

# Saving Private Ryan

Rough Revisions

SF-6/13/1997

**FOR EDUCATIONAL  
PURPOSES ONLY**

FADE IN:

EXT. ST. LAURENT MILITARY GRAVEYARD - LATE SPRING - DAY

As we follow a hunched-over OLD MAN with white, tuffy hair.

High hedgerows prevent any other view except to guide the old man who now follows the pathway.

Then, suddenly, the elderly man stops cold, as if hitting an invisible brick wall. His breathing quickens as his legs fold up beneath him and he falls to his knees, his eyes riveted in front of him...

CAMERA SWINGS AROUND to witness what stopped the elderly man in his tracks and punched the wind out of his lungs...

A LANDSCAPE OF WHITE CROSSES WITH THE OCCASIONAL STAR OF DAVID.

So vast that it spans your peripheral vision and carries your eye acres and acres up a gently rolling hill. It looks like the entire world died and was buried up here.

OUR FIRST CLOSE UP - ELDERLY MAN

He could be anyone's father or grandfather. Nothing very memorable about this face, except those eyes...that have seen too much...and, perhaps for the first time in fifty-five years, are suddenly seeing it all again.

CAMERA SLOWLY PUSHES IN ON THAT FACE...THOSE EYES

ELDERLY MAN'S POV:

A geometrically straight line of crosses, as far as the eye can just about see.

SMASH MATCH CUT TO:

A LESS THAN PERFECT LINE OF BELGIAN GATES

Beach obstacles made of steel crossbars welded into an X-shape...almost as far as the eye can see.

It's very quiet here-- too quiet.

SUPER TITLE:

OMAHA BEACH 0615 HOURS

THE ALLIED ARMADA

Is nothing less than stunning in scope. Almost as many battleships, cruisers, minesweepers, destroyers, troop carriers, as there were graves at St. Laurent.

#### THE HIGGINS BOATS

Two hundred of them head for shore in the first wave--un glamorous, utilitarian, flat-bottomed landing craft. Each holds a platoon of thirty men (or twelve plus a jeep).

#### EXT. ONE OF THE HIGGINS BOATS - DAWN

Madness. The flat bow of the boat crashes into the swell, sending up squalls of spray.

#### IN THE HIGGINS BOAT

Water pouring in with every swell. Men puking, moaning. Smashing and tumbling into each other. Bailing with their helmets. Swallowing sea sickness pills.

MELLISH, a Jewish kid from Yonkers, sees CAPARZO handing out the sea-sickness pills.

MELLISH

Give me some more of those.

Mellish grabs the whole bunch from Caparzo and swallows them all.

CAPARZO

That's my entire wartime supply, you idiot!

MELLISH

What difference does it make? This is probably the last boat ride we're ever gonna-

#### A FIFTEEN INCH NAVAL SHELL STREAKS

Over their heads, LIFTING THE HIGGINS BOAT ALMOST OUT OF THE WATER. Sucking the air from the men's lungs. It slams into the unseen shore ahead.

#### THE CAMERA MOVES PAST THE MEN

Grim. They know they're close. Many of them are praying. Mellish turns green and suddenly, explosively, vomits.

Caparzo glances about, makes sure no one's looking and patiently kneels down and picks up all his slimy used seasickness pills from the puddle at his feet...

CUT TO: A HAND

As it quivers.

PAN UP TO: CAPTAIN JOHN MILLER

Late thirties, by far the oldest man on the craft. Miller glances around to see that none of the men have noticed. He stares at his hand as if it belongs to someone else. It stops shaking.

SERGEANT MICHAEL HORVATH (SARGE) appears at his side, tactful enough not to notice. He gestures to the men.

SARGE

Christ, look at 'em. Most of 'em are farm boys, never even seen the Goddamn ocean.

A young soldier, DELANCEY, tries to get a peek over the gunwale at the Higgins Boat directly off their port side.

DELANCEY'S POV

At that exact moment, that landing craft hits a mine.

A HUGE EXPLOSION

Of fuel, fire, metal, and human parts. Delancey falls back, and you know he's going to lose it, as the debris from the exploded companion boat rains down on all the men. Flaming oil and body parts... actual hands, arms, legs, feet still in their boots... cascade over everyone and everything.

The men stop bailing, using the water to put out the flames. All of them screaming out their reactions.

DELANCEY

Captain, are we all gonna die?

LIEUTENANT BRIGGS turns, responding to Delancey...

BRIGGS

Hell no, Delancey. Two-thirds, tops.

DELANCEY

Oh, Jesus...

Briggs cups his mouth and hollers out to sea.

BRIGGS

Kaback, Reinhardt, Colony. I want every one of you to look at the man on your left. Now look at the man on your right. Feel sorry for those two sons a bitches, they're gonna get it, you're not gonna get a scratch.

Delancey manages a thin smile. The others are made even more nervous by Briggs' pep talk. Miller shoots Briggs a glare.

MILLER

(to Briggs)

Cut the crap.

Speaks calmly to the men.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Keep it simple, sides of the ramp, move fast, no bunches... When you make shore, correct your elevation and windage...adjust your sights.

Miller looks over the gunwale at the HELL IN FRONT OF THEM.

LIEUTENANT BRIGGS

Go LCT's! Light 'em up!

The entire Higgins boat lights up from above. Everyone looks up at the fourteen thousand rockets passing overhead and impacting on the beach.

MILLER

Look up there! That's what you call a shitstorm! And right now it's raining down on every German strongpoint. By the time we land, they'll all be knocked out.

DELANCEY

We're gonna win!

ANOTHER SOLDIER

We're gonna kick ass!

AND ANOTHER

Gonna be a big show!

MILLER'S BOAT

Is heading straight into hell. Tracers rip the haze overhead like a thousand freight trains. Explosions pound the surf, throwing columns of water toward the sky.

CAPARZO

Sounds like the Midnight Limited!

MELLISH

Sounds like the old-fashioned chain flush  
in our hallway bathroom.

JACKSON: a tall, gangly, southern country-boy with a sharpshooters rifle, bows his head.

JACKSON

Better make yourself right with the Lord.

At that moment, THE NAVAL BARRAGE LIFTS. UNCANNY SILENCE, except for the engines of the Higgins boat, descends as the big guns readjust to fire inland.

Everybody gazes up, knowing this is it, waiting for the final cue. Miller exchanges a look with Sarge, begins moving among the men...

MILLER

Good luck. See you on the beach. Good  
luck...

He adjusts the Mae West belt on a soldier raising it.

MILLER

You get into deep water or step in a shell  
hole and the vest inflates, you'll wind up  
head down with your legs sticking out of  
the water. Good luck. I'll see you on  
the beach...

THE COXSWAIN

Is a scared, eighteen-year-old Navy kid. He throttles back, cutting speed. Miller hollers from the bow.

MILLER

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

COXSWAIN

As far as I go!

Miller races toward the stern, pushing through his men.

MILLER

All the way in, goddamn it! You take us  
all the way in!

COXSWAIN

I can't even see the marker flags.

Miller reaches the Coxswain, lunges up into his face.

MILLER

All the way in! You're not going to drown my men!

COXSWAIN

I get hung up on a sandbar, we're never getting out of this!

Miller stuns everybody by pulling his .45 from his holster, jacking a round into the chamber, and jamming the gun into the Coxswain's nose.

MILLER

I don't need you to take us in. I want you to!!

The kid immediately throttles forward, heading in.

That's when Miller's boat runs aground on a sandbar. The Coxswain jams it into reverse, then forward, trying desperately to pull it off.

COXSWAIN

Sandbar!

MILLER

Closer!

COXSWAIN

SANDBAR!

The Coxswain is suddenly hit by machine gun bullets. He SLAMS so quickly out of frame that, were it not for the lingering cloud of red mist, we wouldn't even know he had been there.

Miller, left wearing a fine spray of blood like warpaint, turns to his men. There's nothing left to do.

FACES OF THE MEN

Staring straight ahead at the steel gate. Suddenly it sounds like the worst hail storm imaginable - a thousand hammers hitting in sporadic bursts the upraised steel gate of the Higgins boat.

Involuntarily, the men start backing away, jockeying for position. But there are so many of them packed in that there is nowhere to go.

MILLER  
DEPART RIGHT SIDE OF THE RAMP! SEE YOU ON  
THE BEACH! GOOD LUCK!

SARGE  
Don't bunch up! Wanna see plenty a' beach  
between men!

A WAR CRY

Arises from the throats of the men. So seasick is everyone, the beach is like a cure. An intense swirl of emotions verging on insanity. And in the back of every mind is a desperate little voice saying: *It can't happen to me...*

The Ramp comes down.

IT'S A SLAUGHTER

CLOSE UP: MILLER

Metal minutiae, pink and gray matter, smoke and sparks explode past Miller in all directions.

MILLER'S POV

Triangulated .30-caliber machine-gun fire rains into the boat like God's wrath itself, chewing screaming GIs to pieces.

Miller can only see the backs of all his men. But the heavy caliber slugs, as they pass through the men, are not so much throwing back blood, but pieces of mess kit, canteen shrapnel, sections of shovel, canvas, and rubber from rended Mae Wests.

In less than twenty seconds, two-thirds of the men are piled into each other, dead or dying. A dozen survivors make it over the corpses of their comrades to the ramp and throw themselves into the water. Bringing up the rear is Miller.

MILLER

Go! Go!

Miller grabs a screaming Private Delancey by the backpack and pulls him to his feet from a tangle of bodies, inadvertently saving his life by inches.

MILLER AND DELANCEY

Plunge into the deep water to the left of the sandbar...

UNDERWATER



...And sink like rocks into a WATERY NIGHTMARE WORLD. The sights and sounds are surreal. Drowned soldiers are sinking around us in the murk. Contrails of blood from multiple puncture wounds, men still thrashing weakly as their lungs give out, expelling blood and air. All manner of equipment and gear is tumbling down as far as the eye can see. Rifles are sinking, helmets are going down.

A Higgins Boat with an engine THRUMMING eerily passes right near us. One dead soldier gets caught up in the giant screw, shredding his body and causing the screw to jam and stop.

Most ominous of all, the surface itself is roiling, as if hammered by rain. Machine gun bullets piercing the water leave fizzy lines for a straight five feet before settling gently on the murky, sandy bottom.

DELANCEY

Struggles, trying to undo the straps of his heavy pack. Miller's in the same desperate trouble -- his pack is dragging him down.

Miller pulls his knife, slashes his own straps, dumps his pack. He grabs Delancey, who's panicking, losing all his air. Miller manages to cut him loose, dragging him up toward --

THE SURFACE --

As the CAMERA FOLLOWS Delancey and Miller, EMERGES from the silent shallows and into the chaos of Omaha Beach. Burning water. Exploding shells. Bullets flying. Screams of war. Then SILENCE AGAIN as they once more fall back into the water. Then again CHAOS as Miller gains his feet, Delancey clinging to him, gasping --

DELANCEY

Captain...Jesus...thanks...

...And a stream of bullets slams into his back. He arches in Miller's grasp, dead on his feet with a slack look of surprise.

Miller is pinned in two feet of water by Delancey's body. He starts struggling/paddling towards shore.

Delancey's body takes seven or eight more hits, jerking about violently in Miller's grasp. Miller looks like a man who's wondering if this wouldn't be a good time to go insane.

He looks around, realizing he's not the only one. There are scores of men out here from any number of boats doing the same thing: working their way grimly toward shore, some using corpses for cover... past tangled and burning wreckage... past wave-tossed bodies... past hundreds of dead fish that keep washing ashore...

Miller sees a SOLDIER lift his head, then roll over onto his back in the shallows. Miller moves to help him, is about to drag him when-

SOLDIER

(hisses)

Leave me alone!

Miller looks at the guy who's been pretending to be a corpse.

SOLDIER

Get away or we'll both get shot!

MILLER

Get up, soldier, and follow me.

Miller throws himself behind another Belgian gate. He presses against it for dear life as MACHINE GUN BULLETS hammer the metal, throwing massive sparks. He turns to the soldier...

MILLER

Drop your lifebelt!

(sees another soldier  
wearing his)

Drop your--

Suddenly:

WHAM! AN ARTILLERY SHELL EXPLODES right behind him, knocking him flat with a hammerblow of concussion and debris.

Abrupt silence. We suddenly can't hear a thing. All sounds of the battle are gone, sucked away in a vacuum as:

MILLER

Rises slowly, deeply disoriented and bleeding from a dozen shrapnel cuts, holding the Belgian gate for support. His gaze is blank as a blown fuse, with a look that says: I'm done. No more captain, no more army, no more nothing. Just let me crawl into my basket and stay there.

He looks up. Hundreds of bodies litter the beach before him. Countless wounded are moaning, thrashing, calling for help or "Mommy!" (though we can't hear them).

He sees four men trudging up the beach, two of them pitch forward and fall dead from machine gun fire.

The sand is a carpet of discarded weapons and equipment. A SHERMAN TANK burns furiously, muzzle cocked mutely, greasy black smoke roiling toward the sky.

He sees A GI falling to the sand and firing his weapon in a panic... shooting and killing one of his fellow GI's running in front of him. The soldier, stunned by what he's just done, looks around, looks at Miller, an expression of guilt and horror frozen there forever.

Suddenly a PRIVATE is in front of Miller, blocking Miller's view, staring at him. The kid looks like he's waiting for a reply. So do the THREE PRIVATES sharing cover behind a beach obstacle a few feet away. They're all shivering from the cold water.

SOUND STARTS RETURNING, faint but growing louder as:

MILLER

Huh? You say something?

PRIVATE #1

Yeah! Are you an officer?

Miller shakes his head, trying to get his hearing back, trying to clear the cobwebs:

MILLER

WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

PRIVATE

I SAID, ARE YOU A GODDAMN OFFICER?

Miller has to think about it a moment, finally nods:

MILLER

Yeah!

Beat. The privates trade glances.

PRIVATE #2

Well? What the hell do we do now, sir?

Miller sees there are others out there like him -- hanging on by their fingertips, looking more like shipwreck victims than soldiers, but alive.

SOUND RETURNS COMPLETELY as we hear:

SARGE (O.S.)  
Captain! Captain!

Miller turns, sees Sarge under cover a distance away. He's been shouting all this time.

MILLER  
(to Sarge)  
Take the men off the beach.

PRIVATE #3  
Sir, what's the rallying point?

MILLER  
(pointing toward the  
cliffs)  
Anyplace they can't shoot you!

Miller is pointing about 200 meters up the beach near the base of the German cliffs at the "shingle"--a low seawall of rocks and sand topped with barbed wire. Hundreds of GIs are already up there in ragged groups-- digging foxholes, keeping low, tending wounded.

Miller turns and hollers at a private:

MILLER (CONT'D)  
Soldier.  
(pointing)  
The seawall! The seawall! You see it?

SOLDIER #1  
(hiding behind a Belgian  
Gate)  
I'm stayin'!

Miller shouts to the private and the twenty-five other soldiers huddled behind the Belgian Gates.

MILLER  
Get off this beach! Make room for others!

SOLDIER #2  
This is all we got between us and the  
Almighty!

MILLER  
Every inch of this beach has been  
pre-sighted! You're all dead here!

## STEADICAM WITH MILLER

-- and DOZENS OF MEN seem to emerge from nowhere, following his lead. They're crossing No-Man's-Land in the face of furious enemy fire just like their fathers did a war ago... using shell craters as foxholes... scrambling on hands and knees...leap-frogging positions... using knocked-out tanks for cover...doing some serious broken-field running...grabbing up discarded weapons or helping a wounded friend as they go...

Many are brutally cut down, simply dropping as their legs stop working.

## WOUNDED SOLDIER

(screaming)

Mama! Mama!

Miller makes it to the next obstacle-- tree trunks sticking up out of the sand at thirty-five degree angles. He drops behind one, falling into a pile of terrified young men, several of whom are clutching typewriters and boxes of office supplies.

## MILLER

(aghast at what they're holding)

What are you guys?!?

## YOUNG MAN

61st Medical Battalion, sir! Here to set up field operations!

## MILLER

(re: typewriter)

Get rid of that junk. Pick up a weapon. Come with me!

## MILLER'S POV:

So many of the men are so burdened down with gear and ammunition that they can barely walk. One YOUNG BOY takes off all of his gear and helps another GI take off his. Now down to tank tops and trousers, both men pass...

A GUY WITH A FLAMETHROWER

WHOMP! Small-arms fire hits the flamethrower's cannister and a burst of flames gushes out, engulfing the two running men.

All three, fully immolated now, are mercifully cut down by machine gun fire.

SOLDIER

That's called going to hell in a hurry.

Miller dives behind another Belgian gate, finding Lieutenant Briggs wounded on the sand.

BRIGGS

Get me back! Get me off the beach!

There are several engineers wiring the obstacle Briggs has taken shelter behind with high explosives, wrapping a C-pack around the base of the Belgian Gate. The men work quickly. Miller pushes one of the men away.

MILLER

What are you doing!

ENGINEER

Army engineers, sir! Assigned to blow a path for DD tanks.

MILLER

All the armor is foundering in the Channel! Look around, there are no DD tanks!

ENGINEER

Sorry sir, gotta find another cover. I'm blowing this one.

The Engineer pulls a fuse lighter from his helmet. Miller doesn't argue. He grabs Briggs by his pack harness, starts to drag him.

Running alongside of Miller is a very unusual sight. A soldier...a recent amputee-- is running holding his own arm instead of his rifle. He gets to the shingle, tosses the arm over the seawall, then hurtles himself behind it, screaming "Medic!" the whole way.

On this strange sight, an EXPLOSION throws Miller off his feet. The first thing Miller does is look down at his legs. Sensing he's not wounded, he gets up and starts hauling Briggs by the pack harness again... but Briggs seems lighter. Miller looks back to see he is only carrying half of him.

Suddenly, Sarge grabs Miller, slams into him, propeling him along, both men hobbling the last dozen yards to --

THE SHINGLE

-- where they hurl themselves to the ground, exhausted. Soldiers making it off the beach are likewise tossing themselves to safety up and down the seawall --

but "safety" is a relative term. The Germans are raining MACHINE GUN AND MORTAR FIRE all along this position. The noise is unbelievable. Casualties are mounting and piling up in long rows, packed in tight like cigars. It is hard to tell the dead and wounded from the exhausted. Constant cries of "Medic!" "Aidman!," and "Hey, Medic!"

CLOSE-UPS: Miller sees a lot of faces staring at him. Stripped of gear, huddling under scant cover, many wounded, the soldiers look exactly like what they are -- a bunch of scared kids... some of them weeping out of control.

MILLER

Who's in command here?

SOLDIER #4

You!

That's what Miller was afraid of. He looks to Sarge:

MILLER

You recognize where we are?

SARGE

About a mile from where we're supposed to be?

SOLDIER #5

Nobody's where we're supposed to be!

SOLDIER #6

We're badly intermixed, sir. We got the leftovers from L company, A company, E company, some Navy demolition guys, and beach marking crews.

Miller looks around, seeing a ragged mix of regiments and companies. He spots a RADIOMAN in the chaos, his back to us, yelling into a field phone. Miller scrambles to him, grabs his shoulder, pulls his face into view --

MILLER

ASK ABOUT OUR AIR SUPPORT! TELL 'EM WE  
HAVE NO AIR SUPPORT.

-- the radioman turns away, relaying the message. Miller grabs his shoulder again, brings his face around a second time --

MILLER (CONT'D)  
 AND TELL 'EM NO HEAVY ARMOR IS GETTING  
 ONSHORE! THE C-3 DRAW IS NOT OPEN!! WHERE  
 ARE THE GODDAMN DD TANKS! THEY'RE NOWHERE  
 NEAR THE DRAWS!

-- the radioman turns away, hollering into the phone. Miller  
 grabs him yet a third time --

MILLER (CONT'D)  
 AND TELL 'EM--

-- and pulls him around to find half his face suddenly gone.  
The man pitches lifelessly to the sand.

Miller grabs the radio, but it's bullet-riddled. He  
 belly-crawls back to Sarge. Plunging suddenly into frame as  
bullets rip the seawall is:

REIBEN  
 I want a word with Eisenhower!

SARGE  
 You seen anybody else?

REIBEN  
 Jackson, but that's it!

He points back the way he came. JACKSON is at the seawall.  
 Mellish, sharing cover with Caparzo, hollers over:

MELLISH  
 Here, sir! Mellish.

CAPARZO  
 Caparzo. We got DeForest back there with  
 Wade! D's hurt so bad, Wade says he ain't  
 gonna make it!

MILLER'S POV:

We glimpse WADE, the company medic, through a chaos of smoke  
 and scrambling men. (Wade's older than most, mid-to-late  
 20's. We'll come to know him as steady and soft-spoken.) He's  
 kneeling on the sand over a dying soldier, desperately trying  
 to save the man. It's obviously a losing battle -- the chest  
 wound is bad, and Wade is bloody up to his elbows. But Wade  
 keeps working.

Another soldier passing Wade on the right is shot through the  
 helmet and killed instantly.



Wade hauls the body over along with two others, making human sandbags out of what's left. Wade continues working. The Body takes two more hits. One slug passing through the body and going right into the brain of Wade's patient.

WADE  
(screaming)  
Fucking shit!

At that moment, several hands enter frame and pull Wade away. Wade is dragged up the hill to the shingle.

RESUME MILLER AND SARGE

MILLER  
That's it? That's all that's left?

SARGE  
We got scattered pretty bad, sir. There's bound to be more of us.

MILLER  
Not enough. Not enough.

INCOMING MORTAR ROUNDS POUND THE LINE.

A DOZEN MEN are killed, bodies thrown lifelessly onto the sand. Six or seven bodies falling out of the sky, pinning living men deeper into the sand. Others digging them out. Everybody seems to be SCREAMING for a CORPSMAN. A CORPORAL belly-crawls up to Miller.

CORPORAL  
(frantic)  
What are your orders?

MILLER  
Gather weapons! Whatever we got! Drag 'em in off the sand if you have to!

SARGE  
Where's you B.A.R., Reiben?

REIBEN  
Bottom of the channel, Sarge! Bitch tried to drown me!

SARGE  
Find a replacement!

The word is relayed up and down the line, voices hollering.

VOICES

Weapons!...Weapons! Bring 'em up!

The rumor of a breakout spurs the troops. The fact that any action is being taken has a galvanizing effect. Guns and ammo are gathered, handed along, made ready. Men are even braving the German bullets to dash out and pull weapons in off the sand -- A machine gun here, a bazooka there, M-1's, pistols...

MILLER

Who's got bangalores?

VOICES

(up and down the line)

Bangalore!...Who's got bangers? We're lookin'... We're lookin'... Were lookin'... BANGALORES!

MELLISH and CAPARZO

Are eyeing a .30 caliber machine gun lying about 10 yards out like a pair of hungry dogs eyeing a bone.

MELLISH

You run faster'n I do.

CAPARZO

You're a smaller target.

MELLISH

Forget it.

They both break cover, racing out to grab the weapon...

RESUME MILLER

As someone hands him the Thompson with spare clips. Weapons are coming in from both directions, along with men willing to use them. PVT. BOYLE shows up with a flamethrower still strapped to his back. Miller's impressed:

MILLER

You brought that all the way in?

BOYLE

Not by selection, sir. The buckle is jammed, I can't get the fucking thing off me!

He proves his point by yanking on the buckle. Frozen solid. ANGLE SHIFTS as a PAIR OF ENGINEERS arrive with bangalore torpedoes (long tubes filled with TNT).

## SARGE

Any shit is better than the shit we're in.

The procedure begins: many hands pitch in, attaching the bangalores end-to-end and feeding them out onto the shingle toward the German barbed wire.

We are watching the true miracle of D-Day taking place: when all the planning failed, when all of the calculations proved wrong, when the whole damn thing fell on its ass...it was the common soldier who made it work anyway. They seized the day in dribs and drabs, desperately improvising their way to victory in small rag-tag groups like this one. Men are gearing up, knocking sand out of their weapons, working the bolts, loading ammo.

Mellish and Caparzo are oiling the kinks out of their newly acquired machine gun.

## THE BANGALORE

Inches closer to its mark, nearing the barbed wire.

## MILLER

Is riveted. Wade appears at his side with his medic's pack and M-1, preparing to go. Reiben is loading a B.A.R.

The bangalore is in place. Miller gives the signal. The engineer twists the detonator handle. BOOM! The dust clears, revealing a gap in the barricade.

## SARGE (CONT'D)

THROUGH THE HOLE!

Miller heaves himself onto the seawall and races for the gap, followed by a dozen men.

The German machine guns redirect their fire, tracking the runners. Several men are hit and go down, one body tangling in the barbed wire. The others plunge through the gap --

## SWAMP FLATS/OTHER SIDE OF BARBED WIRE

-- and they're through, racing like crazy across the swamp flats toward the escarpment.

