

BISMARCK

Written by

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Based on a true story

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EXT. ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL. MAY 1941 - DAY

Embers CRACKLE.

THICK SMOKE billows over London's smouldering rooftops.

The wind GUSTS -- For a moment the clouds part... revealing the DOME of St Paul's Cathedral standing proudly -- Defiantly.

Then, once more, the clouds rise to obscure it...

EXT. BOMBED OUT STREET - DAY

Residents clear the rubble of broken terrace houses -- Firemen battle to extinguish the last of the previous night's fires.

Third Officer JENNY BLAIR, 23, of the Women's Royal Navy Service (the "Wrens", as they are commonly known) picks her way through bricks strewn across her path. She scans the house numbers... Or those that remain.

Jenny pauses for a moment to allow a stretcher bearing A WOMAN'S CORPSE to pass. She watches, not without compassion... but moves swiftly onwards. She has a job to do.

Clambering over a mound of rubble, a ROW OF INTACT HOUSES appears.

Jenny checks an official NAVAL MESSAGE SLIP:

MRS NELLY GALBRAITH
17 QUILTER ROAD
HACKNEY

She scrambles down the other side.

EXT. GALBRAITH HOUSEHOLD - DAY

NELLY GALBRAITH, an elderly 75, opens the door -- Her pulse quickens as she sees Jenny's Navy Blue Wren uniform and the official paper in Jenny's hand...

JENNY
Mrs Galbraith?

Before she can answer -- The DRONE of an aircraft intrudes overhead...

As the sound grows, Jenny glances back towards St Paul's.

AUDIO MATCH CUT:

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAWN

A SPITFIRE's Merlin engine THROBS...

SUPER: "ONE WEEK EARLIER"

The Spitfire TRUNDLES along a grass runway before it LIFTS into the skies.

SUPER: "21 May 1941. Britain and her dominions stand alone against the Nazi Third Reich. The *Luftwaffe* bombs her... U-boats starve her..."

EXT. SKIES - DAWN

The solitary Spitfire soars through the clouds...

SUPER: "And now, Britain faces a new threat."

The pilot sees something below him--

The Spitfire peels off into a dive.

IN THE COCKPIT

The Pilot presses a button on the CONTROL STICK.

UNDER THE FUSELAGE

Twin-mounted CAMERAS gaze downwards -- a TAPERED OBLONG reflected in their lenses.

SHUTTERS CLICK and WHIR.

INT. OFFICE, THE ADMIRALTY - DAY

Half a dozen desks jostle for every inch of space in the smoky room.

A shaft of light falls on Lt. Commander JAMES GALBRAITH (mid-30s). He spins a RONSON LIGHTER on the desk. He watches - brooding and turbulent like a young Richard Burton - as the lighter spins to a halt.

He takes the telephone.

GALBRAITH
(into telephone)
Has he gone in yet? ... Halifax 126
took a beating overnight... Six
ships. Wheat. Grain. Some steel and
fuel oil.
(a beat)
Same old bloody story...

A junior officer enters with a MANILA FOLDER tucked under his arm. He sees Galbraith and places it under his nose. The words "MOST SECRET" spark Galbraith's interest...

He takes it and flicks through the folder and the RECONNAISSANCE PHOTOGRAPHS inside...

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Fifty-thousand tons. We don't know
how many men...

Something grabs his attention -- He takes a MAGNIFYING GLASS and runs it over one... And a shape BULGES into view -- The CROOKED "h" of a half painted-out SWASTIKA!

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
(into phone)
--I'll call you back.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Galbraith's polished shoes clatter along the marble corridor, towards two ARMED SENTRYES guarding a door. As he approaches, they salute, and step aside.

INT. ADMIRALTY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The shades are drawn and a PROJECTOR daubs GRAPHS of shocking convoy losses and supply shortages across a portable screen.

At the far end of the room, WINSTON CHURCHILL (66) sits at the head of a grand conference table. A dozen Sea Lords, Admirals, Rear-Admirals and Commodores flank him.

Galbraith closes the door behind him and takes a seat against the wall. The First Sea Lord, ADMIRAL DUDLEY POUND, 52, sees him come in and gives him a questioning look:

"Who the hell are you?".

CHURCHILL

...These convoys are our lifeline.
And we're being choked to death,
one ship at a time. You simply must
assign more battleships to protect
them.

POUND

Convoy protection is our top
priority, Prime Minister, but you
must understand that--

CHURCHILL

Damn it, man, you must be able to
spare something!

POUND

(looking around the table
for assent)

Well... Perhaps if we reassign part
of the Home Fleet--

GALBRAITH

--That would be unwise.

They turn to look at him.

CHURCHILL

What did he say? Who is that?

GALBRAITH

Lieutenant-Commander Galbraith,
sir. Naval Intelligence Division.
(pause)
If I may?

Without waiting for an answer, Galbraith commandeers the
slide projector from its Wren operator.

He speaks with the urgency and directness of a man who knows
his brief and knows the stakes -- As he does, he flicks
through a series of MAPS, DIAGRAMS and PHOTOGRAPHS of a LARGE
BATTLESHIP...

The BISMARCK!

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

A German battleship was
photographed early this morning
near Bergin, in Norway. We believe
it to be the Bismarck. The newest
battleship in the German fleet.
(MORE)

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

Intelligence had placed her in the Baltic until a few days ago, but her presence in Norway now suggests that she intends to break out into the North Atlantic.

(a beat)

Convoy raiding.

That got their attention...

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

Together with the Battlecruiser *Prinz Eugen*, we expect her to make for our convoy routes, where Bismarck will pick off the escorts from long range before moving in to engage and sink the merchant ships unopposed. We expect--

CHURCHILL

What do we have?

GALBRAITH

Sir?

CHURCHILL

What do we have to match her?

The room full of top naval brass hang on his response.

GALBRAITH

Nothing.

(beat)

She has eight fifteen-inch guns each capable of firing a two-thousand pound shell sixteen-and-a-half miles. She has precision-engineered optical rangefinders backed up by state-of-the-art gun-laying computers which means she can sink our ships before we've even noticed she's there... Even if we do manage to engage her, Bismarck's armour makes her nigh on invincible in a typical naval engagement, and she makes over 30 knots at top speed, which is at least three knots faster than our fastest battleship.

(a beat)

In short, she's faster, stronger, and more powerful than anything in the Royal Navy--

CHURCHILL

Are you telling me she's
unsinkable?

POUND

No ship's unsinkable, Prime
Minister--

GALBRAITH

But by us...?

The question hangs uncomfortably in the room.

EXT. GRIMSTADFJORD, NAZI-OCCUPIED NORWAY - DAY

A fisherman tends to his nets aboard a small WOODEN FISHING BOAT on the glassy waters of the fjord.

The boat begins to ROCK -- the fisherman steadies himself. He turns on hearing BREAKING WATER.

The SHARP BOW of a BATTLESHIP towers above him -- SLICING through the fjord. The ship's TOWERING SUPERSTRUCTURE blocks out the sun as all 823 feet of the Bismarck slips by.

EXT. BISMARCK, BRIDGE - DAY

Bismarck courses majestically through the fjord. A few hundred feet away, the Battle-cruiser PRINZ EUGEN follows in Bismarck's wake.

Sailors scurry about on the deck below -- "KMS BISMARCK" sewn into their BLACK CAPS in gold lettering.

Eagerly sucking in the crisp Nordic air, Commander HANS OELS, 36, Bismarck's Executive Officer smiles broadly. He turns to CAPTAIN ERNST LINDEMANN, 47.

OELS

*Just think. By the time we return
here, the war may be over!*

LINDEMANN

That's the idea.

INT. ANTEROOM - DAY

Galbraith waits for the meeting to break up.

Suddenly the conference room door opens and Churchill storms out, followed by a steady stream of officers, and finally, Pound. He signals to Galbraith to walk with him.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Galbraith and Pound converse briskly.

POUND

You've put the fear of God into him.

GALBRAITH

That was the idea.

POUND

We're assembling a fleet. One goal: stop the Bismarck from breaking into the North Atlantic.

(beat)

I'm assigning you to the task force. They'll need someone who's full bottle on the Bismarck and what she's capable of.

Galbraith slows to a halt. Pound looks back to him.

POUND (CONT'D)

(off Galbraith's look)

It's where you can do the most good right now.

GALBRAITH

(reluctantly)

Yes. Understood, sir.

EXT. JETTY, SCAPA FLOW - DUSK

A small sea-plane idles alongside the jetty. Galbraith, in sea-going uniform and slinging a kit-bag, climbs aboard.

POUND (POST-LAP)

Get your things together. You'll make your way to Scapa Flow, and from there join HMS Suffolk, and then link up with Admiral Holland on board HMS Hood when you're able.

The sea-plane's engine builds to a ROAR...

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND STATION - DUSK

...Which merges with the DRONE of bombers attacking London's homes and docks. The NOISE filters down to the hundreds of people sheltering along the tube platform, deep underground.

Picking her way through the civilians, Wren First Officer MAGGIE WARWICK, 48, searches the length of the platform with her armour-plated gaze. She's displeased.

She comes to the far end of the platform, where Jenny COWERS.

MAGGIE

Jenny Blair, you were due at your post thirty minutes ago!

Jenny doesn't react -- she's staring into the middle distance.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

This won't do. Come on! On your feet!

Busybodies watch in interest -- Even as the ground begins to shake...

BOMBERS grow LOUDER overhead -- A rising WHISTLE -- everyone instinctively braces -- BOB-BOBA-BOBBABOOM-BOOM-BOOM! -- The lights FLICKER and FADE... but return to normal.

The danger has passed - for now... Relief along the platform.

Jenny stirs. She scrambles to the edge of the platform... and VOMITS onto the tracks. She turns to Maggie, ashen-faced.

JENNY

I'm-- My nerves... I'm sorry.

Two old ladies pause their knitting long enough to share a knowing glance -- "she hopes it's just nerves..."

MAGGIE

(quietly)

Pull yourself together.

Jenny rises to her feet and follows Maggie out.

INT. MAP ROOM - DUSK

A large MAP TABLE forms the centerpiece of the once-grand room. It shows the North Atlantic: France, Britain, Iceland, Greenland, all the way to North America.

Wrens and Naval officers mill around it, including one Wren (VERA POULTON, 29) who shuffles markers around the map with a long CUE.

On one side of the room, a large window, crisscrossed in tape. On the others, desks and workstations sprout from a raised dais, overlooking the map table.

Along one wall are four large metal RADIO SETS, three of which are occupied by Wren W/T ("Wireless Telegraphy") operators.

One SEAT is conspicuously empty.

Jenny and Maggie enter and go to their posts.

FRASER
Are you all right, Miss Blair?

Jenny turns to see ADMIRAL BRUCE FRASER, 50. His limp and WALKING STICK hint that his sea legs have permanently deserted him.

JENNY
Yes, sir. I'm feeling much better now.

FRASER
Good-oh.

Maggie purses her lips with disapproval. Jenny takes the empty seat and dons her head-set.

Pound hunches over the map.

POUND
(to himself)
Which way will she come? Obviously, the English Channel is out of the question.

Two other options present themselves:

- The gap between Greenland and Iceland: The DENMARK STRAIT.
- The gap between Iceland and Scotland: The FAROES GAP.

FRASER
If I were Lindemann, I would reason that the region around the Faroes is easier to patrol...

POUND
That's because it is.

FRASER

Which would make the Denmark strait
the natural choice. Then again, the
Faroes gap is a considerably
shorter route.

Pound thinks. Two sets of markers on the map take his
interest:

-- HMS HOOD and PRINCE OF WALES together south of Iceland
-- HMS SUFFOLK further north, between Iceland and Greenland.

POUND

Mobilise the Home Fleet. We'll have
to keep it in reserve till we know
for certain which way she's coming,
of course. In the meantime, have
HMS Hood take station due south of
HMS Suffolk...

(a beat)

And let's pray they find her.

AT JENNY'S STATION - SECONDS LATER

Fraser hands Jenny a message slip. She takes it and begins
TAPPING OUT a string of DITS and DAHS in Morse Code.

As she keys, a STRING OF ENCRYPTED LETTERS appears which
quickly resolves itself into PLAIN TEXT...

SUPER: "To Admiral Holland. HMS HOOD and escorts are to take
station due south of HMS SUFFOLK, patrolling Denmark Strait."

INT/EXT. SEA-PLANE OVER DENMARK STRAIT - DUSK

The message fades out in part, leaving only the words:

SUPER: "HMS SUFFOLK, Denmark Strait"

Sure enough, a ship cuts through choppy waters hundreds of
feet below the seaplane. Galbraith watches it through the
rain-lashed window.

He braces himself against the turbulence as the seaplane
tosses about. The pilot looks over to him...

GALBRAITH

(shouting over the noise)

I don't like planes!

The pilot gives him a smile and a THUMBS-UP -- The seaplane dips from view as it commences its approach.

EXT. HMS SUFFOLK - DUSK

The seaplane taxis through the chop to the side of HMS Suffolk.

Sailors -- each with "HMS SUFFOLK" embroidered on their WHITE CAPS -- manoeuver the ship's CRANE into position. They hook on to the seaplane and winch it aboard.

Galbraith steps out onto the deck -- Sleet lashes the grey ship, the grey sea, the grey skies -- He takes in his surroundings...

It seems he's not too keen on ships, either.

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - DUSK

CAPTAIN ROBERT ELLIS, 40, scans the gloomy horizon through the windows of the Suffolk's spartan bridge.

Galbraith arrives at the door.

GALBRAITH
Captain Ellis?

ELLIS
Ah, Galbraith. Glad you made it in
one piece.

GALBRAITH
So am I.

ELLIS
Welcome aboard.

Ellis turns to a Warrant Officer, W/O JOHN DANIELS, 59, an old seafarer who has progressed as far as an enlisted man can go in the Royal Navy.

ELLIS (CONT'D)
(to Daniels)
Yes, thank you Mr Daniels-- You can
resume your lookout.

DANIELS
Aye aye, Captain.

ELLIS
(sizing Galbraith up)
How long since you were last at
sea?

Galbraith hesitates -- He knows where this will lead.

GALBRAITH
Twelve months.

ELLIS
Not since Dunkirk?

He shakes his head.

ELLIS (CONT'D)
What ship?

GALBRAITH
(reluctantly)
HMS Basilisk, sir.

Ellis realises too late that this is a sore topic.

ELLIS
Oh...
(pause)
You know, I came up with Max
Richmond through Naval College...

GALBRAITH
I was his X.O.

ELLIS
Well, damn shame...
(a beat)
Anyway, you've had a long trip.
Lef'tenant Kendrick here will show
you to your quarters. Why don't you
freshen up and join me in the mess
for a hot meal?

GALBRAITH
Much obliged, sir.

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

LIEUTENANT KENDRICK, 19, leads Galbraith down one of
Suffolk's tight corridors. He's full of the exuberance of
youth.

KENDRICK

I was at Dunkirk, sir. On HMS
Gallant. We were all watching, us
mids. And when we saw what Basilisk
was up to we all said it was the
brav--

GALBRAITH

(snapping)

--Look, do me a favour, will you?!

Galbraith reigns himself in, shocked by his outburst.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

(calmer, contrite)

I... I left London in somewhat of a
hurry. When there's an appropriate
moment, if I could have a message
sent back?

KENDRICK

Yes. Of course, sir... Sorry, sir.

They walk in silence for a moment.

KENDRICK (CONT'D)

Here you are, sir.

Kendrick leaves before Galbraith can muster an apology or
other response.

INT. GALBRAITH'S CABIN - DUSK

The cabin is tiny. A small DESK. A BED.

Galbraith unpacks his things. Clothes on the bed. A TEXTBOOK
OF NAVAL TACTICS and various ROLLED-UP CHARTS and Admiralty
PAMPHLETS on the desk.

