: four hours at least. And if we stick around much longer, we're gonna be slaughtered.
 (turns to the map)
 We've got to get back to that highway. It's our only chance of gaining enough speed. There are only two ways there: one is here--South--the other, North.

STILLER
 North is closer.

BAUM
 True. But we can't go back the way we came. The enemy will be dug in. We're going South. And we're sending recon first--

STILLER
 There's no time for recon--

BAUM
 We got no choice. We can't afford a firefight at night. Look at those half-tracks and tanks. They're covered with prisoners. We'd lose every one of them.

Nobody's arguing with that sound logic. Not even Stiller, who used to torture him just "for the laughs" has come to truly respect Baum.

BAUM (CONT'D)
 Nutto, take your medium tanks and three half-tracks with infantry, and probe South. Hoffner, go with him. We'll all wait here. Move out.

As they disperse, Baum grabs Nutto by the arm.

BAUM (CONT'D)
You sure you're up for this?

NUTTO
Yes, sir.

BAUM
Find that goddamn highway.

Nutto salutes and hurries off, limping.

LANGE
Sir, I'd like to go with my men.

BAUM
You're in bad shape, Lange. You've
done your part.

LANGE
Please, sir.

Baum gives him a long look.

BAUM
(beat)
All right, Captain.

Baum salutes with pride, and Lange returns it.

The POWs swarm the tanks, which are now dangerously
overcrowded. On one tank, the cannon cannot even move because
so many POWs block its path.

BAUM (CONT'D)
(to Wise)
There are too many men on that
tank. I want four men off.

Wise BARKS ORDERS at the POWs and four grudgingly come down.

BAUM (CONT'D)
(screams to the crowd)
No smoking and no lights!

The POWs grudgingly put out their cigarettes.

Nutto, in his tank, and Hoffner and Lange, in their jeeps,
lead the mini convoy of three tanks, jeeps and half-tracks.

113

CONTINUED:

113

Baron and the other POWs cling for dear life and look out nervously at the too-quiet darkness.

HOFFNER

Cut em.

The convoy stops, and all the vehicles turn off their engines one by one. A tense SILENCE.

HOFFNER (CONT'D)

(to Nutto)

I'm gonna see what's ahead.

Hoffner's jeep takes off into the blackness.

114

EXT. SOUTHERN VILLAGE NEAR HAMMELBURG NIGHT

114

Hoffner approaches a small village and stops at the periphery, cutting the ignition. He stares.

A huge roadblock, with overturned trucks blocking the narrow road. The village itself is eerily quiet.

HOFFNER

(whispering to his driver)

There.

His Driver squints into the blackness and finally sees it: several German tanks lie hidden at the side of the road, covered in camouflage, their cannons pointing at the road.

Hoffner gestures, and his driver STARTS the jeep and makes a U-turn, keeping the headlights off.

HOFFNER (CONT'D)

(into CB)

Blocked to the South.

115

EXT. SOUTHERN ROAD FROM HAMMELBURG NIGHT

115

Nutto's face falls with disappointment.

116

EXT. HAMMELBURG CAMP NIGHT

116

The POWs mill about anxiously, increasingly agitated.

POW1

What are we waiting for?

POW2

We shoulda left two hours ago.

(CONTINUED)

116

CONTINUED:

116

Baum sits on the hood of his jeep, waiting. He is beyond exhaustion; his eyes close as he sits.

Suddenly, the faint ROAR of vehicles. Baum's eyes open wide.

The convoy pulls up in front of Baum. Nutto, Hoffner and Lange hurry over, and Baum jumps off the hood. Several Officers and POWs crowd around to listen.

NUTTO
Major roadblock.

The Crowd lets out a collective MOAN of disappointment.

Beat, as Baum thinks.

BAUM
OK. We go North.

STILLER
You said they were dug in.

BAUM
Any other options?

Stiller is silent, as is everyone else.

BAUM (CONT'D)
(to Nutto, Hoffner and
Lange)

Take your force, test the Northern route. If it's blocked, see if you can find any smaller roads connecting to the highway--hell, go cross country if you have to.

NUTTO AND HOFFNER
Yes, sir.

They hurry back to their vehicles and the mini convoy ROARS off into the darkness, in the opposite direction.

Hundreds of POWs mill about, clearly disappointed.