## AT THE SHINGLE

## SOLDIER #7

If I gotta die, it's gonna be goin' uphill.

He lunges over the top and breaks for the wire. That's all it takes -- another two dozen men break cover, following his lead.

#### THE ESCARPMENT

Is a maze of deep-winding furrows caused by erosion. Plenty of room to hide. Especially if you're German.

The GIs start up the slope, sticking to the deepest furrows, using them as natural trenches...working their way uphill...leap-frogging positions and keeping low...pausing briefly to assess the blind turns.

#### REIBENS POV:

Five men turn right on a blind curve inside one of the trenches.

There is a hideous explosion of small-arms fire. Two of the men run back out, bumping into eleven more GI's heading the opposite direction. Reiben stops when he sees the log jam.

Suddenly, four -- eight -- twelve German grenades (potato mashers) start to bombard the log jam. Reiben leaps back, just before a dozen tremendous EXPLOSIONS.

Reiben picks himself up on an elbow. It literally starts to rain red, covering everything in Reiben's general position.

MILLER  
THIS WAY. THIS WAY.

#### MILLER

Runs down a path, three Americans round a corner ahead of him. A PAIR OF EXPLOSIONS. Miller rounds the corner and sees the remains of two G.I.s, just killed by a mine.

THE THIRD G.I. stands frozen, knowing he's in the middle of a mine field.

GERMAN VOICE (O.S.)  
(whistles; then frantically  
calls)  
FRITZ! FRITZ!

A GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG races past Miller, pointedly avoiding the mined path and three others as it races toward the unseen German voice.

Miller watches the dog, catching a glimpse of a wildly relieved German Soldier grabbing his pet in a protective embrace, pulling it to safety around the corner.

Before Miller can react, the same German soldier reappears, FIRES HIS RIFLE, shooting the frozen G.I. in the head, killing him. The DOG BARKS, the German ducks back, gone.

Several Americans bunch up behind Miller, trying to choose the path.

AMERICAN SOLDIER

Mines! Goddamn it!

ANOTHER AMERICAN

Krauts gotta use one of them.

Miller takes off, choosing the path that Fritz the dog just ran...

ANGLE ON: ANOTHER GAP

Following behind Miller, we come to a gap in the path, nothing but 30 or 40 feet of open space to cross on a blind angle. Problem is, you have no idea what is waiting for you until you poke your head out.

The MACHINE GUNS sound close now. We are also hearing the POOF-POOF-POOF of mortars nearby.

Miller motions everybody to wait. He grabs a bayonet and a tiny mirror from an inside pocket. He looks at the men, eyes falling on Mellish, who is chewing gum and watching him with puzzlement. Miller unceremoniously digs the gum out of Mellish's mouth, usess it to affix the mirror to the tip of the bayonet.

He eases the bayonet out, angling it around to see:

REFLECTION IN MIRROR

It's shaky, but effective: about 20 yards up is a SANDBAGGED EMPLACEMENT WITH TWO MACHINE-GUN CREWS blasting away at the beach below. Next to the position are TWO MORTAR TEAMS popping shells at the sky and some ADDITIONAL INFANTRY.

The mirror angles slowly up, giving us the final bit of bad news: Ten yards past the machine guns is a CONCRETE BUNKER with the MUZZLE OF AN 88 looming from the long horizontal firing port. Another shell fires. WHUMP!

MILLER

Pulls the mirror back in.

MILLER

Two 642's, two heavy mortars, over sixty,  
up twenty. 88 in the bunker.

SARGE

We don't got the angle. We don't got the  
angle from where I sit!

(pointing)

There's the perfect firing position, but  
it's the journey of a lifetime!

MILLER

Let's get the draws open! Let's get the  
draws open!

Miller motions to four men huddled near him.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Davis, DeBernardo, Young, Valk. Go!

The four men take an instant to get ready and then scramble up  
the path and disappear over the rise into the gap. Miller and  
his men blast suppressing fire.

Germans pour fire into the unseen gap.

Bad angle for the Americans. No Germans are hit.

The four men don't emerge from the unseen gap. Miller ducks  
out, takes a quick look.

Sees the smoking bodies of the four men. Ducks back as Sarge  
dives into the rocks next to Miller.

SARGE

Good Christ, why not just hand out  
blindfolds? It's a firing squad.

MILLER

Sarge, there's two kinds of people on this  
beach. Those that are dead and those that  
are about to die! We have to get 'em all  
the hell outta here!

Miller turns to the next four men.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Weiss, Stuart, Jezler, Keough, you're  
next.

The second four move to the head of the gap. Miller moves for a better angle against the machine guns. Calls to Jackson, the sharp-shooter.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Jackson! Put some fire on that crew!

JACKSON

Yes, sir.

Miller signals others where to direct the cover fire. Turns to the second four.

MILLER

Go!

The second four take deep breaths, race out, and disappear into the gap.

The Germans pour a river of fire into the unseen gap. Miller and others blast suppressing fire. Jackson nails one of the Germans. Not enough.

No one emerges from the other side. Miller doesn't need to look this time. Miller turns, looking for the next four. His eyes fall on Sarge and Reiben. Reiben smiles.

REIBEN

Captain, can I put in for a transfer?

MILLER

Meet me at the top. We'll start the paperwork. Dickerson, Berger, you, too.

The third four move into place.

Sarge and Miller exchange a look. They both see the madness in what they are doing. Miller and the others open up on the Germans.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Go!

Sarge rolls his eyes, takes a breath, scrambles towards the gap. Disappears, the other three right behind.

The German fire increases. Potato masher grenades bounce down, explode below. A pair of screams. Two bodies fall down the cliff, Dickerson and Berger.

Miller dives to a much more exposed position in the rocks, fires more effective cover. German bullets ricochet around him. He is cut by rock fragments, but not hit directly.

An instant later, Sarge and Reiben come out of the gap and into view, scrambling into the relative safety of the overhang.

The German fire shoots toward the exposed Miller, who curls himself into a tiny ball, trying to make the most of his light cover behind the rocks.

Under the overhang, Sarge and Reiben untangle themselves.

REIBEN

(mantra-like)

I'm not dead, I'm not dead, I'm not dead,  
I'm not dead.

Miller's mind races. Bullets chatter and rip. He notices that Jackson is closest to the outcropping at the other end.

MILLER

Jackson! You ready to get across?

JACKSON

Any time's good, sir!

Miller steps into the open. Events play out in fractions of seconds:

THE GERMAN MACHINE GUNNER

Sees Miller just standing there, a perfect target, swings the machine gun toward him.

MILLER

Stands firm as BULLETS RIP THE GROUND in his direction --

MILLER

GO!

--and Jackson's up and running. Miller throws himself back, barely making it, his boot heel getting BLOWN OFF, as Sarge and the others drag him in.

SARGE

CAPTAIN, IF YOUR MOTHER SAW YOU DO THAT,  
SHE'D BE VERY UPSET!

MILLER

I THOUGHT YOU WERE MY MOTHER.

Jackson makes it across the gap to the outcropping. The German gunner tries to adjust, but he's too late.



The pissed-off gunner KEEPS FIRING, battering the gap with bullets, trying to nail Reiben, trying to nail anything. Reiben is yelling and screaming, everybody's going crazy...

...except Jackson. He's the calm at the center of the storm. He works his rifle bolt, raises the scope to his eye --

RIFLE SCOPE POV

and tries to pin the German gunner in the crosshairs. It's not easy; motion and smoke fill the frame.

JACKSON

(quietly)

Be not thou far from me, O Lord:

JACKSON tries to tune out the noise and fury around him, especially:

REIBEN

GODDAMN IT, ROY! PULL MY ASS OUT OF THIS!  
I'M BEGGING YOU, ROY, OH, JESUS CHRIST...

MILLER

Jackson, do you have a shot?

A pause, everybody holding their breath, waiting for a reply:

JACKSON

Send the next three over!

Jackson squeezes the trigger and--

--the German gunner's head snaps back as the bullet exits the back of his helmet. His partner is stunned, snoves the body aside, grabs the weapon to take over...

The NEXT THREE GIs break from cover, racing across. Reiben scrambles to his feet, sprinting for dear life...

JACKSON

O my strength, haste thee to help me.

Jackson squeezes off another shot, nailing the second German. The man pitches over, the machine gun CHATTERING and then stopping as it pitches off the cliff. The gun falls 25 feet, nailing ONE OF THE GIs in the back of the head, knocking him unconscious. TWO OTHER MEN pull him through the gap.

A third German runs up, shouting to the others.

GERMAN#3  
DIE FLANKE! DIE FLANKE!

And Jackson drops him, too. Three for three.

JACKSON

Amen.

That's it. Without the machine gun, the German flank is wide open. The Americans surge up the gap with a wild cry, storming the German position with everything they've got.

The battle is short and fierce.

MACHINE GUN TEAM #2 frantically tries shifting their gun to the gap, but bullets cut them down. Their supporting infantry scramble over to cover the flank. THE MORTAR TEAMS scatter for their weapons, RETURNING FIRE...

Mellish and Caparzo slam their machine gun down and OPEN FIRE, raking Germans off their feet...

Reiben advances with his B.A.R., blowing HUGE HOLES across the tops of the German sandbags, killing two of the enemy...

Miller and his men swarm the German position. Soldiers on both sides are cut down in the blink of an eye -- but the Germans are flatly overwhelmed.

Pvt. Boyle has the final word -- he hoses the area with his flamethrower, frying anything that still moves... cartridges EXPLODING like fireworks on all the burning bodies. A WALL OF FLAME mushrooms skyward on a column of black smoke.

MILLER

BUNKER!

The GIs keep going, racing for the bunker. RIFLE AND MACHINE GUN FIRE ERUPTS from within, taking down a few men --

-- but Miller and the rest are too fast, slamming into position at the bunker's base. Miller signals for grenades. Pins are popped. The GIs lob the grenades into the bunker through the horizontal firing port above their heads and --

WHAM-WHAM-WHAM! CONCUSSIVE BLASTS leap from the port, trailed by billowing smoke. The GIs jump to their feet, SPRAYING SMALL ARMS FIRE through the bunker port just to make goddamn sure...

...and then it's over. All that's left now is the slow, dazed aftershock of terror and adrenaline. Wade hurries to the aid of a wounded man moaning on the ground.

Miller and the others look around, stunned -- we did it. We're alive. After the beach, it's more than any of them expected. Nobody says anything, because there really aren't words to express the moment. We're here. It's a fact.

Mellish crouches down, picks up a KNIFE that's fallen on the ground. There's a swastika on the handle.

MILLER

It's a Hitler Youth knife.

MELLISH

Not anymore.

Mellish examines it another moment, then tucks it into his belt as a souvenir.

SARGE (O.S.)

Oh my God...

Miller turns, follows Sarge's gaze.

SARGE (CONT'D)

That's quite a view.

ANGLE SHIFTS to reveal the beach below and the ocean beyond. Allied ships crowd the horizon. Closer to shore, everything in the water seems to be shattered and burning. Subsequent waves of landing craft are threading through the carnage and hitting the beach. Troops are still running for the safety of the shingle by the hundreds. Shells are bursting. Fire and smoke is everywhere. It's horrible...mind-boggling ...magnificent.

MILLER

Yes, it is. Quite a view.

EXT. OMAHA BEACH - DAY

CLOSE TRAVELING SHOT. The waves, now gentle, break over the debris that covers the shattered beach. Equipment, weapons and bodies, so many bodies, rolling limply in the sand with each wave.

And among the bodies, one in particular. CAMERA MOVES IN closer and closer and closer. The dead man's face is not visible, but we see his dog-tag...the last name is "Ryan."

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WAR DEPARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The SOUND OF CLATTERING MACHINE-GUN FIRE SEGUES to that of CLATTERING TYPEWRITERS. A huge government building stands in the heart of Washington, D.C.

SUPERIMPOSITION:

"WAR DEPARTMENT      WASHINGTON, D.C.      JUNE 8, 1944"

INT. COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE - WAR DEPT. - DAY

The back of a military CLERK as he types...

CLOSE SHOT OF THE TYPEWRITER

An outgoing telegram. It reads: "We regret to inform you...killed in action...heroic service..."

BEGIN TRACKING TO ANOTHER TYPEWRITER

Typing the same thing: "...killed in action..."

AND STILL ANOTHER TYPEWRITER

Again, the same words: "We regret to..."

AND NOW BEGIN CRANING UP:

To gradually reveal row upon row upon row of somber CLERKS typing out this same horrible message over and over again. There is no small talk. This is the paperwork of death.

A CLERK

Older than the others, sad-eyed, adds a sheet of paper to a large pile in his out-box. He then pulls out a file. Reads. Finds something troubling. Quickly shuffles through some other papers. Finds what he's looking for. Rises from his desk and hurries out of the office.

INT. LIEUTENANT'S OFFICE - WAR DEPT. - DAY

Seen through a glass wall. The clerk speaks to a YOUNG LIEUTENANT who is visibly shaken by what he is being told.

He motions to the clerk to follow and he strides out of the office with the clerk on his heels.

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - WAR DEPT. - DAY

Again, seen through a glass wall. The Young Lieutenant speaks to a YOUNG CAPTAIN who, like the Lieutenant, is clearly bothered by what he's being told. The Captain takes the papers from the Young Lieutenant and strides out.

INT. COLONEL'S OFFICE - WAR DEPT. - DAY

A busy office. Aides and secretaries scurry about. The walls and tables are covered with maps of Normandy and complex deployment charts. A ONE-ARMED COLONEL with a chest full of ribbons pours himself another cup of coffee. He clearly hasn't slept in a long time. The Young Captain, his staff officer, walks in.

YOUNG CAPTAIN

Colonel, I've got something you should know about.

ONE-ARMED COLONEL

Yes?

The Young Captain hands the one-armed Colonel two sheets of paper. The Colonel sits down and looks them over as...

YOUNG CAPTAIN

These two men died in Normandy. One at Omaha Beach, the other at Utah.

ONE-ARMED COLONEL

(reads)

Thomas Ryan. Peter Ryan.

He looks up and now the Captain hands him a third sheet.

YOUNG CAPTAIN

This man was killed last week in Burma.

ONE-ARMED COLONEL

(reads)

Daniel...

(looks up)

Ryan.

YOUNG CAPTAIN

The three men are brothers, sir. I've just learned that this afternoon their mother's getting all three telegrams.

The life drains from the Colonel. Others in the room hear and freeze.

ONE-ARMED COLONEL

Oh, Jesus.

YOUNG CAPTAIN

That's not all. There's a fourth brother.  
The youngest. He parachuted in with the  
Hundred-and-First Airborne the night  
before the invasion. He's on the front.

ONE-ARMED COLONEL

Is he alive?

YOUNG CAPTAIN

We don't know.

The Colonel regains his bearings. He motions curtly to the  
Captain.

ONE-ARMED COLONEL

Come with me.

The Colonel strides from the room with the Captain on his  
heels. The aides and secretaries watch them go.

EXT - FARM COUNTRY - MANSFIELD, OHIO - EARLY MORNING

A black car drives along a dirt road, a cloud of dust rising  
behind. Passing through an endless expanse of ripening corn.  
It turns onto another road marked by a big metal mailbox with  
the name RYAN painted on the side.

EXT. RYAN FARM - IOWA - DAY

A white farmhouse. A barn. A stand of trees. Cornfields as  
far as the eye can see.

IN THE YARD

A tire swing. A bushel basket nailed to the barn over a dirt  
basketball court.

A PORCH SWING

Sits empty. Moves slightly.

A FLAG IN THE WINDOW displays four blue stars, each  
representing a family member in armed service.

MARGARET RYAN

Steps out. Around sixty. Her face shows the lines of a life  
of hard work and motherhood.

She wipes her hands on her apron and looks out across the  
fields. Far in the distance she sees the dust rising behind  
the black car.

She watches the car get closer, then sees it turn towards her house. She starts to grow uneasy.

As the black car approaches, her breath comes hard. She reaches out and steadies herself on the porch post.

The car pulls up to the house. She sees three men get out, one wearing a clerical collar. The first of her tears come.

INT. GENERAL MARSHALL'S OFFICE - WAR DEPARTMENT - DAY

Another busy office filled with aides and secretaries. GENERAL GEORGE MARSHALL, Army Chief of Staff, stands next to his conference table, reading the Ryan brothers' files. Half-a-dozen subordinates, among them the One-Armed Colonel and the Young Captain wait. General Marshall puts down the file.

GENERAL MARSHALL

(softly)

Goddamn it.

ONE-ARMED COLONEL

All four of them were in the same company in the 29th Infantry but we split them up after the Sullivan brothers died on the Juneau.

GENERAL MARSHALL

Any contact with the fourth brother, James?

ONE-ARMED COLONEL

No, sir. He was dropped about fifteen miles inland, near Neuville. That's still deep behind German lines.

General Marshall shakes his head, steps over to his desk and picks up a worn sheet of paper.

GENERAL MARSHALL

I have a letter here...it was written a long time ago to a Mrs. Bixby in Boston...bear with me...

(reading)

Dear Madam: I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle...

The room gradually grows quiet as busy aides and secretaries stop to listen.

GENERAL MARSHALL (CONT'D)

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save...

General Marshall stops reading, continuing from memory.

GENERAL MARSHALL (CONT'D)

I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

(beat)

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,  
Abraham Lincoln.

Silence. The warriors in the room are all deeply moved. General Marshall hardens.

GENERAL MARSHALL (CONT'D)

If that boy is alive, we're going to send someone to find him and get him the hell out of there.

That's just what the General's staff wanted to hear.

EXT. CRATER FIELD - DAY

Explosions in the distance. A convoy moves through the b.g.

SUPERIMPOSITION: **Normandy 1300 hours June 9**

REIBEN (OS)

How harebrained was that, send so many guys fresh off the base into a fuckin hellstorm like that?

We then BOOM DOWN TO REVEAL:

Miller and his men sit inside one of the craters taking a few moments of R&R.



REIBEN

They wanted things to go right, they shoulda sent guys with more experience.

MILLER

Tell me, Rieban, now that you know what it's like, you had to do it again, how'd you think you'd react next time?

REIBEN

Me? I'd shoot myself 'fore I ever got off the damn boat. Was pure luck we made it, the others didn't.

JACKSON

Wasn't luck. Someone on high kept an eye on you.

REIBEN

I'm an atheist, Jackson.

JACKSON

Like they say, "There are no atheists in fox holes."

MILLER

So, if any of you, by some world class fluke, were in Allied High Command, which soldier would you send? The one with experience? Or the one fresh off the base?

They all sit there quietly a moment. Reiben nods, looks at Miller.

REIBEN

I see what you mean. Big battle like that, I guess they'd rather have us more amazed than afraid.

And now the others are thinking about that, too.

MILLER

Longer a soldier's been in the field, better chance his number's gonna come up, or so he's likely to think. Fear's no longer the voice in the next room, it's right there inside your helmet, screaming at you every minute of the day. You can't let that happen.

JACKSON

Any suggestions, sir?

MILLER

Sure. Don't listen to it.

He sees the guys' faces, all solemn nods, thoughtful now.

MILLER

Look at the bright side, you all have experience now.

They look at him. Start nodding, smiling. Feeling better.

MELLISH

That's right. We do.

REIBEN

Which means we can get our asses up to Caen...

SARGE

What's the hurry, Reiban?

REIBEN

Sarge, don't you know what Caen is famous for?

SARGE

Frogs?

REIBEN

Lingerie.

SARGE

Yeah? So?

REIBEN

Just picture some French number been spending all day, every day, making cream-colored, sheer body negligees with gentle-lift silk cups and gathered empire waists, what the hell you think she wears at night.

MILLER

Reiben, how the hell do you know so much about lingerie?

REIBEN

Lingerie is my life, sir. My mother's got a shop in Brooklyn, I grew up in it, from the time I could crawl, we carry Caen lingerie, it's the best there is.

MILLER

There's a war on, good chance they're not still making lingerie in Caen.

REIBEN

Oh, Captain, they'll always make lingerie, it's one of the three basic needs of man -- food, shelter, silk teddies.

CAPARZO

Captain, I've got Command, they want you back at H.Q., right away.

MILLER

Hey. Maybe the war's over.

EXT - REAR AREA/FIELD H.Q. - DAY

Chaos. MEDIUM-DISTANCE EXPLOSIONS RUMBLE. NOTHING CLOSE. Vehicles and men are everywhere.

Miller makes his way over the broken ground to a heavily-damaged German bunker that has been taken over by the Americans for use as an HQ.

INT - FIELD H.Q./GERMAN BUNKER - DAY

Debris and the remnants of the former occupants are tossed in a pile -- twisted re-bar, chunks of cement, a couple of German helmets, a torn Nazi flag. The rest of the bunker complex has been cleaned up fairly well and stands in marked contrast to the chaos outside.

Miller enters, salutes a MAJOR:

MILLER

Miller, C Company, Second Rangers, reporting as ordered.

MAJOR

Go on in, Captain.

Miller goes deeper into the bunker where he finds a DOZEN OFFICERS with as many AIDES, RUNNERS, and RADIOMEN. Very busy. Several of the men in the room note Miller, a few nod to him, respectfully. Miller is a mess -- dirty, unshaven and blood-spattered. Though the uniforms of the other men in the room are not pristine, their trousers do have creases.

COLONEL ANDERSON is in command, talking on a field phone. He sees Miller and motions for him to wait.

ANDERSON

... We expected thirty-two tanks to float to the beach... twenty-seven went underwater... I understand your problem, but if we don't get those dual drive Shermans off-loaded by 0600... we're going to have an entire division at Carentan with its ass hanging out of its pants...

As Miller waits, he looks around the room. He notices a steaming cup of coffee and a half-eaten sandwich. He sees a small pin-up of Betty Grable. His eyes are drawn back to the coffee and the sandwich.

ANDERSON (CONT'D)

...alright, let me know when.

Anderson hangs up and speaks to an AIDE.

ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Have the Second Battalion hold at Vierville until we get those tanks.

AIDE

Yes, sir.

Colonel Anderson motions for Miller to join him at a large map.

ANDERSON

Report.

Miller speaks quickly, methodically and coldly.

MILLER

Sector four is secured. We put out towed eighty-eights here, here and here, they'd already gotten four Shermans and a Stuart.  
(pointing)

These two mine fields, are actually one big one, we tried to go between them, uh, uh...

Colonel Anderson notes the comment and knows it means that Miller took casualties there.

MILLER (CONT'D)

...it's a mixed, high-density field, Sprengmine 44's, Schumine 42's, Pot Mines, the A200's, and some of those little wooden bastards our detectors don't pick up. They also planted some big mushrooms in the road for our tanks, Tellermine 43's, from here all the way to the edge of the village, here. We marked them and called for a clearance crew.

ANDERSON

Resistance?

MILLER

We fought mainly pocket actions. I had higher support expectations. No counter fire though. There was an under-strength company with the artillery, Wehrmacht, 346th Infantry, von Luck Kampfgruppe. We took twenty-three prisoners, turned them over to intelligence.

ANDERSON

Our casualties?

MILLER

Forty-four, twenty-one dead.

An instant of SILENCE, all hear, none look.

MILLER (CONT'D)

They didn't want to give up those eighty-eights, sir.

ANDERSON

It was a hard assignment. That's why you got it.

MILLER

Yes, sir.

ANDERSON

I have another one for you.

MILLER

Sir.

ANDERSON

This one's straight from the top.

EXT - CRATER FIELD - DAY

As Miller approaches Sarge.

MILLER

Put on your traveling shoes, Sarge, we're heading out.

SARGE

Caen?

MILLER

I wish. You and I are taking a squad up to Neuville on a public-relations mission.

SARGE

You? Leading a squad?

MILLER

Some private in the Hundred-and-First lost three brothers, got a ticket home.

SARGE

What about the company?

MILLER

I get the pick of the litter, the rest get folded into Baker.

SARGE

Jesus Christ, they took away your company.

MILLER

It's not my company, it's the army's...so they told me. I want Reiben on B.A.R.; Jackson, Wade, Caparzo, Beasley...

SARGE

Beasley's dead.

MILLER

Okay, Mellish. We got anybody speaks French?

SARGE

Not that I know of.

MILLER

What about Talbot?

SARGE

This morning.

MILLER

Damn. I'll go see if I can find another one. You get the others, meet me at transport.

SARGE

Yes, sir.

EXT - INTELLIGENCE TENT - STAGING AREA - DAY

In a short distance from the beach. A clean, taut-lined tent in the midst of a staging area. Miller strides through the chaos of ROARING VEHICLES, CHATTERING men and mountains of supplies and equipment. He heads into:

INT. INTELLIGENCE TENT - DAY

Three bookish corporals hover over map tables like studious nerds the day before finals. They're gridding maps, covering them in plastic. Tedious, detailed work.