He opens his WALLET to a PHOTOGRAPH of an old woman -- Nelly
Galbraith...

GALBRAITH

(to the photograph)

Sorry Nan. Guess I won't be home to
fix your supper...

He tosses the wallet onto the desk.

AWOOGA -- AWOOGA -- AWOOGA!

An alarm! Galbraith moves back into...

THE CORRIDOR

Men race past.

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

Galbraith bursts into the bridge -- Captain Ellis hunches over a map, marking a position and taking a bearing.

GALBRAITH
Bismarck?!

ELLIS
We picked up an echo on radar,
Nor'nor-east, bearing 240 degrees--

GALBRAITH
Straight for us.

Ellis takes a large pair of BINOCULARS and heads out of the bridge and up to the...

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK - HMS SUFFOLK - CONTINUOUS

Galbraith joins Captain Ellis, Lt Kendrick, W/O Daniels and several other sailors each keeping watch through binoculars.

THICK BANKS OF FOG swirl amid chunks of ice bobbing in the grey Atlantic waters. In the dying light, the fog plays tricks... dark shapes appearing and dissolving.

Only the throbbing of Suffolk's engines, the cold water breaking over her bows and the whipping wind breaks the silence.

GALBRAITH
There!

Bismarck SURGES towards them out of a fog bank -- A death-bringing pyramid of grey steel, bristling with guns!

KENDRICK
Good god!

ELLIS
(to Daniels:) Warrant Officer Daniels, signal to Hood: Bismarck sighted, range...

GALBRAITH
Twelve-thousand yards?
(under his breath)
We're too close...

Bismarck's twin fifteen-inch caliber guns of *Anton* and *Bruno* -
the two foremost turrets - TURN towards them!

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
She's engaging us, Captain!

ELLIS
Hard to port!

--A MASSIVE FLASH lights up the Northern skies as Bismarck
opens fire!

ELLIS (CONT'D)
Port engine full astern! Starboard
full ahead!

Suffolk LURCHES into her turn...

The deep ROAR of four two-thousand pound shells RIPS through
the air...

...Followed seconds later by a B-BOOM B-BOOM as the sound of
the guns finally reaches Suffolk--

--Then four TOWERING COLUMNS of white water BURST from the
sea, just feet from the Suffolk, showering her with spray.

Captain Ellis moves down to the...

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

Galbraith follows him.

ELLIS
I think that makes us the first
ship Bismarck has fired on in
anger.

GALBRAITH
That was just target practice...

Ellis takes the intercom.

ELLIS
(into intercom)
Prepare to return fire.

GALBRAITH

--Sir? We should withdraw.

(off his look)

What type of radar do you have?

ELLIS

The type 284.

GALBRAITH

Then we can shadow her until the fleet is close enough to engage.

Ellis thinks for a moment.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

We can't do much good from the bottom of the Denmark Strait!

ELLIS

(into intercom)

Engine room: lay down a smokescreen and both ahead full!

(to Galbraith)

Follow me.

INT. BISMARCK BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Oels watches Suffolk through binoculars. A DENSE CLOUD of smoke envelops the British ship, shielding her from view.

OELS

(to Lindemann)

She's breaking off, Captain.

(into intercom)

Prepare to give chase.

LINDEMANN

Our mission is clear, Commander.

Our orders are to break out into the North Atlantic.

OELS

Of course, sir.

LINDEMANN

This cruiser is unimportant. To

pursue her will only cause delay.

If we delay, we miss opportunities

to sink merchant shipping. From now

on, there is to be no unnecessary

contact with the enemy.

(a beat)

Resume our previous course.

OELS
Jawohl, Herr Kapitän.

INT. MAP ROOM - NIGHT

Maggie hands a message slip to Fraser as he gazes over the map table.

MAGGIE
Message from HMS Suffolk, sir.

He takes the slip.

FRASER
(to Vera)
Confirmed sighting of Bismarck and
Prinz Eugen at 67° North, 25° West.

She takes her cue and moves Bismarck's marker into place, between Iceland and Greenland. Pound sees the movement and heads over.

He looks over the map table. South-East of Bismarck and Suffolk are markers for HMS Hood and HMS Prince of Wales.

POUND
They've got a long night ahead of
them. Pass this to Admiral Holland
on Hood.

AT JENNY'S RADIO SET

Jenny keys the following message in quick, efficient Morse.

SUPER: "TO HMS HOOD: BISMARCK AND ESCORT LOCATED 67°N, 25°W
BEARING 240°. HMS SUFFOLK SHADOWING. PLOT COURSE TO
INTERCEPT."

EXT. NORTH ATLANTIC - DUSK

The message fades out in part, leaving the words:

SUPER: "HMS HOOD".

Smoke pours from her TWIN FUNNELS as HMS Hood steams through the grey seas. Another battleship, HMS Prince of Wales, follows in Hood's wake.

INT. HMS HOOD'S BRIDGE - DUSK

ADMIRAL LANCELOT HOLLAND, mid 50s, unfurls a CHART of the North Atlantic with a vigorous sweep of his hands. Officers crowd around the map waiting for the charismatic commander to speak.

HOLLAND

Bismarck! If all goes to plan,
we'll intercept her at first light.
It's all quite simple... If they
get past us...

(extending his finger down
the map:)

They'll be smack bang in the middle
of our convoy lanes by nightfall
tomorrow.

Holland fixes each of his men in turn with a determined gaze, and a trusting smile.

HOLLAND (CONT'D)

Let's not let that happen, shall
we?

INT. RADAR ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - NIGHT

Galbraith watches a RADAR OPERATOR carefully twist and jog the dial of his TYPE A RADAR DISPLAY.

It's primitive - rather than the familiar Position Plan Indicator sweeping out a circle, there's just a BEARING INDICATOR and the dancing green SQUIGGLES of an OSCILLOSCOPE.

RADAR OPERATOR

It's a bit temperamental.
Especially in these snow squalls...
Very narrow beam, you see...

He tunes some more -- The SQUIGGLE resolves into a CLEAR SPIKE.

RADAR OPERATOR (CONT'D)

--There we go!

GALBRAITH

Good work. I'm afraid you've got a long night ahead: We need to know where she is at all times.

INT. MAP ROOM - NIGHT

The room buzzes with activity. The intermittent tones of radio messages in Morse ring out from the wireless sets.

Vera manoeuvres ship markers into position:

To the North: SUFFOLK.

To the South: HOOD and PRINCE OF WALES.

They're closing the noose on BISMARCK and PRINZ EUGEN...

EXT. FORECASTLE DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - NIGHT

HMS Suffolk cleaves through a frosty swell. The powerful BEAMS of Suffolk's searchlights cut through a freezing mix of SPINDRIFT and FLURRIES OF SNOW.

Galbraith hunches against the cold. In his right hand, he toys with his RONSON LIGHTER.

Ellis approaches.

ELLIS

It's coming back to you?

Galbraith looks away -- He SLIPS the lighter into his pocket.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

Don't worry, you'll have your sea-legs back soon enough.

(a beat)

You don't give us much of a shot,
do you?

GALBRAITH

Bismarck's like nothing we've ever come up against. As fast as a cruiser. As strong as a battleship... And the Hood, well, as fine a ship as she is, she's getting on in years. All things being equal, she's no match for her.

ELLIS

Great...

GALBRAITH

Then again, Bismarck's on her maiden voyage, with a green crew.

(MORE)

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

And as for the Hood, by God her crew know their business. That might tip the balance.

(a beat)

And then there's Admiral Holland...

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

Galbraith shows Ellis a plot of Hood's course on a CHART.

GALBRAITH

Admiral Holland is smart, probably the best tactician we've had since Nelson. He could have intercepted Bismarck by now.

(indicating on the chart)

But this longer course puts Hood west of Bismarck at first light. Hood will be in darkness, hidden from Bismarck's range-finders, while Bismarck is back-lit by the rising sun.

(a beat)

Well... It will even the odds.

ELLIS

So... now we wait.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. GALBRAITH'S CABIN - DAWN

Galbraith sits on the edge of the bed -- A bundle of tension.

A knock comes on the door.

DANIELS (O.S.)

First light approaching, sir.

Galbraith SPRINGS up -- Ready for action.

EXT. SUFFOLK, OBSERVATION DECK - MOMENTS LATER

Galbraith and Ellis race headlong into the rain lashing the deck and press forward to the railing.

The sky to their left -- The East -- is brightening.

ELLIS

If all goes to plan Hood and Prince
of Wales are somewhere over
there...

(indicating the "2
O'clock" position)

Laying in wait.

Galbraith turns his binoculars to follow Ellis's indication.

INSERT: Through the lenses, there's nothing to see -- It's
still much too dark in the Western skies.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

Bismarck should be somewhere...

(indicating "11 O'clock")

...Over--

Galbraith scans over and--

GALBRAITH

--There!

Insert: Bismarck and Prinz Eugen are there in the distance...
just visible through the rain in the pre-dawn glow.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

I'd say it's all about to kick off,
Captain.

INT. HMS HOOD'S BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

It's a hive of activity on the bridge.

HOLLAND

Excellent. We got the drop on her.
Now let's make it count.

INT. PLOTTING ROOM, HMS HOOD - DAY

Royal Navy officers FRET around a device the size of a dinner
table -- The GUN LAYING COMPUTER.

They twist and turn the dials and knobs on the analog
computer to make their inputs.

GUNNERY DIRECTOR

(into intercom)

Fire control, can we please have a
range?

INT. RANGEFINDER, HMS HOOD - DAY

The CHIEF SPOTTER makes his way through the cramped space, jammed with men and equipment, to answer the intercom.

One sailor, the JUNIOR SPOTTER, presses against the eyepieces of a contraption that spans the room like a horizontal periscope -- The RANGEFINDER.

INSERT: SPRAY and RAIN lashes the viewfinder as Hood steams into the worst of the weather -- THEY CAN'T SEE A BLOODY THING!

The Junior Spotter pulls away from his eyepieces and RUBS his eyes.

CHIEF SPOTTER
(into intercom)
When we have a range, we'll give it
to you!

INT. HMS PRINCE OF WALES, BRIDGE - DAY

CAPTAIN JACK LEACH, 46 watches for a sign of action from HMS Hood, just a few hundred yards ahead of him.

His X.O. hangs up the intercom.

X.O.
We have a firing solution, sir--

CAPTAIN LEACH
--No. Fire on Hood's lead. We'll
only get one chance to take her
unawares.
(under his breath)
Come on!

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - CONTINUOUS

Galbraith and Ellis watch and wait -- The cover of darkness is FAST RECEDING in the West.

GALBRAITH
(under his breath)
Come on...!

INT. HMS HOOD'S BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The tension is rising -- Admiral Holland looks over to the Captain, who is on the intercom...

Still nothing.

HOLLAND
Come on, gentlemen.
(a beat)
Let's get amongst it!

INT. HOOD TURBINE ROOM - DAY

The boilers and turbines THROB and HUM deep in the innards of the ship.

An Engine Room Mechanic WHEELS the throttle on a control panel decked with DIALS, KNOBS and GRIME. The HUM of the turbines rises to a WHINE.

EXT. HOOD PROPELLER - DAY

Below the waterline, HMS Hood's propellers CHURN.

INT. BISMARCK HYDROPHONE STATION - DAY

A German sailor listens intently through a headset.

From out of the NOISE of the ocean the distant ECHOES of a propeller leap out at him... His eyes widen!

INT. BISMARCK BRIDGE - DAY

Oels replaces the intercom receiver.

OELS
(to Lindemann)
*Two fast turbine ships approaching
at 280°!*

Lindemann can scarcely believe it -- He moves past Oels to look for himself.

INT. RANGEFINDER, HMS HOOD - CONTINUOUS

Hood's Junior Spotter excitedly pulls away from the eyepieces.

JUNIOR SPOTTER
Got it!

CUT TO:

INT. PLOTTING ROOM, HMS HOOD - CONTINUOUS

The Gunnery Director listens on the intercom--

GUNNERY DIRECTOR
(relying the message)
25,000 yards!

CUT TO:

INT. HMS HOOD'S BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

The Captain takes the receiver... Listens--

He turns to Admiral Holland and NODS.

HOLLAND
You may open fire.

INT. HOOD, GUN TURRET - DAY

A HYDRAULIC LOADER rams a shell cartridge into the barrel and the breech clamps shut.

GUN OPERATOR
--FIRE!

INT. HMS PRINCE OF WALES, BRIDGE - DAY

Captain Leach's face brightens as Hood's forward guns -- just a few hundred yards ahead -- BURST into life with a THUNDERCLAP.

CAPTAIN LEACH
That's more like it... Fire when ready!

X.O.
(into intercom)
You may fire when ready.

INT. BISMARCK BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Oels joins Lindemann at the window.

OELS
Two ships-- There!

An instant later, the sky FLASHES... Then...

VVVVOOOOOSH! Shells from the British ships sail overhead.
Oels sounds the ALARM...

EXT. BISMARCK FIRE CONTROL PLATFORM - MOMENTS LATER

...And it CLANGS up to the highest part of the ship.

A deck runs around a ROTATING STEEL TURRET -- But rather than guns, two thick ARMS of a RANGEFINDER project out the sides... Their span reaches a full 10 metres across.

Gunnery Officer ADELBERT SCHNEIDER, only 37 but already an old sea dog, races up the stairs and emerges onto the platform -- Sailors file into the turret.

SCHNEIDER

Quickly!

Two sailors haul off the CANVAS coverings on the end of the arms to reveal PRECISION OPTICAL LENSES.

Schneider looks out to the direction of the British ships -- Hunting for them in the darkness...

INSERT: He scans along through his binoculars... nothing...

--He DOUBLES BACK.

There! Just visible, the outline of TWO BATTLESHIPS.

INT. PRINCE OF WALES, RANGEFINDER - DAY

The Chief Spotter observes the fall of shot through his viewfinder -- FOUR MASSIVE PLUMES OF SPRAY falling well beyond Bismarck.

CHIEF SPOTTER
(into intercom)
All four guns long. Adjust range
minus 500 yards all guns.

EXT. HMS PRINCE OF WALES, FORWARD TURRETS - DAY

The MASSIVE TURRETS rotate -- Their GUNS swivel downwards.

B-B-BOOM!

They HURL their shells towards Bismarck. The shockwave FLATTENS THE SEAS for a hundred yards around.

EXT. BISMARCK FIRE CONTROL PLATFORM - MOMENTS LATER

Schneider sees the flash...

--Three COLUMNS OF WATER EXPLODE from the sea directly in Bismarck's path.

A fourth shell CRASHES into Bismarck's bow with a massive FLASH and a SHOCK-WAVE that hits him like a sledgehammer.

He races inside.

INT. RANGEFINDER, BISMARCK - CONTINUOUS

Schneider ducks under the cross-beam of the rangefinder that dominates the room to take his seat -- Moving past his crew-mates who are already in position...

SCHNEIDER

You saw them, yes?

The room bristles with periscopes, telescopes and other optical devices -- BRAND SPANKING NEW.

The TRAINER looks through his eyepiece -- He spins his hand-wheel.

The WHOLE ROOM ROTATES...

INSERT: A BLACK LINE down the centre of his viewfinder sweeps across the ocean until it lands perfectly on HMS HOOD.

TRAINER

Target bearing acquired!

POINTER

Vertical inclination... acquired!

The RANGING OFFICER dials in a series of quick adjustments.

INSERT: Through his viewfinder a DOUBLE-IMAGE of HMS HOOD moves closer and closer to a SINGLE SHARP IMAGE.

RANGING OFFICER

Range 24,000 metres!

This has taken seconds -- Brutally efficient.