117

EXT. NORTHERN ROAD OUT OF HAMMELBURG NIGHT

117

Nutto and Hoffner approach a village. Nutto and Lange wait, while Hoffner takes off in his jeep.

118

EXT. NORTHERN TOWN NEAR HAMMELBURG NIGHT

118

Hoffner pulls up and stops: roadblock.

118

CONTINUED:

118

Hoffner spots a country path veering away from the town. He points to his driver and they make for it, going cross-country.

119

INT. TANK NORTHERN COUNTRYSIDE NEAR HAMMELBURG NIGHT

119

Koehl sits in his tank, sweating, Three Teenage German Soldiers beside him, hands on their guns. He stares out into the night, watching Hoffner approach.

KOEHL

That's it. Come this way.

120

EXT. NORTHERN COUNTRYSIDE NEAR HAMMELBURG NIGHT

120

Hoffner and his driver bounce along the rough road, the terrain rising and falling. They finally reach a small hillside, and look out and see the highway in the distance.

Hoffner breaks into a smile. He picks up the CB.

HOFFNER

(into CB)

I think we found it.

121

EXT. NORTHERN ROAD OUT OF HAMMELBURG NIGHT

121

Nutto and Lange break into smiles.

NUTTO

ROLL EM!

The mini convoy comes to life, and takes off.

122

INT. TANK NORTHERN COUNTRYSIDE NEAR HAMMELBURG NIGHT

122

TEENAGE GERMAN SOLDIER

Sir, we should fire!

KOEHL

Await my command!

123

EXT. NORTHERN COUNTRYSIDE NEAR HAMMELBURG NIGHT

123

Hoffner flashes his flashlight twice, and Nutto, Lange and the convoy pulls up to him.

Hoffner points, and Nutto and Lange look and see the highway. They break into a huge grin.

NUTTO

(into CB)

Captain: we found it.

124 EXT. HAMMELBURG CAMP NIGHT 124

A CHEER from all the POWs. Baum breaks into a big smile.

BAUM

Good work. We're on our way.

(screams)

ROLL EM!

Everyone scrambles to find a spot on their vehicles, and the entire convoy STARTS UP WITH A ROAR.

Baum's jeep pulls out in front, and they all follow.

125 EXT. NORTHERN COUNTRYSIDE NEAR HAMMELBURG NIGHT 125

Nutto's convoy--six tanks and six half-tracks--wait with Hoffner. Nutto stands on his tank and faces his men.

NUTTO

Baum and the others will be here any minute. In the meantime--

126 INT. TANK NORTHERN COUNTRYSIDE NEAR HAMMELBURG NIGHT 126

KOEHL

FIRE!

127 EXT. NORTHERN COUNTRYSIDE NEAR HAMMELBURG NIGHT 127

A TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION.

Nutto, Hoffner and Lange are all knocked off their feet and fly through the air. They both land hard, ten feet away, unconscious.

CANNON FIRE from Koehl's hidden tanks pounds the convoy.

Within seconds, three American tanks are on fire.

DOZENS OF POWS are sent flying into the air, landing hard, most of them dead on impact.

The Americans slowly gain their wits, and one or two tankers aim their cannon and return fire.

Baron grabs a rifle from a fallen soldier, takes aim and FIRES back.

But the Americans are outmatched by the heavy German armor. The few hits they manage bounce right off the German tanks.

128 INT. NORTHERN COUNTRYSIDE NEAR HAMMELBURG NIGHT 128

Koehl, face covered in sweat, CHEERS madly with his CREW.

129 EXT. NORTHERN COUNTRYSIDE NEAR HAMMELBURG NIGHT 129

Baum pulls up over a hill and sees the fight on the horizon, the night lit up with flames, his men being decimated.

He slams on his brakes, and the entire convoy comes to a hasty stop behind him.

BAUM
(into CB)
Nutto! Hoffner!

130 EXT. NORTHERN COUNTRYSIDE NEAR HAMMELBURG NIGHT 130

Hoffner sits unconscious in his jeep, his driver dead beside him.

Baron runs to the jeep, dodging FIRE, and grabs the CB.

BARON
They're hit, sir!

BAUM
(voiceover)
Disengage! Get those men back here!

Baron runs amidst the mayhem.

BARON
(screaming)
Disengage! Baum's orders!

131 EXT. NORTHERN COUNTRYSIDE NEAR HAMMELBURG NIGHT 131

Baum watches as his force slowly and awkwardly starts to retreat on the horizon and head back in his direction.