One of them is TIM UPHAM, a thin, twenty-four-year-old patrician with gentle, thoughtful eyes behind his thick glasses. He nervously jumps at the sound of a VERY DISTANT EXPLOSION, then he forces himself to concentrate on his work. Miller strides in.

MILLER

I'm looking for Corporal Upham.

Upham raises his eyes from his map and refocuses.

UPHAM

Sir, I'm Upham.

MILLER

I understand you speak French and German.

UPHAM

Yes, sir.

MILLER

Do you have an accent?

UPHAM

A slight one in French. My German is clean. It has a touch of the Bavarian.

MILLER

Good. You've been reassigned to me. Get your gear, we're going to Neuville.

Upham knows enough geography to know what that means.

UPHAM

Uh, sir, there are Germans at Neuville.

MILLER

That's my understanding.

UPHAM

Lots of them.

MILLER

Do you have a problem with that, Corporal?

UPHAM

Sir, I've never been in combat. I make maps. I translate.

MILLER

I need a translator, both of mine were killed.

UPHAM

But, sir, I haven't fired a gun since basic training.

MILLER

It'll come back to you. Your gear?

Upham hesitates.

UPHAM

Sir, may I bring my typewriter?

Miller looks at him closely, not sure if he's joking.

UPHAM (CONT'D)

I'm writing a book and I...

Miller's expression gives him his answer.

UPHAM (CONT'D)

Uh, how about a pencil?

MILLER

A small one.

Miller shoos him off.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Go, go...

Upham scurries away. Miller sighs.



SARGE, REIBEN, JACKSON, WADE, CAPARZO AND MELLISH

Wait nearby. Reiben is beside himself, pacing, muttering. The others are relaxed.

They see Miller approaching through the chaos, avoiding passing vehicles.

He's trailed by Upham whose clothes and gear are pristine.

CAPARZO

(re: Upham)

What's that?

SARGE

I think it's a translator.

Caparzo shakes his head at the thought. Reiben hurries up to Miller, pleading.

REIBEN

Captain, I been thinking this whole thing over, and it seems to me you need a really top-notch B.A.R. man on a mission like this...

MILLER

You are top-notch.

Miller jerks his head for his men to follow as he strides toward the Transport Operations table. Reiben scurries alongside Miller.

REIBEN

...no, I'm not, sir, not really. Morgan's much better, I think you should make him volunteer for this, you know, so as to maximize your chances for success, plus he's Irish, so he speaks the lingo...

MILLER

Reiben, forget about the lingerie.

REIBEN

That's like telling an Arab he can't go to Mecca, you see what I'm saying, sir?

MILLER

Come talk to me when you're an Arab. Any other questions?

REIBEN

Yes, sir. What idiot thought this one up?

MILLER  
(deadpan)  
Eisenhower.

REIBEN  
(falling back)  
Him? Again? I'm beginning not to trust  
this Eisenhower so much!

MELLISH  
Me neither. Ever notice how German that  
name sounds? "Eisenhower?" Think about  
it...

EXT - TRANSPORT OPERATIONS TABLE - DAY

Just in from the beach. DISTANT ARTILLERY AND EXPLOSIONS.  
Nothing close. Dust. Confusion. Vehicles THUNDERING by. An  
endless parade of VEHICLES being offloaded from LCTs -- DUKWs,  
tanks, troop carriers, you name it. Tanks, half-tracks, troop  
trucks. In the middle of the mess, a cigar-chewing MOTOR  
SERGEANT works at a make-shift desk made out of a crate. He  
yells at a PRIVATE.

SERGEANT  
GET THOSE GODDAMNED HALF-TRACKS OUT OF  
THERE!

PRIVATE  
They're blocked in!

SERGEANT  
THEN UNBLOCK 'EM!

Miller steps up to him.

MILLER  
Sergeant, I need a truck.

SERGEANT  
Sorry, sir, fresh out of trucks. How 'bout  
a '38 Ford Roadster, hard-top, red with  
black interior.

MILLER  
White-walls?

SERGEANT  
No, white-walls, sir, there's a war on.  
(to the Private)  
NOT THERE, YOU GODDAMNED IDIOT, OVER  
THERE!

(to Miller)  
I can't help you, sir.

MILLER  
A half-track, anything.

SERGEANT  
Sorry, sir. Division is using everything  
on wheels to get up to Caen.  
(notices Miller's shoulder  
patch)  
How come you guys aren't going?

Miller ignores the question. He spies an M3 SCOUT CAR.

MILLER  
What about that M3?

SERGEANT  
Beauty, huh? That's General Craig's. His  
lap dog told me if anyone breathes on it  
I'll get busted and if anyone touches it  
I'll get court martialed. If you were to  
take it, he'd shoot me.

JACKSON  
Cap'n, does that mean we got to walk all  
the way up to Noo-ville?

UPHAM  
(correcting pronunciation)  
Neuville.

Jackson shoots a glare at Upham.

JACKSON  
Huh, Cap'n?

SERGEANT  
What's at Neuville, besides a lot of  
Germans?

MILLER  
A paratrooper named Ryan. He's going home  
if he's alive.

SERGEANT  
Senator's son?

MILLER  
No, three brothers of his were killed in  
action. Command wants him out of there.

The Sergeant grunts as if punched in the belly.

SERGEANT

Damn...I got a couple brothers...

Miller looks at him, noting his reaction coldly. The Sergeant shifts his eyes toward General Craig's scout car. Then...

SERGEANT

You know, now that I think about it, I've been waiting on the General for the last few hours, but it's likely we won't see a General until at least D plus 5.

The Sergeant looks at Miller a moment, then gets to his feet.

SERGEANT

Y'all will pardon me, I've gotta hit the latrine. I'll be back in say...

He looks at Miller.

MILLER

Five minutes.

SERGEANT

Good luck.

He walks away. And now Miller looks off at:

THE GENERAL'S TWO STAR INSIGNIA PLATE

Beat. A bootheel SLAMS into frame and kicks the plate off. ANGLE WIDENS as Miller and his men pile into the scout car. With Sarge at the wheel, they drive off.

THE MOTOR SERGEANT

Is walking up just as they go. Behind him, GENERAL CRAIG, pure piss and vinegar, strides up, trailed by his staff. He looks around for his M3 and comes up empty.

GENERAL CRAIG

SERGEANT, WHERE THE HELL IS MY COMMAND VEHICLE!?

The Motor Sergeant puffs his cigar, smiles and turns to take his lumps.

EXT - ROAD - OMAHA BEACH TABLEAU - DAY

As Miller and his men drive off in the scout car the CAMERA CRANES UP to reveal the vast tableau of the biggest invasion in military history.

The scope of the operation is stunning. The beach is covered with mountains of supplies, arriving troops, streams of vehicles winding up the dunes. Barrage balloons hover over the entire scene. Off-shore, a massive Mulberry port is under construction, workers swarming over it like ants. Beyond that, thousands of ships and boats of every type and description. EXPLOSIONS RUMBLE, some distant, some closer.

It's an awesome, breathtaking sight. Miller and his tiny band of men, weave their way, speeding away from the beach, heading inland, leaving the bulk of the American Army behind.

EXT - FRENCH COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Miller and his men in the scout car. Sarge drives fast, passing American vehicles and infantrymen moving forward. The sides of the road are littered with the debris of burning German and American vehicles, abandoned equipment, and bodies carefully laid out and covered.

Miller, riding shotgun, reads a map. Upham, cradling a pristine M-1 rifle, is all eyes and ears. Caparzo, Jackson, Wade and Mellish calmly take in the view. Reiben eyes the close quarters.

REIBEN

Captain, can I ask you a question?

MILLER

Sure, Reiben.

REIBEN

Where are you planning on putting Private Ryan, sir?

Miller doesn't raise his eyes from the map.

REIBEN (CONT'D)

It's just that it's kind of crowded back here. I was wondering if you're expecting to have more room on the way back.

Miller points out a turn to Sarge.

MILLER

Left.

Sarge makes the turn.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Now we've got a straight shot, eleven miles to Neuville. We'll take the car as far as we can, then go on on foot.

SARGE

We in radio contact with anybody up there?

MILLER

Their SCR 300's are more screwed up than ours, somebody put in the wrong crystals, we're going in blind.

UPHAM

Shouldn't we really have a tank?

Reiben gives him a look.

SARGE

What's likely to be there?

MILLER

Three Kraut divisions, 709th, 352nd and the 91st...

SARGE

(shrugs)

Eh.

MILLER

...and a flood of reinforcements, including my personal favorites, the 1057th and the 1058th Panzers.

SARGE

Oh, shit.

UPHAM

Because it seems to me a tank would be more appropriate...

MILLER

Our drops were completely fouled up, no one's where they're supposed to be, we've got little mixed units all over the place, trying to hang on, heavy casualties. Even if Ryan's where he's supposed to be, good chance he's dead.

SARGE

Hell of a mission.

MILLER

Yep, hell of a mission.

UPHAM

I really think a tank would've been more appropriate.

Upham notices Reiben staring at him, grows nervous under his look and offers a hopeful smile.

UPHAM

So, uh, you're all Rangers?

Reiben, Jackson and Caparzo look at Upham as if he were an insect.

UPHAM (CONT'D)

I'm Upham. Corporal Upham.

(beat)

You don't have to salute or anything. I know all that breaks down in combat.

Mellish turns around, nails him with a ferrety gaze.

MELLISH

There's only one reason you're along for this ride, Upham.

UPHAM

To translate?

MELLISH

As food, in case we get lost.

MILLER

I don't want anybody eating him. He speaks French and his German has a touch of the Bavarian.

They shrug. Upham retreats. No one notices.

CAPARZO

Captain, where's this Ryan come from anyway?

MILLER

Iowa.

REIBEN

Iowa? Great. Just what the world needs, another farm boy. It's not enough, it's fucking raining farm boys back home, we have to risk our necks, go save another one.

CAPARZO

Another one like Gleason, asshole in Baker Company, one's always picking fights, spitting indoors. I'm pretty sure he's from Iowa.

MILLER

I have it on good authority that this Private Ryan is a top-notch grade-A number-one kind of kid.

REIBEN

Oh, yeah, sir?

MILLER

(hesitates)

Alright, I'm going to tell you all something you're not supposed to know.

The men eye Miller.

MILLER (CONT'D)

I saw Ryan's service record. It included his high school report cards. He got an A-plus in tenth grade civics and he won the school-wide, Good Citizenship Award.

(beat)

Two years in a row.

Reiben is silent for a moment, playing it straight.

REIBEN

Eagle Scout, sir?

MILLER

Yep.

Reiben sighs.

REIBEN

This is nuts, I should be on my way to Caen.

MILLER

Come on, Reiben, there's gotta be a bright side, look for it.



REIBEN

Sir, you know what Neuville is famous for?  
Cheese. Everybody else is going to Caen  
and we're going to the goddamned cheese  
capital of France. There is no bright  
side.

MILLER

There's always a bright side.

REIBEN

I'm listening, sir.

MILLER

Well, I, for one, like cheese.

THEY ROUND A TURN

Skid to a stop at a:

BOTTLENECK OF AMERICAN VEHICLES

AN M.P. is roadmaster. Miller calls to him.

MILLER

How's the road to Neuville?

M.P.

Bad, sir, eighty-eights knocking the hell  
out of our traffic.

Miller looks to Sarge. They have no choice.

MILLER

Let us through?

The M.P. holds up traffic, waving them through.

EXT - ROAD TO NEUVILLE - DAY

The scout car barrels down the road, fast. The road is  
pock-marked with craters. They pass the wreckage of a pair of  
American jeeps. Direct hits. Sarge swerves around them  
without slowing.

AN AMERICAN TROOP TRUCK SMOLDERS

On the side of the road, surrounded by the charred bodies of a  
dozen American troops. It's a nightmare vision. Upham grows  
weak at the sight.

UPHAM

Like I said, a tank-

MILLER

Shhh.

Miller, scanning the nearby hills, notes Upham's reaction, then goes back to searching for the source of the 88 shell that destroyed the truck.

SARGE

You get a line on it?

MILLER

No. Speed it up, will you?

Sarge drives faster.

IN THE BACK

The men bounce up and down like stuffed animals, doing their best not to be thrown out.

CAPARZO

Hell, this is better than Coney Island!

A HUGE BUMP

Bounces Reiben up and slams him back down on his entrenching tool. He HOLLERS IN PAIN.

MILLER

(without taking his eyes  
from the horizon)

Just trying to make room for Ryan.

Reiben shoots Miller a smile and shifts his entrenching tool from under his bruised ass.

THEY ROUND A BEND

See a long, straight stretch of road. Half-a-dozen obliterated American vehicles. A gauntlet to run. As they speed down the road, all eyes, except Upham's, very nervously scan the surrounding hills.

MELLISH

Captain, something just occurred to me.

MILLER

What's that?

MELLISH

We're now the front. We go a foot, the front goes with us, is that not correct, sir?

MILLER

That's correct. Everybody else is now behind us.

The other men let this sink in a moment, then...

MELLISH

And, of course, by everybody, you mean the other one hundred and fifty thousand guys with the four thousand armored vehicles, ammo and food. That's the everybody you're talking about, right sir?

MILLER

That's correct.

MELLISH

Just checking, sir.

AN EIGHTY-EIGHT SHELL SCREAMS IN

Lands right behind them. BLOWS A NEW CRATER.

MILLER

(sweetly)

Sarge?

SARGE FLOORS IT. Everyone hangs on.

ANOTHER SHELL EXPLODES

Thirty yards ahead of them.

MILLER

Notes a wooded hillside about three-quarters of a mile away.

SARGE

You got him?

MILLER

Yeah. Road's zeroed.

He directs Sarge off the road.

SARGE

Yanks the wheel.

## THE SCOUT CAR BOUNCES

Off the shoulder, nearly throwing everyone out. Somehow they hang on. The scout car tears along the rutted field.

## ANOTHER EXPLOSION

Just behind them.

## SARGE DRIVES MADLY

Not slowing down. Trying to avoid the biggest ruts and bumps.

## ANOTHER EXPLOSION

Close on their side. Showers them with debris.

SARGE

Jesus Christ!

## ANOTHER EXPLOSION

Even closer. The scout car's PEPPERED WITH DEBRIS.

MILLER

S-curves, Sarge.

SARGE

Turns shallow curves without slowing down.

## SUDDENLY SEES A DITCH

Tries to avoid it. Too late. Brakes. PLOWS IN. STOPS SHORT.

REIBEN, UPHAM, WADE

THROWN from the scout car. TUMBLE into the dirt. Not hurt.

## THE OTHERS

Hang on. Stay in the scout car. Are battered. All stunned.

MILLER

Is the first to regain his bearings. Jumps out. Checks the scout car. Undamaged. Deep in the soft dirt.

AN EIGHTY-EIGHT SHELL SCREAMS IN

EXPLODES THIRTY YARDS LEFT

MILLER (CONT'D)

Sarge! Reverse!

Sarge puts his head back on and throws the scout car into gear. The wheels spin. Miller throws his shoulder into the scout car. Yells to the others.

MILLER (CONT'D)

COME ON! YOU WANNA WALK?

STILL DAZED

The others screw their heads back on. Shoulder into the scout car. Push for all they're worth. The WHEELS STILL SPIN.

ANOTHER EIGHTY-EIGHT SHELL LANDS. EXPLODES THIRTY YARDS RIGHT.

MILLER IGNORES IT.

He's the only one who does.

SARGE

Captain, they got us bracketed.

Upham is very nervous.

UPHAM

I know about bracketing. I read about it.

They all ignore him.

UPHAM (CONT'D)

The next one's gonna hit us.

MILLER

FORWARD! FORWARD!

(beat)

NOW REVERSE!

Sarge SLAMS THE SCOUT CAR INTO REVERSE. Rocks it. SLAMS IT BACK INTO FORWARD. Makes progress.

ALL THE MEN PUSH, ALL EYES UP. WAITING FOR THE NEXT SHELL.

SARGE

Uh, Captain...

MILLER

PUSH!

SARGE

Uh, Captain...

THE TIRES SCREAM

A bit more progress. It's almost out.

WADE GRABS THE MEDICAL PACK out of the car, holds it tightly.

THE OTHERS PUSH, knowing the shell is coming any second.  
Upham is beside himself.

SARGE (CONT'D)

(sweetly)

Oh, Captain...

ONE MORE PUSH

The scout car rocks back in, deeper.

MILLER

SHIT!

THEY HEAR THE SCREAM OF THE SHELL

MILLER BARKS TO HIS MEN

MILLER (CONT'D)

GO!

Everybody grabs what they can and scatters away from the jeep,  
hauling ass and gaining precious yards, hitting the dirt as:WHAM! Direct hit. A STUNNING BLAST. The jeep cartwheels thirty  
feet in the air and SLAMS BACK DOWN AGAIN in a flaming heap.

THE MEN

Barely out of the BLAST PERIMETER. STUNNED by the concussion.  
SHOWERED with dirt, rock, debris. They raise their heads.

CAPARZO

Well...at least the jeep's out of the  
ditch.

Suddenly we hear: POOF-POOF-POOF-POOF.

MILLER

HERE COME THE MORTARS!

THEY ALL TAKE OFF

Running as fast as they can. LOTS OF MORTARS firing. The eight men run madly through the gauntlet of MORTAR EXPLOSIONS.

BOOM

RUNNING, STUMBLING.

BOOM.. BOOM. BOOM.

UPHAM IS THROWN TO THE GROUND.

Miller yanks him. Half-drags him to the edge of the field.

THEY MAKE IT TO THE TREES

-- where they go crashing through branches, finally collapsing to safety about thirty yards in. The mortars have stopped. The men are completely used up, struggling to catch their breath.

SARGE

Sound off if anybody's hit.

(looks around)

Anybody?

UPHAM

(touching his nose)

I got a little nosebleed here...

...but that's it. They look around, amazement slowly dawning, fear and adrenalin draining away. Nobody's hit. Softly:

WADE

It's a miracle.

Nobody laughs. Only Wade can say something like that and get away with it -- besides, they know he's right.

WADE (CONT'D)

We've got an angel on our shoulder. Maybe this Ryan's good luck for us.

REIBEN

Let's not get carried away. He did get our jeep blown up.

Panting. Struggling to catch their breath. Check their body parts. Everything's there. They have their weapons but have lost a lot of gear.

Reiben looks back through the trees at THE SCOUT CAR, which is nothing more than a smoldering, shattered carcass. He shakes his head.

REIBEN (CONT'D)

General Craig is going to be very upset with you, Captain.

Miller checks his men, gives himself a second to get oriented, then jerks his head for his men to follow.

MILLER

Let's move out.

The men hesitate.

SARGE

Sir, aren't we going to go take care of those eighty-eights?

MILLER

That's not what we're here for.

JACKSON

Wouldn't take us but a minute, sir.

MILLER

We have our orders. Let's go.

Miller heads off without pausing or looking back. The men don't like it, but they follow.

EXT. HEDGEROW CART ROAD - DAY

Miller walks point. His men follow warily. It's hot. They're exhausted. Upham looks miserable, weighed down like a pack horse with all the B.A.R. ammunition, slapping at horseflies. They talk quietly, their eyes scanning.

JACKSON

(shifts his load)

Grant me strength, Lord.

REIBEN

If we find Ryan and he's still alive, that son-of-a-bitch is going to carry this B.A.R. all the way back to the beach for me.

WADE

What are you griping about, Reiben? Mellish is ABAR, he's got your heavy stuff, you don't hear him complaining.

REIBEN

That's 'cause Mellish is strong as an ox and twice as smart.



MELLISH

(flips him off)

Up yours, Reiben.

REIBEN

Up mine? Up Ryan's. Eagle Scout, my ass. Only merit badge the guy ever got was for givin' the clap to the family cow.

They come to A BREAK IN THE HEDGEROW. A small brush-lined stream. Good cover.

REIBEN

This goes against everything the army taught me. Makes no sense--

Miller signals, stop.

MILLER

Break. Jackson, Caparzo, here, here, cover.

They all head to the stream. Jackson and Caparzo set a close perimeter defense. The others fill canteens, piss, rest.

MILLER

What doesn't make sense, Reiben?

All the men look at Reiben now.

REIBEN

The math, sir. Of this mission. Maybe you could explain it to me.

MILLER

Sure, Reiben, what do you want to know?

REIBEN

Well, sir, in purely arithmetic terms, what's the sense in risking eight guys to save one?

MILLER

Anybody want to answer that?

WADE

Jesus, Reiben, think of the poor bastard's mother.

MILLER

Very good, Wade.

REIBEN

Hey, I got a mother. We all have mothers, Wade, Sarge, Corporal Insect. Captain, I'll bet even you have a mother.

Miller smiles. Reiben eyes him and reconsiders.

REIBEN (CONT'D)

Well, the rest of us have mothers.

UPHAM

Theirs not to reason why. / Theirs but to do and die.

They all look at Upham a moment.

MELLISH

You just make that up, book boy?

UPHAM

(shakes his head)

Yeah, I just made that up.

MELLISH

What the hell's it mean? We're all supposed to die?

UPHAM

Never mind.

MILLER

Upham's talking about Duty. He's saying that you've got orders. And that supercedes everything, including your mother. Even if you think the orders are stupid.

JACKSON

Sir, I have an opinion on this matter.

MILLER

By all means. Let's hear it.

JACKSON

Seems to me, Cap'n, this mission is a serious misallocation of valuable resources.

MILLER

Go on.

JACKSON

Well, sir, seems to me, God gave me a special gift, made me a fine instrument of warfare. What I mean by that is, if you was to put me with this here sniper rifle anywhere up to and including one mile from Adolf Hitler, with a clear line of sight, war's over. Amen.

MILLER

Reiben, pay attention. This is the way to gripe. Jackson, continue.

JACKSON

Yes, sir. It seems to me, sir, that the entire resources of the United States Army oughta be dedicated to one thing and one thing only, and that is to put me and this here weapon on a rooftop, smack-dab in the middle of Berlin, Germany.

REIBEN

What about you, Captain?

Miller looks at Reiben, shocked.

MILLER

Reiben, what's the matter with you? I don't gripe to you. I'm a captain. There's a chain of command. Griping goes one way, up, only up, never down. You gripe to me, I gripe to my superior officers. Up, get it? I don't gripe to you, I don't gripe in front of you. How long have you been in the army.

REIBEN

I'm sorry, sir, I apologize.

(beat)

But if you weren't a captain, or if I were a major, what would you say?

MILLER

(considers)

In that case, I would say this is an excellent mission, with an extremely valuable objective, worthy of my best efforts.

Reiben rolls his eyes. Miller plays it straight, with no obvious sarcasm.

MILLER (CONT'D)

In addition, as I pointed out earlier, I have a fondness for cheese and I hope to have the opportunity to sample some of the Neuville products, when we arrive there, to see if they live up to their excellent reputation. Moreover, I feel heartfelt sorrow for the mother of Private James Ryan and I'm more than willing to lay down my life, and the lives of my men, especially you, Reiben, to help relieve her suffering.

The men thoroughly enjoy the performance.

MILLER

Let's move out.

The men get to their feet with more energy than they ought to have.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Miller still walks point, his men following. Upham falls in alongside Caparzo, still trying to break the ice:

UPHAM

So? Where you from?

CAPARZO

Get stuffed.

So much for Caparzo. Upham turns to Reiben.

UPHAM

You?

REIBEN

Drop dead. And another thing, Up-Ham. Every time you salute the Captain, it makes him a target for the enemy. So knock it off. Especially when I'm standing next to him.

Okay, fine. Upham falls silent. Mellish is staring at him.

MELLISH

You writing a book, book boy?

UPHAM

As a matter of fact, yes.

MELLISH

Name's Mellish. Stanley Mellish, of the Chicago Mellishes. I'm gaunt and wiry, with piercing, steel-gray eyes and chiseled, darkly handsome features... don't you take notes?

WADE

What's your book about, Corporal?

UPHAM

I don't know. It was going to be about the bonds of brotherhood that develop between soldiers in war, but now I'm not so sure.

REIBEN

Why don't you go ask the Captain where he's from?

The other men snicker.

MELLISH

That's a great idea. Ask the Captain.

Upham looks to Miller who's ahead, out of earshot.

UPHAM

(wary)

All right, I'll play along. Where's the Captain from?

CAPARZO

You figure that out, you got yourself one nice prize.

JACKSON

Over three hundred bucks, last I heard.

WADE

Company's got a pool, five bucks gets you in, whoever guesses where the Captain's from and what he did as a civilian gets it all.

UPHAM

Somebody must know where he's from and what he did for a living.

SARGE

Somebody probably does.