INT. BISMARCK BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Oels watches Bismarck's guns track in on their target in unison.

As they do--

Seven TOWERS of WHITE WATER ERUPT from the surf all around Bismarck...

...Then a rising VVOOOSHHH as a shell RIPS through the air.

BOOM -- the shell SMACKS against Bismarck's armour.

LINDEMANN

(to Oels)

Come on, I won't have my ship shot out from under my ass!

OELS

(into intercom)

Damn it, open fire!

BISMARCK'S MAGAZINE - MOMENTS LATER

A mechanical arm moves a two-thousand pound FIFTEEN-INCH SHELL onto an automated hoist.

A sailor slaps a large GREEN BUTTON and the hoist lifts the shell up through a hatch and into...

GUN TURRET "DORA"

...Where a HYDRAULIC RAM shoves the shell into the BREECH of one of Bismarck's mammoth guns.

EXT. PRINZ EUGEN ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN - DAY

A German gun crew looks back towards Bismarck -- Following a few hundred yards behind their Battlecruiser.

Her guns ERUPT, lighting up the sky with an INCANDESCENT WALL OF FLAME.

Transfixed, the gunners turn...

Following the path of the shells...

Distant SPOUTS of foam leap up around Hood -- Then a BRIGHT FLASH!

The gunners CHEER as the FLASH burns into a SMOKE CLOUD, and the BOOM of the hit registers.

INT. HMS PRINCE OF WALES, BRIDGE - DAY

The X.O. notices SMOKE and FLAME coming from the rear of HMS Hood.

X.O., PRINCE OF WALES
Sir, Hood's been hit.

CAPTAIN LEACH
They've found her range...

Captain Leach takes up his binoculars.

INSERT: Bright PIN-PRICKS OF LIGHT dance along Bismarck's silhouette in the distance.

CAPTAIN LEACH (CONT'D)
Stand by for another volley--

CRASH!

Glass and metal SHATTERS as a SHELL RIPS THROUGH THE BRIDGE -- It passes CLEAN THROUGH and then explodes.

Captain Leach staggers to his feet -- His bridge is completely DECIMATED -- His X.O., his helmsman, signalmen -- all dead -- He's exposed to the elements amidst a mass of TWISTED METAL.

He reaches for the intercom--

CAPTAIN LEACH (CONT'D)
Lay down smoke!

But the intercom is dead.

He looks towards HMS Hood, framed by the gaping hole in the bridge -- The HOWL of another volley of incoming shell-fire grows to a ROAR.

BOOM!

SPOUTS of water ERUPT from the waves all around HMS Hood -- then one shell SMACKS into her, PUNCHING a hole just below the main funnel.

INT. MAP ROOM - DAY

Jenny listens to her headset as a stream of DITS and DAHS rattle through her RADIO SET. She busily copies down the message--

--She looks up in confusion.

The stream of Morse CUTS OUT--
SILENCE.

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

Galbraith and Ellis scan the ocean ahead of them through binoculars.

A SLIVER OF FLAME shoots up on the horizon.

ELLIS
My God!

INT. BISMARCK BRIDGE - DAY

The officers on the bridge look on as a JET OF FLAME bursts from the *Hood* and thrusts into the sky.

...But everyone on the bridge is AWE-STRUCK into SILENCE.

INT/EXT. HMS PRINCE OF WALES, BRIDGE - DAY

Captain Leach looks on in shock as A GEYSER of FLAME towers hundreds of feet above *HMS Hood*.

Then a BLAST RIPS *HOOD* IN TWO!

Debris rains down on Prince of Wales.

The rear half of *Hood* begins to sink almost immediately -- The DISEMBODIED FORE-SECTION continues on through the waves -- As if NOTHING HAD HAPPENED.

INT. BISMARCK BRIDGE - DAY

Oels watches through binoculars: the bow of *HMS Hood* continues to SURGE towards him, then RISES vertically into the air, and SLIPS under the waves.

Oels turns to Lindemann -- Shocked by Bismarck's display of power...

LINDEMANN
Der Jäger wird zum Gejagten geworden...

SUBTITLE
Now the hunter will become the hunted...

INT. MAP ROOM - DAY

Jenny tunes the dial of her radio set -- Nothing but static.

JENNY
(to Fraser)
Sir, I can't raise the Hood.
(pause)
Has anyone had word from the Hood?

Silence...

Then, one by one, the other W/T operators' sets BURST into life...

But Jenny's set stays silent. A wave of panic grips her.

Fraser turns to Vera solemnly. He nods. She takes her CUE and REMOVES HOOD'S MARKER from the map board.

INT/EXT. HMS PRINCE OF WALES, BRIDGE - DAY

Captain Leach watches in shock as Prince of Wales passes by the last of the Hood's burning wreckage. No-one moving in the water -- Just death and destruction.

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - CONTINUOUS

Galbraith watches as Prince of Wales - now ALONE on the horizon - lays a SMOKESCREEN and turns away from the German battleships.

Ellis gives him a look -- He can't quite believe what he just saw.

INT. MAP ROOM - DAY

Pound pulls away from the map board. He moves to a telephone.

INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS - CONTINUOUS

Churchill sits on the front bench of the impressive parliamentary chamber, surrounded by Britain's ruling elite. A clerk approaches -- Taps him on the shoulder.

POUND (O.S.)
Prime Minister, I'm afraid I have some unwelcome news.

INT. ANTEROOM - CONTINUOUS

The clerk ushers Churchill in. A TELEPHONE sits on a fine walnut table. He takes the receiver, and listens as he is told the news.

Devastated.

POUND (FILTERED)
Sir?

CHURCHILL
(into telephone)
Sink her.

INT. MAP ROOM - DAY

Vera manoeuvres an armada of markers into the North Atlantic and into the hunt for Bismarck.

Somewhere, a radio HISSES.

CHURCHILL (RADIO)
You ask "what is our aim?".
Victory. Victory at all costs.
(murmurs of approval)
Victory in spite of all terror.
(shouts of "hear, hear!")
Victory however long and hard the road may be... For without victory there is no survival.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

HMS Suffolk passes by HMS Prince of Wales as it limps away from Bismarck. Galbraith and Ellis stare at the battered hulk -- AWESTRUCK -- Its bridge is a mess... nothing but a gaping hole.

ELLIS
I guess you're stuck with us for now.

Galbraith ruefully takes his leave.

ELLIS (CONT'D)
(calling after him)
There was nothing we could have done!

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

Galbraith hunches over the chart table -- Deep in thought --
Eating himself up inside.

Ellis enters and makes for the public address microphone.

ELLIS (LOUDSPEAKER)

This is the Captain speaking. By
now you'll all know what happened
to the Hood. I know many of you
will have lost friends and former
ship-mates. There will be a time to
mourn them in due course. For now,
we dig deep. We carry on.

(a beat)

That is all.

Ellis replaces the microphone, wearily -- The speech has
taken a lot out of him.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

(to Galbraith)

I need to get some shut-eye. Take
command for the next watch.

Galbraith glances back... says nothing. He rolls up his chart
and gathers his things--

GALBRAITH

(without looking at Ellis)

Not me. Kendrick should take the
con.

Kendrick swells with enthusiasm.

KENDRICK

Sir?

Ellis glares at Galbraith... "what the hell?".

ELLIS

(under his breath)

Very well...

(to Kendrick)

Kendrick. You're in command for the
next watch.

KENDRICK

(swelling with pride)

Thank you, sir.

ELLIS

We need to be aware of Bismarck's every move. Our fleet is still a good day and half's sail to the East so if we're to have any sort of a chance we have to keep tabs on her till they arrive.

KENDRICK

(burdened by the responsibility)

Understood, sir...

ELLIS

Send for me or Commander Galbraith the minute there's any news.

GALBRAITH

Don't get too close.

Galbraith leaves and Ellis follows -- Kendrick tries out a couple of CAPTAINLY POSES -- But he's too young to carry them off...

Daniels, watching, shakes his head with a smile.

INT. GALBRAITH'S CABIN - DAY

Galbraith SLAMS his books and charts onto his desk in frustration. He picks them up one by one and dumps them into a waste paper bin.

He takes a PAMPHLET - "Armour Efficiency and Penetration Tables, 1941" ... He sets fire to one corner and dumps it into the bin with the others.

Ellis STORMS in after him.

ELLIS

What the bloody hell was all that about?! The Captain asks you to take a watch and--

GALBRAITH

My duty is to sink the Bismarck. Do you know what that means?!

(a beat)

Believe me, you do not want me responsible for the safety of your ship--

ELLIS

Well thank you for your concern,
but we'll take our chances, just
like the rest of the fleet.

Galbraith gives him a slow burn.

GALBRAITH

Chances? What chances?! You saw
what she did to Hood! That shot
went straight through her side
armour, and at that range--

ELLIS

We got a few good hits on her too--

GALBRAITH

And Bismarck is still afloat!
(a beat)
You can forget about your zones of
immunity and armour efficiency and
all of that rubbish... If those
shots had hit any of our ships it
would have been game over.

Ellis notices the SMOULDERING bin and EMPTIES his coffee mug
into it, extinguishing the flames.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

Don't you see? Bismarck changes the
game. We just don't have an answer.

ELLIS

Then we find one! What about an air
attack?

GALBRAITH

Against a lesser ship? Maybe that
would work. But our aerial
torpedoes can't carry enough
explosive to penetrate Bismarck's
armour.

ELLIS

Well, if we stick with her we can
track her into the convoy lanes--

GALBRAITH

...And signal her position so they
can divert around her?

ELLIS

Well, why the hell not?!

Galbraith takes his ROLLED UP CHART and spreads it over the desk -- It shows the NORTH ATLANTIC.

GALBRAITH

(stabbing at the map)

Because you push the convoys into the Wolf-packs. U-boats. Into the ice floes. They travel further, use up fuel-- that means they slow down... not just the convoys you divert, but all of them, you see, because who knows when they have to take the long way? That means less cargo, day in, day out-- it all adds up. You take them away from the cover of our battleships--

Galbraith pauses -- Calms himself. He resumes, slower...

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

Besides, if it worked, Bismarck would just sink us. Which she probably will anyway...

(a beat)

If it's all the same to you, Captain, I'd rather not be the one who has to lead your men to their deaths.

ELLIS

(sarcastic)

Well that's just fantastic...

Ellis thunders out. Galbraith hunches over the chart, DISGUSTED with himself.

GALBRAITH

(under his breath)

Damn it, man!

INT. MAP ROOM - NIGHT

At the map table, Pound looks over the disposition of his fleet... A dozen ships stretch in a line, racing to catch up with Bismarck.

A MURMUR fills the room -- Churchill enters.

CHURCHILL

I don't suppose Admiral Holland might have...

(off Pound's look)

Who's in charge now?

POUND

Tovey.

(off his look:)

He wouldn't be my first choice,
either, sir. But he's most senior.

CHURCHILL

Well, we're not going to win this
with good manners.

Churchill gravitates to the map table. He gazes over it.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

What's the situation?

POUND

Well, sir... It's a chase.

(a beat)

Suffolk is shadowing by radar and
it's a mad dash for everyone else
to catch up. Bismarck's been trying
to shake her off but so far
Suffolk's been up to the task.

CHURCHILL

Can she take her on herself?

POUND

No, sir. Suffolk's just a cruiser.
Built for speed. Lightly armed.
Lightly armored.

CHURCHILL

(indicating the Map)

Which ship is that?

One MARKER lags well behind.

POUND

HMS Rodney.

CHURCHILL

Rodney... Just think. When her keel
was laid down, we were the most
powerful navy the world had ever
known. Her sixteen-inch guns could
take on any battleship and give her
a beating. Now she's a relic of
another age. Ready for the scrap-
yard...

(a beat)

And I suppose we lost our Bismarck
expert with the Hood?

POUND

Galbraith? No, sir. As far as we know, he's still on the Suffolk.

CHURCHILL

Well, that's something, I suppose. Keep me informed.

He leaves.

FRASER

You might have mentioned that he was up on charges after Dunkirk. Recklessly endangering his ship.

POUND

It must have slipped my mind.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESTROYER OFF DUNKIRK - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Exhausted British Soldiers clamber aboard over cargo netting. Galbraith helps the last of the sodden Tommies with the final step over the railing.

He glances at his watch.

GALBRAITH

(to a sailor)

This is all we can take.

He breaks away and moves inside the ship.

INSIDE (FLASHBACK)

Galbraith moves down a corridor lined on both sides by soldiers. Many are wounded. They're weary. Beat.

BRIDGE (FLASHBACK)

There's blood on the floor. Bullet-holes pepper the windows.

GALBRAITH

Right, they're aboard.

(to the Helmsman)

What are you waiting for?

HELMAN

--We're grounded. Stuck fast, Sir!

Galbraith stops, suddenly aware of a loud DRONE.

GALBRAITH
Sound the alarm...

He moves to the window in time to see a LINE OF STUKA BOMBERS peel into a DIVE.

HELMAN
It's the tide, sir--

GALBRAITH
(into Intercom)
Pump out the forward fuel tanks. We
need to lose ballast--

The DRONE increases in pitch to a WAIL.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
Take cover!

The WAIL BUILDS IN INTENSITY--

INT. GALBRAITH'S CABIN - NIGHT

--Then CUTS OUT as Galbraith wakes in a cold sweat.

He takes a moment to compose himself -- He takes out his RONSON LIGHTER and sets it on the desk.

As he does, he notices the waste paper bin... He regards it for a moment, then plonks it on the desk.

INT. MAP ROOM - NIGHT

The Wrens are changing shift.

Jenny leaves her post and a new girl takes her place.

MAGGIE
Right, girls. Back at your posts in
four hours.

INT. DORMITORY - NIGHT

A dozen Wrens try to sleep in a long room filled with camp-beds -- All still in uniform.

Jenny lies facing the thick black-out curtains pinned against the windows, curled on her side.

She closes her eyes. Her hand moves down to cradle her belly.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Jenny and a British sailor passionately embrace on a seedy hotel room bed.

The sailor's CAP lies discarded on the bedside table -- The letters "HMS H..." are all that can be seen on the ribbon.

He fumbles to un-hook her stockings--

An AIR RAID SIREN wails as their lovemaking increases in intensity.

INT. DORMITORY - NIGHT

Jenny SNAPS out of her reverie--

The SIREN blares. A voice from outside...

MAGGIE (O.S.)
Ladies, you know the drill. Make
your way immediately to the
shelter.

Jenny shudders.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Galbraith works at his desk -- Drawing diagrams and making calculations -- The wall PLASTERED with charred and coffee-stained pages from his books, heavy with hand-written notes.

He STOPS.

An idea takes hold...

INT. CORRIDOR, HMS SUFFOLK - NIGHT

Galbraith charges down the corridor, rolls of charts and diagrams under one arm.

He comes to a door marked "CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS".

He RAPS on the door.

INT. SUFFOLK, CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Ellis stirs from his slumber. Before he's fully awake, Galbraith is already laying out his charts on Ellis's desk.

GALBRAITH

So, we know Bismarck can outrun our battleships, yes?

Ellis glares at him: "You woke me up to tell me this?"

ELLIS

Yes...

GALBRAITH

...And if they do catch her, there's little they'll be able to do...

(pointing to a diagram of Bismarck)

Her armour belt protects her sides from her forward gun turret right back to her rear--

ELLIS

(annoyed)

So you keep saying--

GALBRAITH

--So if we play by the book, we'll never stand a chance against her--

ELLIS

(snapping)

Then how the bloody hell do we sink her?!

A beat.

GALBRAITH

Magnetic fuses.

ELLIS

Go on...

GALBRAITH

It's new technology. Largely untried, but the results in the lab have been promising.

Great...

ELLIS
(a beat)
How does it work?