He stares, crestfallen. Beside him, Wise waits with his map spread out. Baum snaps out of it and looks at the map.

Stiller pulls up beside them.

STILLER
Where to now?

BAUM
(looking at the map)
All the roads are blocked.
(MORE)

BAUM (CONT'D)

We're gonna have to go cross-country, and that's impossible at night.

(beat)

We're gonna take the high ground, regroup, and take off again at first light. There's a hill back that way. Hill 427. Follow me.

Baum makes a U-turn, and his jeep races ahead. Stiller and the convoy begin to awkwardly make U-turns and follow.

132 EXT. HILL 427 LATER THAT NIGHT

132

The wounded American soldiers MOAN as they are attended by medics Zeno and Demchak, who dole out shots of morphine and sulfur tablets. With Stiller, Graham, Wise, Moses, Weaver and Wrolson by his side, Baum surveys the rows of wounded, laid out beside each other neatly on the grass. Behind him, high up on the hill, is the enormous white cross we saw at the beginning.

He stops beside Lange, who is badly injured, bloody and barely conscious. Baum kneels down and holds his hand.

LANGE

(smiling weakly)

Not bad for my first day, huh,
Captain?

BAUM

You've got more heart than any vet
I've known.

Baum's eyes well up as Lange passes out.

Baum steels himself. He stands and faces the others.

BAUM (CONT'D)

Put all the wounded in that barn
and put a red cross on the roof.

ZENO

Yes, sir.

Baum helps all the healthy men carry injured soldiers into the barn.

Baum surveys the rest of the force. Only 3 medium tanks, 3 jeeps, and 12 half-tracks remain of Task Force Baum. Of the original 294 soldiers, there are only about 80 left. Some check their weapons, some sit dejectedly, nursing wounds; most sleep where they sit.

92.

132

CONTINUED:

132

Milling among them are about 30 POWs, all that's left of the 70 that came with the task force. Three POWs suddenly stand and take off into the wood. Baum addresses his troops.

BAUM

We leave at first light, heading due west across country. And we're not stopping until we find that highway.

WISE

Sir, we still won't have enough gas to make it back.

Baum looks back at him, glassy-eyed from exhaustion.

BAUM

That's what war's all about, Sergeant.

133

EXT. WITH COLONEL KOEHL - NIGHT

133

An German aide rushes up to Colonel Koehl with a piece of paper.

KOEHL'S AIDE

They have retreated to hill 427, sir.

Koehl looks over the piece of paper and smiles. He turns to his map, and moves dozens of red arrows around a tiny spot, in the center of which sits one tiny blue arrow.

KOEHL

Our firing range.
(smiles)
They're finished.

134

EXT. HILL 427 PRE-DAWN

134

A German tank quietly rolls its way through the woods, followed by 10 German tanks.

135

INT. TANK HILL 427 PRE-DAWN

135

Koehl drives the lead tank, the Three Soldiers by his side.

136

EXT. HILL 427 DAYBREAK

136

Baum stands in his jeep, watching the sun break over the horizon.

(CONTINUED)

136

CONTINUED:

136

All his men sit at the ready in their vehicles. Baum raises his hand slowly, then brings it down. All the vehicles START UP WITH A ROAR.

137

INT. TANK HILL 427 DAYBREAK

137

KOEHL
FIRE!

138

EXT. HILL 427 DAYBREAK

138

RAPID CANNON FIRE hits the Americans from every direction.
It's a mix of tanks and more than 30 teenage German soldiers
each with his own Panzerfaust. They have completely
surrounded the Americans, and they all FIRE simultaneously.

A WALL OF FIRE.

Within seconds, one American vehicle after another is blown to bits. American soldiers and POWs go flying in the air, dead and wounded in every direction.

The barn, filled with American wounded, is BLOWN UP.

Baum raises his rifle and FIRES back. Stiller raises his pistol and FIRES, too.

Graham stands atop his tank, manning his machinegun with both hands, FIRING for all he's worth. His tank FIRES its 105mm canons, causing some damage on the German side.

GRAHAM
(screams, smiling)
They've got us surrounded again--
the poor bastards!

An American machinegunner FIRES back, but within seconds is blown away.

Baron and several POWs take positions behind vehicles and FIRE back.