UPHAM

Why don't you just ask him?

JACKSON

The Captain prefers not to discuss certain aspects of his life, in particular, everything up to and including his enlistment in the United States Army.

SARGE

I've been with him since Kasserine Pass. I'm closer to him than I am to my own brother but I don't even know what state he's from. Somewhere in the Northeast as near as I can figure. I don't even have a clue what he did for a living.

Reiben shakes his head.

REIBEN

No one's gonna win that money for the simple reason that the Captain never was a civilian. They assembled him at O.C.S. out of spare body parts from dead GIs. I know this for a fact.

JACKSON

You got something against the Cap'n?

REIBEN

Hell, no. I think he's the best officer in the army.

For once, Reiben isn't bullshitting. They all nod in assent.

JACKSON

You got that right.

Upham watches Miller with even more curiosity.

EXT - NEUVILLE - DAY

A small town, mostly reduced to rubble. WE HEAR sporadic SMALL-ARMS FIRE, grenade and mortar EXPLOSIONS, some MEDIUM ARTILLERY in the hills. AMERICAN PARATROOPERS with the 101st crouch in doorways and hunker down in the rubble, exchanging GUNFIRE with an unseen German force. It's a sniper's alley.

Some FRENCH CIVILIANS dash across the street -- a MAN, a couple of WOMEN, several CHILDREN. They make it across, disappearing into the remains of a building.

ANGLE ON MILLER

As he enters frame f.g., flattening against a wall near a corner, his men closing ranks behind him. Miller pokes his head out, takes a quick mental snapshot (U.S. troops, gunfire, ruined buildings beyond) pulls back. SMACK! -- a bullet takes a chunk out of the brick near his head. Miller yells out:

MILLER

Thunder!

A PAUSE, THEN:

VOICE (O.S.)

Flash! Come on across!

Miller takes a moment, then takes off. GERMAN BULLETS BLAST, kicking up the cobblestones behind him. Miller zig-zags and makes it to the cover of the far side.

Upham watches. Jackson sees his expression.

JACKSON

It's okay, they can't kill him.

SARGE

Like hell, they can't.

REIBEN

Jackson's right, it's some kind of scientific, magnetic thing. I can't explain it, but I've seen it.

CAPARZO

We all have, he's got nine lives or he's bulletproof, or some damn thing.

The men are equal parts joking and admiring. Sarge is neither.

SARGE

No one's bulletproof. No one.

MILLER

Ducks out of a doorway, crouch-runs down the block, makes it to:

AN ALLEY

TEN PARATROOPERS are bunched there in the rubble, just out of the line of fire. They're dirty, battered and exhausted. Among them are PRIVATES GOLDMAN AND HASTINGS.

Miller sees that four of the paratroopers are wounded and calls back down the block.

MILLER

Wade!

GOLDMAN

You guys are a sight for sore eyes!

HASTINGS

Sergeant Hill, our relief showed up.

SERGEANT HILL scurries over.

SGT. HILL

How many are you?

Wade ducks into the alley and quickly starts treating the wounded. The rest of Miller's men arrive as the scene plays.

MILLER

Just eight of us, we're not relief.  
Sorry.

SGT. HILL

No? What do you mean, sir?

MILLER

We're looking for a Private James Ryan.

GOLDMAN

Huh?

SGT. HILL

Ryan? What for?

Miller ignores the question.

MILLER

Is he here?

SGT. HILL

Maybe in a mixed unit on the other side of town.

SGT. HILL

Hard to get to, Germans punched a hole in our center a few hours ago, cut us in two. What's his name again?

MILLER

James Ryan. Private. Dropped in with the 101st.



SGT. HILL  
(back over his shoulder)  
Runner forward!

A YOUNG PRIVATE wearing no gear comes forward.

SGT. HILL (CONT'D)  
Locate Captain Hammil. There's a  
retraction squad here looking for Private  
Ryan, James, probably a misdrop from the  
One-O-One.

The runner looks over the low wall and around the corner...  
and takes off.

ANGLE: MILLER'S MEN

All of them get in better positions to watch the runner.

SGT. HILL (CONT'D)  
(to Miller's men)  
The streets have been quiet for a couple  
of hours. The Germans aren't bothering us  
here as much as over there.

The men wait.

ANGLE: THE RUNNER

He's a smaller figure now, ducking behind walls, quickly  
crossing streets.

Just as he is about to round the corner, what SOUNDS like  
popcorn popping. Dirt explodes up around him in the street  
and he goes down on one leg.

Sergeant Hill and the rest of the men pour in suppressing fire.  
But they don't quite know where to shoot because the shots are  
coming from around a blind corner.

SGT. HILL (CONT'D)  
Hold your fire.

ANGLE: THE RUNNER

He's trying to crawl for cover. More sounds of popcorn  
exploding. More dust hits around him.

Suddenly, he is lying very still. Pause. Then... more sounds  
of innocuous popcorn. More dust hits. The Runner's body is  
shaken with multiple hits.

Mellish stands up.

MELLISH  
(stand up screaming)  
The sadistic fucking animals.

ANGLE: THE RUNNER

He's clearly dead. But the popcorn sounds continue. The body is being hit dozens of times.

SGT. HILL  
They know we're not in direct contact.  
They're going to single out the runners.

MELLISH  
(yelling)  
Why do they keep shooting him up!?!

MILLER  
As long as there's breath in him... he  
still has the message.

Miller notes the rage and fear on all the men's faces.

MILLER (CONT'D)  
Our side does the same thing.

That gets the men's attention.

MILLER (CONT'D)  
(re: wounded men)  
Wade, get 'em ready to travel.

SGT. HILL  
Boyd, try again, see if you can let  
Captain Hamill know we're coming.

BOYD, with a SCR 536 walkie-talkie, searches for something other than static.

Miller steps to the mouth of the alley and eyes the street.  
Sgt. Hill steps up next to him.

SGT. HILL (CONT'D)  
We'll backtrack two blocks, then right,  
get those buildings between us and  
wherever that insulating fire is coming  
from.

SGT. HILL

Next block's got two story buildings, both sides of the street, lot of windows, then a wide open square with pretty good cover on the left.

MILLER

Sounds, okay. Four men up. Two of mine, two of yours.

Sgt. Hill shoots a quick glance at Miller, appraising him. He seems to know what he's doing. Sgt. Hill nods.

SGT. HILL

Hastings, Goldman, up front.

MILLER

Reiben, Caparzo.

Boyd, with the walkie-talkie, shakes his head.

BOYD

They're still jamming us.

The four men move up to take the lead. The others get ready, helping the wounded to their feet.

MILLER

Reiben, Mellish. Fundamentals, short runs, double up at the corners, one man close, one man wide.

(fixes his bayonet to his rifle)

Prepare for close contact.

CLOSE: REIBEN

Staring at the fallen, shattered Runner... not saying much of anything.

ANOTHER ANGLE:

They take off, scurrying/crouching/darting through the rubble, those at the rear helping the wounded along, making their way up the street. They leap-frog positions, hug doorways for cover, scan windows and rooftops for snipers...

It's incredibly tense, boots scuffing over cobblestones, figures darting this way and that, looks traded and acknowledged, signals given -- I think we're clear till there, let's go, keep moving, you next...

They come to a house where an entire wall has collapsed and fallen away. Three entire stories of rooms are visible and intact, the furniture still in place.

They hear something CREAK above. Everybody drops into a crouch, weapons snapping up, ready to open fire.

SGT. HILL

Thunder!

Beat. Nothing.

MILLER

Thunder, goddamn it, or we open fire!

MAN (O.S.)

Ne tirez pas! On est francais.

UPHAM

They're civilians!

SARGE

Yeah? Let's see 'em!

UPHAM

Montrez-vous!

A MAN appears above, peering down from a second story living room. He's French, all right -- so is his WIFE and MOTHER-IN-LAW. All appear with hands raised, talking at once:

FRENCH FAMILY

Ne tirez pas! On est pas des soldats et on est pas arnes. Baissez vos fusils, nous sommes vos amis!

MILLER

Stop jabbering! One at a time!

(to Upham)

Ask them where the Germans are.

UPHAM

Ou sont les allemands?

MAN

Ca va pas! Ils sont partout, vous devez emmener les enfants!

MILLER

What? What's he saying?

UPHAM

I don't know, something about taking the children?

The French pull THREE SMALL CHILDREN into view. The father takes the first one by the wrist, a little girl, and dangles her over the side. She starts CRYING as he tries to hand her down, everybody talking at once:

MAN

Je vous la passe!

UPHAM

They want us to take them--

MILLER

--wait, no, tell them we can't take children--

UPHAM

--nous ne pouvons pas les prendre avec nous!

-- but the man drops the girl down. A PARATROOPER catches her.

Then the French man drops ANOTHER CHILD, a boy about five, confused, scared, letting the grown-ups pick him up and sort out the confusion.

The French woman grabs the other kid who's starting to cry.

There are now two French kids down with the American. Miller's pissed, losing control of the situation.

LITTLE BOY

Je veux pas y aller!

WIFE

Tu dois! Vous serez en securite avec les americains!

UPHAM

They think they'll be safe with us.

MILLER

It's not safe anywhere, goddamn it, tell 'em it's not safe...

UPHAM

Ils ne seront pas en securite avec nous, vous ne comprenez pas, on ne peut pas les emmener!

MILLER

Goddamn it, that one first, back up!  
Caparzo, grab her!

Caparzo picks up the sobbing little girl, lifts her. He's short of the task, so he climbs up on a fall of rubble to gain some height. The French are crying, calling down, begging the soldiers to take the kids.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Tell 'em again! Make 'em understand!

UPHAM

Vous devez comprend que les enfants seront  
plus en securite ici!

Caparzo hoists the little girl up. The father is weeping as he reaches down, almost gets a firm grip on her wrist ----

and at that moment a high-powered SNIPER'S BULLET WHINES IN and blows through Caparzo in a spray of blood. He flies off his feet and slams onto the cobblestones.

The girl falls, unhurt but terrified and confused. The SOUND OF THE GUNSHOT comes an instant later.

The girl and her little brother stand paralyzed in the open. Everyone's yelling at once, the Americans and their parents.

CAPARZO

I'M HIT! I'M HIT!

Wade and Upham break cover, Wade to help Caparzo, Upham to grab the kids.

MELLISH

CAPARZO!

CAPARZO

OH GOD, I'M SHOT!

Sarge grabs Wade and pulls him back to cover. Miller grabs Upham by the back of the collar and yanks him back roughly, choking him. Upham gags.

ANOTHER SHOT HITS just where Upham would have been.

The two children stand frozen. Nothing happens. They're not targets.

SARGE

STAY DOWN!

SGT. HILL  
GODDAMN IT! WHERE'D IT COME FROM?

Miller looks to Jackson, who's got his head cocked, listening.

JACKSON  
Wasn't close. Bullet put him on the  
ground 'fore we heard the shot.

Everybody's trying to see where the gunfire came from.  
Caparzo's SCREAMING on the pavement and the French family is  
CRYING with fear for the children.

WADE  
We gotta get him out of there!

MILLER  
You stay put, Wade, goddamn it!

CAPARZO

Looks down at his wound. MOANS. He reaches into his shirt,  
pulls out a letter. Sees that it's bloody.

CAPARZO  
Oh...God...oh...

REIBEN

Peering out from behind rubble as ANOTHER BULLET WHINES IN and  
blows a chunk of debris into his face. He jerks back, blood  
suddenly trickling down the side of his face...

MILLER -- THE INSTANT THE SECOND SHOT COMES IN, MILLER DASHES  
OUT, GRABS THE KIDS AND PULLS THEM BACK TO COVER.

...and a second or two passes before we hear the actual  
GUNSHOT ECHOING. Miller looks to Jackson.

MILLER  
Jackson?

JACKSON  
Two thousand yards, Cap'n, maybe more.

UPHAM  
Over a mile?

The French parents sob with relief. The kids stand next to  
Miller, watching everything, wide-eyed, no longer crying.

Everybody scans for likely sources. Miller points at a chateau with a chapel belltower on a hillside more than a mile away. Jackson nods; he's already seen it.

JACKSON

That's where I'd be.

CAPARZO

Feels himself fading...tries to focus on the blood-spattered letter he holds.

CAPARZO

...help me...somebody...

MELLISH

You hang on, Caparzo! Hang on, buddy!

JACKSON

Stows his standard-issue sniper rifle, pulls a zippered case off his back. He opens the case and removes an unusual long-barreled rifle, flicks down a two-legged stand, attaches a scope, working intensely as:

UPHAM

What is that?

JACKSON

Thirty-ought-six Norton long barrel.  
Army's only got two hundred of these.

He works the bolt, loads a single oversized shell.

UPHAM

They gave you one? You must be a hell of a shot.

JACKSON

Not where I come from.

CAPARZO

With every movement causing intense pain, Caparzo wads up the letter.

CAPARZO

Help me...

Wade and Mellish focus on Caparzo, dying to rush to him, held firmly in place by Miller's command.



WADE

Don't talk...

MELLISH

We'll be with you in a sec...

CAPARZO

No...this letter...got blood on it...it's  
to my...my parents...

WADE

Just shut up.

Wade turns to Miller, pleading.

WADE (CONT'D)

Captain, please...

MILLER

Wade, you stay put! JACKSON!

JACKSON

Almost, there, sir.

Jackson sights on a tree about a thousand yards out. FIRES.  
Evaluates. Notices Upham staring.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Checking for drift.

Jackson re-loads, puts his eye to the scope, shifts his aim  
toward the chateau. Waits. Finger on the trigger. Absolutely  
motionless.

CAPARZO

With every effort he can muster, throws the letter toward Wade  
and Mellish. It falls short.

CAPARZO

Send it...copy it...no blood...huh...?

WADE

Shut up, you're going to be okay...  
(desperate)  
Captain...

CAPARZO

...copy it over...huh...?

MILLER

Stands riveted in place. Holding himself together...barely.

JACKSON

Waits. His eye at the scope.

JACKSON

O my God, I trust in thee; let me not be  
ashamed...

IN THE CHATEAU BELLTOWER

The GERMAN SNIPER is on his stomach in the shadows, scanning through the scope of a much more impressive German rifle...

JACKSON (VO)

...let not my enemies triumph over me.

GERMAN SNIPER POV (THROUGH SCOPE)

...as he tries to pin another victim in the crosshairs. He pans the rubble, past Caparzo thrashing weakly on the ground, and finds...what the hell is that? Something poking over the rubble? Is that a head barely visible behind it? Wait, it's...Jackson aiming his sniper rifle.

THE GERMAN SNIPER

Realizes he's aiming at another sniper aiming right back at him. Their scopes are locked, both men pinning each other in the crosshairs. There's a soft intake of startled breath. The German's eyes widen and his finger goes frantically to the trigger ---- and Jackson's bullet blows straight up through the German's rifle scope, blowing the back of his head off in a blast of shattering glass and blood. The German dies instantly, rifle slipping from his fingers and plummeting

to the courtyard below. Jackson's GUNSHOT ECHOES the countryside seconds later.

RESUME TOWN

Wade and Mellish rush out to Caparzo as Jackson lowers his rifle and nods, done.

Wade, Mellish, with the others right behind, find Caparzo dead. Eyes glazed and staring.

MELLISH

Oh, no...

REIBEN

Goddamn it...Goddamn it...

Wade turns and looks accusingly at Miller who holds his glare for a moment, then speaks coldly.

MILLER

That's why we can't take any goddamn kids.

The men are jarred by his brusque manner. Off their looks:

MILLER (CONT'D)

What do you want? A Viking funeral? Sing a few hymns? Maybe wait around for another goddamn sniper?

Miller kneels down, takes one of Caparzo's dogtags and pockets it. Then he stands and jerks his head in the direction they were heading.

One by one, the others follow. Reiben's wiping blood off his face, mutters darkly to Mellish:

REIBEN

So much for that angel on our shoulders.

MELLISH

It's still there, it's just shitting down our necks.

As he starts to go, Miller looks down and sees Caparzo's bloody, wadded-up letter to his parents. Miller sees Wade looking at it also. They lock eyes for a moment, each waiting to see if the other is going to pick it up.

Finally, Wade bends down and picks up the letter and puts it in his pocket. He avoids looking at Miller as he follows the others down the street.

Miller waits for a safe gap, then he brings up the rear, scanning the street and the surrounding buildings, doing his best to keep his men safe.

EXT - STREET/TOWN HALL BUILDING - DAY

Here they come, more cautious and tense than ever. Fingers on triggers. Hearing SMALL ARMS FIRE here and there.

They come to a house and flatten into doorways. Hill looks across the street at the town hall building and scans the upper levels. Somebody darts past a window up there. Miller nudges him, points -- there's a machine gun muzzle aimed at them through an upstairs shutter. A voice calls down:

VOICE (O.S.)

Thunder!

SGT. HILL

Flash!

The machine gun muzzle eases off. Hill cocks his head at Miller -- let's go. They break cover and hustle across the street toward the town hall, heading for several huge crumbled holes in the wall...

INT - TOWN HALL BUILDING - DAY

A central lobby level with banistered landings above and all around. The place is gloomy and claustrophobic, clogged with Wreckage and fallen beams...

Miller's group enters a back room through the holes in the wall, relieved to be inside at last. They proceed past sections of caved-in ceiling toward the lobby, trying to adjust to the gloom, sensing the presence of men ahead...

There are MEN up there, barely discernible in the shadows. Huddled and whispering. The GIs come around some fallen beams behind them, BOOTS CRUNCHING on fallen plaster ---- and the group spins around. They're Germans. INSTANT SCREAMING PANDEMONIUM ENSUES as both sides snap their weapons up, fingers taut on triggers, everybody hollering at the top of their lungs for everybody else to surrender:

EVERYBODY AT ONCE

(frenzied mixture of German  
and English)

PUT YOUR GODDAMN GUNS DOWN--WE'LL OPEN  
FIRE--GONNA SHOOT YOU DUMB SONS OF  
BITCHES--PUT 'EM DOWN NOW--SAID PUT THE  
GODDAMN GUNS DOWN--!

And then SILENCE. No one moves, says a word. One of the Germans loses it, pulls the trigger on his weapon, but it misfires with a loud CLICK! Miller and his men realize he tried to shoot them, are still processing this when--

-- an ENORMOUS VOLLEY OF MUZZLE FLASHES ERUPTS from the banisters above the Americans' heads. It's a stunning barrage of machine gun fire tearing explosively down through the banister posts. The Germans are blown back off their feet, bullets chewing through them in clouds of smoke and blood, the entire group sprawling backward in a tangle of bodies. A dying German's Schmeisser goes BRRRAAAP! at the ceiling and brings down a chandelier.

Abrupt, stunning silence. Fragments of banister flutter down and settle. A haze of cordite smoke hangs in the air. A VOICE calls from above:

HAMILL (O.S.)

Clear, up!

SGT. HILL

Clear, down!

Sarge looks to Miller. Everybody's stunned, trying to get a hold of their adrenalin.

SARGE

Enough to make you old.

MILLER

Let's hope.

Miller's group rises and turns, peering up...

...as a DOZEN AIRBORNE TROOPERS appear above, rising from behind what used to be the banister and stepping forward to look down. Leading them is CAPTAIN HAMILL, who gives Miller a puzzled look.

MILLER (CONT'D)

We've come for Private Ryan.

EXT - RAILROAD SWITCHING YARD - DUSK

The 101st holds the railhead with a defensive perimeter. There's some sporadic GUNFIRE to be heard, but this part of town is relatively secure. Hamill and his men are leading Miller's group across the tracks:

HAMILL

How was the road in?

MILLER

Scenic. We lost an M3 scout car and most of our ammo.

SARGE

(aimed at Miller)

Not to mention one of our men.

Miller hears Sarge but doesn't respond. Hamill approaches a LIEUTENANT:

HAMILL

Get Private Ryan up here.

LIEUTENANT  
 (hollers back)  
 Ryan! Front and center!

A FEW MORE VOICES HOLLER BACK as the message is relayed. After a few moments, PRIVATE RYAN appears, coming across the tracks. He's a goofy-looking kid.

Miller's men are watching Ryan approach. Reiben shakes his head derisively.

REIBEN  
 Told 'ya he was an asshole.

Ryan steps up, salutes Hamill.

RYAN  
 Sir, Private James Ryan reporting as ordered.

HAMILL  
 At ease. Captain Miller here would like to have a word with you.

Ryan faces Miller, confused.

RYAN  
 Sir?

MILLER  
 Private, I'm afraid I have some bad news for you.

Miller hesitates.

MILLER (CONT'D)  
 There's no easy way to say this, so I'll just say it. Your brothers are dead.

Color drains from Ryan's face -- he's shocked beyond words. He sits down on a steel switching box, finds his voice:

RYAN  
 Dead? They're dead?

MILLER  
 We've been sent to get you. You're going home.

RYAN  
 Oh my God...my brothers...my God...

Ryan promptly bursts into tears. Hamill squeezes his shoulder.

HAMILL

We're sorry for you, James. Can't tell you how much.

Ryan turns his tear-streaked face to Miller, crying and hiccuping so hard he has trouble speaking:

RYAN

How...how did they...die?

MILLER

They were killed in action.

RYAN

In action? That can't be...

MILLER

I'm truly sorry.

RYAN

No, I mean it can't be. They're both still in grammar school.

Miller gets a sinking feeling -- something's wrong here.

MILLER

James Ryan?

RYAN

(sobbing)

Yeah...

MILLER

James Francis Ryan? Iowa?

RYAN

James Frederick Ryan. Minnesota.

A stunned pause. Ryan bursts into tears all over again:

RYAN (CONT'D)

Does this mean my brothers are okay?

MILLER

Uh, I'm sure they are...we're looking for another James Ryan.

But Ryan just keeps crying harder.

RYAN

But how do you know they're okay?

MILLER

It's just a foul up.

Ryan's inconsolable. The tears just keep coming.

RYAN

But maybe the foul up is that his brothers  
are okay and mine are...oooooh....

Guys come up, patting his shoulders, trying to calm him down.

Miller, feeling utterly stupid, turns to Hamill.

MILLER

Sorry for the trouble.

HAMILL

(dryly)

Military intelligence.

They walk back to Miller's men as snickers spread along the  
perimeter -- paratroopers having a laugh at their expense.

MELLISH

(to Jackson)

God's laughing at us. He's looking down  
and laughing at us...

JACKSON

...laughing, hell, he's holding his ankles  
and howling...

SARGE

(to Miller)

So where the hell is our Ryan?

MILLER

You got me.

(to Hamill)

You in contact with Command?

HAMILL

Yeah, right.

MILLER

That's what I figured.

HAMILL

What unit is your Ryan in?

MILLER

Charlie Company of the 508th.



Hamill thinks for a moment. Turns to Sgt. Hill.

HAMILL

That guy with the broken foot, he's 508th, isn't he?

SGT. HILL

Yeah, Baker, I think...

Hamill jerks his head for Miller to follow.

INT. BOMBED OUT BUILDING - DAY

Hamill's wounded. Among them is OLIVER, 101st, 508th, Baker Company. He looks up at the delegation in front of him which is headed by Miller and Hamill.

OLIVER

Ryan? Don't know him.

MILLER

What was your drop zone?

OLIVER

Just in from Vierville.

MILLER

How the hell did you end up way out here?

OLIVER

You got me, sir, our C-57 got heavy fire, pilot went crazy trying to get away from it, turning every which way, took fire turn the drop, got messy, I ended up here, I haven't seen a single guy from my stick. God knows where they are.

MILLER

Anybody in Charlie Company got a big mouth? Tell you what his primary was?

Oliver eyes Captain Miller who sees and understands his reluctance to speak.

MILLER (CONT'D)

It's important.

OLIVER

No, sir, but I know Charlie Company had the same rally point as us.

Miller pulls out a map.

MILLER

Now we're getting somewhere.

He spreads it out in front of Oliver.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Where?

Oliver takes a moment to get oriented.

OLIVER

Jesus Christ...are we way up here...?

MILLER

Private...

OLIVER

Uh...let's see....uh...here...these bean fields...that's the rally point. It's a glider landing zone.

MILLER

Thank you, Private.

Miller stands and folds up his map, checks his watch, turns to his men.

MILLER (CONT'D)

We'll wait 'til dark to head out. Three hours.

(to Hamill)

Got a good hotel here with clean sheets, soft beds and room service?

HAMILL

More or less.

(to Sgt. Hill)

Show them the church, it's secure as anyplace.

Miller watches his men go. He gives himself a second, steps to a fallen wall and looks out at what remains of the once lovely village, now nothing more than rubble. Hamill steps up next to him. Though strangers, Miller and Hamill speak like tired old friends.

HAMILL (CONT'D)

What do you hear? How's it all falling together?