GALBRAITH
We replace the contact fuses in our
torpedoes for magnetic fuses. A
battleship's made of metal, right?
Well that creates a magnetic field
as it moves through the water.
Rather than detonate on impact, a
magnetic fuse will detonate once it
comes within a few yards of its
target.

ELLIS
(skeptical)
How does that help?

GALBRAITH
Well, like I was saying. Bismarck's
armour runs down her sides. And
across the deck.
(a beat)
But there's no armour running
underneath the Bismarck...

Ellis smiles, suddenly all ears.

ELLIS
Go on...

INT. MAP ROOM - DAWN

Jenny copies down the last DITS and DAHS of a message.

She leaps to her feet and races over to Fraser with the
message slip.

JENNY
Sir? From Suffolk. Most urgent.

Fraser takes it and reads. Pound sees the commotion and comes
over.

Fraser hands the message to Pound. He reads with interest.

FRASER
You know, I think this might just
work.

POUND

I don't see that there's much to lose.

AT THE RADIO SETS - MOMENTS LATER

The W/T operators around Jenny tap out urgent messages in Morse code.

EXT. HMS VICTORIOUS - DAY

The stream of DITS and DAHS reach an Aircraft Carrier steaming through the North Atlantic.

SUPER: "HMS VICTORIOUS"

INT. VICTORIOUS, FLIGHT BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

A SQUADRON LEADER addresses a room full of pilots. He taps a WOODEN POINTER against a diagram of BISMARCK.

SQUADRON LEADER

...The effect will be two-fold. First, the blast will compress the water between the torpedo and the target, magnifying the effect by a factor of ten. Second, detonation UNDER the target vessel will use the enemy's weight against it, causing her to flex upwards, breaking her back and resulting in complete destruction...

EXT. VICTORIOUS, FLIGHT DECK - DAY

A flight of SWORDFISH TORPEDO BOMBERS sit on the carrier deck -- Open-cockpit, two-seater biplanes.

Relics of a bygone era...

A dozen armorers busily mill around the planes -- Swapping out the fuses from the TORPEDOES slung beneath them as the LEAD ARMOURER reads from a set of instructions.

LEAD ARMOURER
(flipping the page)
...Finally, ensure that before taking the foregoing steps, personnel remove all wristwatches and other metallic objects from their person.

They all groan and gently cuss... Now they bloody tell us!

UNDER ONE OF THE SWORDFISH

An armorer gently removes a fuse from the business end of a torpedo -- He carefully sets it down on the lower wing.

He motions a colleague to pass him the new fuse from where it sits...

ON TOP OF THE FUSELAGE

Just resting against the cockpit windshield.

As he takes the MAGNETIC FUSE to hand it to the man below...

THE COMPASS NEEDLE

On the cockpit dashboard WAVERS...

...And remains OUT OF POSITION...

BUT NO-ONE NOTICES!

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

Galbraith enters the bridge to see Kendrick scanning the horizon with binoculars.

GALBRAITH
What's going on? We've reduced speed...

KENDRICK
Bismarck, sir. She's slowing.

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - LATER

Emerging out into the sea air, Galbraith and Ellis clap eyes to their binoculars.

In the distance: a PLUME OF SMOKE!

ELLIS
Well, well, well!

Galbraith turns to Ellis and GRINS.

GALBRAITH
At this rate, HMS Victorious will
be in range by nightfall!

ELLIS
Looks like you'll get your air
strike!

Then Galbraith sees something.

GALBRAITH
You know... I think she might just
have a problem...

ELLIS
Perhaps--

GALBRAITH
No, sir, look.

Ellis lowers his binoculars and follows Galbraith's
indication...

An OIL SLICK stretches to the horizon.

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - DUSK

Galbraith and Ellis come in from the observation deck,
animated and lively.

ELLIS
What does it mean? Do you think we
actually may have done her some
damage? Maybe we can beat her in a
fair fight after all?!

GALBRAITH
Perhaps... Could just as easily
have been a lucky shot that crept
in forward of her main armour belt.
Which wouldn't do us much good at
all.

Galbraith spreads out a diagram of Bismarck on the chart
table. Ellis looks on.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

We think some of her fuel is stored forward, to aid her trim. If she took some damage there, perhaps she lost some fuel--

ELLIS

Or sea water contaminated her tanks--

GALBRAITH

I'd need to take a closer look at the damage before we could be certain--

Kendrick enters from the radio room and hands Ellis a Message SLIP.

KENDRICK

Sir, an intercept from Bismarck.

Ellis looks it over... line after line of FIVE LETTER BLOCKS of seemingly random TEXT.

KENDRICK (CONT'D)

It's encrypted--

GALBRAITH

Wait-- Let me see that.

Galbraith takes a look, then moves into the...

RADIO ROOM

A SIGNALMAN, 17, presses an earpiece to his head at his BANK OF RADIO EQUIPMENT.

He flicks on the loudspeaker and removes his headset when Galbraith bounces into the room.

GALBRAITH

This message you intercepted earlier, re-transmit it to the Admiralty. Mark it for the attention of Admiral Pound. And tell them anything we know about Bismarck's current position, course and speed...

A string of MORSE CODE comes over the speaker. Galbraith pauses.

SUPER: "Were there any survivors?"

The signalman looks to Galbraith: what do I tell her?

The wind goes out of his sails. Galbraith motions to the Signalman and he gives up his seat.

Galbraith takes the MORSE HANDSET.

His hand hovers over the key. A beat.

He taps out a message.

SUPER: "Three survivors. Condition unknown."

INT. MAP ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny slumps at her radio set. Tired and emotional. She struggles to keep it bottled up.

She pulls off her headset and pushes out from her station.

IN THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE

Jenny bursts out of the map room... Still struggling to stay composed.

Her pace quickens.

She races to a stairwell.

EXT. ROOFTOP, ADMIRALTY - NIGHT

The London skyline GLOWS RED in the East from hundreds of BLAZING FIRES. Searchlights crisscross the clouds and smoke in the distance.

Jenny emerges from the stairwell and into the night. She sucks in the air and breaks down into sobs.

Fumbling, hands trembling, she puts a cigarette to her lips and struggles to light it--

--Maggie SNATCHES it from her hands!

MAGGIE

Put that cigarette out! There's a blackout!

JENNY

What difference does it make...?!
The whole city's burning--

MAGGIE
Sort yourself out--

JENNY
They're bombing us half to hell
every night, they're sinking our
ships, starving us into submission.
How much longer can we possibly
hope to endure!? Our men are dying--
And for what?
(mocking)
For King and Country?! Our men are
dying for us...
(quietly)
Are we still worth fighting for...?
(a beat)
Sometimes I just wish it would end.

And Maggie immediately grasps she wasn't just talking about the war...

MAGGIE
There may not be much we can offer
those men... But we can give them
everything we've got. They need you
at your post.

Jenny nods that she understands.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Take a few moments. I'll see you
downstairs.

Maggie leaves her to dry her eyes. Jenny starts pulling herself together.

INT. MAP ROOM - LATER

As Jenny returns to her station and dons her headset, Maggie prepares to make an announcement to her Wrens.

MAGGIE
Right, girls. We're short-handed,
so it will be double shifts until
further notice.

Jenny tunes her set.

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - DUSK

Galbraith sits at the radio set.

Suddenly the all-pervading HUM of the engine drops to a DEEP BARITONE -- Galbraith's lighter SLIDES forward on the table.

Galbraith picks it up just as it tips over the edge -- He's on his feet...

INT. CORRIDOR, HMS SUFFOLK - DUSK

... And Galbraith walks briskly through the corridor...
Suddenly--

AWOOGAH!

The WHOLE CORRIDOR TILTS!

Time S L O W S...

The tight turn launches Galbraith against the wall -- Objects tumble into the corridor -- Pots, pans, plates from the Kitchen...

A DEEP RUMBLE reverberates through the walls...

And now we're...

MOVING SIDEWAYS TOWARDS THE SOURCE OF THE NOISE

Through the walls -- Through the CANTEEN -- Through the HULL.

And onwards another 50 yards to...

A 2000-POUND SHELL

Still in super slo-mo, the shell SMASHES into the waves.

It burrows a dozen feet under the water in an instant--

Then EXPLODES!

In a fraction of a second, the force of the blast compresses the water to the density of steel...

The SHOCK-WAVE SLAMS into the armour plate of the HULL, which BUCKLES and WARPS.

As the shock-wave clears, SPLINTERS of shell-casing RIP through the water and SLAM into the hull.

A SPLINTER THE SIZE OF A FOOTBALL

PUNCHES through the HULL--

FLIES into a MACHINERY SPACE--

CUTS through a PIPE --

STEAM EXPLODES through the room -- Water GUSHES in its wake.

And finally the shard LODGES in the steel ceiling.

BUT WE CONTINUE--

THROUGH THE CEILING -- Catching up with the shock-wave...

And back into--

INT. CORRIDOR - MILLISECONDS LATER

Where the shock-wave knocks Galbraith's feet from under him.

As time SPEEDS-UP to normal, Galbraith CRASHES to the floor.

He climbs back to his feet.

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - CONTINUOUS

Galbraith RUSHES back onto the bridge -- It's action stations as Suffolk turns violently, this way and that, to avoid Bismarck's WITHERING barrage.

KENDRICK

All of a sudden she was just on us!

ELLIS

She turned on a bloody dime. That was some damn fine seamanship.

A series of near-misses WELL UP from the ocean -- Each ROCKING the ship with deadly shock-waves and PEPPERING her with shell-splinters.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

I think you were right, Commander Galbraith.

(a beat)

She means to sink us...

(into intercom)

--FIRE WHEN READY!

INT. MAGAZINE, SUFFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

It's hot and sweaty down here surrounded by High-Explosive EIGHT-INCH SHELLS.

Seamen bend their backs to lift the shells - each at least a hundred pounds - into a hoist.

The shell rises up through a hatch and into...

A GUN TURRET

...Where sailors HEAVE the shell off the hoist and onto a LOADING TRAY, which feeds into the BREECH of Suffolk's guns.

EXT. HMS SUFFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

THUNDEROUS FLASHES light up the sky as both ships open fire.

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - CONTINUOUS

Galbraith presses forward instinctively towards the LOW ROAR of Bismarck's incoming rounds...

He gathers a pair of binoculars and moves...

OUTSIDE

BOOM-BOOM -- two MASSIVE TOWERS of SPRAY well up -- Both short -- but close enough for the SHOCKWAVE from the blast to rattle the Bridge's windows.

Galbraith peers through the binoculars.

BOOM -- BOOM -- BOOM! Three more blasts in quick succession -- this time behind Suffolk -- Too long.

Galbraith has seen enough -- He lowers the binoculars and moves back...

INSIDE

Just as--

GALBRAITH
I think we--

CRASH -- Splinters from the shell SMASH through the bridge! The shock-wave from the blast sends Ellis and Galbraith flying.

Galbraith looks up to see a HISSING SHARD OF METAL spinning on the deck -- just inches away!

He rises to his feet as the splinter comes to rest.

ELLIS

Damage reports, all stations.
Kendrick, prepare a message for--

GALBRAITH

--Captain...

Ellis stops cold. He turns to see that Kendrick has not got back to his feet.

Kendrick lies there, his jaw-bone oddly askew... but it's his lifeless eyes that give it away...

ELLIS

(quietly)

Send for an orderly...

GALBRAITH

Sir?

Ellis follows Galbraith's gaze -- Something else is wrong...

A deep crimson stain BLOOMS through Ellis' uniform...

ELLIS

(to Galbraith)

Take the next watch...?

Galbraith rushes to catch Ellis as he begins to PASS OUT -- He claws for the intercom with his free hand.

GALBRAITH

(into intercom)

Engine room: lay a smokescreen and
get us the hell out of here.

As he tries to prop Ellis up, Galbraith glances at Kendrick's corpse...

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

(snapping)

Where the hell is that orderly?!

EXT. NORTH ATLANTIC - DUSK

HMS Suffolk, OBSCURED BY SMOKE, executes a tight turn.

Further away... Bismarck and Prinz Eugen start to turn away from each other, and from Suffolk, leaving DIVERGING TRAILS of WAKE.

EXT. FLIGHT DECK, HMS VICTORIOUS - DUSK

The FLIGHT CONTROLLER takes instructions over the telephone in his perch on the conning tower.

Pilots watch from their cockpits...

He puts the receiver down and signals--

"STAND DOWN".

The pilots start unhooking themselves and clamber out.

INT. MAP ROOM - DUSK

Jenny finishes transcribing a message. She unhooks herself from her headset and makes her way to Fraser at the map table.

JENNY

Sir?

He takes the slip.

FRASER

(to Vera)

Bismarck has broken contact.
Current position and bearing
unknown.

She takes her cue and removes Bismarck's marker, replacing it with a blank placeholder.

JENNY

There was another message, sir.

(handing him the message)

It's in code.

Fraser reads it, grasping its significance.

FRASER

Yes, thank you Miss Blair.

INT. CHURCHILL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Churchill and Pound look up from a map-laden conference table.

FRASER

Bismarck sent an encrypted message
just before she broke contact.

Pound reads it and picks up the phone.

CHURCHILL

(to Pound)

Get on to Bletchley.

(to Fraser)

She broke contact, you say?

FRASER

Yes, sir.

He turns back to the maps, deep in thought. Pound hangs up the phone and joins him.

CHURCHILL

You recall what I said about convoy protection?

POUND

Yes, Prime Minister.

CHURCHILL

Ignore it.

(a beat)

Any ship. Any size. Anywhere. Get them in the hunt!

EXT. OIL TANKER BRIDGE - DUSK

A battered old oil tanker forms part of a line of MERCHANT SHIPS that stretches to the horizon.

The TANKER CAPTAIN and his FIRST MATE watch as the cruiser HMS Dorsetshire CURVES AWAY from the convoy.

FIRST MATE

Terribly sorry, old chap, but we'll have to leave you for the U-Boats. We've only gone and lost the blimmin' Bismarck.

(under his breath)

Son of a bitch!

The First Mate heads back inside. The Tanker Captain grimly watches the escorts leave.

INT. RADAR ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

The Radar Operator tunes his set through the range of combinations. The JAGGED GREEN LINE oscillating on his display shows only NOISE.

GALBRAITH

Nothing?

RADAR OPERATOR

Nothing, sir.

GALBRAITH

Prinz Eugen?

The Radar Operator shakes his head.

EXT. HANGAR, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

Galbraith watches a dozen sailors PICK through the wreckage of Suffolk's SEA-PLANE. It's twisted and charred -- A total write-off.

EXT. DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

Galbraith wanders forwards toward the bow of HMS Suffolk as it pitches and rolls through the worsening swell.

He stares blankly out over the grey seas -- He fumbles in his pocket, drawing out his Ronson Lighter and turning it over and over in one hand...

As he does... The waves grow in power and intensity--

Suddenly, A HUGE MOUNTAIN OF A WAVE LOOMS up out of the ocean -- It TOWERS over Galbraith -- The ship CRASHES into it and the grey mass of water SWALLOWS him whole.

UNDERWATER

Galbraith sinks into the murky water... The cruel sea tugging him down, invading his lungs...

...Above him, the sun dances on the wave-tops -- Galbraith kicks out -- Claws for the light... Then something odd...

Galbraith finds himself surrounded by BRITISH ARMY UNIFORMS -- Not sailors, but SOLDIERS in KHAKI and STEEL HELMETS.

He breaks through to the...

SURFACE (FLASHBACK)

A burning wreck of a destroyer -- HMS Basilisk -- lies in the surf just off the smouldering beach at Dunkirk.

Flaming pools of oil from the wreck surround Galbraith as he tries to stay afloat. Dozens of soldiers - wounded, weighed down with equipment - GASP for air, slipping under the waves.