The fire is so intense that an enormous tree is cut cleanly in half. It falls with a CRASH onto the battlefield.

BAUM
(to Sidles)
Goddamn it, radio air support!

Sidles, sitting beside Baum, taps his Morse Code furiously.

Baum turns and finds Wise, right beside him, has been shot; he's unconscious.

138

CONTINUED:

138

Baum quickly turns and surveys the scene. Only about thirty men are left fighting. The rest are dead or wounded. The entire hill is on fire. It looks like Armageddon.

BAUM (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Retreat! Into the woods!

The Americans run for the woods. Baum, runs, too, limping badly, joined by Stiller, Sidles and several others.

Baum turns and sees Graham, alone, still atop his tank and FIRING, smiling.

BAUM (CONT'D)
(turning and screaming)
Goddamn it, Graham, retreat!

Graham keeps FIRING. Suddenly, a shell EXPLODES near him, knocking him off his tank and onto the ground.

Dazed, he gets up, grabs a rifle, and takes off for the woods.

139 INT. TANK HILL 427 DAYBREAK

139

Koehl and his men CHEER, hugging each other.

140 EXT. WOODS NEAR 427 DAYBREAK

140

Roughly two dozen U.S. soldiers converge around Baum, shells EXPLODING all around them.

BAUM
Break into groups of three. Fan out. Head West.

They all sprint into the woods, in small groups. Baum takes off, too, limping, joined by Stiller and Sidles.

141 EXT. WOODS NEAR 427 MORNING

141

Three U.S. Soldiers sprint up a hill.

At the base of the hill, a GERMAN OFFICER appears, flanked by SIX GERMAN SOLDIERS and TWO BARKING DOGS.

One of the German Soldiers raises his rifle and takes aim at the fleeing Americans.

The German Officer puts his hand on the Soldier's rifle and forcibly lowers it. The Soldier turns and looks at him.

GERMAN OFFICER
 (to another Soldier)
 Send in the dogs.

They let loose the BARKING German Shepherds.

The Shepherds sprint up the hill, chasing the Americans down. One of them bites an American's leg. He falls.

The other two soldiers stop and try to pull off the dog.

GERMAN SOLDIER
 Halt!

The Three soldiers look up and see A DOZEN GERMAN SOLDIERS looming over them.

They raise their hands in surrender.

Baron and TWO OTHER POWS race down a wooded hill, towards a stream. They stop short at the periphery, glancing warily at the open space.

They all decide to run for it, and burst out of the woods.

They run across the stream, legs SPLASHING.

VOICE
 (screaming)
 AMERIKANER! AMERIKANER!

They look over and see TWO GERMAN CHILDREN running across a small bridge, for the woods, and pointing in their direction.

Suddenly, THREE GERMAN SOLDIERS appear from out of the woods. They casually approach, rifles raised.

Baron and the others stop mid stream and raise their hands.

Graham sprints through the woods with THREE OTHER AMERICAN SOLDIERS, the sound of BARKING DOGS growing louder.

They all suddenly stop short. They stand on the precipice of a steep ravine.

SOLDIER1
 What now?

GRAHAM

We go down.

SOLDIER2

It's too steep. We won't make it.

Graham starts to scramble down the steep cliff, rocks crumbling. The angle is so steep, he slides more than climbs.

The Three Soldiers look at each other then all at once run in the opposite direction, up the hill.

A SQUAD OF GERMANS with dogs appear, and bears down on the three men. One of them FIRES a warning shot.

The three men stop and raise their hands.

Graham, unseen, clings to the side of the cliff.

Baum, Stiller and Sidles race through the woods, Baum limping, the sound of BARKING DOGS closing in.

A SQUAD OF GERMANS appears on the horizon, and all three dive into the dirt. They lie frozen as the Germans come close.

The Germans get to within feet of them, then keep walking.

The three of them exchange a look, then slowly rise to their knees. Stiller snatches Baum's dogtags from his neck and hurls them into the forest. Baum looks at him, shocked.
CLICK.

They look up and see THREE GERMAN SOLDIERS standing over them. GERMAN1 has his pistol raised and pointed.

Stiller and Sidles slowly raise their hands.

Baum, though, reaches for his .45, but his hand is too heavily bandaged now to get it.

German 1 FIRES. Baum is shot, and is knocked on his back. The bullet tore away his fly and cut through his inner thigh. Blood pours from his leg.