MILLER

Beachhead's secure but it's slow goin'.  
Monty's takin' his time getting to Caen,  
we can't move 'til he's ready.

HAMILL

That guy's over-rated.

MILLER

No kiddin'.

Hamill shakes his head and sighs.

HAMILL

We gotta take Caen, to take St. Lo.

MILLER

And we gotta take St. Lo, to take  
Valognes.

HAMILL

Gotta take Valognes, to take Cherbourg.

MILLER

Gotta take Cherbourg, to take Paris.

HAMILL

Gotta take Paris, to take Berlin.

MILLER

Gotta take Berlin, to take a boat home.

HAMILL

Gotta take a boat home...

MILLER/HAMILL

(together; softly)

...to see my wife.

SILENCE as they think of their wives. Then Hamill shakes his head.

HAMILL

Tough, huh? Three brothers?

Miller shrugs.

HAMILL (CONT'D)

We sure as hell could use your help here,  
but I understand what you're doing.

MILLER

Yeah?

HAMILL

Yeah. Good luck.

MILLER

Thanks.

HAMILL

I mean it. Find him. Get him home.

Miller is a bit taken aback by Captain Hamill's forceful sincerity. He shakes it off.

MILLER

So, where's this church?

They head off together.

INT - CHURCH - NIGHT

A single stained-glass window remains intact -- an ANGEL watches over the righteous from a pall of heavenly light. TILT DOWN to Miller and his men settling in for the night in the ruins:

SARGE

Jackson, you're first watch.

Jackson grabs his rifle, goes to a sentry point where the wall has collapsed to create a sloping egress of rubble. ANGLE TO Reiben pacing and agitated. Everybody's on edge, emotions and nerves working overtime.

REIBEN

Fuck Private James Ryan, fuck him, just fuck the goddamned son-of-a-bitch.

JACKSON

God a'mighty, Reiben, give it a rest. You're killing me.

REIBEN

It's not me killing you, pal, it's Ryan. Caparzo's just the first, you wait and see.

WADE

Ryan didn't kill Caparzo. A German sniper did.

MELLISH

Might as well have been Ryan's finger on that trigger.

MILLER

That's enough. We move out in two hours,  
try and get some sleep.

The men settle down into the debris and try to follow Miller's order.

EXCEPT FOR WADE

Miller looks over and sees him recopying Caparzo's letter. Wade glances up at Miller, then continues copying, pointedly ignoring Miller.

Miller looks at the rest of his men, then pulls out his map case and his flashlight. He turns it on. Alone, in the dim glow of the light, he studies his maps. Two men in two glowing balls of light, on opposite sides of the shattered church.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT (LATER)

Dark. ARTILLERY RUMBLES IN THE DISTANCE. The men, including Wade, sleep. Miller still sits in the glow of his flashlight, studying his maps. His hand starts to shake. He stares at it a moment and it stops. He looks up, sees Sarge lying nearby, watching him.

MILLER

I was just thinking the guys here are going to have a hard time holding out until help shows up.

SARGE

Yep.

MILLER

If we stayed, we could make a difference.

SARGE

You're kidding yourself.

MILLER

You never know.

They sit in silence for a moment.

SARGE

I hope this boy Ryan is worth it.

MILLER

Now you're the one kidding yourself.

(beat)

Hell of a mission.

Sarge looks away at the men.

SARGE

How long's your hand been shaking?

MILLER

(beat)

A-couple of weeks. It started in  
Portsmouth when they brought us down for  
loading.

SARGE

Is it getting worse?

MILLER

No. It comes and goes. It stops when I  
look at it.

SARGE

What do you think it is?

MILLER

I don't know.

SARGE

You may have to get yourself a new line of  
work. This one doesn't seem to agree with  
you anymore.

MILLER

I'll be alright.

Miller looks at his watch, rises and barks at the men.

MILLER

Rise and shine, boys. Let's go.

Grumbling, the men get up and start shouldering up their gear.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

The little band of Americans walks along the edge of a field,  
parallel to a cart path. Wary. They're just a small squad,  
but these seven, heavily-armed men, in full battle gear, are  
very formidable-looking.

Miller notices Jackson and Wade drifting too close to each  
other. He SNAPS HIS FINGERS, getting their attention, and  
motions curtly for them to open it up a bit.

A FLASH OF LIGHT APPEARS ON THE HORIZON

Then REPEATED FLASHES OF LIGHT. The sky is on fire. The AIR TREMBLES. A FAR OFF RUMBLING THUNDER ROLLS over the countryside like a tidal wave.

Then, THE OPPOSITE HORIZON LIGHTS UP AS WELL.

IT'S A MASSIVE ARTILLERY BATTLE. The MAGNITUDE OF THE FURY is incredible, strange, other-worldly.

EVERY MAN IS TRANSFIXED.

Frozen in place. The lights play on their faces. They watch a moment, then move on.

EXT. CROSSROADS - NIGHT

Dark. FAINT DISTANT ARTILLERY. Miller checks the map as Sarge shines a red flashlight on an array of directional signs.

Miller puts away his map. Checks the horizon. The first glow of dawn is visible.

MILLER

It'll be light, soon. Let's pick it up.

EXT. FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE - DAWN

First light. The SOUND OF DISTANT GUNS has been replaced by the CHIRPING OF BIRDS. The Americans are taking five.

Miller stands, a bit apart from the others, looking out at the view. It's lovely. Dew shimmers on the long grass. The war is far away. He sees Upham sitting with his notebook open and walks over to him, sits down beside him.

UPHAM

This is all good for me, sir.

MILLER

How's that?

UPHAM

"War educates the senses, calls into action the will, perfects the physical constitution, brings men into such swift and close collision in critical moments that man measures man."

MILLER

I guess that's one way to find the bright side.

UPHAM

Emerson was my favorite writer. I've read everything he ever wrote.

MILLER

He's alright. But personally, I liked the Tennyson you quoted the other day better. I guess he's one of my favorites.

Upham, surprised, looks at Miller a moment.

MILLER

Even though some people say that "Charge of the Light Brigade" was a lousy piece. A "newspaper poem" they called it. But I still like it.

UPHAM

(beat)

Where are you from, Captain?

Miller smiles.

MILLER

What's the pool up to?

Upham smiles, caught.

UPHAM

Over three-hundred.

MILLER

Tell you what, when it hits five-hundred, I'll give you the answer and we'll split the money.

UPHAM

If that's the way you feel, why don't we wait until it's up to a thousand?

MILLER

I might not live that long.

Upham looks closely at Miller and sees that he means it.

UPHAM

Five hundred, then.

Miller stands, considers Upham a moment.



MILLER

Just so you know, the others, no matter what they say, they're all just as afraid as you are.

UPHAM

I'm trying to control it, sir.

MILLER

You can't completely and I'm not sure you should.

(then)

"Fear is in an instructor of great sagacity and the herald of all revolutions."

UPHAM

Was that Tennyson, sir?

MILLER

Emerson. I thought you said you read everything he wrote.

Miller takes a last look at the view. Then he turns back into a commander.

MILLER

Let's go, Corporal.

Miller strides away. Upham watches him, trying to figure him out, then he simply follows him.

EXT - COUNTRYSIDE - MORNING

Sarge is walking point. The others are behind him.

REIBEN

You know what the best thing that could happen is?

JACKSON

You step on a rusty nail, get lockjaw, and never say another word again as long as you live?

Miller laughs, making sure the men hear.

MILLER

I'll bite, Reiben.

REIBEN

The best thing that could happen is we find Ryan and he's dead.

MILLER

Why's that?

REIBEN

Well, sir, consider the possibilities. A: Ryan is alive. We have to take him back to the beach. Knowing you, you don't let him carry my gear, even though he should, and we all get killed trying to keep him alive.

MILLER

Except for the last part, that one's not bad.

REIBEN

B: Ryan is dead. We find him blown up into a million pieces, floating around in some river bumping into himself. We're trying to fish him out a piece at a time like Humpty Dumpty when the Germans pick us off, one after another.

MILLER

I don't like that one at all.

REIBEN

Neither do I, sir. C: And this is the worst one, we find Ryan and he's wounded. Not only does he not carry my gear, we have to carry his gear. And him.

MILLER

That's a possibility.

REIBEN

That's why I'm saying, sir. Best possible situation is, he's dead, we find his body, more or less intact, we grab one of his dog-tags and high-tail it back to the beach.

WADE

I don't think Ryan's mother would like that.

REIBEN

Don't start with the mother. Ever occur to you she might not even like the guy?

UPHAM

She's his mother.

REIBEN

So? Maybe he's been a pain in the ass since he was born. Maybe it was the other three she loved. Maybe she always wished she could send little Jimmy back for a refund.

JACKSON

Yeah, maybe he accidently killed Bessie, her prize Hereford, or burned down the barn by accident playin' with matches...

MELLISH

Maybe they weren't accidents...

MELLISH

Maybe he's one of those mean farm boys you hear about, likes to torture the chickens, rub the blood on his overalls.

Miller listens, wondering about the direction the griping has now taken.

EXT. BEAN FIELD - GLIDER GRAVEYARD - DAY

Quiet, murmuring chaos. Half-a-dozen American gliders. Five of them are intact, opened up at the rear, gear and men gone. The sixth glider has crashed into a hedgerow on the far side of the field.

Lots of people and activity in the field:

FRENCH REFUGEES, old people, women, children, all with essential or poignant possessions -- an elegant suitcase full of food; a wheel-barrow, piled high, topped with a birdcage. An old woman carries a portrait of some deceased relative. A little girl maternally pushes her favorite doll in a miniature stroller. Some are arriving, others are already camped out.

AMERICAN WOUNDED, most are clustered around the wrecked glider. A couple dozen at least. More are being brought in -- some walking, others in commandeered civilian vehicles, an old farm truck, a battered milk-wagon.

There are OTHER AMERICAN TROOPS, mostly paratroopers. Some are bringing in wounded. Others are arriving in small groups, joining clusters of paratroopers already in the field.

OTHER AMERICAN TROOPS have dug in, setting up a defensive perimeter. A handful of French children watch them, admiringly.

MILLER AND HIS MEN

Approach, trying to make some sense out of the chaotic gathering.

NEAR THE WRECKED GLIDER

A young American Air Corp pilot, LIEUTENANT REINHART, sees them and motions.

REINHART

Captain.

Miller motions Wade to the wounded. He's already on his way to them. Miller eyes the mixed gathering of people curiously.

MILLER

Want to fill me in, here, Lieutenant?

REINHART

Reinhart, sir, 99th Troop Carrier Squadron.

(re. wrecked glider)

This one was mine. I was the pilot. Twenty-two dead. I ended up over there without a scratch. It took my co-pilot's head right off.

MILLER

Where's the unit? Who are all these people?

REINHART

Well, sir, the guys we brought in went off, first night, haven't seen them since. This is a rally point for the Hundred-and-First, 508th and some others...

MILLER

I know, go on...

REINHART

Guys keep showing up, one, two, half-dozen at a time. Then some officer'll come along, patch together a mixed unit and head off to make trouble. I've been helping out, too.

MILLER

How?

REINHART

Lot of busted-up guys around here, sir. I've been going out, bringing 'em back here, doing what I can. Lot of dead guys out there, too.

Reinhart shakes a little sack he has attached to his belt.

REINHART (CONT'D)

Dog-tags. More than I want to count, sir. Don't expect Graves Registration up here for a while. I've done a lot of digging, sir.

Miller nods. He and his men look at Reinhart with respect.

MILLER

We're looking for a Private James Ryan, Baker Company of the 508th.

REINHART

You got me, sir. A lot of guys have been in and out of here.

Miller calls over to Wade who's with the wounded.

MILLER

Wade?

WADE

Not here...

Miller motions Upham toward the other paratroopers.

MILLER

Upham, go check those guys.

Upham heads off.

AT THE WRECKED GLIDER

Sarge looks in and sees a body pinned between what's left of the bulkhead and a jeep that smashed forward at impact.

REINHART

I couldn't pry him out of there. I need a winch.

Sarge notices stars on the dead man's helmet.

SARGE

Stars.

REINHART

General Pratt, Deputy Commander, Hundred-and-First. Some fucking genius had the great idea of welding steel plates onto our deck to keep the general safe from ground fire. Unfortunately, they forgot to tell me until we were just getting airborne. Like trying to fly a freight train, gross overload, trim characteristics were all to hell. I almost broke my arms trying to keep it level.

Miller and his men stop and listen.

REINHART (CONT'D)

When we released, I cut as hard as I could, tried to gain some altitude, keep from stalling, didn't work. We came down like a fucking meteor, this is how we ended up. The others stopped easy, we were just too damn heavy, wet grass, downward slope, twenty-two guys dead.

(beat)

Guess it was real important to keep General Pratt alive. One man.

Reiben nods.

REIBEN

Lot of that goin' around.

Miller shoots him a look. Then he nods. He has to agree.

MILLER

Lieutenant, let me see those dog-tags.

Reinhart hands Miller the sack of dog-tags. Miller hands it to Jackson.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Jackson, see if you can find Private Ryan.

JACKSON

Yes, sir.

REIBEN

(cheerfully)

I'll help.

Reiben grabs the bag, takes a handful, passes it on to Mellish who takes a handful. They start checking, tossing tags back into a pile on the bag.

REIBEN (CONT'D)

Think he's here?

JACKSON

Bet he is. Bet the son of a bitch is.

...and something strange takes over, something like a touch of gambling fever. The men start going faster and faster as if it were a game or competition, first one to find him wins:

MELLISH

...bet I find him first...

REIBEN

...screw you, he's mine...

MELLISH

...c'mon, I know you're in here...

JACKSON

...no use hiding, Ryan, we're on to you, buddy...

REIBEN

...come out, come out, wherever you are...

JACKSON

...olly oily oxen free...

This gets a big laugh, the search growing even giddier as:

REIBEN

...ten bucks I nail him first...

JACKSON

...you're on...

MELLISH

(holds up tag)

I got him! Ryan! I got him!

MILLER

James Francis?

MELLISH

(reading closely)

Uh...no, it's Reyes, R-E-Y-E-S, that's close...

He tosses it onto the pile. Reiben laughs.

REIBEN

Close, my ass...

The search continues. Miller smiles, then he notices the disgusted expressions on the faces of Sarge and Reinhart.

Then Wade appears behind them. His expression simmering just below furious, his voice very low and steady:

WADE

What the hell are you doin'? Those guys out there can hear you...

(indicates the dogtags)

...and those guys are dead. You wanna keep it down?

The men stare at the tags, then silently continue checking the names.

MILLER

Finds himself stunned, confused. Not sure who or what he has become. He struggles to pull himself together. Reiben, Jackson and Mellish finish checking the dogtags.

JACKSON

He's not here, sir.

Miller nods and walks away from the glider.

Upham approaches, motioning back toward the men to whom he just spoke.

UPHAM

No Ryan.

Miller keeps walking toward the middle of the field and the jumbled gathering of civilians and G.I.'s.

Sarge rises, looks to Miller.

SARGE

Now what, sir?

Miller shoots him a look -- drop dead for asking. Miller stalks off toward the road. The others grab their gear, go after him...



MILLER

(muttering)

...goddamn radios don't work...chain of command doesn't work...nothing in this goddamn war works...

The men trade looks. Is he griping or is he losing it?

MILLER (CONT'D)

Here's an idea, let's split up into two groups and wander the countryside, calling his name, sooner or later, he's bound to hear us.

SARGE

Good thought, sir, but could take a while.

MILLER

Let's ask the locals, maybe they've seen him.

(stops an OLD COUPLE)

Parlez vous Ryan? Oui? Non?

The old couple speaks to each other in French, decides Miller's crazy, move away from him.

Coming into the field with some refugees is a RAGGED COLUMN OF GERMAN PRISONERS escorted by SOME PARATROOPERS. The paratroopers have seen some heavy action; many are walking wounded. Miller calls to the nearest group of them:

MILLER (CONT'D)

Hey! 101st! You know a guy named Ryan?

The men shake their heads, pass by. Miller keeps going, tries the next group:

MILLER (CONT'D)

Ryan? Anybody know Ryan?

The men pause. One of them looks at his buddy -- is that name familiar? He turns, hollers at a group further back:

PARATROOPER #1

Hey, Joe! Doesn't Michaelson pal around with a Ryan in B company?

JOE

(hollers back)

Yeah! I think so!

PARATROOPER #1

Get him up here, would you?

JOE nudges the man next to him -- MICHAELSON, who seems oblivious to the conversation so far. Joe motions "come on, up ahead, they want us." Miller and his men still don't get it, not until the pair arrive and the conversation begins:

MILLER

You know a guy named Ryan?

JOE

You'll have to speak up, sir, his hearing's not so good...

MICHAELSON

YOU'LL HAVE TO SPEAK UP, SIR, MY HEARING'S NOT SO GOOD!

JOE

...comes and goes. German grenade went off right next to his head...

MICHAELSON

IT COMES AND GOES! GERMAN GRENADE WENT OFF RIGHT NEXT TO MY--

MILLER

YEAH, YEAH, I GET IT! THESE GUYS SAY YOU KNOW RYAN?.

MICHAELSON

WHO?

MILLER

RYAN! YOU KNOW RYAN?

MICHAELSON

JIMMY RYAN?

Miller's men are electrified -- this could be it.

MILLER

(nodding his head)

JAMES FRANCIS RYAN?

MICHAELSON

(nodding, then shaking)

NO! JAMES FRANCIS RYAN!

MILLER

THAT'S WHAT I SAID!

MICHAELSON

WHAT?

MILLER

Anybody got a pencil?

Everybody starts patting pockets.

MILLER (CONT'D)

C'mon, a pencil! Anybody?

UPHAM (O.S.)

Yes, sir...

Miller turns, sees Upham holding a pencil stub with a deadpan look on his face.

UPHAM (CONT'D)

...a small one.

A stone-faced beat.

MILLER

Write this down: "James Francis Ryan?  
Iowa? You know him?"

Upham jots the message, shows it to Michaelson.

MICHAELSON

COURSE I KNOW HIM! HE'S MY BEST BUDDY!

MILLER

Does he know where he is?

Upham jots and shows the message. Michaelson nods.

MICHAELSON

YEAH. WE MISSED OUR DROP ZONE BY ABOUT  
TWENTY MILES, ENDED UP WAY OVER BY  
BUM-VILLE OR SOME DAMN PLACE. HIM, ME AND  
A COUPLE OTHER GUYS WERE COMIN' HERE, TO  
OUR RALLY POINT, RAN INTO A COLONEL WHO  
WAS GATHERING UP MEN TO GO TO  
RAMELLE...THERE'S A BRIDGE THERE...SAID  
IT'S REAL IMPORTANT.

(beat)

THAT'S THE LAST I SEEN OF HIM.

Miller's group is electrified. Miller is pleased.

MILLER

Thank you, private.

MICHAELSON

HUH?

Miller mimes thanks. Michaelson motions, you're welcome. He and the other paratroopers move on.

MILLER PULLS OUT A MAP

He spreads it on the ground and motions to his men.

MILLER

Gather 'round.

Miller kneels, his men hover over the map.

MILLER (CONT'D)

We're here. Ramelle is here, on the Merderet River, about fourteen miles, west-by-northwest.

SARGE

You know about this bridge, he was talkin' about, Captain?

MILLER

Yeah...

Miller opens up the map wider and gives his men a quick geography lesson.

MILLER (CONT'D)

While the Brits and our Fifth Corps go to Caen, Bradley's taking the rest of the First Army up the east side of the Merderet River to make a run on Cherbourg. The whole invasion depends on Cherbourg. We gotta have a port.

(pointing)

The Germans know it. They're gonna try and cross the Merderet and hit Bradley on his way up. Most likely, it'll be Rommel and his Panzers.

Miller's men know what that means. It's not good.

MILLER (CONT'D)

God willing, our planes and the 82nd have blown up every bridge across the Merderet except for two, one at Valognes and one at Ramelle. Those two bridges are now funnels. If we hold them, we'll use them to take the rest of the penninsula after we have Cherbourg.

(beat)

If Rommel has those bridges, he's going to drive his tanks over them and kick the ever-loving shit out of Bradley and the First Army before they even get to Cherbourg.

Miller looks at his men and sees that all this has sunk in. He starts folding up his map.

JACKSON

Well, Cap'n, seems to me, we oughta think about gettin' on up there.

MILLER

My thoughts, exactly, Jackson.

Miller grabs his gear and starts walking. His men follow.

EXT - FIELD - DUSK

The sun is setting over the fields. Miller and his men are walking.

REIBEN

...I'm just saying it's easier for the guys in the Pacific on account of the Japs don't look as much like people as the Krauts do.

WADE

Killing a man is the same, no matter what he looks like.

REIBEN

Not that there was ever a German worth a damn. They're all pricks. Always have been. It's in their blood.

Pause. Nobody seems to feel much like arguing, but they're all thinking about it.

UPHAM

They can't all be pricks.

REIBEN

Name one decent German. Go ahead, just one.

No response.

REIBEN (CONT'D)

See? You can't, there aren't any.

No one speaks for a moment. Then:

WADE

Albert Schweitzer..

REIBEN

Who?

WADE

Albert Schweitzer. He's German.

REIBEN

Who the hell is Albert Schweitzer?

WADE

He was a famous musician but he didn't think he was doing enough for mankind, so he got a medical degree and went to Africa, to a very poor, out-of-the-way place, to spend the rest of his life treating the natives. No reason other than they needed medical care and he wanted to help. He's been there thirty years now. It's because of him I decided to be a doctor.

REIBEN

Both your parents are doctors and it takes some fucking Kraut to convince you to go into the family business.

WADE

You asked me to name a decent German, I did.

REIBEN

Guy could find something nice to say about anybody. Hitler? Hey, anybody who likes dogs can't be all bad.

MILLER

Reiben, lose an argument for once, huh?

REIBEN

Yes, sir.

Reiben shuts up. Miller eases up next to Wade and glances over, making sure that Reiben is out of earshot.

MILLER

(whispers to Wade)

Albert Schweitzer was born in Alsace.  
He's of German descent but officially,  
he's French.

Wade processes that. He turns and looks closely at Miller.  
They share a slight smile, then they separate and walk on.

EXT - HEDGEROW FIELD - DAY

A beautiful, hedgerow-lined field of tall grass. The seven  
Americans walk carefully through the woods to the edge of the  
field.

Miller notices something. He signals stop, crouches and scans  
the field and the hedgerow on the far side.

Sarge and Jackson ease up next to him. Jackson points to some  
trees nearby, freshly shattered and pockmarked with bullets.

Wade calls quietly from a tangle of roots and brush.

WADE

Captain.

Staying low, they join Wade, who has found:

A DEAD AMERICAN PARATROOPER. A trail of blood and flattened  
grass leads from the field. They gaze out, seeing FOUR MORE  
BODIES sprawled in the grass out there.

MILLER

(scans the far hedgerow)

In the shadow by those two trees.

SARGE

My guess, too.

UPHAM

What is it?

WADE

Machine gun.

Miller pulls back into the cover of the brush stands and takes  
off his pack.

REIBEN

Sir, why don't we go around it?

MILLER

We can't leave it here.

SARGE

We left those eighty-eights.

MILLER

Three runners with suppressing fire. I'm going right. Reiben, you're fast, you're up the middle. Who's taking left?

UPHAM

Sir? I ran the 220 in high school in twenty-four-five.

JACKSON

Shit, that's nothin', I ran twenty-two flat. Woulda made the state finals if some bastard hadn't tripped me.

MILLER

Okay, Jackson goes left. We draw fire and work up. Everybody else spread out along the treeline.

The men spread out. Sarge pulls Miller aside:

SARGE

Sir? Rule of thumb says you detail this one out.

MILLER

Which rule of thumb is that?

SARGE

How about I go right?

MILLER

How about you take your position?

Sarge hesitates, sees no point in arguing. He moves off, finds a spot from which to fire. Miller looks to Jackson and Reiben -- ready? They nod.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Now.

Miller and Jackson take off at full runs onto opposite sides of the field, with Reiben going up the middle. Nothing happens for a moment...

...and then a GERMAN MACHINE GUN OPENS UP, murderously loud, shattering the quiet. The GIs in the treeline RETURN FIRE.



## THE MACHINE GUN NEST

Contains THREE GERMANS. We don't see faces. One man's on the gun, a second feeds the belt, a third brings up more ammo...

MILLER

Draws the first fire. He races the bullets, dives for cover, bullets screaming over him ---- and the machine gun swings toward Reiben, who also hits the dirt with bullets grazing his helmet ---- and it swings toward Jackson, who also dives ----but by now Miller's back up and running, drawing the machine gun in his direction. He dives, rolls ---- and then it's Reiben again, drawing gunfire, diving ---- and Jackson, running, barely making it to safety --

-- and so on, the runners leap-frogging and gaining yards, working their way closer until:

A bullet slaps Jackson in the arm. He spins and goes down.