Above them, a STUKA dive bomber SHRIEKS as it PLUNGES towards them, PUMPING its machine guns into the men in the water--

RADAR OPERATOR (PRE-LAP)

Sir?

INT. RADAR ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - DUSK(BACK TO PRESENT)

Galbraith finds himself back in the dry surroundings of the radar room.

RADAR OPERATOR

Sir?

Galbraith snaps out of his trance.

RADAR OPERATOR (CONT'D)

Do you want me to--

GALBRAITH

Yes... yes.

(a beat)

Keep trying.

EXT. DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - DUSK

Galbraith sulks alone at the bow of the ship. He stares into the Western skies, where a setting sun lights up a dramatic sky.

Daniels approaches him with two STEAMING mugs and offers him one. Galbraith takes it.

Daniels offers his SILVER HIP-FLASK.

Galbraith takes that too.

GALBRAITH
 (a beat)
 No sign?

Daniels shakes his head.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
 We've lost her. So that's it...
 They've got us beat. What a god-
 awful mess this is. And kids like
 Kendrick--

DANIELS
 Lieutenant Kendrick knew how it
 was, sir.

GALBRAITH
 --Did he?! He still thought we
 could win!
 (a beat)
 I spend all day analyzing the cold
 reality of it all. Digesting our
 losses for the brass. We're barely
 hanging on, Mr Daniels. The rate
 we're losing convoys we won't see
 out the year.

DANIELS
 We'll find a way to hold on. Always
 have--

GALBRAITH
 The numbers don't lie--

DANIELS
 Numbers aren't everything sir.
 Character, sir. Captain Ellis used
 to say character was worth an inch
 of armour in any fight. You may not
 have a column for that in your
 briefings, but you should. Because
 that's what will get us through.

(a beat)
 And if you'll forgive me, sir, you
 bloody well know it!

Galbraith bows his head -- Ashamed to look at him.

GALBRAITH
 Not this time... Plot a course for
 home.

Daniels gives him a look -- Terribly disappointed. He leaves
 Galbraith to himself.

Galbraith turns into the wind -- He braces against the cold.

EXT. HMS SUFFOLK - DUSK

The battered ship turns, leaving a curving line of wake behind it.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MAP ROOM - DUSK

Jenny looks glumly over the map table as Vera shuffles Suffolk's marker back East, towards home.

Jenny turns back to her radio -- She keys a short message:

SUPER: "Message understood."

She sits in silence for a moment. It feels like defeat.

As the next group of Wrens arrives for the change of shift, Jenny's headset flares up again.

SUPER: "You lost someone on Hood, didn't you?"

She doesn't take this message down. She pauses, then furtively taps out a reply: DAH-DIT-DAH-DAH DIT DIT-DIT-DIT.

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - DUSK

Galbraith listens, then replies.

SUPER: "I'm sorry."

INT. MAP ROOM - DUSK

Jenny's replacement operator waits impatiently.

MAGGIE

Right girls. Now's as good a time as any. Try to get some rest...

Jenny finishes and collects her things.

EXT. LONDON STREET - DUSK

Jenny walks along a row of shop-fronts...

...Past the QUEUE OF SHOPPERS outside a barren greengrocers, ration-books in hand...

...Past a bombed-out shop with a sign in the window: "MORE OPEN THAN USUAL"...

...And up to a cinema BOX OFFICE. Jenny buys a ticket.

INT. CINEMA - DUSK

The jaunty MUSIC of a NEWSREEL fills the cinema.

Jenny takes a seat among the scattered couples making out in the darkness.

NEWSREEL (FILTERED)

This clever housewife is doing her bit for the war effort by cutting down on luxuries such as eggs and butter. It's dig, dig, dig for Victory!

Maggie enters and takes a seat in the row behind Jenny.

NEWSREEL (FILTERED) (CONT'D)

Meanwhile, in the Atlantic, trouble is brewing. Fresh from sinking 22 ships with *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* in March, the Nazis are back with their newest and greatest battleship, the *Bismarck*. On *Repulse*, *Prince of Wales* and *Rodney*, they're spoiling for a fight. And let's not forget the *Mighty Hood*! It'll be a stern test for our boys... But they'll be ready!

Jenny shudders. This was a mistake... She starts gathering her things--

MAGGIE

Have you thought about what you're going to do?

Jenny turns to her -- "You know?"

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(off her look)

I didn't come down in the last shower, dear. Call it women's intuition...

(pause)

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

It isn't easy for a woman in your position... I wish I could pretend otherwise. You should think about whether you can carry on. For your own sake.

(a beat)

I... I know a man who can help. No-one need know.

JENNY

(much too loud)

And let them--

Several of the other cinema-goers SHUSH her.

JENNY (CONT'D)

(much quieter)

And let them take everything? All I have left of him?

Jenny turns back to the screen -- Eyes MISTING UP -- But she holds it together.

MAGGIE

Just let me know...

Maggie gathers her things and leaves.

INT. MAP ROOM - NIGHT

Fraser stares glumly at the large blue space which marks where Bismarck *could* be. Pound beckons him to his office.

INT. OFFICE OF ADMIRAL POUND - CONTINUOUS

Pound motions for Fraser to pull the door closed.

POUND

No sign?

FRASER

Still nothing. We'll resume the search at first light. Continue to track her last known course...

POUND

Take a look at this.

He hands Fraser a MESSAGE SLIP with the words "ULTRA" stamped on it in red ink.

POUND (CONT'D)
Turns out it was a partial message.
Bletchley managed to crack it...

FRASER
U-boats...

The thought chills him. The colour drains from his face.

POUND
A wolfpack. We can only assume
Bismarck is preparing to link up
with them somewhere out in our
convoy lanes--

FRASER
But we've had to divert most of the
escorts... It will be--

POUND
Carnage.

FRASER
Will you tell the PM?

POUND
There's enough on his plate. He
doesn't need to be burdened by a
decision he can't undo.
(a beat)
We can't warn them, you realise?
Risk revealing we've broken Enigma.

FRASER
No. No, of course not...

Neither man can meet the other's eye. Fraser leaves the slip
on the desk and walks back out into the...

MAP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Fraser moves back to the map table.

VERA
Sir?

She's waiting, cue in hand, for an update.

Fraser shakes his head.

INT. HMS SUFFOLK SICK BAY - NIGHT.

Galbraith sits beside Ellis' sickbed -- He idly turns over the RONSON LIGHTER in his hand as Ellis sleeps silently.

Galbraith slips the lighter into his pocket.

INT. MACHINERY SPACES - LATER

Galbraith watches quietly as a team of workmen HAMMER at the cracks in the hull, trying stem the flow of seawater.

He departs, lost in his thoughts.

EXT. DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - LATER

Galbraith strolls along the deck.

Past an ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN and its crew...

Past the TORPEDO TUBES...

He looks out over the waves... Before turning back inside the body of the ship.

INT. SEAMAN'S MESS, HMS SUFFOLK - LATER

Galbraith walks into the mess... Off-duty sailors play cards on half a dozen tables, while others sleep in HAMMOCKS slung from the ceiling.

One sailor sees Galbraith and goes to stand--

GALBRAITH
As you were.

Glum faces greet him.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
I know you're all eager for news...
Well, right now it's touch and go.
(pause)
He's taken a beating. I won't lie
to you; he's hurting pretty good
right now. But there's a lot of
fight in him yet, I'm sure.

But does he mean Ellis... or himself?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NORTH ATLANTIC - PRE-DAWN

The sound of CRASHING WAVES in the darkness.

Slowly, the HORIZON comes into view as the skies brighten.

Then...

Something else...

A COLUMN OF SMOKE becomes just barely discernible.

FOOTSTEPS -- As they come closer...

We PULL BACK to reveal Oels pacing at the Bismarck's railing, looking out to the horizon.

Something in the distant haze catches his attention -- He raises his binoculars.

EXT. OIL TANKER BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

A fine cloud of WHITE SMOKE vents from the funnel of the battered old tanker.

The Tanker Captain scans the horizon. The First Mate joins him at the railing.

FIRST MATE

Fuel pump's repaired. Any sign of the rest of the convoy?

He shakes his head.

TANKER CAPTAIN

There's nothing for... miles...

He slows -- sees something.

TANKER CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Around...

He stops -- Heart in mouth -- In the darkness, SUNLIGHT from the rising sun glints off a row of windows -- Just for a FRACTION OF A SECOND.

TANKER CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Radio! Distress call. Quickly!

CUT TO:

INT. TANKER BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

The first mate punches his MORSE SET for all he's worth --
DIT DIT DIT -- DAH DAH DAH -- DIT DIT DIT!

AUDIO MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BISMARCK RADIO ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A German sailor's eyes widen as he listens through a headset--
S.O.S. -- Unmistakable!

He grabs for the INTERCOM...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BISMARCK BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

...And Oels listens--

OELS
(to Lindemann, urgently)
She's about to signal our position!

EXT. TANKER BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The Tanker captain takes one more look through his binoculars...

INSERT: Just visible -- The outline of Bismarck in the distance!

He races...

INSIDE

...And SOUNDS THE ALARM.

TANKER CAPTAIN
It's Bismarck--

He's cut off by a distant BOOM!

They both FREEZE--

VOOOOOSHBBBBB--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. GALBRAITH'S CABIN - DAY

Galbraith's eyes OPEN.

He sits up on the bed. Fully clothed.

Weary.

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

Daniels stands at his post, looking out towards the rising sun on the horizon. Galbraith enters the bridge -- He pauses.

Ashamed.

He makes a beeline for the chart table.

DANIELS

Morning, sir.

GALBRAITH

(without looking at him)

... Mr Daniels.

(pause)

Any word?

DANIELS

The U-boats were quiet last night, sir. One merchant vessel lost in the Western Approaches, and a tanker roughly a hundred miles or so to our East. It's unlikely to pose a threat but I've entered it on the chart all the same, sir.

(off his look)

No sightings of Bismarck, I'm afraid, sir.

GALBRAITH

Thank you.

Galbraith looks over the chart -- The PLOT of Suffolk's course heading straight back to England -- the CROSS marking the sunken tanker.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

(re the chart:)

That's odd.

DANIELS

What's that sir?

GALBRAITH
(thinking hard)
That's quite a long way south of
the usual u-boat hunting grounds.
Are you sure that's--

DANIELS
I'm afraid it went down before they
could finish their distress signal,
sir.

Galbraith looks hard at the chart for a long moment, before
stepping back from it and joining Daniels at the window.

GALBRAITH
Poor bastards...
(a beat)
Thank you, Mr Daniels. You should
get some rest.

DANIELS
Thank you sir.

As Daniels gathers his things, and enters the change of the
watch in the SHIP'S LOGBOOK, Galbraith grapples with a
nagging thought...

He moves back to the chart.

DANIELS (CONT'D)
What is it, sir?

Galbraith takes a STRAIGHT-EDGE and a PENCIL -- He traces a
line from La Rochelle in France to an area west of Ireland
marked "Western Approaches"...

The sunken vessel is HUNDREDS OF MILES to the West of the
line.

Galbraith THINKS -- Staring hard at the map.

Then... slowly, he lines up the straight-edge against the
tanker's location... He slides it till it touches against
BISMARCK'S LAST KNOWN POSITION...

Trembling now, Galbraith runs the pencil eastwards, from the
last sighting of Bismarck...

Through the tanker's coordinates...

And onwards to the GERMAN-OCCUPIED PORT OF BREST!

GALBRAITH
(to himself)
Bismarck... It must be!
(to Daniels)
She's making for France...

A beat -- Galbraith steeling himself.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
Set a new course: 087°. All
possible speed.

DANIELS
Aye aye, sir!

EXT. HMS SUFFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

The cruiser carves a TIGHT turn through the North Atlantic --
Crashing through the waves as she gives chase.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MAP ROOM - DAY

Vera shuffles Suffolk's marker towards the French coast.

Pound and Fraser take in the new development -- All of the
other ships are heading the other way... and are well to the
North or the South.

POUND
It just doesn't make sense.

FRASER
He says Bismarck's damaged--

POUND
(exasperated)
Has anyone else confirmed that?!

FRASER
No, sir.
(a beat)
If I'm honest, Admiral Tovey is
right. It's a damned foolish
risk...

POUND
But....?

FRASER

If Galbraith's right, and that's a
big if, it's also our best chance.
Our only chance, I should think.

(a beat)

But I'm not the First Sea Lord,
sir. It's your decision.

Pound thinks...

POUND

I'll be the last sea lord if we're
not careful--

(to Maggie)

Miss Warwick?

CUT TO:

INT. BRIDGE, HMS KING GEORGE V - DAY

Admiral JACK TOVEY (55), a tightly-wound man who's run out of
people to be insubordinate to, sips from a fine BONE CHINA
CUP. A sailor hands him a message. He reads....

He SMASHES THE CUP into the DECK.

TOVEY

Damn fools!

The other officers glance nervously from one to the other as
Tovey storms off the bridge.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

As one by one, the ships of the fleet...

-- The powerful battleship *King George V*...

-- The aircraft carrier *HMS Victorious*...

-- The cruisers *Sheffield*, *Norfolk*, *Dorsetshire*...

All turn into their new courses.

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

Galbraith reads a message slip as Daniels looks on.

DANIELS

It seems they're rather banking on
you being right, sir.

GALBRAITH
(no pressure, then:)
Yes, thank you Mr Daniels.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. MAP ROOM - NIGHT

It's tense in the map room. Pound and Fraser confer over the map table.

POUND
Nothing all day.

FRASER
Give it time.

POUND
We don't have time!

Jenny turns to eavesdrop.

POUND (CONT'D)
We could be leading the fleet on a
wild goose chase. Damn it!
(a beat)
Sorry--

FRASER
Quite alright, sir.

POUND
If there's no sign of her at first
light... I think we'll need to cut
our losses.

MAGGIE
--Miss Blair!

Jenny turns, startled.

JENNY
Yes, Ma'am.

MAGGIE
Send a message to HMS Prince of
Wales. Due to bomb damage to the
Belfast docks, they're now to
divert to Liverpool. Please also
have them confirm their
requirements.

JENNY

Yes, Ma'am.

As Jenny finished scribbling a note of the message she PAUSES...

A brief flicker of an unformed idea--

MAGGIE

Quick as you can.

JENNY

Ma'am.

EXT. HMS VICTORIOUS - DAWN

The carrier surges through the North Atlantic.

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK, HMS VICTORIOUS - DAWN

The glassy gaze of multiple binocular lenses pore over the horizon -- Desperate for a sign of the Bismarck.

MONTAGE - DAWN

On ships of every size, the same scene plays out--

HMS NORFOLK -- HMS SHEFFIELD -- HMS DORSETSHIRE -- HMS KING GEORGE V.

But there's nothing to be seen.

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - DAWN

Galbraith breaks off from his search.

Nothing.

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

Galbraith approaches the radio operator, who turns to meet him, expectantly.

GALBRAITH

No contact Bismarck at first light.

The radio operator glumly sets about his task as Galbraith slumps, bone-tired, into the nearest chair.

INT. MAP ROOM - DAY

Jenny copies down the message -- She fine-tunes her set as she does, trying to deal with the static and whine of some persistent interference running through her headphones.

SUPER: "HMS Suffolk reports no sighting at first light."

She hands off the slip to Maggie and fires off a quick response.

SUPER: "Message understood."

She takes off her headset and STRETCHES, pushing back from her station.

As she does, a distant DRONE grows louder -- Vera pauses and looks upwards, trying to place the sound. Pound, Fraser and Maggie do likewise -- Jenny looks up as well.

POUND
(nonchalantly)
Messerschmitts?

FRASER
Heinkels.

With that, everyone returns to business as usual. Maggie gives Fraser the message from Suffolk.