BAUM

You son of a bitch. You shot my ball off!

German 1 LAUGHS.

GERMAN 1
I speak English.

Uh oh: he understood. This isn't good.

GERMAN 1 (CONT'D)
I'm American, too.

Stiller and Sidles both look at him, shocked.

GERMAN 1 (CONT'D)
Grew up in Connecticut.

STILLER
(spits)
Swine.

German 1 steps towards Stiller, raises his pistol, and COCKS it.

GERMAN2
Klaus!

German 1 reluctantly lowers his gun.

Stiller stares back with contempt.

145 EXT. WOODS NEAR 427 MORNING

145

Zeno races through the forest with TWO OTHER AMERICAN SOLDIERS. They suddenly stop short, as they run into THREE GERMAN SOLDIERS with their rifles raised and aimed. Zeno and the two Americans slowly raise their hands.

GERMAN2
Zeno?

Zeno stares back, slowly comprehending.

ZENO
Ralph?

AMERICAN1
You know this guy?

Zeno and Ralph stare at each other, shocked.

ZENO
From high school.

German 3 walks up to American 1 and examines his dogtags.

GERMAN3

Nicht ein Jude.

Ralph steps up and tears off Zeno's dogtags. He pretends to examine them.

RALPH

(to German 3)

Nicht ein Jude.

German 3 looks at Ralph suspiciously, then moves on.

ZENO

(to Ralph)

Danke.

RALPH

(smiles)

Bitte.

146 EXT. HILL 427 DAY

146

Zeno and Ralph sit together on the hood of a jeep, Ralph smoking and relaxed, Zeno looking devastated. They look out at the carnage before them: the field is still on fire, and corpses lie everywhere.

RALPH

What made you do all of this?

Zeno shakes his head, and stares with a vacant, hollow stare.

ZENO

I wish I knew.

147 INT. BARN DAY

147

Baum lies on the floor of a barn, in a long row of wounded bodies. Beside him sits Stiller. At this point, there's no tension between them. They've been through hell together. Stiller finally decides to ask the question he's been curious about since they met.

STILLER

(quietly)

You know what's amazing to me? You could have skipped all of this.

Baum looks at him, not quite sure where this is going.

STILLER (CONT'D)

...could have spent the whole war stateside.

(CONTINUED)

Baum doesn't respond. Stiller persists.

STILLER (CONT'D)
You did turn down a spot on the
Army boxing team, right?

BAUM
(nods)
I didn't sign up to fight
Americans. I did it to fight the
enemy.

Stiller respects the hell out of Baum for that.

Of the FOUR GERMAN GUARDS who stand at the doorway, three suddenly exit, leaving only one Guard.

Baum notices, and slowly reaches over and grabs his helmet. He grips it tightly in one hand, and begins to raise it, preparing to use it as a weapon to strike the German Guard.

Stiller reaches over and grabs Baum's wrist. Baum looks over at him. Stiller shakes his head.

After a moment, Baum relents. He drops the helmet and lays back down with a thud. He passes out.

Suddenly, SIX GERMAN GUARDS enter the barn and march directly to Stiller.

GERMAN GUARD1
Major?

STILLER
Yes.

GERMAN GUARD1
You are the ranking officer here?

STILLER
Yes.

GERMAN GUARD1
Then you are the Commander of this
force?

Stiller realizes they might be looking to execute the commander. He glances at Baum, and makes an instant decision.

STILLER
Yes.

100.

147

CONTINUED: (2)

147

Baum nods in thanks. Stiller nods back. There's respect between these two now. Even admiration. Their relationship has come a long way.

German Guard 1 nods to his men, and they all swoop down and grab Stiller and pull him up off his feet.

Stiller jerks his arm away roughly, and throws them off.

They stare back, caught off guard by his strength. Stiller marches himself, dignified, out of the barn, the German Soldiers following him closely, guns raised.

148

INT. HAMMELBURG POW CAMP HOSPITAL DAY

148

The door bursts open, and TWO POWs rush in, carrying Baum, unconscious and covered in blood.

Dr. Berndt rushes over. They put Baum on a cot.

BERNDT

This is the officer the Germans are looking for?

The POW nods. Berndt cuts off the officer patches from Baum's uniform, hands them to the POW.

BERNDT (CONT'D)

Get rid of this.

(to the other POW)

Mark him down as a returned POW.

The two POWs hurry off.