JACKSON

AAHHH, SHIT!

Reiben's up and running, drawing fire away from Jackson...

And then Miller, drawing fire away from Reiben...

Now Reiben again, getting closer, just about grenade-throwing range...

Now Miller, closing in from the other side, pulling a grenade, angling for a throw...

And then Wade breaks cover, trying to get to Jackson. The machine gun swings, OPENS FIRE. Wade stumbles, sits down, presses his stomach as if punched. He looks almost embarrassed. A long exhale of breath...

WADE

....oh...stupid...

UPHAM

WADE!

Miller and Reiben pop their pins and throw. The grenades arc into the nest.

A moment later, a HAND emerges from the nest and lobs Reiben's grenade back out! It lands square in Reiben's lap. Frantically, Reiben scoops it up and hurls it over the top once again.

Clutching the grenade, the hand lifts BACK UP OUT OF THE NEST, ready to return the volley, when--

BOOM!

Nothing now but silence and billowing dust. All eyes go to Wade...

SARGE

Wade? You hit?

No answer. Everybody starts toward Wade from all directions. Miller and Reiben come running, faster and faster...

Upham's the first one there. Jackson's next, clutching his grazed arm, then the others. Miller and Reiben arrive last, stunned to see:

Wade took five bullets in the abdomen (four are in the stomach area, but one is higher, just below the right nipple). He looks astonished by the pain, can barely breathe. A stunned, frozen beat --

MILLER

Oh, Wade, oh, Jesus Christ...

-- and they throw themselves to the ground, hands grabbing and ripping through the medical pack in a flurry, tearing Wade's shirt open, everybody shouting and hollering at once:

MILLER (CONT'D)

--sulfa, gimme the sulfa--

SARGE

--shit, he's bleeding, get pressure on it--

MELLISH

--help me out, Upham, shit, use your hands--

JACKSON

--me, goddamn it, he was comin' after me--

MILLER

--more sulfa, I need more sulfa--

JACKSON

--oh, God, Jesus--

MELLISH

--don't die, Wade, don't you do it--

SARGE

--morphine, he needs morphine--

They're injecting morphine, pouring sulfa, getting bloody. It's all a blur, a rush of adrenalin and panicked effort.

MILLER

Wade? Wade? Can you hear me?

Wade is looking up at them, shaking, riding the pain.

WADE

...how...bad...

MILLER

You're fine, you'll be okay...

Wade's hand shoots up, grips Miller's wrist.

WADE

...Captain...

MILLER

(beat)

I don't know, Wade, I'm not a doctor, it doesn't look good.

The morphine's kicking in. Wade's shaking subsides. He tries to raise his head to see, but can't, gasping with the effort.

WADE

...am I shot...in the spine?

MILLER

I dunno. Lift him up a little...

Carefully...carefully...

The others maintain pressure on the wounds as Sarge helps Miller lift Wade slightly up on one side. Miller puts his hand under him, running his hand down his back. Blood drizzles through his fingers from several gaping exit holes. Wade's eyes are fixed on his, waiting for the answer.

MILLER (CONT'D)

(nods)

Exit wound right on the spine, small of the back. It's torn up.

Wade reacts with a soft sob. Miller pulls his hand out, now covered with blood and tissue, eases Wade gently back down. The others keep pressure on the wounds (especially the one below the right nipple, Mellish and Upham are both pressing on that one because it's bleeding so much).

WADE

...can't move...

MELLISH

That don't mean you're dead, Wade, it don't goddamn mean it!

Wade tries to put his hand to his abdomen to check the wounds, but misses -- his coordination is gone.

WADE

...help me...

Miller takes his wrist, guiding his hand. Wade presses on the wounds, trying to determine their severity by feel.

WADE (CONT'D)

...is anything...bleeding worse than others...

MELLISH

Yeah, me and Upham are pressing on it, it's bleeding bad...

WADE

...show me...

They guide his hand to the wound below the right nipple. Wade feels it. Pushes his finger all the way down into it as blood wells up past his knuckles. The others watch in horror.

WADE (CONT'D)

...oh god...my liver...it's my liver...

UPHAM

What do we do about it? Tell us what to do!

Wade gives Miller a look, shakes his head. The message in his eyes is clear -- there's nothing you can do. Not a thing.

WADE

...could use a little extra morphine...really could...

Beat. Their eyes locked. Miller realizes what he's asking.

MILLER  
(to Sarge)  
More morphine.

Sarge hands it to him. Miller injects Wade.

MILLER (CONT'D)  
Another one.

Sagre hesitates. He and the others are starting to realize what's going on. Miller snaps at him:

MILLER (CONT'D)  
I said another one, goddamn it!

Sarge hands it over. Miller injects Wade a third time.

The men can do nothing but wait. They're still keeping pressure on his wounds, which gives everything the appearance of a strange laying on of hands...

Wade is drifting, feeling the full effects of the drug kicking in.

Then Wade motions to Miller, directing his attention to the ground near him. Miller turns and sees, among the spilled contents of the medical pack, CAPARZO'S RECOPIED LETTER.

Miller picks up the letter and puts it in his pocket.

WADE LOOKS AT MILLER

Gives him a faint smile. Eyes glazing. Going away...

...and they actually feel the life leaving his body under their hands.

The aftermath of silence seems to last forever. Nobody knowing what to say. Nobody wanting to be the first to speak.

A soft sob. Upham's crying.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Kamerad!

They whip their heads around, amazed to see a GERMAN SOLDIER staggering toward them from the direction of the machine gun Nest, arms raised and head bleeding...

GERMAN  
Kamerad! Ich ergebe mich! Nicht schiessen!

Reiben's amazement gives way to rage. He grabs an M-1, lunges to his feet, and OPENS FIRE before anybody can react --

REIBEN  
YOU SON OF A BITCH!

MILLER  
Reiben!

-- and the German drops for cover as carbine rounds rip the dirt all around him. Miller slams into Reiben from behind, spins him around, tries to wrestle the weapon away...

MILLER (CONT'D)  
Hold your fire!

...and the brief tug-of-war ends with Miller ramming the rifle into Reiben's gut and knocking him on his ass. Miller stands over him, catching his breath...

MILLER (CONT'D)  
We don't shoot prisoners!

...and the German rises again on shaky legs, arms upraised...

GERMAN  
Nicht schiessen! Ich will mich ergeben!

...but Reiben's still gripped by rage -- he lunges to his feet and goes after the German. The German turns, tries to run...

MILLER  
Reiben, goddamn it!

...and Reiben takes the man down with a flying tackle. He rolls him over and starts beating the shit out of him, fists flying, punching him in the face...

The others arrive, drag Reiben off. Sarge gets him in a headlock, like a cowboy wrestling a steer.

SARGE  
REIBEN, ARE YOU GONNA CALM DOWN OR AM I  
GONNA KNOCK YOUR BLOCK OFF? NOW EASE  
OFF!

Reiben eases off, forces himself calm. Sarge lets him go. The German looks up at Miller, battered and bloody, voice small:

GERMAN  
...bitte...tötet mich nicht...Ich will  
mich ergeben...

MILLER

Check him for weapons.

Mellish and Sarge pat the German down. Mellish finds a Wehrmacht dagger, holds it up.

MELLISH

What's this for? Fricassee a few GIs, you piece of shit?

They drag the terrified German to his feet. He keeps his hands in the air. Reiben's glowering, barely restraining himself.

REIBEN

Ask him one thing for me. I wanna know if it was his finger on the trigger that took down Wade.

SARGE

It doesn't matter. Wade's dead just the same.

UPHAM

We're not just gonna leave him there like that...or the others...are we, sir?

The men all look to Miller.

MILLER

Organize a burial detail. Put the German to work, too. Jackson, you all right?

JACKSON

Bullet took a bite out of my arm. I'll be all right.

MILLER

Get it cleaned and dressed. You and I stand watch -- you're south perimeter, I'm north.

Miller speaks with authority, but something's missing. There's a dead spot in his eyes. It's subtle, only Sarge really notices. He watches Miller turn and walk away.

SARGE

You heard the man. Move your asses.

EXT - HEDGREROW FIELD - DAY

Dark clouds gathering. Miller's at the edge of the field, sitting and staring off at the horizon. His concentration seems intense...

...and we realize he's desperately trying to control the shaking in his hand. It's clenched tight.

Sarge appears, coming up from behind. Miller realizes he's not alone. Sarge sits, waits. (The burial detail is at work b.g.) Nothing is said for a time, and then:

MILLER

What was that kid at Anzio, the one who got his face burned off?

SARGE

Vecchio.

MILLER

Vecchio, right. I couldn't remember his name. Remember how he used to walk on his hands and sing that song about the man on the flying trapeze?

SARGE

Yeah.

Sarge nods. A stretch of silence. Miller looks at him.

MILLER

You know the first thing they teach you at O.C.S.? Lie to your men.

SARGE

Oh, yeah?

MILLER

Not in so many words, but that's what it boils down to. If your men don't have good morale, nothing's worth a damn. So if you're scared or empty or half-a-step from a Section Eight, do you tell your men? Of course not. You lie, and you lie to yourself, too.

SARGE

And how do you do that?

MILLER

That's the easy part, numbers. Every time you kill one of your men, you tell yourself you just saved the lives of two, three, ten, a hundred others. You know how many men I've lost under my command?



SARGE  
No.

MILLER  
(instantly)  
Ninety-four. I'll bet I've saved the  
lives of ten times that number. Maybe  
twenty times. Any number you want. See?  
Simple. It lets you always choose mission  
over men.

SARGE  
Except this time the mission is a man.

MILLER  
That's the rub. Caparzo... Wade... who  
the hell is Ryan? You put the three of  
them in front of me, tell me I have to  
shoot one, no contest. Look at my hand,  
there it goes again.

SARGE  
Same thing happened to my father. He ran  
the big press at the *Plain Dealer*. Forty  
some years on the job, one day his hand  
starts to shake. Won't stop. My mother  
said it was trying to tell him something.

MILLER  
And what was that?

SARGE  
That he was all used up.

Miller looks at him, then looks back at his hand.

MILLER  
Yeah, maybe that's it.

They both sit there quietly a moment, then Sarge nods...

SARGE  
It's a young man's war.

Miller looks at Sarge, all at once they both realize the  
absurdity of that statement and they both start laughing.

A ROW OF RIFLES

Protrudes from the ground as grave markers, dogtags hanging off the triggers. The men are done with burial detail. Jackson sits down to rest. The German, a few feet away. Jackson takes a cigarette from a pack, is about to put the rest of the pack away when he sees the German staring at him.

#### INSIDE THE MACHINE GUN NEST

Reiben and Mellish step inside the nest, sift through the debris. In one corner, one of the dead soldiers pack has been ripped open-from the blast. While Reiben stares at the two obliterated bodies that are heaped over the weapon, Mellish crouches down, rifles the contents: food. Extra clothing. He finds a wallet, among the contents here: some cash, some ticket stubs, a foil wrapped condom, a picture of A YOUNG MAN holding a soccer ball. The same young man in uniform posing with HIS PARENTS. A lock of someone's hair.

Mellish looks up from the photo, over at the mangled bodies.

REIBEN

Hey...

Reiben finds a shopping bag from a store in Paris among the debris. He opens it up, looks inside and his smile fades.

REIBEN

Oh, no...

He reaches in and pulls out a beautiful, RED-SILK TEDDY. He looks down at the body it was lying beside.

REIBEN

Son-of-a-bitch.

#### JACKSON & THE GERMAN

both have cigarettes in their mouths now as Mellish and Reiben walk over.

JACKSON

One a you got a light?

Reiben takes one look at the scene and stops cold.

REIBEN

What are you giving him a smoke for? What are you, stupid?

JACKSON

He did his share of digging.

REIBEN

He should, the bastard.

JACKSON

C'mon, pass the lighter.

REIBEN

Oh, he gets my lighter, too? What next, press his trousers?

Jackson waits. Reiben gives in, tosses his Zippo. The German catches it, lights up, clicks it shut. He notices the lighter is engraved -- a Mickey Mouse hand-done in rough GI style.

GERMAN

Micky Maus.

They all look at him. He gives them a tentative smile...and mimes a steamboat wheel, bouncing jauntily up and down.

GERMAN (CONT'D)

Steamboat Willie. Oompah, oompah...

REIBEN

Tell Steamboat Willie to cut the shit or I'll kill him. I don't care what the Captain says.

Upham motions the German silent -- this is not the time. The German complies, passes the lighter to Jackson. (NOTE: From now on the German will be referred to as Steamboat Willie.)

MELLISH

Goose-stepping asshole. Bet it was him who killed Wade.

REIBEN

Not just him. Ryan, too, that piece of shit.

(off their looks)

That's two of us he's gotten killed. Wade and Caparzo. Hitler should pin a medal on the prick.

Miller and Sarge walk up.

SARGE

Gear up, we're moving out.

Everybody hesitates. Upham says what they're all thinking:

UPHAM

Shouldn't we say a few words? For Wade, I mean?

MILLER

Wade who? I knew a Wade once, but he's dead. He died so long ago nobody remembers him. Now get off your ass and gear up.

Looks are traded, but nobody argues. They rise as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - RIDGE - NEARING DUSK

The sun is descending from a canopy of clouds. Miller and his men traverse the ridge with Steamboat Willie, heading into the farm valley below...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - WOODS - NIGHT

Miller and his men finish digging in for the night -- they've expanded a ditch with shovels to create a communal foxhole. Everybody's exhausted beyond words -- trading shovels for blankets, settling in, trying to get comfortable.

SARGE

Reiben, you're first watch.

Reiben sighs, grabs his rifle. Miller tosses him a blanket.

MILLER

I know you're tired, but stay sharp.

REIBEN

Yes sir, sharp, that's me...

Reiben climbs up out of the ditch, sits cross-legged on the edge, settles in. He pulls the blanket around himself, rifle propped between his knees.

REIBEN (CONT'D)

...sharp as a tack...

SOFT SNORING from below. The others are already falling asleep. Reiben finds himself alone, staring off at the woods, listening to crickets in the night...

REIBEN (CONT'D)

...sharp...

...and it soon becomes apparent that he's desperately trying to stay awake. And it seems the harder he tries, the more sleep wants to claim him...the more it wants to make him...

...drift off...

No! He shakes himself awake, forces his eyes open. Not gonna drift off that easy, not a chance...no way...

...I'll just stare at the night...listen to the crickets chirping...nothing moving out there...

...quiet and dark as can be...stay sharp...that's me...

His head nods. His helmet goes clunk against the rifle. Let's face it, the poor bastard just fell asleep.

CAMERA PULLS SLOWLY BACK. Reiben's dead to the world, still sitting upright...

THEN, IN THE BACKGROUND:

A GERMAN SOLDIER with a Schmeisser enters the clearing from the edge of frame, not ten yards away...

...and then ANOTHER GERMAN...and then TWO MORE...and, holy shit, there are dozens of them in the shadows...

The first German looks over this way, sees Reiben sitting there (just a shadowy figure from where he's standing).

GERMAN #1

(turns, loud whisper)

Das ist es, genau hier!

Reiben snaps wide awake. Frozen like a statue. Did I just hear German being spoken behind me?

A flurry of activity and noise suddenly bursts on us as a COMPANY OF WEHRMACHT converges on this area: ENGINES growling, VOICES calling out, lights sweeping through the foliage...

The GIs wake up in a total panic, thrashing their blankets aside, grabbing for weapons. Hands reach up and grab Reiben, yank him down into the ditch. Everybody's expecting to go out in a blaze of gunfire at any moment...

...but the Germans are just going about their business in the background. DIESEL ENGINES ROAR CLOSER. A GERMAN SOLDIER backs slowly across the clearing, motioning with his hands...

GERMAN #3  
 Ja, das ist gut...weiter...nach  
 links...etwas weiter...

...and the MUZZLE OF A TIGER TANK comes easing through the low branches.

GERMAN #3 (CONT'D)  
 Gut! Halt hier!

The muzzle stops -- that's all we'll see of the tank. For that matter, everything around us is more suggested than seen; we're conveying an impression of scale with noises, lights, voices calling to one another. Somebody hollers loudly:

VOICE (O.S.)  
 Abschalten! Alle ruhig sein!

We hear ENGINES SHUTTING DOWN all over the area...

...and silence takes over again. The night returns.

Miller and the others are frozen f.g., holding their breath, fingers on triggers. If it were physically possible for human beings to shit bricks, that's exactly what they'd be doing.

Germans are pattering around b.g., making camp, getting homey. One guy's whistling "Pretty Baby" under his breath. Now that it's quiet, they speak in low tones or whispers.

GERMANS #4 and #5 are at the back of a supply truck, fiddling with a shortwave radio. They go past a speech by Goebbels, past a broadcast of Wagner's "The Ring"...and tune in to Armed Forces Radio. It's the Benny Goodman Orchestra performing "How High the Moon" with vocalist Helen Forrest.

GERMAN #4  
 (whispering)  
 Benny Goodman...klasse...

GERMAN #5  
 (motioning)  
 Sshhh...mach's leiser...

They tweak the volume down and drift away to other parts of the clearing, going about their business.

A portly infantryman named DIETER settles in no more than fifteen feet from Miller and our group. He pulls off his boots, rubs his aching feet. He looks over this way, calls softly to our guys in the ditch:

DIETER  
Habt Ihr mal 'ne Zigarett?

Upham throws a look of panic -- he's talking to us!

DIETER (CONT'D)  
Du da, im Graben. Ich rede mit Dir.  
Haste 'ne Zigarett?

Upham's white as a sheet. Facial expressions and hand gestures come in a jumbled rush: for God's sakes, don't answer -- we have to answer -- what are you, nuts? -- what if he comes over here? -- shit -- okay, say something -- what should I say?

Dieter rises, peering, wondering why they don't answer:

DIETER (CONT'D)  
Stimmt was nicht?

UPHAM FINALLY SPEAKS UP:

UPHAM  
Uh...nein. wir suchen nach 'ner  
Zigarett.

DIETER  
Wunderbar, danke.

Dieter turns away, starts puttering with his gear. A fierce flurry of whispering ensues:

UPHAM  
Who's got a cigarette?

MILLER  
What for?

UPHAM  
He wants a cigarette! Gimme a damn  
cigarette!

Somebody hands him the rest of a pack.

SARGE  
Now what, genius? Throw it at him?

Upham's mind races. Dieter's looking this way again.

DIETER  
Und: wie sieht's aus?

Steamboat Willie motions to Upham -- here, give me the damn cigarettes! Everybody looks to Miller -- we gonna trust the prisoner? Miller sees no choice, whispers:

MILLER

He tries any shit, he takes the first bullet. Reiben?

Reiben shoves his BAR right up Steamboat Willie's ass and smiles grimly.

UPHAM

(starts to translate)  
Wenn Du irgendwas versuchst-

REIBEN

I think he gets the message.

Willie, very aware of the BAR at his back, rises partially from the ditch, Willie tosses a cigarette from the pack. Dieter takes one, nods thanks...and pats his pockets. Beat.

DIETER

Hast Du Feuer?

No need to translate that gesture. Miller and the men roll their eyes toward heaven -- shit!

Steamboat Willie turns, leans back into the ditch and reaches down, snapping his fingers for the lighter -- c'mon, c'mon.

Reiben's patting his pockets, eyes wide. Holy crap, where's my lighter? They launch into a frantic search -- shit, where the hell's the goddamn lighter?

Reiben finds it -- here! Everybody sags with relief. Steamboat Willie takes it, goes back to Dieter, lights his cigarette.

DIETER (CONT'D)

Danke.

Dieter blows the smoke out, checks the cigarette.

DIETER (CONT'D)

Amerikanische? Wo zum Teufel hast'n amerikanische Zigaretten her?

STEAMBOAT WILLIE

(hesitates)  
Von Amerikanern, natürlich.

Dieter chuckles appreciatively, notices the lighter.



DIETER  
Micky Maus? Kann ich mal sehen?

He takes the lighter, clicks it admiringly a few times.

DIETER (CONT'D)  
Willst Du tauschen?

STEAMBOAT WILLIE  
(considers a beat)  
Hast Du irgend etwas zu essen?

DIETER  
Massig. Ich tausch' Dir gegen das  
Feuerzeug und mehr Zigaretten.

Steamboat Willie nods -- done deal. Dieter happily pockets the lighter and moves off. Steamboat Willie drops back into the ditch. In whispers:

REIBEN  
Son of a bitch stole my lighter...

UPHAM  
We're swapping for food.

SARGE  
Really?

Looks are traded -- this could be a good idea.

MILLER  
C'mon, c'mon, cigarettes...

The GIs turn out their pockets, handing up cigarettes and whatever else they've got. Mellish hands up a yo-yo.

Steamboat Willie takes it, gives him a look -- a yo-yo? Mellish responds with a shooing motion -- go on, trade it.

In the b.g., Dieter's been raiding the larder for sausages, cheese, bread, a slab of bacon...but he can't find the knife. He turns, calls softly to Steamboat Willie:

DIETER  
Bring ein Messer mit.

Steamboat Willie looks at Upham -- good luck breaking that news. Upham cringes a bit as he does:

UPHAM  
He needs a knife.

REIBEN

Christ, let's just give the Kraut my rifle.

JACKSON

We've gone this far, haven't we?

Beat. Miller nods, looks to Mellish.

MILLER

Give the Kraut his knife back.

MELLISH

Jackson's got it.

JACKSON

No I don't, you had it last...

MELLISH

...no I didn't, you did...

A frantic search fails to turn it up. Finally, Mellish pulls the Hitler Youth knife he found at Omaha beach and looks at it.

SARGE

Good Christ, Mellish. What're you waiting for?

MELLISH

It's a souvenir, sir.

MILLER

Mellish. Give it up.

He hands it up to Steamboat Willie.

MELLISH

I want that back.

Steamboat Willie looks at the knife, gives Mellish a look, then calls to Dieter and starts tossing over the goods: cigarettes, yo-yo...

DIETER

Ein Jojo?

Willie shrugs -- why not? And then he proudly offers up the final item: Mellish's knife.

STEAMBOAT WILLIE

Ich hab' sogar ein amerikanisches Armeemesser.

UPHAM

He just traded your knife...

MELLISH

Son of a bitch...

The transaction goes down -- Dieter carves off hunks of bacon, slabs of cheese, sausages, half a loaf of bread, a few tins of sardines. Steamboat Willie gathers it all up.

STEAMBOAT WILLIE

War mir ein Vergnügen, mit Euch Geschäfte zu machen.

DIETER

Jederzeit...

Steamboat Willie ducks back down, re-joins Miller and the others in the ditch. There's a pause, everybody staring at the food as if it were the Grail itself...and then Steamboat Willie earns a few grateful smiles, a nod or two of growing respect -- wow, that was good, you actually pulled it off...

The food is passed around, bitten into, torn apart, consumed. No mistaking the joy in the faces of these men -- hell, we got us a feast! Hey, pass that cheese...whoa, slow down on the salami, I haven't had any yet...

...and suddenly there's frantic scurrying in the clearing behind them, some fast whispering:

GERMANS

(various, ad-lib)

Stell's ab...Scheisse, er kommt...

The Germans kill the shortwave, hide their stuff, scramble to look soldierly...

...as MAJOR HOESS strolls into the clearing. He's a frosty bastard, an S.S. tank commander in black Panzer gear, the Aryan ideal -- blond, flinty blue eyes, broad shoulders, perfect posture. He peers around, speaks ever so softly:

HOESS

Ich dachte, ich hör Musik. Benny Goodman.

He gives them a faint, steely smile. I must have imagined it. Good thing, too...for all your sakes. He walks on...

...right past our GIs in the ditch. His boots pass a mere foot or two above their heads...and then he's gone, leaving one thought on everybody's minds. Sarge whispers it to Miller:

SARGE

What happens in the morning? They'll see us at first light...

Miller has no answer for them. Everybody falls silent as we

DISSOLVE TO:

Fog. Glorious, wonderful fog. Thick as pea-soup.

We hear DIESEL ENGINES ROAR. A HUGE SHAPE goes by -- a tank. In its wake trudges German infantry, though we see them only as vague shapes. It's dawn, the Germans are leaving...

BOOM DOWN to Miller and his men in the ditch. They're holding their breath, listening to the Germans depart, scarcely able to believe their good luck.

CUT TO:

EXT - FIELD - MORNING

An empty field - except for one solitary tree - surrounded by hedgerows. The fog has lifted. In the b.g. the men get their gear together, get ready to move out.

Steamboat Willie stands facing Miller and the men, waiting. Miller looks to Upham.