Jenny watches as Fraser reads -- The final nail in the coffin...

Suddenly, Jenny notices her headset buzzing with a stream of Morse code...

MUCH LOUDER than normal--

She races back to her set and dons her headphones...

...But the message has finished before she's ready.

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

The signalman listens as a message comes in.

SUPER: "Please say again your last transmission."

INT. MAP ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jenny listens intently to the Suffolk's reply.

SUPER: "Negative. You have our last. Over."

She's confused for a split second...

JENNY

Sir?!

She unhooks, pushes back from her desk and races over to Fraser.

Meanwhile, the DRONE from the bombers overhead is growing louder.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Sir? If Suffolk is right and Bismarck is damaged, then she'll need to break radio silence at some point...

FRASER

Perhaps--

JENNY

...To coordinate arrangements for repairs.

FRASER

But we don't have the time or the resources to monitor every--

JENNY

I just overheard a message sent to the Bismarck.

POUND

How can you be sure?

JENNY

I can't.

(with a nod to Maggie)

Call it women's intuition. But if I'm right, we know the frequency and we know she'll be responding any moment now.

Pound and Fraser share a look.

POUND

What have we got to lose?

By way of answer, an AIR RAID SIREN kicks in. Fraser pauses for a moment, weighing the new danger...

FRASER
(addressing the W/T
operators)

Right! Everyone pay attention. For
every ship in the fleet. Take a
bearing on a radio transmission
being sent on...

JENNY
--753 megahertz.

FRASER
...753 megahertz. At the double!

Half a dozen radio sets FIRE UP.

A SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS

A German radio operator sets to work:

-- Unpacking an ENIGMA MACHINE...

-- Setting its rotors...

-- Tapping the un-encrypted message into the Enigma...

INT. MAP ROOM - DAY

Jenny hooks in and begins tapping out her message.

The BOOMS of German bombs exploding... Growing closer...

But Jenny STAYS AT HER POST -- Transmitting the message.

The SHRIEKING whistle as the bombs fall from the sky now VERY LOUD.

But Jenny KEEPS TAPPING.

With her spare hand, she reaches for her STEEL HELMET and puts it on. All the while, finishing her message. Not even flinching.

INT. RADAR ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Galbraith rushes up to the radar operator, startling him.

GALBRAITH
I need a bearing on this
frequency...

The radar operator turns to his RADIO DIRECTION FINDER equipment and starts FLICKING switches and tuning dials.

RADAR OPERATOR
Just, ah, takes a little while for
the old valves to warm up...

GALBRAITH
Come on...!

Galbraith watches as the Radar Operator works the equipment, getting ever closer to locking on to the signal...

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BISMARCK RADIO ROOM - SAME TIME

The operator taps the message into the Enigma machine and feeds the stream of letters that LIGHT UP on its display to a signalman, who taps them into a MORSE handset...

They're getting close to the end...

H... E... I... L... H... I... T... L... E--

INT. MAP ROOM - SAME TIME

Windows RATTLE with every blast -- Then SHATTER -- Glass SPRAYS everywhere! The NOISE builds to a CRESCENDO.

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

The Radio Operator pulls his headset away and turns to Galbraith excitedly--

RADAR OPERATOR
Got it!

INT. MAP ROOM - DAY

The bombs fall silent.

A cloud of dust settles over Jenny and her fellow Wrens. There are a few walking wounded, and the room itself is a mess, but everyone seems okay.

They all dust themselves off, straighten themselves out and get on with it.

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

Galbraith excitedly smooths out a chart -- Taking a PENCIL, STRAIGHTEDGE, and PROTRACTOR he rules a LINE from Suffolk's position in the direction of Bismarck's radio signal.

GALBRAITH
(to Daniels)
Do you have-- Thank you.

He takes a MESSAGE SLIP from Daniels -- Scanning along the top and side of the map, he finds the coordinates and rules a LINE from that spot...

The two lines NEATLY INTERSECT about 75 miles to the East of HMS Suffolk.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
And Victorious?

He marks HMS Victorious's position -- Carefully measures out the angle -- He draws the line...

But it DOESN'T MATCH!

This line intersects the others another fifty miles further East... A MASSIVE MARGIN OF ERROR -- And a massive disappointment.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
Someone got their bearings wrong...
Damn it!

DANIELS
Best case, it will be at least half a day before we're in radar range...

GALBRAITH
(a beat)
Then we'd better get a move on.
Both ahead full.

DANIELS
Aye aye, sir.

OFFICER (PRE-LAP)
Sir, in these conditions it's too great a risk!

INT. BRIDGE, HMS KING GEORGE V - DAY

Admiral Tovey fumes as he looks over a CHART. He snaps at the other officers on the bridge.

TOVEY

I don't care! Bismarck is no more than a day's sail from air cover. We're running out of time. Tell *Victorious* to get her planes in the air. They're to scour this area and sink whatever they find...

INT. MAP ROOM - DAY

A TRIANGLE of RED TAPE on the map table marks out the area where Bismarck could be -- The British ships are all closing, but for now, they're desperately far away...

Except for one... HMS SUFFOLK.

TOVEY (POST-LAP)

...We have no ships nearby.

Vera SLIDES SUFFOLK'S MARKER INTO THE RED TRIANGLE...!

EXT. SKIES - LATER

A dozen Swordfish torpedo bombers dart in and out of the cloud-tops -- Four distinct formations of three bombers each.

INT/EXT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The rear-gunner/navigator of one of the Swordfish struggles to flatten out his MAP as it FLAPS in the wind.

He looks out the side -- It's a white-out.

He TAPS the COMPASS on his instrument panel -- Tries to line up the map.

They emerge out of the clouds -- His two wingmen are there, but the other nine planes are hidden somewhere in the clouds.

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - LATER

Galbraith checks over the map at the chart table.

The intercom BUZZES. Daniels picks it up. Listens.

DANIELS

Sir, the Radio Room is picking up a transmission.

(a beat)

You'll want to listen.

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

Galbraith enters. The Signalman pulls off his headset and flicks on the speaker.

SIGNALMAN

You've got to hear this...

From behind a wall of STATIC... An unmistakable sound...

SIGNALMAN (CONT'D)

Voice transmissions, sir. Ours.

From the radio, small fragments of messages crackle. Some **much louder** than the others...

RADIO

"Say again your bearing, over"...

"[Static] degrees, do you copy?"...

"Negative". "Visual on target... 15 miles."... *"Say again, over?"...*

GALBRAITH

They've found her...!

Galbraith grabs the intercom.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

(into intercom)

Radar room? We're receiving on 830 megahertz, can you give us a fix on the signal?

RADIO (FILTERED)

"Where the bloody hell are you, Red Flight?"

SIGNALMAN

They've been scattered in the high winds, sir. Sounds like they're all over the shop.

RADIO (FILTERED)

"Target sighted. Range 5 miles."...

"Say again, Red Flight. Say again, over."

GALBRAITH
(to the Signalman)
You don't say...

SIGNALMAN
Is it just me, sir, or does that
signal sound rather close?

At that moment, an AIR RAID SIREN sounds. Galbraith and the Signalman turn to each other in horror...

RADIO (FILTERED)
"[Static]...Commencing run."

Galbraith SPRINTS out of the room.

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - SECONDS LATER

Galbraith charges onto the bridge.

DANIELS
Incoming aircraft--

GALBRAITH
Those are our planes. Take evasive
action!

From outside, the steady BOOM-BOOM-BOOM of an ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN fires up -- Galbraith races out of the bridge.

EXT. DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - CONTINUOUS

Galbraith leans out over a railing to the deck below -- A gun crew FIRES into the incoming torpedo bombers.

GALBRAITH
Cease fire!

But they ignore him. He races down and GRABS the gunner, shaking him.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
Those are our men up there!

ACK-ACK GUNNER
... And there's 700 of us down
here!

Galbraith YANKS him off his seat by his shirt collars and the Ack-Ack Gunner COWERS, expecting a blow...

But Galbraith relents -- He drops him back to his seat...

GALBRAITH
(firmly)
Be ready to abandon ship.

The gunner NODS. Ashamed.

Galbraith turns towards the front of the ship -- TREMBLING as the Swordfish BANK INTO THEIR ATTACKING RUNS.

He WILLS HIMSELF forward -- Waving -- HOLLERING -- Trying to get their attention!

But it's too late... One-by-one, they release their torpedoes, which arc into the water...

He stops and straightens...

--The Swordfish OPEN FIRE with their machine guns -- Bullets FIZZ past him, DINGING off the metal around him.

INT/EXT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The rear gunner of the lead plane reaches forward -- He tugs at the Pilot as they bank into a turn -- Pointing furiously at HMS Suffolk.

REAR GUNNER
Friendlies! Look.

The pilot looks back over his shoulder and the side view of Suffolk's THREE FUNNELS. He curses into the wind.

EXT. DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - CONTINUOUS

Galbraith composes himself as the Swordfish head away -- Somehow he's unharmed.

He races to the railing -- Three TRAILS speed towards him -- Galbraith BRACES for impact...

CLUNG!

CLANG!

CLUNG!

The torpedoes SCRAPE along the bottom of the hull. Galbraith moves with the sound as they pass under the SUFFOLK -- Heart racing -- Pulse pounding!

As he reaches the far railing THREE TRAILS EMERGE from under the ship -- All three torpedoes have FAILED TO EXPLODE!

The gun crew can't believe their luck! Everyone ERUPTS into cheers and laughter.

BUT NOT GALBRAITH.

He stares down at the trails -- Shocked -- Disconsolate.

GALBRAITH

No...

The Ack-Ack Gunner and his fellows look over in confusion.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

Oh God, no!

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

Galbraith bounds in, followed closely by Daniels.

GALBRAITH

Duds! Those bloody fuses are duds!
We need to warn the others--

SIGNALMAN

They've already started their run
on Bismarck--

GALBRAITH

(grabbing the microphone)
This is HMS Suffolk. Break off your
attack-- Disengage! Do you read me--

DANIELS

It's no use... They're trained to
ignore all signals once they're in
contact with the enemy.

GALBRAITH

Damn it!

But Galbraith knows Daniels is right...

Over the radio comes a stream of INCREASINGLY PANICKED MESSAGES from the Swordfish, punctuated by the sound of EXPLOSIONS and the CRIES OF DYING MEN...

And gradually, all the hubbub is overcome by a remorseless stream of STATIC.

EXT. FLIGHT DECK, HMS VICTORIOUS - DAY

A Swordfish comes into land on the pitching deck, joining TWO BIPLANES already parked.

The lead pilot climbs out of his cockpit. The Flight Controller moves to intercept him.

LEAD PILOT
It was a bloody shambles!

He RIPS OFF his flight helmet and chute.

The Flight Controller's expression stops him in his tracks. He glances at the other planes on the flight deck -- All that remain...

He FLINGS his gear at a ground-crewman and storms off.

EXT. HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

Galbraith watches silently as sailors try to hook onto a PARACHUTE in the water...

POUND (PRE-LAP)
A total loss... No damage to
Bismarck. These damn new magnetic
fuses... HMS Suffolk is trying to
retrieve survivors...

The sailors haul the parachute aboard, bringing with it the waterlogged CORPSE of a young airman. Galbraith swallows hard and looks away.

INT. CHURCHILL'S OFFICE - DUSK

Churchill listens gravely on the telephone.

POUND (FILTERED)
But I wouldn't hold out much hope.
I'm sorry I don't have any better
news, Prime Minister.

Great statesman though he is, this is a body blow. He replaces the receiver...

Churchill looks over to his DRINKS CABINET.

CUT TO:

SCOTCH POURING INTO A GLASS

As much going in as splashing out. The bottle slams unsteadily against the table... but stays upright.

As Galbraith knocks it back, it's clear we're now in...

INT. SUFFOLK, CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DUSK

Even though he's seated, Galbraith needs the Captain's table for support.

A KNOCK from outside and Daniels enters.

He takes a look at Galbraith. Disappointed doesn't even come close...

DANIELS

Drowning your sorrows, sir?

GALBRAITH

Why the hell not? Never met one yet with a wife and kids... You?

DANIELS

It was always going to be touch and go, sir. Going in against the Bismarck.

GALBRAITH

They deserved better than to be sent in there armed with nothing more than character!

(a beat)

It was my damned-foolish plan that drowned those men... And with them our last hope of sinking Bismarck. Once she reaches air cover she's as good as gone-- So yes I'm drowning my FUCKING sorrows! What's it to you?

DANIELS

Right... That's enough. On your feet, Sailor!

He hauls Galbraith to his feet.

DANIELS (CONT'D)

You're wanted in the radio room.

INT. MAP ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jenny keys a short message -- Churchill takes a place by her side.

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

Galbraith slumps by the radio as the stream of Morse comes in.

SUPER: "Stand by for message from the Prime Minister".

A short pause, then another message:

SUPER: "You mustn't blame yourself".

Galbraith snorts. He yanks the handset closer and starts tapping.

GALBRAITH
(as he keys)
You tell him--

INT. MAP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jenny quickly gets the gist of Galbraith's expletive-laden stream of DITS and DAHS... She shoots a nervous sideways glance at Churchill, the old naval man...

His Morse is clearly still pretty good! He shakes his head, and waits calmly for the invective to end.

CHURCHILL
Transmit the following--

JENNY
Encrypted, sir?

CHURCHILL
--No. Send this in plain. I don't care if the Nazis hear it.

He pauses. Choosing his words carefully.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)
No doubt you feel the loss of those brave pilots keenly. So do we all.
But you mustn't blame yourself. You gave your all.

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - CONTINUOUS

Galbraith listens. In pain.

He keys a response.

INT. MAP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Galbraith's message comes in over the speakers of Jenny's set.

SUPER: "No. They did."

Churchill looks away. His gaze casts over the map room, still bearing the dust and damage of the air raid.

A beat... And then Churchill begins to speak once more. Quietly at first...

CHURCHILL

It may be that we find ourselves in the last weeks and months of our resistance.

He looks over the map table and the grim reality that it portrays. Pound and Fraser stop and listen.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

A dying ember...

He pauses, weighing the course of the war as much as his next words.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

But though we may not long endure, we will never surrender. We will never surrender whilst our men and women fight to keep that ember aflame.

Maggie and Vera stop and listen.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

Those men and women stand ready to give their lives in the fight against the gravest evil this nation has ever encountered. They do so safe in the knowledge that they are led by those who understand the value of their sacrifice. They know their leaders ask that sacrifice of them for no reason other than that they must!

(MORE)

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

(a beat)
Not for glory.
(a beat)
Not for power.
(a beat)
Not for the cruelty of all for
which they stand.
(a beat)
But for our survival.

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - DUSK

Galbraith turns over the Ronson Lighter as he listens to the message.

INT. MAP ROOM - DUSK

Churchill pauses for a moment as Jenny catches up.

CHURCHILL

Be not mistaken: Our very survival
depends not only upon those brave
souls who offer up to the struggle
all that they are and all that they
may ever be... Our survival
requires us to lead them to that
reckoning. Our survival demands
that we lead them, not without
compassion, but without sentiment.

He looks back to the map table, and the MARKER that
represents Bismarck.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

The first step on the path to our
deliverance is to prevail against
the *Bismarck*. We must do all that
we can to rid the seas of her
shadow. It will require every ounce
of our resolve, and from each and
every one of us. If we are to
prevail, then you and your fellow
men must not balk at the enormity
of the task that lies ahead. You
must endure. You must never
surrender.

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - CONTINUOUS

Galbraith listens in silence.

He turns to the signalman.

GALBRAITH
Acknowledge receipt.

He gets up and pushes past Daniels as he makes his way out of the room.

INT. MAP ROOM - DUSK

Churchill moves away from Jenny's set and approaches Pound at the map table.