Berndt turns to Baum, who opens his eyes slightly.

BAUM

(groggily)

My compass...careful with it...I'll need it to escape...

Baum passes out.

149

TITLE: "6 DAYS LATER"

149

150

EXT. WOODS NEAR AMERICAN LINES DAY

150

Graham, emaciated, with a look in his eyes like a wild animal, comes to the edge of the woods and stops. Out of breath, he stands there, watching.

On the road are THREE GERMAN OFFICERS, their backs to him, talking to each other.

(CONTINUED)

101.

150

CONTINUED:

150

Graham runs up behind them and COCKS his .45.

The three German Officers slowly turn.

GRAHAM
HANDS UP!

They slowly raise their hands.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
YOUR GUNS!

They slowly reach down and hand Graham their pistols.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
Where are the lines? The Americans?

The Germans shrug.

Graham steps up and raises his pistol to German 1's face.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
AMERICANSKI!!!

The nervous Officer gestures in a Western direction.

Graham looks in that direction. The FAINT CANNON FIRE seems to be coming from there. He takes off.

151

EXT. WOODS NEAR AMERICAN LINES DAY

151

Graham comes upon A DOZEN GERMAN SOLDIERS running for their lives. They run right past him, not even noticing him.

Graham turns in the direction they're running from and sees a PLATOON OF AMERICAN SOLDIERS approaching, FIRING as they go. He breaks into a huge smile and heads off towards them.

They FIRE at him.

He crouches down, then gets up with his hands high.

GRAHAM
I'm an American! HOLD YOUR FIRE!

The Platoon stops firing as it approaches Graham. THREE AMERICAN SOLDIERS step towards him. They scowl, rifles raised.

Graham's smile drops.

SOLDIER 1
Goddamn desertin sonufabitch.

(CONTINUED)

SOLDIER 2
Or German spy.

SOLDIER 3
Let's shoot this piece of shit
right here.

GRAHAM
I'm not a spy! I'm with the 4th
Armored!

SOLDIER 1
Yeah, right.

GRAHAM
Look!

Graham takes off his dogtags and hands it to Soldier 5.

SOLDIER 3
(examining them)
Could be fake.

SOLDIER 2
Then what the hell you doing so far
behind enemy lines?

GRAHAM
I was on a mission.

SOLDIER 1
Where are your men?

GRAHAM
Dead. They're all dead or captured.

SOLDIER 2
Who's your C.O.?

GRAHAM
Baum. Captain Abe Baum.

SOLDIER 3
Never heard of him.

SOLDIER 1
Who's *his* C.O.?

GRAHAM
Lieutenant Colonel Creighton Abrams.

SOLDIER 1
Who's *his* C.O.?

151

CONTINUED: (2)

103.

151

GRAHAM
Brigadier General William Hoge.

SOLDIER 2
Who's his C.O.?

GRAHAM
General Manton Eddy, Commander of
XII Corps.
(defiantly)
And his C.O. is General George S.
Patton. Ever hear of him?

The Soldiers are finally appeased.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
(angry)
Now would you get me some goddamn
food!?

SOLDIER 1
Take him back to headquarters.
Charge him with desertion.

Two Soldiers raise their rifles and prod him down the hill.

152

INT. ARMY FORWARD HEADQUARTERS DAY

152

Graham is lead into a tent and faces off with a COLONEL, 50s.

COLONEL
Sergeant Graham, you are being
charged with desertion--

GRAHAM
(exploding)
Goddamn it! Somewhere in this
country there's a Third Army
headquarters. You ask them about
Task Force Baum. When they tell you
they've heard of it--and they will--
you tell them you found somebody
who knows what happened to it.

The Colonel gives Graham a long, hard look.

153

INT. PATTON'S FORWARD HEADQUARTERS DAY

153

Patton lowers the phone, crestfallen.

Flanked by SIX AIDES, he walks over to his wall map, staring.
He gestures to one of his Aides, and leaves the room.

(CONTINUED)

Patton Aide 1 hurries over to the wall and removes the small red arrow positioned deep behind enemy lines.

THREE REPORTERS, sitting in the back of the room, stand up and rush the Aide.

REPORTER 1

Why did you just remove that arrow?

REPORTER 2

Why was it so far behind enemy lines?

REPORTER 3

Was it part of the Third Army?

The Aide turns and follows the others out of the room. Before leaving, he stops and turns to the Reporters.