MILLER

I don't want him to see what direction we go, so he's gonna walk with a blindfold for a while. Just tell him to go a thousand paces, then he can take it off.

UPHAM

Wit werden dir dis Augen verbinden. Lauf' eintausend Schritte, dann kannst du die Binde abnemen.

Steamboat Willie nods, pauses.

STEAMBOAT WILLIE

Tut mir leid fur den Mann, den ihr verloren habt. Den Sanitater. Das ist halt Krieg, nicht wahr?

UPHAM

He says he's sorry about Wade. He just wanted us to know that.

Miller nods at Steamboat Willie, then motions for him to turn around. Miller blindfolds him, taps his shoulder. Steamboat Willie starts to walk.

Reiben looks up from his pack, sees Steamboat Willie heading across the open field.

REIBEN

We're letting him go?

MILLER

Alright, everybody on their feet.

Reiben walks over to Miller now.

REIBEN

We're letting him go?

MILLER

We can't take him with us.

REIBEN

Sir, he's the enemy.

MILLER

I'm aware of that, Reiben.

REIBEN

So he gets to go home to his family while we go off to get blown away on some fucked up Public Relations stunt...

MILLER

That's enough, Reiben. Get your pack on. We're moving out.

REIBEN

You let the enemy go, sir!

MILLER

I said, we're moving out!

Miller turns to go. Reiben stays where he is.

REIBEN

No, sir.

Miller pauses, looks back. All of the men are watching now.

REIBEN

We're all of us here to fight the enemy, not go save some asshole's life so his mother feels better!

Reiben starts walking the other way.

REIBEN

I'm going back to fight the fucking war.

SARGE

Reiben, fall in!

REIBEN

No, sir. I'll spend my life in Levenworth, I have to, but I'm not going with you.

Miller looks about at the other men. They're not sure what to do. It's clear they'd like to follow Reiben.

MELLISH

I can't say as I understand the logic of it myself, sir.

UPHAM

We don't even have a way back, sir, once we do find him. Maybe if we had a tank...

Miller looks at Jackson.

JACKSON

It don't make sense, Captain. It's a waste a manpower.

And now Mellish and Jackson are walking with Reiben. Miller turns to Sarge.

SARGE

They're not wrong. It doesn't make sense anymore. Caparzo, Wade. Who's next? You said yourself Ryan's not worth it.

(then)

Be easy to end this mission right now. Just tell 'em we couldn't find the guy. No one'd be the wiser.

MILLER

You saying you want to go back, Sarge?

SARGE

I'm saying Reiben's right. We're here to fight the war.

Miller looks past Sarge, watches the men who one by one start walking away from him. Reiben looks back...

REIBEN

Don't make it go like this, sir. Come with us.

JACKSON

(backing away)

Come on, Captain, lead us back to where they need us most.

But Miller doesn't move. The men resume walking. He looks at Sarge who's in agony now, not sure what to do, who to follow. Finally...

MILLER

I'm an English teacher.

All of the men stop cold. Turn around and look at Miller.

MILLER

I teach high school in Addley, Pennsylvania.

UPHAM

I knew it.

They all give him a look. Miller takes a step towards them now.

MILLER

Back home, I tell someone what I do, they'd say it figures. But here... it's a big surprise.

(then)

I guess I've changed.

The men don't move as Miller considers them all a moment. Then-

MILLER

I wonder sometimes if my wife were watching me here, if she would know me. Or even still wanna marry me.

Reiben turns to Mellish and mouths the word "Wife?"

MILLER

Yes, Reiben I have a wife. And a mother.

REIBEN

Kids, sir?

MILLER

I have students. And I think if you were to ask them to describe me, most of them would probably use words like "good" or "kind" or "decent." Words that have no meaning here. Words that I've had to forget in order to survive, and to lead.

Or at least I thought I'd forgotten until this mission came along. And as much as I'd like to turn around and go back, dammit if those words won't let me.

So now I can't help thinking: what if this is what the whole war's been about for us? What if we look back on this as old men, assuming we live, and figure that saving Private Ryan was the one decent thing we were able to pull out of this whole godawful shitty mess.

(beat)

Maybe then, we'll have earned the right to go back home and carry on with our lives.

No one says a word. Miller stands there a moment, facing his men, watching them watching him.

REIBEN

An English teacher, sir?

MILLER

That's right.

REIBEN

Sir, I enlisted to get away from people like you.

Reiben smiles now. As does Miller.

MILLER

I also coach the baseball team.

This gets the rest of them smiling.

SARGE

All right, fall in.

As the men do, Miller picks up his pack, gets ready to roll when--

MELLISH

For cryin' out loud...



They all follow Mellish's gaze, look off and see Steamboat Willie's walking blindfolded toward the one solitary tree in the field.

MELLISH

Don't even tell me he's gonna hit that tree.

REIBEN

He's gonna hit the tree.

SARGE

Nah. That'd be too weird.

UPHAM

I think Reiben's right, he is.

JACKSON

Buck says he misses.

MELLISH

I'll take that action.

SARGE

Me, too.

They all pull out cash as...

STEAMBOAT WILLIE

Is walking stoically, unaware that he's heading for the tree. He gets nearer and nearer the tree... Everybody's holding their breath...

Steamboat Willie goes past the tree missing it by a foot.

REIBEN

Aw, shit!

JACKSON

Told you so.

MELLISH

C'mon, pay up!

The bets are settled, money changes hands amidst laughter and grumbling. Sarge exchanges a look with Miller. Both men are relieved.

MILLER

All right, let's move.

The men look back at Steamboat Willie. He's about ten paces past the tree when he suddenly trips over a rock, falling flat on his face. We hear from a distance.

STEAMBOAT WILLIE

Scheiss!

He pushes to his feet, no longer sure what direction he's going. He starts off again - right back toward the tree.

MELLISH

Oh, no, you gotta be kidding me.

BONK! Steamboat Willie smacks right into the tree, knocks himself on his ass. A howl of LAUGHTER goes up from the men as the winnings are reversed.

Steamboat Willie stands up again, straightens his tunic. He walks off again, shoulders straight, all the time maintaining his dignity.

REIBEN

Ten bucks says he falls flat on his face again.

Silence. No takers. It's dawning on everybody the fun they've been having at Steamboat Willie's expense.

JACKSON

If he does, I don't wanna see it.

THE GROUP MOVES ON AS WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - COUNTRYSIDE (NEARING RAMELLE) - DAY

Miller and the men trudge wearily into view. They pause, gazing down...and CAMERA COMES AROUND to reveal Ramelle less than half a mile away. Things seem quiet down there.

EXT - FIELD/OUTSKIRTS OF RAMELLE - DAY

The GIs are approaching town through a field of tall grass. All seems very still and silent here, unusually so. There's nothing to greet them so far but buzzing insects.

REIBEN

You know, sir, I'm still gonna make the son of a bitch carry my B.A.R. all the way back to the beach for me.

JACKSON

Reiben? Anyone ever tell you you're unpleasant to be around sometimes?

SARGE

Why can't you children be more like Upham? Look, he's carrying all the ammo plus the radio - you don't hear him complaining, do you?

UPHAM

Actually, sir, I was just thinking...

Everybody rolls their eyes, expects the worst.

UPHAM

...that I'm so tired of this goddamn walking, I'd pay a thousand dollars to see Ryan crawl through a river of camel shit just hear my great-aunt Martha fart "Yankee Doodle" through a field phone.

The men are shocked and impressed into momentary silence. Miller finally nods approvingly.

MILLER

Very nice, Corporal.

REIBEN

Guy's a natural.

The SOUND OF AN ENGINE brings their heads around. A GERMAN HALF-TRACK comes out of nowhere, barreling across the field with a SIX MAN SQUAD OF SUPPORTING INFANTRY running through the grass. A GERMAN GUNNER on the half-track OPENS FIRE with a MOUNTED MACHINE GUN...

The GIs take off running in the direction of town, crashing through the tall grass as BULLETS WHINE like hornets...

They reach a drainage culvert, beyond which are railroad tracks. They jump into the culvert, sliding down as bullets CHEW the lip, missing them by inches...

...they splash across the thin trickle of muddy water at the bottom of the culvert, try to scramble up the other side to the railroad tracks above...

...but MACHINE GUN BULLETS SHATTER the wooden ties, driving them back down into the ditch. Desperation time -- they're stuck in the culvert with the half-track bearing down on them from the field side, plus the six Germans on foot...

There's nothing they can do except take the bastards on. They thrust their weapons over the lip of the culvert and OPEN FIRE...for all the good it does. The half-track keeps coming with MACHINE GUN BLAZING...forty yards...thirty...twenty...

VOICE (O.S.)

HEADS DOWN!

They whirl around in surprise as --

-- a FLASH OF BAZOOKA BLOWBACK sends a projectile right over their heads. WHAM! It nails the half-track dead on, rips it apart with a FIERY BLAST. The vehicle somersaults forward in flames, flips upside-down, skids to a stop at the edge of the ditch right in front of their noses.

And before Miller and the others can so much as blink ---- FOUR AIRBORNE TROOPERS lunge up out of the grass like phantoms and OPEN FIRE with submachine guns, raking the German infantrymen off their feet...

Silence. Miller and his men are stunned. They gaze up at the YOUNG PARATROOPER with the smoking bazooka who just saved their lives. He's tall and athletic, a good-looking blond kid kneeling on the railroad tracks, looking down at them with a touch of amusement in his eyes.

RYAN

I'm Ryan. Who are you?

OFF THEIR STUNNED LOOKS, WE

CUT TO:

EXT - RAMELLE BRIDGE - DAY

The town lies in shattered ruin from Allied bombing. Miller and his men approach the bridge escorted by Ryan and the four troopers from the field -- SANDERS, TOYNBE, WELLER, O'TOOLE.

OTHER PARATROOPERS watch them approach, a few even melting out of the woodwork as they pass. The bridge is where most of the men are; it's clearly the key spot being held. There are two heavily sandbagged machine gun emplacements -- one at each end of the bridge.

We're seeing just over a dozen paratroopers in total, all privates. And as tired as Miller and his men are, these guys look worse -- haggard, unshaven, some wounded. They look like the settlers in some western who've been holding the fort against constant Apache raids.

## ON THE BRIDGE

Miller's group arrives at the bridge. CORPORAL HENDERSON (the only non-private) moves from the sandbag emplacement to meet them, flanked by RICE and TRASK.

HENDERSON

Sir, if you're our relief, I'm filing a complaint.

MILLER

Can't say I blame you. Who's your commanding officer?

Henderson cocks his head. Miller turns to look. SEVERAL DOZEN CORPSES lie covered with tarps along the riverbank.

HENDERSON

That would have been Captain Jennings, sir. I'm afraid the best we can muster right now is a corporal -- that's me, Henderson.

(beat)

What are you guys doing here?

Miller nods his head at Ryan.

MILLER

We came looking for him.

RYAN

(surprised)

Me?

MILLER

James Francis Ryan? From Iowa?

RYAN

Yeah, Peyton, Iowa. What's this about?

MILLER

I'm sorry to have to tell you this, James. Your brothers have all been killed in action.

A pause as Ryan tries to absorb this. Softly:

RYAN

On the level?

MILLER

'Fraid so.

The tough paratrooper melts away, replaced by the teenage boy who just found out that the brothers he grew up with...and loved deeply...are dead.

It's certainly worth a few tears. He sheds them fairly stoically under the circumstances. The others wait. Some of Ryan's buddies look away, feeling bad. Let him get it out.

He wipes his eyes, finds his voice:

RYAN

You came all the way out here just to tell me that?

MILLER

(shakes his head)

They're sending you home. We have orders to bring you back.

RYAN

Bring me back, sir?

Miller nods. It takes Ryan a few moments to process it. It doesn't seem to make much sense to him either.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Thing is... I have orders too. And they don't include deserting my post.

MILLER

(beat)

I understand, but this changes things.

RYAN

I don't see that it does, sir.

MILLER

The Chief of Staff of the United States Army says it does.

(to all of them)

Look, you guys have been hanging on by your fingernails. Why don't you all fall back?

HENDERSON

Our orders are to hold this bridge at all costs...to the last man, if necessary. If all else fails, as an absolute last resort, we blow it up.

MILLER

Okay. Why don't we just skip the middle part and go straight to the blowing up? That way we can all get the hell out of here.

HENDERSON

Unacceptable, sir. Our people need this bridge intact, if at all possible.

Miller considers this, turns to Ryan:

MILLER

These guys want to stay, fine. But it's not your party anymore--

RYAN

--it damn well is--

MILLER

--it damn well isn't. Now I'm only saying this once, Private. You grab your gear and report within five minutes, we are moving out--

RYAN

I'm afraid I ref--

MILLER

--and don't even think of trying to refuse that order! You are denied that option!

RYAN

I don't think so, sir!

REIBEN

Hey, asshole, two of our people died looking for you!

RYAN

That supposed to be my fault?

REIBEN

You're goddamn right it is!

MILLER

Ryan, get your gear and I mean now.

RYAN

No, sir.

MILLER

That is a direct order.

RYAN

Which I am refusing, sir.

REIBEN

(seething)

I say we take the son of a bitch anyway.

RYAN

What are you gonna do, shoot me?

REIBEN

There's an idea.

RYAN

Come on, infantry, try it!

Now they have to be separated. Miller gets between everybody. Both sides are overheated, ready to go at it - some men are even tensing up with weapons.

Miller sees the volatility of the situation and holds up his hands, backing both sides off.

MILLER

Awright! Everybody count to ten!

He notices Upham scared, holding his M-1 at port arms.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Stand down, you idiot. These are Americans. You're not allowed to shoot them.

Upham lowers the rifle. Miller pauses, taking deep breaths, calming down. He regards Ryan dourly, motions to him.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Can I have a word with you? Sarge, you want to sit in on this?

Ryan hesitates, joins them. They walk past Miller's men to the mouth of the bridge where they can talk privately. Sarge hovers just within earshot as:

MILLER (CONT'D)

I've been getting people killed ever since I set foot in this goddamn cheese-eating country. Why can't you be the exception?

RYAN

Would you go?



MILLER

(beat)

Absolutely. I would absolutely go.

Ryan searches Miller's eyes...and smiles.

RYAN

You're not a very good liar, sir.

Miller blinks -- nobody ever accused him of that before.

RYAN

Sir, my mother doesn't know that less than five miles down the road are about a hundred guys who are gonna get their asses kicked if we let the Germans roll across this bridge. If she knew that, I believe she'd want me to stay put.

MILLER

And is that what I'm supposed to tell her, she gets another flag?

RYAN

No, sir. It comes to it, you can tell her that when you found me, I was with the only brothers I had left. And that there was no way I was deserting them. I think she'd understand that.

Ryan turns, walks back past Miller's men, rejoins the paratroopers at the barricade. Miller's completely at a loss, stares off across the river. Sarge moves to his side, still speaking privately:

SARGE

What are your orders, sir?

MILLER

Sergeant. We have crossed some strange boundary. Life has taken a turn for the surreal.

SARGE

Clearly, sir. But the question stands.

MILLER

What do you think?

SARGE

You don't really want to know, sir.

MILLER

Mike. I really do.

SARGE

From what I can see, the only way the kid's gonna come with us is if we shoot him... but that kinda defeats the whole purpose of the mission, don't you think?

MILLER

Unless we shoot him in the leg or something.

Sarge looks at Miller.

MILLER

Just a thought.

Miller turns, goes back to the others. Everybody waits for him to speak.

MILLER

How do you propose to prevent the Germans from crossing this bridge?

HENDERSON

What's it to you, sir?

MILLER

It's become obvious to me that staying is the only hope I have of keeping Private Ryan alive.

The men are stunned, especially Reiben:

REIBEN

You gotta be shitting me--!

Miller whirls, cuts him off fiercely:

MILLER

You wanted to fight the war, Reiben, now's your chance.

(turns back)

Tell me the plan.

HENDERSON

We've got the machine gun emplacements you see...plus we mined the road through town...

MILLER

Machine guns and mines. Good, that'll slow 'em down for thirty seconds, what else?

(off their silence)

You think they're gonna come at us with donkey carts? If this bridge is vital to us, you can be damn sure it's vital to them. So far they've been picking on you with a little infantry, but when they come for real, they'll be coming with tanks. Now exactly what do we intend to do about it?

OFF THEIR LOOKS, WE

CUT TO:

Weapons and explosives are laid out on the ground, arrayed for inspection. ANGLE UP to Miller and Sarge as:

TRASK

This is everything. Five thirty caliber machine guns, seventeen grenades, eleven anti-personnel mines, four bazookas with less than a dozen rounds, the flamethrower, assorted M-1s and Thompsons...

RICE

Might as well be pea-shooters if they roll on us with tanks.

Everybody knows he's right. Sarge notices Miller staring off down the road that curves from sight through town.

SARGE

What are you thinking, sir?

MILLER

I'm thinking they're gonna come rolling right up the middle of that road and flatten us...

(points)

...unless we can disable the lead tank there...between those buildings, where the rubble makes a bottleneck.

RYAN

Disable him?

MILLER

Yeah, you know, turn him into a 60 ton roadblock. We do that, the tanks behind him will have to leave the road and try to get around. That means plowing through some buildings.

Tall order, even for tanks. The others are starting to get it, to see the potential:

HENDERSON

Yeah. We can split 'em up that way, make 'em more vulnerable... take 'em on while they're bogged down in the rubble...

MILLER

...right, hit 'em hard, one on one, keep falling back toward the bridge.

SARGE

I'd say three machine gun teams to pin down their infantry...two for displacement, number three up in the belltower. Piss a little bad news down on their heads.

MILLER

Good idea. Jackson, you could use some company up there, right?

JACKSON

I'm guessing that makes me spotter?

MILLER

Well, I was hoping you could pin the tail on a few German officers for me, long as you're up there.

Jackson flexes his wounded arm. Miller looks for reactions.

REIBEN

It's not the worst idea ever, sir...it's just that everything depends on knocking out that lead tank, right?

(Miller nods)

How exactly do we do that?

SARGE

Reiben's right. As our esteemed colleague in Airborne pointed out, what we got here are peashooters. So how do we stop the tank?

MILLER

Sticky bomb.

That puts a pause in the conversation. Everybody looks at Miller like he's nuts.

RYAN

Sticky bomb, sir?

HENDERSON

You're making that up.

MILLER

It's in the manual of arms, you can check it yourself.

RYAN

We would, sir, if we had a manual of arms handy. Lacking one, perhaps you could enlighten us.

MILLER

You have TNT?

TOYNBE

That's the one thing we got plenty of. Stanz and I wired the bridge with enough combination B to blow it up twice.

MILLER

Then you can spare some. What you do is, you take a standard issue GI sock, cram as much TNT into it as you can, rig a simple fuse, then coat the whole thing with axle grease. That way, when you throw it, it sticks. Sticky bomb.

(off their looks)

You think of another way to knock the treads off a tank?

Looks are traded -- no, they can't.

REIBEN

Great. Now we gotta give up our socks.

CUT TO:

SEQUENCE OF BATTLE PREPARATIONS: UNDER THE BRIDGE

Toynbe and Stanz are dangling in harnesses under the bridge, working on a network of ropes. They're pulling down TNT charges, handing them across to Sanders and O'Toole, who relay them up to --

## ON THE BRIDGE

-- Upham and Mellish, who bring them to Miller and a row of men. There's a sticky bomb assembly line happening. Sarge stuffs a sock full of TNT, hands it off to someone.

SARGE

I feel like goddamn Santa Claus...

## CHURCH BELLTOWER

Jackson emerges from the trapdoor, turns back, takes his sniper rifle as somebody hands it up. Next comes a thirty caliber machine gun. CAMERA SHIFTS to the trapdoor to reveal Parker and Weller on the ladder below, relaying up ammo belts, satchels of supplies...

## IN THE RUBBLE

Machine Gun Team #1 consists of two Airborne troopers named LYLE and FALLON. They're picking a spot, settling in, sighting their barrel down the street. Upham appears with four ammo belts, gives them two, moves on...

...and we follow him as he hurries through the rubble to Machine Gun Team #2: Mellish and Henderson are positioning their weapon "inside" a collapsed building, angling the muzzle through what used to be a window. Mellish starts oiling the bolt, working it back and forth.

MELLISH

Upham, listen to me. You listening? When the shit comes down, we'll be displacing and falling back like crazy sons of bitches, so you gotta be Johnny-on-the-spot with the ammo, understand?

Upham takes a deep breath, nods. Mellish ruffles his hair.

MELLISH (CONT'D)

We're gonna kick ass.

## MOUTH OF THE BRIDGE

Miller strides from town with a group that includes Sarge and Henderson, checking angles of fire. They stop at the first sandbagged emplacement just past the bridge entrance.

MILLER

Machine gun number four looks good right here...not bad for a forward position...

He looks out across the bridge to the emplacement at the far end. Machine gun #5.

MILLER (CONT'D)

That one over there? That's the Alamo.  
They push us back that far...last man  
alive blows the bridge.

TOYNBE

We got a 30 second delay on the switch.  
If you're that last man, better get off  
the bridge fast or you won't be alive for  
long.

The others nod grimly. Ryan looks to Miller.

RYAN

Where am I during all this?

MILLER

Never more than two feet away from me.  
That's not negotiable.

ALONG THE STREET

Demolition teams are carefully hiding the anti-personnel mines along walls, behind shutters, in window boxes. They're angling the devices to blow out into the street on the horizontal to take down some infantry...

IN THE RUBBLE

Men are picking positions, hunkering in the rubble, finding lines of sight toward the street...

CHURCH BELLTOWER

Parker's got himself a machine gun nest now, muzzle aimed down

Through the balusters. ANGLE TO Jackson as he sweeps his sniper rifle up and over the balustrade, targeting one end of the street to the other, eye pressed to the scope, checking freedom of movement. He does it again, practicing the move...

SEQUENCE ENDS AS WE

CUT TO:

INT. BUILDING NEAREST THE BRIDGE - SAME

We see the bridge through one window, the square through another. Miller and Ryan have just finished clearing away some of the rubble to create a position for themselves.

Miller takes a drink from a canteen, tosses it to Ryan, then looks out the window at the bridge. His hand is shaking. He stares at it as...

Ryan sits down, pulls a PHOTOGRAPH from his pocket and looks at it.

RYAN

The hardest part is remembering their faces. It wasn't all that long ago I saw them, but for some reason I can't picture 'em in my head anymore.

Miller stares at his hand.

RYAN

This was the last time we were all together. Two Christmases ago.

He moves to show Miller the photograph when he sees him over by the window staring at his hand.

RYAN

You alright, sir?

Miller comes out of his trance, looks at Ryan.

MILLER

Just nerves is all.

Ryan looks at Miller a moment, then...

RYAN

Somehow I don't see you as the type to get a bout of bugs right before a fight.

Miller looks back out the window.

MILLER

I don't think any man in his right mind looks forward to a fight.

RYAN

How do you get yourself ready?

MILLER

I try to look at the bright side.



RYAN

And does that actually work?

MILLER

It has so far.

RYAN

And what's the bright side in this case, sir?

MILLER

I don't know yet.

Ryan nods, watches Miller a moment. Then:

RYAN

Is it true you were a teacher back home?

MILLER

Yep.

RYAN

I thought about teaching. My brother's used to joke that I should be a priest. They said I was the type, whatever that means. That I could see into people. Some ways, I guess there's not much difference between a classroom and a congregation.

MILLER

No, not much.

RYAN

Two problems with being a priest, though. One, you can't have a girlfriend or get married or even just make out once in a while.

MILLER

That is a problem.

RYAN

And two, you have to believe in God. And I don't know for sure that I do.

Miller looks at Ryan.

RYAN

I know for sure God's not the one who decides who lives or dies. It's guys like you. Or even Corporal Henderson, things got that far. I don't think God could handle the pressure of that, do you?

MILLER

I don't know.

RYAN

I guess what I'm saying, I were you, I had to go back home after all of this, my hand would shake, too. Hell, my whole damn body would shake.

This gets Miller looking at Ryan now.

RYAN

It's kind of ironic you think about it.

MILLER

What's that?

RYAN

You're not afraid of the war, you're afraid to go home.

Miller considers this kid, this farmboy from Iowa. He shakes his head.

MILLER

You know what, Ryan? I think your brothers were right. You should be a priest.

Ryan smiles, nods.

MILLER

Let's see that picture.

But something stops Miller. He looks out the window, listening, his smile fading.

CHURCH BELLTOWER

As Jackson hears it, too, looks off in the distance.

THE OTHER POSITIONS

Some of the men are starting to hear it now...they're pausing, listening.

## INT. MILLER'S POSITION

As now we hear the DEEP RUMBLE OF DIESEL ENGINES coming this way. A pause, a breathless hush...

MILLER

Here they come.