CHURCHILL
(examining the map)
Bismarck's what? Five, six hours
from German air cover?

FRASER
Four or five.

Churchill points to a marker coming up on Bismarck from the South: ARK ROYAL.

CHURCHILL
And how long before Ark Royal's
aircraft will be in range?

POUND
Two or three hours. Perhaps
slightly longer. There's a slim
window, sir...

CHURCHILL
But...?

POUND
But the weather has worsened, Prime
Minister. It's blowing a gale.
Added to that, we're running out of
light.
(a beat)
I can't ask those men to go up
there. Not in these conditions.

CHURCHILL
(a beat)
But I can.
(off his look)
Get those men in the air.

EXT. HMS ARK ROYAL - DUSK

Lieutenant-Commander TREVENEN PENROSE COODE, 28, grimly leads his men onto the flight deck.

Ground crew CRANK the propellers of TWELVE SWORDFISH lined up on the flight deck and laden with TORPEDOES.

Coode looks up to the skies -- Spray WHIPS through the air and gale-force winds LASH the deck.

GROUND CREWMAN

We've gone back to the contact fuses, sir.

COODE

Better the devil you know, eh?

Coode gives a signal -- The pilots SCRAMBLE for their planes.

INT. MAP ROOM - DUSK

Pound stares at the map for a moment.

POUND

(resigned)

Now all we can do...

He looks up at Churchill.

POUND (CONT'D)

Is wait...

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - CONTINUOUS

Daniels takes a seat next to the signalman. The signalman removes his headset and turns on the loudspeaker.

They sit -- They wait.

EXT. HMS SUFFOLK, DECK - DUSK

Wind and spray lash the deck as Galbraith waits in silence in the cold.

Then a DEAFENING ROAR as A DOZEN SWORDFISH fly past HMS Suffolk in formation. Galbraith shudders as he watches them fly towards Bismarck.

From the cockpit of the last of them, Coode sees Galbraith and gives him a SALUTE, before they break and disappear into the clouds.

INT/EXT. COCKPIT - LATER

Coode checks his WRISTWATCH.

The group of Swordfish to Coode's left BREAKS AWAY.

One by one, the other flights break off and peel into a DIVE towards the clouds.

EXT. BISMARCK DECK - DUSK

Oels braces against the gusting, swirling wind as he passes the small gap near the funnel--

A distant DRONE--

Oels stops on a dime -- But just like that, it's gone. A brief gust of noise carried on the wind -- He looks up to the cloud base, uncertain of what he heard.

INT/EXT. COCKPIT - DUSK

The clouds SWALLOW UP Coode's Swordfish.

MIST whips off the control surfaces -- Wind buffeting everything -- Barely enough visibility to see even the propeller in front of him.

Coode looks left. Glances right -- A WINGTIP from another Swordfish HOVES INTO VIEW -- Looming up on the fragile CROSS-BEAMS of Coode's wing.

...And then disappears once more into the mist.

Then the SEA LOOMS UP AT THEM -- the clouds disappear!

Coode pulls up -- Out of the dive -- As he levels off, BISMARCK APPEARS IN HIS SIGHTS!

EXT. NORTH ATLANTIC - DUSK

A dozen Swordfish bombers DIVE OUT of the CLOUD-BASE -- Coming from EVERY POINT OF THE COMPASS--

EXT. BISMARCK OBSERVATION DECK - MOMENTS LATER

Half a dozen observers scan their sectors... One spots something just before the others.

OBSERVER
Fliegeralarm!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN - DUSK

Dozens of men race along the deck past a QUAD-BARRELED 20MM A/A GUN.

Three peel off and clamber aboard the gun -- Squeezing themselves into the metal seats -- GRINDING on hand-wheels to turn and elevate the guns.

EXT. SKIES - DUSK

Coode's flight of Swordfish -- "ABLE" -- fly into a barrage of flak -- dozens of lethal black peppercorns of smoke BURSTING into life in their path.

But they hold their course -- Racing towards Bismarck's right rear quarter.

BAKER FLIGHT

The Swordfish of Baker flight dart over the wave-tops, aiming for the middle of Bismarck's left-hand side, while...

DOG FLIGHT

...Closes in on Bismarck's sharp bow as it cuts into the waves.

IN DOG LEADER'S COCKPIT

The pilot YANKS on a lever and...

THE TORPEDO

Breaks free and ARCS gracefully into the waves.

The Torpedo's propeller CHURNS the water as it RACES towards Bismarck.

EXT. BISMARCK - DUSK

The mighty battleship straightens -- It begins to wheel to the left...

As the rear of the ship swings sideways through the water -- The line of wake from the torpedo approaching from the left passes just feet behind it -- A narrow miss!

The bow lumbers round -- Dog flight's torpedo looks certain to hit -- But just in time, the turn starts to bite -- A MISS.

With all Bismarck's manoeuvring, the torpedo coming from the right rear is now RUNNING PARALLEL to the Bismarck's left side -- Bismarck is turning BACK INTO ITS PATH!

EXT. BISMARCK FIRE CONTROL PLATFORM - DUSK

Oels watches in awe as the deadly torpedo comes up to Bismarck.

OELS
(to Lindemann)
Go back! Go back!

LINDEMANN
(into intercom)
Hard a' starboard!

WHEELHOUSE

The helmsman turns the wheel with all the speed he can muster.

EXT. BISMARCK DECK - DUSK

A sailor watches over the railing as the torpedo FIZZES through the water on a collision course.

But as the ship straightens, the torpedo's angle of attack gets shallower...

CLUNK-CLANG!

A glancing blow -- It doesn't detonate!

The sailor breathes a sigh of relief--

But he looks up to see a SWORDFISH heading straight for him!

IN THE SWORDFISH

The pilot releases his torpedo and BANKS away...

He TURNS back to look and--

BANG! His chest explodes as a round SMACKS into him.

He SLUMPS, head lolling like a rag-doll. His navigator TEARS at his straps -- DESPERATE to climb free... But the plane POWER-DIVES into the sea.

EXT. BISMARCK DECK - DUSK

The sailor watches a line of WAKE churning towards Bismarck -- Transfixed with horror.

A massive BOOM and a WALL OF WHITE WATER shoots up.

EXT. COODE'S SWORDFISH - DUSK

The Swordfish banks as it arcs through the deadly barrage of flak.

Coode looks out at Bismarck below -- She's turning away from him, EXPOSING the POINT OF IMPACT of the torpedo...

The HULL still COMPLETELY INTACT...

COODE (RADIO)

Damn it!

He looks to his wingmen and makes a signal -- "Go around".

EXT. ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN - DUSK

The crew WHEEL the gun round, TRACKING their targets -- FIRING all the while.

Empty shell cases CLINK onto the deck amid countless others -- Tracer rounds ZING towards the attacking Swordfish...

One of the Swordfish takes a hit -- It CRUMPLES and SMASHES into the waves...

The survivors press their attack -- Their torpedoes dive into the waves.

EXT. BISMARCK - DUSK

Bismarck DANCES between the converging TRAILS of three torpedoes.

One is a clear miss -- It passes harmlessly in front.

The second, coming up on Bismarck's right rear, JUST MISSES -- Bismarck turns just in time.

THE FINAL TORPEDO

Courses through the seas...

RACING towards Bismarck's left rear...

--But Bismarck is moving too fast...

She's slipping away... first the ship's tower crosses the torpedo's path -- Then the funnel, quickly followed by gun turret "Cäsar" -- Then Dora...

EXT. SWORDFISH - MOMENTS LATER

Coode looks back towards Bismarck -- He CRANES his neck to see past the biplane's rigging.

A COLUMN OF WHITE WATER booms from Bismarck's REAR!

Coode flicks his head around -- Desperate for a better view...

Hopeful... Expectant...

But Bismarck continues to carve its way through the waves.

COODE (RADIO)
(downcast)
Right lads. That's it...

EXT. HMS ARK ROYAL - DUSK

Fragile planes land on the pitching, windswept flight deck, joining a handful which have already come to rest.

COODE (RADIO) (POST-LAP)
(crestfallen)
Let's head for home.

Coode wearily clammers out of his plane.

GROUND CREWMAN
Well, sir...?

But Coode just shrugs off the harness and shakes his head.

INT. MAP ROOM - DUSK

Churchill and Pound watch Fraser read a message slip. He finishes and stares at the map board -- Bismarck well ahead of the chasing pack -- Well on the way to FRANCE.

He hands the message to Pound.

POUND
(to Churchill)
I'd say that's it, then.

Downcast eyes all around the room. Jenny turns back to her radio set.

EXT. DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - DUSK

Galbraith is standing alone at the bow of the ship, when Daniels joins him.

He offers Galbraith his HIP FLASK -- He declines it with a shake of his head.

GALBRAITH
Same old bloody story...

They share a look -- They've done all they can...

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - LATER

Galbraith enters the room. The signalman turns to him.

SIGNALMAN
Sir, the Admiralty's requesting a bearing on Bismarck, if we have one.

GALBRAITH
She'll be well out of range by now.
Why don't you stretch your legs awhile and check with Warrant Officer Daniels.

SIGNALMAN
Yes, sir.

The signalman relinquishes his seat.

Galbraith pauses for a moment before beginning a message.

INT. MAP ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny's set beeps.

SUPER: "With luck we'll reach any survivors of the last attack in three or four hours."

She keys a short response.

After a pause, her set starts up again.

SUPER: "I'm sorry we couldn't have done more for your husband."

Jenny stops. She considers her next message.

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - NIGHT

Galbraith listens to the stream of dits and dahs coming over his set.

SUPER: "We weren't married... We were only starting out."

Galbraith finds himself staring at his Ronson lighter as he listens, turning it over and over... Such a waste.

He takes up the handset again.

GALBRAITH (V.O.)
It can't have been easy for you...
Remaining at your post...

INT. MAP ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny listens... The final part of the message comes over her headset.

SUPER: "...Thank you."

Keeping a firm grip on her emotions, she begins her response.

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - NIGHT

SUPER: "It's where I can do the most good right now."

Galbraith reflects on the message in silence for a moment...
Then--

SIGNALMAN
--Sir? The latest bearings.

Startled, Galbraith takes the signalman's note. He relays the coordinates to Jenny.

AT JENNY'S RADIO SET - NIGHT

Jenny copies down the message -- She signals to Maggie and passes her a MESSAGE SLIP.

JENNY
The co-ordinates you requested,
Ma'am.

As Maggie moves away, Jenny's set starts bipping.

SUPER: "One more thing."

INT. RADIO ROOM - NIGHT

Galbraith taps out a message on the radio set.

GALBRAITH (V/O)
Could you check on someone? I left
London in a rush.

He listens for the response.

SUPER: "Of course."

INT. MAP ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny finishes writing on a MESSAGE SLIP: MRS NELLY
GALBRAITH, 17 QUILTER ROAD, HACKNEY.

She taps out a response.

JENNY (V/O)
What shall I tell her?

At that moment, Maggie interrupts.

INT. RADIO ROOM - NIGHT

A few short dits and dahs...

SUPER: "Stand by--"

Followed by static... A beat. Galbraith waits... Then the radio FLARES UP once more.

SUPER: "Please confirm last Bismarck coordinates."

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - NIGHT

Galbraith spreads open a chart -- He runs his hand along the map to pin-point a location -- He stares at it for a moment, confused.

GALBRAITH

Read me the last position from the log.

DANIELS

48 degrees North, 16 degrees West.

GALBRAITH

Well I'll be...

Galbraith looks back to the map. He makes a mark.

Bismarck is GOING IN CIRCLES!

INT. BISMARCK, RUDDER MACHINE ROOM - NIGHT

Ankle-deep water sloshes around the room.

Machinery lies in pieces -- Parts and tools strewn everywhere -- as workmen struggle to effect repairs.

A group of three men weigh on an enormous WRENCH, trying to pry open a coupling -- The machinery starts to GROAN and SHUDDER.

WORKMAN

Nein! Nein!--

BANG! The machine casing CRACKS open and BEARINGS shoot out!

Oels watches -- Frustrated -- Fuming.

MOVING THROUGH THE HULL

We emerge into the CHURNING WAKE of Bismarck's propellers...

...And past Bismarck's TWIN RUDDERS -- Both of them BUCKLED and BROKEN -- And both VERY FIRMLY-WEDGED into a left-hand turn.

Emerging above the waterline: A CURVING LINE OF WAKE stretches out behind Bismarck.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAP ROOM - NIGHT

Churchill arrives in the room. Pound intercepts him and together they move to look over the Map Table.

CHURCHILL

What is it--

POUND

We found her Achilles Heel. Looks like the second shot hit home after all. Destroyed her steering. Bismarck's been going in circles ever since.

(a beat)

You made the right call.

CHURCHILL

And now we must put ten thousand men within range of her guns... We can only guess how many will return.

He pauses, weighed down with the decision.

Reluctantly, he NODS.

POUND

(to Fraser)

Send in everything we've got.

INT. SICK BAY - DAWN

Ellis lies on a cot, his chest wrapped in bandages. Galbraith sits beside him, deep in thought, watching him breathe, turning his LIGHTER over and over.

Ellis stirs.

ELLIS

(laboured)

They tell me it's all about to kick off.

Galbraith nods.

ELLIS (CONT'D)
You'll be fine, you know. Just
trust your instincts--

GALBRAITH
You sound like Max Richmond--

ELLIS
Well, he was right.

GALBRAITH
You know, you look like him too--
all bandaged up like that.

Ellis smiles.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
It's hard to believe it's been a
year since Dunkirk...

Galbraith's memories flood back. Ellis waits -- Lets him get it all out.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
Max-- He was very badly wounded...
Strafed by Messerschmitts on our
second run. We off-loaded him at
Dover, but there were so many men
left on the beaches, there was no
time to replace him... We did two
more runs by the book, but they
just weren't coming in quick
enough. It was taking forever to
get them through the breakers...
And all the while they were getting
smashed to bits-- What was left of
them. So on the next run, I took us
in-- What was I thinking...?

(a beat)
Well... I got too close. The tide
turned. The Stukas came. The rest
you know. *Basilisk* sunk. Five-
hundred drowned--

The number sticks in his throat. He takes a moment to compose himself.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
I promised myself I'd find a desk
somewhere. Somewhere I couldn't...
(a beat)
The men need their captain--

ELLIS

No, they need a leader. What would have happened had you left those men on the beach? They'd have been dead by nightfall. At least you gave them a shot.

Ellis lets his words sink in for a moment.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

You were sent here to do a job: sink the Bismarck. We may never have another chance.

(a beat)

The men know what's at stake. If we end up like the Hood, so be it. If it ends up like Dunkirk, so be it... Just give these men a chance to follow you.

EXT. HMS SUFFOLK - DAWN

Galbraith stands by the railing at the rear of the ship, staring out over the churning wake.

He reaches into his pocket and draws out his LIGHTER. He regards it silently for a moment--

Then an idea takes root...

GALBRAITH

Just like Dunkirk...

INT. MAP ROOM - DAY

Jenny removes her headset and stretches -- As she does, her set comes to life. She dons the headset once more...

INT. RADIO ROOM, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

Galbraith hunches over the Morse keys, waiting for a response which comes in a stream of DITS and DAHS.

SUPER: "Go Ahead".

GALBRAITH (V.O.)

Kindly tell her...

INT. MAP ROOM - DAY

Jenny takes down the transmission beeping in her headset.

SUPER: "Duty Called".

As she works out the contents of a message, Jenny smiles.

AT THE MAP TABLE - MOMENTS LATER

Churchill and Pound watch as Vera moves markers into place -- HMS King George V -- HMS Rodney -- HMS Norfolk -- HMS Dorsetshire.

They form A RING of ships surrounding Bismarck from the North, West and South.