PATTON AIDE 1

Sorry, boys. Classified.

He closes the double doors.

Baum, in a hospital bed, opens his eyes, and the room slowly comes into focus.

Standing over him is Dr. Berndt, who looks down patiently.

BERNDT

Can you hear me?

Baum nods, licking his dry lips and trying to open his eyes.

BERNDT (CONT'D)

The bullet passed through your leg.
You're going to be fine, Captain.
You lost a lot of blood, but you'll recover.

Baum looks at him expectantly.

BAUM

Do I still have nuts?

BERNDT

The family jewels are gonna be ok.
(beat)
Nasty burn up there, though.

Baum nods, relieved. He looks around and realizes that he is in the POW hospital, and that it is nearly empty.

BAUM
Where am I?

BERNDT
Hammelburg.

The irony of that isn't lost on Baum.

BAUM
So I'm a prisoner in the same damn camp I liberated?

Berndt nods.

BAUM (CONT'D)
Where...is everyone?

BERNDT
The Germans evacuated the camp.
They moved the POWs--deeper into Germany, I suppose. They only let a few stay--those too sick to be moved. Aside from you, there's only myself and Colonel Waters--

BAUM
Waters?

Dr. Berndt nods.

BAUM (CONT'D)
Can I see him?

Dr. Berndt leaves. Baum stares at the ceiling, thinking. Several beats.

A SQUEAKY NOISE as Colonel Waters pulls up in his wheelchair, beside Baum.

WATERS
Captain.

Baum looks over. He studies Waters.

BAUM
Colonel.

WATERS

We didn't know if you'd make it.
Doctor Berndt and I were taking
bets.

They both smile weakly.

BAUM

Are you...

WATERS

Paralyzed? No. Just chair-bound
for a few weeks. I was lucky. I
hear you were, too.

Baum nods, relieved. He looks back at the ceiling. Beat.

BAUM

A lot of my men weren't.

(beat)

We did some damage, but...I failed
the mission.

WATERS

No you didn't.

BAUM

I didn't make it back.

WATERS

But you made it here. Most officers
never would have come close.

Waters studies him.

WATERS (CONT'D)

Baum...you may not be a West
Pointer. But you're forgetting
something.

Baum looks at him.

WATERS (CONT'D)

Patton chose you.

Baum appreciates that. It means a lot coming from a career
military officer.

WATERS (CONT'D)

Captain. Can you tell me something?

Baum looks over. Beat.

WATERS (CONT'D)
 This mission...it wasn't for my
 sake, was it?

Baum gazes at him directly for a long time. Several beats.

BAUM

No.

Water looks back for several beats. Finally, he is satisfied. He looks greatly relieved.

WATERS

Thank you.

Waters WHEELS away.

Baum stares at the ceiling.

TITLE: TWO WEEKS LATER

THE RUMBLE OF U.S. TANKS. Dr. Berndt runs to the window and looks out excitedly.

Dozens of U.S. tanks roll over the barbed-wire fences, crushing them beneath their treads.

Dr. Berndt runs towards them, waving his hands frantically.

FOUR U.S. OFFICERS burst into the room. Two of them carry a stretcher, and they hurry to Colonel Waters.

They don't say a word to anyone else. They don't even look at Baum.

They put him onto the stretcher and rush him out of the hospital before he can react.

Baum raises his head and watches through the glass.

They carry Waters to a small Army airplane which has landed in the midst of the camp. They load him, and the plane immediately starts its PROPELLERS and TAKES OFF.

Baum lays his head back down, and stares at the ceiling.

The Americans may be here. But after all Baum has done, he might as well be invisible to them. Not a good feeling.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ARMY HOSPITAL - DAY

A much better facility. Baum has clearly been moved from the Hammelburg POW camp to a proper army hospital. In this one, almost all of the beds are full. The place hums with medical attention, too.

The hospital door BURSTS open again, and in struts General Patton, flanked by SIX AIDES (none of them Stiller).

One of the aides yells out

PATTON AIDE 1
Attention!

Lots of men scramble out of their beds and stand at attention.

Not Baum. No chance he's doing that now. He's staying in bed.

Patton and his aides all march directly towards Baum.

Aide 1 holds a small box in front of him and opens it, displaying a shining medal. He formally reads a pronouncement:

PATTON AIDE 1 (CONT'D)
For extraordinary heroism in
connection with military operations
against an armed enemy in Germany:
the Distinguished Service Cross.