## CHURCH BELLTOWER

Jackson and Parker are tense as hell as the RUMBLING GROWS EVER LOUDER. DIESEL FUMES are rippling over the rooftops, coming this way, distorting the air with heat haze.

## VARIOUS ANGLES IN TOWN

As the Americans prepare. Cocking weapons. Sighting down muzzles. Crouching in debris. Ducking past broken shutters.

## MILLER'S POSITION

As Sarge comes in with Toynbe, tosses Miller a pair of binoculars. Miller looks out the window--

## BINOCULAR POV: BELLTOWER

-- and brings Jackson into focus. Jackson's peering off through his rifle scope to see what's coming.

## IN THE BELLTOWER

JACKSON

I'm seeing Tigers. Two of 'em.

Parker relays this using hands signals -- he holds up two fingers, then makes a "T" with his hands...

## MILLER

Has his binoculars riveted to the belltower. Parker holds up two fingers again, and this time makes a "P."

MILLER

Two tigers. Two panzers. Four total.

## MELLISH AND HENDERSON

Are at their machine gun, also watching the belltower.

MELLISH

Tigers. Shit. It hadda be Tigers.

## VARIOUS ANGLES

The ground itself is starting to vibrate. Bits of plaster and debris start breaking loose, drifting from the rafters...

## THE LEAD TANK

Looms into view around the curve of the street...huge. A King Tiger. It rumbles and clanks like a prehistoric monster, treads Crushing the cobblestones to dust. Riding the turret is a haughty S.S. tank commander we've seen before -- Major Hoess. TANK #2 now looms into sight: another Tiger. On the heels of that come TANKS #3 and #4: a pair of Panzers.

Trooping along in the wake of the armor is a COMPANY OF WEHRMACHT INFANTRY about a hundred men strong. Steamboat Willie is among them, toting a Schmeisser.

## CHURCH BELLTOWER

Jackson and Parker peer down as the procession passes awesomely below. It looks like really bad news from up here.

JACKSON

Grant me Strength, Lord.

PARKER

Me, too.

## SIX "STICKY BOMB" MEN

Are hidden in various positions along both sides of the street, sticky bombs ready. Reiben is one of them...plus Wilson, Henderson, Weller, Garrity, Trask. The bombs are gooey and bizarre, like big globs of grease with fuses.

## MILLER'S GROUP

Toynbe's got his hand on a detonator switch, eyes riveted to Miller, waiting for the signal. Miller has his hand poised, watching the lead tank get closer...wait...wait...wait...

...now. Toynbe throws the switch --

## ANGLE ON STREET

-- and thunderous hell breaks loose as the ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES DETONATE massively along both sides of the street. The

walls blow out toward the infantry, taking them down with concussion and shrapnel, killing at least a dozen men...

The MACHINE GUNS OPEN FIRE at the same moment, turning the street into a killing zone:

MACHINE GUN #1: Lyle and Fallon are raking the street from one direction...

MACHINE GUN #2: Mellish and Henderson hammer the infantry from another direction...

MACHINE GUN #3: Parker is spraying the street from up in the belltower, raining bullets down on the Germans. Jackson is next to him, drawing a sniper's bead on Major Hoess...

#### THE LEAD TANK

Major Hoess ducks down into the turret and pulls the hatch shut...just as Jackson's bullet WHANGS off the metal. Missed the bastard. The tank keeps rolling as:

#### THE SIX STICKY BOMBERS

Swarm from the rubble on both sides of the street, fuses smoking, running alongside the tank. They hurl their sticky bombs onto the treads -- then veer off and run like hell, scrambling back into the rubble, trying to gain precious seconds. Tank #2 OPENS FIRE on them with its forward machine gun. Wilson is TORN BY BULLETS and goes down...

WHAM-WHAM-WHAM-WHAM-WHAM-WHAM! The sticky bombs DETONATE, blowing gouts of flame sideways over both sides of the street, and for an unnerving moment or two we figure nothing happened because the tank just keeps going ---- but then the tread rips apart on one side, throwing up massive steel links. The tank skids, slewing to one side, wheels spinning. It stops, tries going in reverse -- but that throws even more tread off...

The lead tank just became a 60 ton roadblock (though still able to fire). The other tanks jam up behind, slamming on their brakes.

#### INSIDE THE TANKS

TANK CREWS are shouting, looking for targets, trying to find a way around. A VOICE cuts through the noise on the radio:

HOESS

(filtered on radio)

Dreht die Kanonen um!

#### ALL FOUR TANK TURRETS

Start cranking, muzzles coming around and leveling at the surrounding buildings.

## IN THE CRIPPLED LEAD TANK

Major Hoess finds a target, hollers into his headset:

HOESS (CONT'D)

FEUER!

## THE TANKS

Start BLASTING at the surrounding buildings, punching storms of debris through the air, each muzzle-blast a thunderclap.

## MILLER'S POSITION

Miller and the others are ducking and covering as debris hurtles and the tanks FIRE AWAY b.g.

## THE AMERICANS

Scramble and dive in the rubble as the tanks methodically blast the living shit out of the area. An EXPLOSION catches O'toole on the run, killing him instantly.

## THE GERMAN INFANTRY

Is scrambling, pulling their wounded off the road, swarming into the rubble, taking cover, OPENING FIRE...

## THE THREE REAR TANKS

Start backing up, still FIRING as they go. Stanz rears from the rubble with a bazooka, FIRES at Tank #2. The projectile WHOOSHES, deflects off the turret, EXPLODES against the building opposite -- and the building collapses, dropping a ton of wall down on the tank. Tank #2 lurches, keeps backing up, getting clear of the debris. Muzzle cranking this way. Still operational. Stanz runs for it. WHUMP! The EXPLOSION is stunning. We don't even see what happened to Stanz.

The tanks lurch forward and veer off in various directions, leaving the road and heading through the rubble.

## MILLER

Sees it happening, shouts to the others:

MILLER

Let's go!

## IN THE RUBBLE

The German infantry is trying to press forward. The Americans are hitting them with everything they've got:

MACHINE GUN TEAM #1

Is hammering them with bullets...but the Germans are pressing closer, threatening to overwhelm them.

LYLE

DISPLACE!

They use rags to pick up the machine gun -- the barrel's hot enough to char the cloth. They fall back to another spot...

UPHAM

Comes racing through the rubble with ammo belts, terrified as the world gets shot to pieces around him. He comes to Mellish and Henderson as they also get pushed back:

MELLISH

DISPLACING!

They haul the sizzling-hot machine gun off its perch, fall back frantically under heavy fire. They come to a new spot, slam the machine gun down, RESUME FIRING...

CHURCH BELLTOWER

Parker BLAZES AWAY with his machine gun. Jackson's got his eye to his scope, picking targets below, FIRING.

Jackson ducks back as BULLETS CHEW the lip of the balustrade to splinters. Parker gives him a tense look -

PARKER

They know we're up here.

IN THE RUBBLE

Miller appears, flattens against a wall. Here comes Tank #3, a Panzer, plowing through what used to be somebody's living room in an eruption of shattering plaster and lathe.

The tank reaches a stone wall and bogs down, grinding against rock, struggling to get through. Miller turns, motions -- Rice and Sanders race past him with sticky bombs, bobbing through the rubble. Ryan tries to go too, but:

MILLER

Not you.

Ryan wants to argue, but they see German infantry coming. They OPEN FIRE to cover Sanders and Rice, pinning the Germans down.

The tank is maneuvering, grinding, moments from battering through. Sanders and Rice come running and ducking. They pause at the tank, get the fuses going ---- and one of the sticky bombs DETONATES PREMATURELY. Sanders and Rice literally VAPORIZE. The BLAST knocks over walls and slams Miller and Ryan to the ground.

They roll over, stunned and horrified...as the Panzer grinds on, unharmed.

#### THE BATTLE

Rages on in the rubble. The German infantry is swarming, FIRING, pushing forward by inches or yards...

The machine gun teams are HAMMERING AWAY at them, displacing, falling back, hammering away again. Upham is shuttling ammo to both teams, running like crazy through the rubble...

Trask surprises a SQUAD OF ADVANCING GERMANS with the FLAMETHROWER, hosing a stunning stream of fire through the rubble, setting men afire in a hell of mushrooming smoke...

The tanks keep plowing inexorably along, battering their way through, turrets swiveling, picking targets, FIRING and taking down obstacles in their path almost at random...

#### ANGLE ON TANK #4

The other Panzer. Here it comes, grinding through the rubble. Sticky bombers swarm out to ambush it -- Reiben, Weller, Toyne, Garrity. They slam-dunk their bombs onto the treads and run like hell --WHAM-WHAM-WHAM-WHAM! The sticky bombs shoot GOUTS OF FLAME, knocking Reiben head-over-heels into the rubble...

He rises on his elbows, dazed, trying to clear his head. He turns, rolls over to look at the tank ---- and is horrified to see it come through unharmed, still rolling. It swerves toward him. He scrambles desperately, Trying to get out of its path, but his head's still spinning and he's not going to make it --A bazooka projectile WHOOSHES up the tank's ass and blows out the engine. The tank stutters and hitches, groans to a stop.



Reiben looks past the tank -- and sees Stanz about twenty yards back. Stanz is filthy, covered with soot, perched on some rubble with a smoking bazooka in his hands. Their eyes meet for a moment -- Stanz gives him a shy little smile -- and then he's gone, ducking out of sight like a ferret.

The turret hatch lifts. A PANZER CREWMAN pops up with a Luger, shoots Toyne dead. He turns, sees Reiben, aims...and a BULLET BLOWS through the crewman's chest, killing him instantly.

Reiben looks around, realizes the shot came from:

THE CHURCH BELLTOWER

Jackson just saved Reiben's ass. He works his rifle bolt and turns away, scanning for other targets...

JACKSON

Blessed be the Lord my strength, which  
teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers  
to fight--

REIBEN

Is stunned. His life's been saved twice within a span of moments. He joins the others as they swarm up onto the tank. CREWMAN #2 is emerging, but Weller shoots him. Pins are popped, grenades tossed in. A CONCUSSIVE BLAST kicks up.

THE CHURCH BELLTOWER

Jackson has his eye to the scope, scanning the street for another target...

JACKSON

My goodness and my fortress; my high  
tower, and my deliverer; my shield and he  
in whom I--

RIFLE SCOPE POV

...and he brings the crippled lead tank into view, still blocking the middle of the street. The Tiger's turret is cranking around, the muzzle is raising -- right at the belltower.

JACKSON

Pulls his eye from the scope...

JACKSON

--trust.

a heartbeat of stunned horror as he realizes:

JACKSON

PARKER, RUN!

They scramble for the trapdoor, trying to get down, knowing they'll never make it in time...

THE CRIPPLED LEAD TANK

FIRES A THUNDERCLAP BLAST AND:

THE BELLTOWER

Vanishes in a STUNNING FIREBALL of hurtling debris. Gone.

THE CRIPPLED LEAD TANK

Adjusts its muzzle down -- and FIRES AGAIN, blowing the rest of the tower to smithereens. TILT DOWN to Mellish and Henderson in the rubble f.g., staring over their machine gun in horror.

MELLISH

Jackson! Goddamn it!

HENDERSON

(looks at the tank)

It ain't enough to knock the treads off!  
We gotta take the son of a bitch out!

Mellish FIRES A BURST, sends some Germans scurrying for cover.

MELLISH (CONT'D)

Yeah? How?

Henderson pulls a grenade. He's got an idea -- whatever it is, he's about to try it.

MELLISH (CONT'D)

You nuts? It's a Tiger! Grenades don't mean nothin'!

HENDERSON

Maybe. Keep me covered...

Henderson dashes toward the street, weaving through the rubble. Mellish KEEPS FIRING, pinning the Germans down.

Henderson crouches near the crippled tank, pulls the pin, holds the grenade tight. Waiting. The muzzle is turning, adjusting, seeking another target...

INSIDE THE TURRET

HOESS FINDS A TARGET AND:

HOESS

FEUER!

HENDERSON

Ducks, forearms pressed to his ears against the awesome MUZZLE BLAST. That's his cue -- he lunges over the rubble and runs straight at the tank. He jumps up and hooks his arm around the muzzle, slam-dunking the grenade down the barrel...

INSIDE THE TANK

...as a GERMAN CREWMAN opens the breach and extracts the spent shell casing...

INSIDE THE MUZZLE

...and the grenade comes rolling/clattering down the long dark tunnel of the barrel...

INSIDE THE TANK

...the crewman turns back with a fresh shell to reload -- and is stunned to see a grenade drop out of the breach at his feet. WHAM! The BLAST turns the screen white with a concussive hammerblow of echoing steel...

HENDERSON

Scrambles up on the tank with another grenade. The hatch opens with a billow of smoke. Major Hoess rises into view, bleeding from the ears and nose, in shock. Henderson drives him back down with an elbow to the face, drops the grenade in, slams the hatch. Another BLAST kicks up -- BOOM/CLANG!

MELLISH

Is truly stunned. Henderson jumps off the tank and runs back through the rubble, hollering and exultant --

HENDERSON

Holy shit, did you see that? Took those sons of bitches out--

-- and German MACHINE GUN BULLETS rip across him, spinning him dead to the ground.

MELLISH

HENDERSON!

Mellish RESUMES FIRING, screaming in anguish, raking bullets at the German positions...

...and his ammo belt runs out. That's the last of it. German bullets spatter the rubble, driving him down. He grabs an M-1 and falls back, running for his life...

IN ANOTHER AREA

Tank #2, the other Tiger, comes awesomely through a wall, ramping up and slamming back down again...

...as Miller and Ryan come running, ducking past shattered walls. They find Sarge and Garrity lying in wait for the tank. Garrity has a bazooka aimed.

SARGE  
AIM FOR THE TREADS!

Garrity FIRES. The projectile connects and EXPLODES -- but the tank keeps coming, unaffected.

MILLER  
FALL BACK! FALL BACK!

SARGE  
GO! GO!

They run for their lives as the Tiger comes crashing after them. The FORWARD MACHINE GUN OPENS FIRE, swiveling and chattering. Garrity gets shot in the back and goes down, the tank rolling right over him, grinding him under...

MACHINE GUN TEAM #1

Fallon and Lyle are on their last ammo belt. A potato-masher comes spinning toward them, EXPLODES. German soldiers swarm forward as the smoke clears, overrunning their position...

IN ANOTHER AREA

Mellish comes running with his M-1. He sees Upham ahead --

MELLISH  
UPHAM! RUN!

-- and suddenly a young German soldier darts into Mellish's path. Both men freeze, staring at each other.

The world stops for a heartbeat of time. Both men frozen.

They both swing their weapons up simultaneously. The German is faster -- BRRAAAAAAAP! Mellish is driven back as BULLETS SLAM a bloody pattern into his stomach. He goes down hard, dead before he even hits the ground.

The German spins, turning his Schmeisser on Upham -- but Upham has a .45 pistol aimed. BLAM!BLAM!BLAM! Massive holes punch into the German soldier's chest as he arcs back into the rubble, FIRING A BURST at the sky.

Upham stares at the two dead men in shock. Reiben appears at his side with his B.A.R., realizes what just happened.

REIBEN

C'mon, Upham, we gotta fall back.

Upham is slow to move. Reiben pulls him along, FIRING his B.A.R. to cover their retreat...

AREA LEADING TO SQUARE

Miller comes zig-zagging through the rubble with Ryan and Sarge, heading for the square...

...and here comes the Tiger bashing through. Trask hits it with the FLAMETHROWER. FIRE AND SMOKE mushroom skyward. Trask hits the trigger again -- and runs out of fuel. He frantically shrugs out of the harness, turns, runs for his life.

IN THE SQUARE

The surviving soldiers race into the square -- Miller, Ryan, Sarge, Trask. Reiben and Upham appear too, everybody heading for the bridge...

Weller's already there, in the forward sandbag emplacement, racking the bolt of the machine gun...

The Tiger BLOWS THROUGH A WALL with its cannon and comes thundering into the square, treads grinding through a massive turn. The forward MACHINE GUN OPENS FIRE, swiveling, tracking the runners...

THE RUNNERS

...but everybody else makes it to the emplacement, throwing themselves over as INCOMING MACHINE GUN FIRE rips the sandbags.

The Panzer enters down at the other end of the square. Both tanks closing in now, backed by some infantry.

Weller OPENS FIRE with the machine gun. Ryan snatches up a bazooka, lays it over the lip, aims for the Tiger. Miller loads, pounds him on the helmet. Ryan FIRES. The projectile EXPLODES ineffectually off the treads.

RYAN

Reload!

SARGE

We'll take it! You fall back!

Sarge gives Miller a look -- go, get him back there.

MILLER

You be right behind us!

SARGE

Count on it!

Ryan and Miller grab whatever they can, leaving the forward emplacement and racing across the bridge...

Sarge levels the bazooka over the sandbags. Reiben loads, pounds his shoulder. Sarge FIRES. This one also EXPLODES with no effect. Both tanks keep coming.

SARGE

FALL BACK!

They bail out in a big-ass hurry, grabbing whatever they can and running for it. Weller stays on the machine gun, BLASTING AWAY to provide some cover...

THE TIGER

Swivels its muzzle toward the emplacement...

WELLER

Abandons the machine gun, running after the others. The forward emplacement EXPLODES in a swirling ball of flame, sandbags, and debris. Weller is caught by the blast and thrown, dying as he slams off the pavement...

THE LAST SANDBAG EMPLACEMENT

At the far end of the bridge. The Alamo. Ryan and Miller come running and throw themselves over the sandbags. Miller grabs the last bazooka, hollers to Ryan:

MILLER

Connect those wires!

Miller lays the bazooka over the sandbags, waiting for the first tank.

Behind him, Ryan frantically connects the wires to the detonator, spinning the wingnuts...

Sarge and the others are running up the bridge toward us. Behind them, the Tiger lumbers hugely into view...

MILLER

RUN!

The Tiger's forward MACHINE GUN OPENS FIRE, ripping bullets up the pavement. The runners throw themselves in all directions for whatever cover they can find. Trask is hit in the leg and goes down. Sarge grabs him, drags him behind a buttress --

MILLER

DOWN!

-- as Miller FIRES THE BAZOOKA. The projectile rips down the length of bridge past the men and EXPLODES against the front of the Tiger. No effect. Miller desperately reloads as --

SARGE

GO! GO!

-- the men keep running, dragging Trask along the ground. The tank's machine gun OPENS FIRE AGAIN. Sarge is hit in the back and goes down.

REIBEN

SARGE!

MILLER

GODDAMN IT!

Miller FIRES THE BAZOOKA AGAIN. The last round. It EXPLODES off the tank as harmlessly as the others.

Reiben and Upham jump to their feet, now dragging two wounded men, going all out...

...and then the Tiger FIRES ITS CANNON. THE EXPLOSION TEARS THE WORLD APART, spinning it upside-down, ripping the air with heat and shrapnel...

...and everything goes quiet, as if the sound has drained out of the world. We're left with sounds that are remote, faint, surreal, disembodied...

SLOW MOTION SEQUENCE

...as we find Sarge dead through swirling dust. Somebody crawls to him -- it's Upham, dazed and disoriented, glasses cracked. He looks over and sees Reiben through a swirl of haze and smoke, using a bridge buttress for cover, one side of his face blackened. He's motioning -- c'mon, get off the middle of the bridge, for God's sakes. Upham looks back, sees:

#### THE MUZZLE OF THE TANK

Emerging from the smoke with a surreal howl...

#### UPHAM

Starts crawling, trying to get to Reiben...

#### THE SANDBAGGED EMPLACEMENT

Is a tumbled mess, everything strewn and smoking. Ryan and Miller rise into view, battered and stunned, hearing the tank coming: a bizarre animalistic howl echoes faintly up the bridge. They reach for the toppled .30 caliber machine gun...

#### REIBEN

Reaches out, grabs Upham's hand, pulls him in. They cling together, huddling behind the buttress...

#### RYAN AND MILLER

Slam the machine gun atop the sandbags. Ryan works the bolt (a sound we do hear: a big, echoing CLACK-CLATCH) and OPENS FIRE.

The muzzle blast of the machine gun is silent, all we hear is the bolt whacking back and forth, the shells ejecting with a faint metallic shriek...

#### THE TIGER TANK

Fills the screen. It lets off a bizarre howl, more animalistic than ever. If you closed your eyes, you could picture it with

Teeth and claws...

#### MILLER

Watches the monster approach, sees:

#### THE TANK'S FORWARD MACHINE GUN

Swiveling, taking aim...

#### MILLER



Throws his arms over Ryan, shoving him down out of the path of the bullets -

STEAMBOAT WILLIE

Appears running beside the tank, sees the two figures behind the sandbag and quickly fires his Schmeisser-

and Miller takes several rounds in the chest. They fall from sight together...

REIBEN AND UPHAM

See Miller go down, soundlessly screaming his name...

STEAMBOAT WILLIE

Then runs for cover, unaware of who he's just shot as...

MILLER

Rises up wounded...playing out the final, grueling, inevitable moments...moving in a litany of pain...raising his .45 automatic...the only weapon left to him...

...firing...one round after another...knowing the futility but pumping the trigger anyway...pistol jumping soundlessly in his fist...running the magazine down to the final round...

...he FIRES the final bullet...

...and sees the Tiger EXPLODE. MASSIVE GOUTS OF FLAME blow soundlessly over the sides of the bridge -- and a SECONDARY EXPLOSION blasts the Tiger's turret up into the air like a flaming pinwheel; it slams off the side of the bridge, taking a chunk with it, crashing hugely into the water...

...Miller stares slack in amazement...looks at the pistol in his hand...wondering for a brief moment if such a thing is even possible...

...and then he starts to hear them. He gazes up. Here they come, descending like voices from above, building to a choral crescendo...

RESUME NORMAL SPEED AND SOUND:

...as a pair of P-51 MUSTANGS swoop grandly over the bridge. Tank-busters. They peel overhead, no longer with the sound of voices, but with a THROATY ROAR OF PACKARD ENGINES.

REIBEN AND UPHAM

See the planes coming around for another pass. The Panzer is Desperately trying to back off the bridge as the Tiger burns. Reiben and Upham come limping/running up the bridge...

...and find Miller dying in Ryan's arms.

REIBEN

...Captain...oh god...

They drop to their knees, grabbing onto Miller as if that simple gesture might keep him alive, anguish bursting like a dam. Reiben screams at the sky. Upham breaks down in tears.

Down at the far end of the bridge, the Panzer DETONATES with a superheated ball of flame. Both tanks destroyed. The Mustangs ROAR past, rising up into a steep climb.

MILLER

Is staring at the clouds, unable to speak. He raises a bloody hand, pointing up. Ryan follows the gesture, looks up to see:

THE P-51s Climbing together, damn near vertical, straining magnificently at the apex of their climb.

MILLER

Is trying to speak. Tears are streaming down Ryan's face.

RYAN

They're tank-busters, sir. P-51s.

Miller may not have heard him. His breath is leaving his body...

MILLER'S POV - RYAN

Backlit against the bright sky. The face of...

MILLER

...angels...on our shoulders...

His hand flails up, shaking. Ryan catches it. It stops shaking. And the two men lock eyes.

RYAN

...the bright side, sir.

(then)

You're a teacher again.

Miller stares up at Ryan. Holds onto his hand as we...

DISSOLVE TO: LONG LENS OF BRIDGE

Ryan, Reiben, and Upham sit with Miller's body, smoke drifting gently across the river. The first of the Sherman tanks appear b.g. from the treeline, coming toward the bridge with waves of supporting infantry as we then again...

DISSOLVE TO: CLOSE-UP OF THE OLD MAN

Tears streaming down his face.

VOICES

Grampa!

EXT - ALLIED CEMETERY AT NORMANDY - PRESENT DAY

The old man is staring at a grave marker with tears streaming down his face. He wipes his face, composes himself as now we see A LITTLE BOY come over the rise, followed by three more CHILDREN and then a MAN and a WOMAN.

OLD MAN

I have my family with me. My son and his wife...my grandkids. I have a daughter in Seattle. She's got a family, too. All good people. I'm sorry you couldn't have known them.

LITTLE BOY

Grampa!

The old man turns, looks back. A short distance away stands the little boy... and a moment later, the rest of the family. The old man motions for them to wait. He turns back to the gravestone, the tears still coming. An intense swirl of emotions on his face. Softly:

OLD MAN

I want to thank you not just for my life, but for all of theirs. And to tell you that I-- that we've all tried the best we could to earn what you did for us. That we'll never forget.

The old man stands a moment longer, then gives the gravestone a heartfelt salute. He turns and then goes to his family as

CAMERA COMES AROUND on the grave marker, which bears the name "Captain John Miller." It sits silently as it has for over fifty years in this well-tended place.

THE END