Next up, she moves HMS Sheffield -- HMS Cossack -- HMS Maori -- ORP Piorun -- HMS Sikh -- HMS Zulu.

CHURCHILL

Did Admiral Tovey have any comments on the plan?

POUND

None that can be repeated, Prime Minister.

And finally, HMS Suffolk takes its place around Bismarck.

INT. BRIDGE, HMS KING GEORGE V

Admiral Tovey FUMES as he reads a MESSAGE SLIP.

TOVEY

--And who the hell does this Galbraith think he is?!

GALBRAITH (PRE-LAP)

So lads, this is the plan.

INT. SEAMAN'S MESS, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

Men of every rank crowd around a mess-table, where Galbraith addresses them.

GALBRAITH

Our heavy battleships, *George the Fifth* and *Rodney*, will open fire at their extreme range, exposing Bismarck to plunging fire.

(MORE)

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

That way we hope to do the maximum damage possible. Now Bismarck is still dangerous. She'll do more damage to them than they will to her if she gets the chance...

(a beat)

That's where we come in.

Galbraith takes a chart and rolls it out across the table. It's a diagram of BISMARCK.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

For all her steel, Bismarck's real strength is her glass.

(pointing to the diagram)

Her ten metre optical rangefinder gives her the edge. Her secondary range-finders are...

(pointing)

Here, and here.

He looks up at the men.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

So we get in close... Too close. And then we keep going! We don't stop until for all she can throw at us, we're close enough to give her something back in return. We get in close enough to target her rangefinders with our guns and destroy her means of hitting us and our battleships. Then they can finish her off.

(pause)

I know what you're thinking...

(a beat)

And you're right. You all saw what she did to Hood, the pride of the fleet. I've long said that Bismarck is nigh on invincible in a typical naval engagement... But this will be no typical naval engagement.

Galbraith looks from face to face. He sees Daniels.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)

We've all endured a lot. The Nazis have had us on the back foot an awfully long time. But we've held on. We persevered. And today, we prevail.

(a beat)

Any questions?

THE MEN

No, sir!

INT. MAP ROOM - DAY

Vera slides Suffolk's marker ever closer to Bismarck.

MAGGIE
(to Fraser)
Bismarck has opened fire.

A nervous glance shoots from Vera to Fraser to Pound.

INT. BRIDGE, HMS KING GEORGE V - DAY

Tovey calmly takes his spot near the window...

VOOOOSH! Bismarck's shells sail in and FOUR EXPLOSIONS WELL UP FROM THE SEA just feet away from him.

TOVEY
(cool)
You may open fire.

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

Galbraith takes a spot by the railing -- He looks through his binoculars.

To his left, HMS KING GEORGE V -- FLASHES OF LIGHT spark into life as her guns open up.

Galbraith scans along the horizon until Bismarck LOOMS LARGE IN HIS VIEW. Half a dozen SPLASHES of water mark the misses of the opening British salvo.

EXT. BISMARCK - DAY

The main guns fire volley after volley towards HMS King George V.

EXT. KING GEORGE V - DAY

The BOOMING explosions from Bismarck's near-misses turn the seas around the battleship into CHURNING COLUMNS OF SPRAY -- Getting closer and closer...

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

Galbraith watches Bismarck and King George V exchange fire as Suffolk draws ever nearer.

He spots movement on Bismarck.

INSERT: Through his binoculars, he sees Bismarck's SECONDARY GUNS rotate towards Suffolk. They explode into life.

The sky GROANS as the shells fly towards Suffolk.

BOOM! BOOM! Two misses in front and to the left of Suffolk.

BOOM! BOOM! Misses to the front and right.

Daniels joins him on the deck.

DANIELS

Hold the present course, sir?

GALBRAITH

I should think so.

Bismarck UNLEASHES a barrage towards King George V.

INT. BRIDGE, HMS KING GEORGE V - DAY

Spray from FOUR ERUPTING COLUMNS of water rains over Admiral Tovey's ship.

Getting VERY close...

TOVEY

(under his breath)

Any time you want to take out those range-finders...

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

Suffolk continues to make straight for Bismarck -- The secondary guns fire another volley...

Once again -- FOUR MISSES -- Off to the LEFT and the RIGHT.

Galbraith GRINS.

DANIELS

Sir?

GALBRAITH

They keep expecting us to turn...!

Galbraith picks up the intercom.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
(to Daniels)
I wonder if they'll be expecting
this...
(into intercom)
Open fire!

Seconds later, Suffolk's guns ERUPT!

EXT. BISMARCK - DAY

Bismarck's MAST EXPLODES as one of Suffolk's shell's crashes into it.

The mast begins to TOPPLE...

It CRASHES down to the deck, bringing with it a tangle of cables.

INT. RANGEFINDER STATION, BISMARCK - DAY

As Schneider looks through his sights, the Trainer desperately tries to turn his hand-wheel.

SCHNEIDER
What's the hold-up?

Schneider angrily gets up and exits the rangefinder...

EXT. BISMARCK FIRE CONTROL PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

He emerges into the tangle of cables -- One of them WRAPPED around the end of the Rangefinder -- Pulled TAUT and not budging an inch.

VVVVOOOOOOSHMH -- Schneider DUCKS as a shell flies past -- The cable SINGS as the air displaced by the shell rushes over it.

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

Bismarck's secondary guns unleash another round of shellfire at Suffolk -- But this time they're wise to the plan and the shells land TWO DEAD AHEAD and TWO BEHIND...

--And they keep coming!

Galbraith breaks away from his vantage point on the railing and moves back to the Suffolk's range-finder -- Only half the size of Bismarck's.

He skips up the stairway and pulls back the armoured door...

INT. SUFFOLK'S RANGEFINDER - CONTINUOUS

The range-finder crew busily work their instruments.

The Chief Gunnery Officer offers Galbraith a look through his view-finder.

THROUGH THE VIEWFINDER

Suffolk's cross-hairs target the middle of Bismarck's superstructure.

GALBRAITH (O.S.)
More elevation. Aim for the range-finder.

The cross-hairs creep up Bismarck...

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

Galbraith heads back to his spot on the rail as Suffolk's guns let loose another BOOMING THUNDERCLAP.

INT. RANGEFINDER STATION, BISMARCK - MOMENTS LATER

Schneider peers intently through his viewfinder.

SCHNEIDER
Fall of shot short. Increase by two-hund--

BOOM!

EXT. BISMARCK - CONTINUOUS

The rangefinder DISAPPEARS in a FLASH of white-hot FLAME -- Reduced to a flaming tangle of metal and bodies.

INT. BRIDGE, HMS KING GEORGE V - CONTINUOUS

Admiral Tovey watches as flame licks the wreckage of Bismarck's rangefinder.

TOVEY

That's our cue. Fifteen degrees to
Starboard!

INT. BISMARCK BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Oels spots something. He raises his binoculars.

King George V turns to reveal another ship -- HMS RODNEY --
With all her guns set forward of the bridge tower, the
ancient battleship looms like a STEAMPUNK STAR DESTROYER.

Oels swallows hard.

HMS RODNEY fires a salvo from her massive 16" guns.

INT. "ANTON" TURRET, BISMARCK - DAY

The gun-loaders tend to the machinery as it loads a 15" shell
into the breach -- The massive cartridge waits to be loaded --
100 lbs of CORDITE sewn into a SILK SACK.

The Gun Captain frets by his control panel.

GUN CAPTAIN
(into intercom)
What is our target?!

He slams the phone down!

EXT. SHELL IN FLIGHT - CONTINUOUS

One of Rodney's heavy shells carves through the air -- Ahead
of it, three TOWERS OF WATER mark the fall of Rodney's other
shots...

But this one is right on target -- Bismarck's forward-most
turret, "Anton", looms up--

BOOM! It strikes the gun turret and explodes in a massive
FIREBALL--

INT. "ANTON" TURRET, BISMARCK - CONTINUOUS

The roof of the turret BUCKLES and a JET OF FLAME snakes
inside the narrow gap between the barrel and the turret's
armour casing.

The flame ignites the CORDITE CARTRIDGE waiting to be loaded --
It explodes in a BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT.

INT. MACHINE ROOM, ANTON TURRET - MILLISECONDS LATER

Flame BURSTS through the ceiling of the machine room (directly below the main gun platform) where the next CARTRIDGE and SHELL are being prepped.

They both EXPLODE as the flames reach them.

INT. MACHINE ROOM, BRUNO TURRET - MILLISECONDS LATER

The explosion SMACKS THROUGH the floor and walls, engulfing the room and its contents in a FIREBALL -- The crew VAPOURIZED.

INT. BISMARCK BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Oels and the others on the Bridge watch as "Bruno" turret LIFTS off its mounting -- Hundreds of tons of armoured steel rise up -- Then come CRASHING back down to the deck!

The SHOCK-WAVE reverberates around the cabin...

FLAMES licking out of holes in the deck -- Two battered carcasses of the once mighty Anton and Bruno turrets lying broken and silent.

Out of the smoke, small PATCHES OF FLAME dart towards the railings and TUMBLE OVERBOARD -- Sailors burning to death.

INT. BRIDGE, HMS KING GEORGE V - DAY

Admiral Tovey watches the scene unfolding on Bismarck with a smirk.

TOVEY

That's evened the odds a little,
wouldn't you say?

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK, HMS SUFFOLK - MOMENTS LATER

Suffolk continues to make directly for Bismarck.

In the distance the CRACK of the British guns rings out in a rippling rolling THUNDER -- Moments later, THREE EXPLOSIONS tear into Bismarck.

VOOOSHHHH -- Another shell sails over Suffolk -- This one close enough to suck Galbraith's cap right off his head.

DANIELS
Sir, perhaps we might...

Galbraith looks over... see his concern.

GALBRAITH
Yes. Yes, of course.

Galbraith retrieves his cap, and after a last look at Bismarck, together they head down...

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

...To the bridge, where they find Ellis PROPPING HIMSELF UP against the compass pedestal.

ELLIS
You still think she can't be sunk?

GALBRAITH
She's still floating...

Ellis falters. Daniels rushes to pick him up.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
I think you'd best return to sick bay, Captain.

Daniels carries Ellis out of the bridge.

Galbraith looks back to the Bismarck -- He spots movement.

EXT. BISMARCK GUN TURRET "CÄSAR" - CONTINUOUS

The massive turret CLANKING as it turns--

DIRECTLY TOWARDS HMS SUFFOLK!

INT. BRIDGE, HMS SUFFOLK - CONTINUOUS

Galbraith freezes as he stares down the enormous gun barrel -- A deep breath...

THIS IS IT...!

There's a FLASH as the guns fire.

EXT. HMS SUFFOLK - SECONDS LATER

The bridge explodes in a FIREBALL.

Smoke pours from a gaping hole in Suffolk's superstructure as it courses on through the waves...

Towards Bismarck!

INT. BRIDGE, HMS KING GEORGE V - DAY

Tovey watches as Suffolk LURCHES towards Bismarck -- He holds his breath...

TOVEY
Hold fire!

EXT. HMS SUFFOLK - SECONDS LATER

Suffolk continues to close on Bismarck... Both ships out of control.

It passes into Bismarck's shadow...

But JUST MISSES...

INT. BRIDGE, HMS KING GEORGE V - MOMENTS LATER

Tovey breathes a sigh of relief as Suffolk emerges from Bismarck's path.

It's eerily silent...

The men on the bridge look to one another as the oddness registers--

Bismarck's guns have fallen silent.

Tovey thinks for a moment.

TOVEY
Resume firing. And keep firing till
she goes under, Captain. Give no
quarter.

EXT. NORTH ATLANTIC - CONTINUOUS

The Bismarck sits aflame as the circling British ships continue to fire their guns into her. Bismarck's a pitiful sight -- Even at this distance the GROAN of red-hot metal echoes...

BUT STILL SHE FLOATS -- Apparently unsinkable despite the carnage!

EXT. BISMARCK - CONTINUOUS

A thousand men thrash about in the seas -- And DOZENS MORE, some burning, leap from the deck.

Oels helps men clamber aboard one of the few lifeboats that remains intact.

Bismarck's burning hulk looms above them...

...Then, from DEEP WITHIN its hull -- A series of EXPLOSIONS rumble forth.

The mighty battleship starts to slip under the waves -- Snorting -- Shuddering -- Screeching.

As the bow begins to rise, a hideous metallic SHRIEK stuns the watching men into silence.

And then SHE IS GONE...

A moment of eerie silence -- And then the FRANTIC CRIES of men splashing in the freezing water grow louder.

INT. MAP ROOM - DAY

Pound picks up Bismarck's marker from the table and places it to one side.

Everyone gathers round to hear the final confirmation.

POUND

I think we've done it.

(a beat)

I didn't think we would...

Churchill takes Bismarck's marker.

CHURCHILL

But we did.

POUND

(addressing the room)

Well done everybody. Well done.

Relief breaks out around the room. W/T operators rise from their posts...

Except Jenny.

She looks back to the DEATHLY SILENCE of her radio set... She takes off her headset and begins to push away--

--When her set starts BEEPING!

SUPER: "Retrieving survivors..."

Jenny scribbles down the message as a post-script comes in.

SUPER: "Tell Nan I'll be home soon."

Jenny breathes a sigh of relief, and a smile creeps across her face.

EXT. HMS SUFFOLK - DAY

Men crowd the railing -- Bismarck's survivors clamber from their lifeboat -- Shimmying up ROPES thrown down to them.

SAILOR (O.S.)

Make way!

A crowd of sailors parts to reveal Galbraith -- Head BANDAGED and his ARM IN A SLING.

The GANGWAY swings down to the sea -- The survivors start clambering up it, past Galbraith who moves down to the lifeboat -- Towards Oels.

GALBRAITH

You're responsible for these men?

Oels chokes up a little -- but eventually he NODS.

OELS

I had that honour...

Galbraith offers him a pack of smokes.

OELS (CONT'D)

Danke.

An awkward moment passes -- He doesn't have a light.

Galbraith hands him his RONSON LIGHTER -- Oels looks at it, and the inscription:

INSERT: *"With gratitude from the men of HMS Basilisk".*

Above them, HMS Suffolk's siren lets out a short, sharp TOOT. Daniels appears over the edge of the railing.

DANIELS

We've been ordered to leave the area at once, sir. There may be U-boats in the vicinity.

GALBRAITH
(to Oels)
There are no U-boats, are there?
(off his look)
Save yourself.

But Oels just looks out over the sea and the HUNDREDS OF MEN still in the water... He proffers the lighter to Galbraith.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
Keep it.

Galbraith looks back up to the railing and sees Ellis, all BANDAGED UP -- Galbraith signals and they winch him up.

Oels takes up his oars, and beats back against the waves, rowing out to his drowning men.

GALBRAITH (CONT'D)
(watching Oels go)
If it had been down to character,
we would have lost.

ELLIS
I'd say we were evenly matched...

EXT. ADMIRALTY ARCH - DAY

Jenny emerges into the shade of the Admiralty Arch. She takes in the fresh air.

Air Raid Sirens are just sounding the ALL CLEAR...

She puts a cigarette to her lips...

-- And Maggie LIGHTS IT.

MAGGIE
Going my way?

JENNY
Not today, Ma'am.

They share a look. Maggie smiles, and sets off down the Mall in the direction of Buckingham Palace.

MAGGIE
(calling back)
Good work, officer Blair. Good work.

Jenny stubs out her cigarette, pulls out a NAVAL MESSAGE SLIP, and checks the address: "Nelly Galbraith, 17 Quilter Road..."

She heads through the Admiralty Arch...

Past Trafalgar Square...

...And up Strand towards the SHINING DOME OF ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, standing resolute amid the embers of the smouldering city.

FADE OUT.