Patton steps forward, takes the medal from its case, and pins it on Baum's shirt.

Patton salutes. Baum salutes back.

PATTON
I always knew you were one of the
best, Baum. You did one helluva
job.

BAUM
Thank you, sir.

PATTON
They thought the entire 4th was
attacking. They moved a division
down to meet you.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

PATTON (CONT'D)

By the time they figured it out, we were able to get 100 miles deep in the north without a shot fired.

Never seen anything like it in my entire career. Helluva a diversion, son.

Baum stares back quietly.

Patton doesn't say a thing. He just sits down on the edge of the bed, hoping to forge a bit more of a bond.

What Baum knows could immediately end Patton's career and mar his legacy. Both men are keenly aware of this.

Still Baum doesn't speak. And Patton doesn't dare open his mouth--but he's begging with his eyes. The tension in the room is brutal.

Finally, Baum makes a decision:

BAUM

General...

(beat)

I can't believe you would have sent us to Hammelburg just to rescue one man.

General Patton is immediately relieved--we see it clearly. Baum's given him an opening, and he's going to take it.

PATTON

That's right, son. I wouldn't.

Baum nods. They have an understanding: Baum is a team player. He isn't going to be the stubborn individualist bent on defying Patton's authority.

PATTON (CONT'D)

You know, Task Force Baum has been classified Top Secret. Use discretion when discussing it.

BAUM

That goes without saying.

The deal is sealed. Patton straightens himself, preparing to go.

PATTON

(formally)

Is there anything I can do for you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BAUM
As a matter of fact, there is.

Patton stares back.

BAUM (CONT'D)
You can get me back to my men.

Patton smiles broadly.

PATTON
You're forgetting the Geneva
Convention, son. You're a POW now.
You can't fight again.
(beat)
You've got nothing to prove to me.

Baum takes a lot of comfort from this. If the man he regards as the best field general in the war says Baum measures up, well that's pretty damn meaningful.

And then it occurs to Baum: he knows a way out of this one.
Baum smiles himself.

BAUM
You're General George S. Patton,
aren't you?

Patton smiles even more broadly.

He turns and struts towards the door, his boots CLICKING,
followed closely by his Aides. He stops just before he
reaches the door and turns to Baum, a big smile on his face.

PATTON
I'm gonna get you back to your
unit.
(beat)
And you give em hell!

FADE TO BLACK

TITLE: Germany surrendered just 14 days after the raid.

TITLE: General George S. Patton died on December 1, 1945,
just a few months after the raid, of complications from a
jeep accident while touring post-war Europe.

TITLE: Patton's son-in-law, Lieutenant Colonel John Waters,
recovered from his wounds. He went on to become a 4 star
general, and head of the Continental Defense Command.

CONTINUED: (3)

TITLE: German General Von Goeckel was himself interred in a POW camp. He survived two years on starvation rations, until he was finally released. He lived out his life in a small village near Hammelburg.

TITLE: Major Stiller was imprisoned in a POW camp in Nurnberg, and released at the end of the war.

TITLE: Second Lieutenant William Nutto went on to practice law in Corpus Christi, Texas.

TITLE: Sergeant Graham stayed on in the army for another 19 years. He retired as a Master Sergeant, a six striper with three Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars, and a Purple Heart. He returned to the tiny South Carolina town where he grew up, and became its postmaster.

TITLE: Captain Abe Baum retired from the Army as one of the most decorated men in the 4th Division, with the Distinguished Service Cross, four Purple Hearts, two Silver Stars and two Bronze Stars. He was a consultant to Moshe Dayan during the Israeli War of Independence. He lives with his wife in San Diego. They have four children.

TITLE: On the 40th anniversary of the raid, Captain Baum was invited to revisit the German towns his task force swept through. It was a hero's welcome--a celebration of the liberator. Among the thankful was a middle-age man: the son of the German civilian Baum had untied from a US tank to send home to his pregnant wife.

TITLE: Task Force Baum remains an inspiration for military leaders to this day.

TITLE: "I can say this: that throughout the campaign in Europe I know of no error I made--except that of failing to send a combat command to Hammelburg."

--Patton's personal diary

Beat.

TITLE: This film is dedicated to the brave men of Task Force Baum who risked their lives to save their brothers in arms.