

THOSE DAMNED ENGINEERS

By

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Inspired By Actual Events

Lee M. Field (C) 2016

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OVER BLACK

VOICE (O.S)

In December 1944, Hitler's empire was rapidly collapsing. With the Russian's driving relentlessly through Poland in the east and Patton's juggernaut 3rd Army at the Rhine to the west, defeat was inevitable. A plan was drawn up to drive a wedge between the allies and split their lines, if it succeeded Hitler could possibly win the war. It was brilliant, audacious and poised to succeed, only one thing stood in their way. THOSE DAMNED ENGINEERS!

INT. REICH CHANCELLERY HITLER'S OFFICE - DAY

Hitler sits at his desk flanked on either side by his top Generals he signs General order WATCH THE RHINE. Standing at attention in front of the desk is JOACHIM PEIPER (29).

The youngest Colonel and regimental commander in German history. A cold warrior, he has served on all fronts with distinction.

Blond, blue eyed and piercing razor sharp voice, he is as handsome as he fierce. With a platoon of tanks he is deadly.

Hitler hands him his orders, Peiper eye's it, then the large map on the wall.

FIELD MARSHALL VON RHUNDSTAT (60) Hitler's chief of staff speaks up.

VON RHUNDSTAT

You are the spearhead Peiper,
you'll have 4500 troops and 100 of
the New Tiger II tanks.

Peiper a little hesitant but cold and calculating.

PEIPER

All this depends on whether I can
cross all those bridges between
here and Antwerp. What about allied
air supremacy?

(CONTINUED)

VON RHUNDSTAT

The weather forecast calls for heavy snow, you will have complete cloud cover for two days. After that you will be open to attack.

PEIPER

Tanks run on Petrol. What are my reserves.

GENERAL GUDERIAN (50) Hitler's top strategist takes over.

GUDERIAN

We're relying on speed, the Americans' will supply all the gas you need, their fuel dumps are here.

Guderian indicates the spot on the large map.

HITLER

I have complete faith in you Pieper be swift and have no mercy. BUT GIVE ME ANTWERP!

Hitler slams his fist on table. Peiper snaps the Nazi salute and leaves. Hitler gets up and everyone salutes as he leaves.

GUDERIAN takes VON RHUNDSTAT aside.

GUDERIAN

This is too risky.

VON RHUNDSTAT

If he fails, we will count the end in hours, not days.

Their faces pallor with dread.

SUPER MALMEDY, BELGIUM DECEMBER 1944

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

MALMEDY is a pretty little quintessential countryside village. A Church dominates the center square surrounded by storefronts that house the residents upstairs in apartments. It hasn't changed much in the past three hundred years.

(CONTINUED)

COLONEL DAVID PURGEON (28) a young Engineer officer browses the window of local flower shop. Looking more like a bookworm than a soldier, he seems out of place in a uniform. Bespectacled jet black hair. He admires the flowers a welcome site to all the carnage that is World War II.

MARIE LOUVET (23) a pretty French girl fluffs what little flowers are there to work with. She sees David and smiles, he kindly returns it. She motions him in.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Entering the shop David seems a little timid. Marie beckons him on. She is beautiful and the flowers smell lovely, for a moment the war is far away.

MARIE
Americana?

DAVID
Yeah my French aint great. Parle
très peu Français. Parles-tu
Anglais?

MARIE
Okay, a little.

DAVID
Belle boutique, Nice shop.

It is awkward, David hasn't seen a woman for months.

MARIE
Oui, Thank you.

DAVID
Not many flowers.

Marie cocks her head not really understanding. She sees David's wedding ring.

MARIE
Tu es marié?

DAVID
Sorry?

Marie points to the ring.

DAVID
Yes I'm married.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE
Ou a photographic?

DAVID
Photo?

David finally getting it.

DAVID
Oh of my wife.

MARIE
Qui!

Shaking her head yes he goes for his wallet and takes it out. David proudly presents her with the photo of his bride.

Marie looking at it.

MARIE
Oh beautiful.

DAVID
Yes she is, like you.

Marie doesn't quite understand but gets it from David's tone. She seems embarrassed.

DAVID
Sorry I didn't mean anything by it
I love my wife, uh don't get the
wrong idea, crap.

MARIE
(laughing)
No, it - okay.

DAVID
Pew that was close.

MARIE
You like, uh flowers?

DAVID
Yes I grow roses back home in
Alabama.

MARIE
Ala-bam - a?

DAVID
It's a state in the South.

MARIE
Sate, South?

DAVID
Southern part of the United States.

David takes out his note pad he draws a rough outline of the US and pinpoints Alabama

DAVID
There, Alabama.

Marie touches the map her fingers drift onto his.

MARIE
Home?

DAVID
Yes Home.

MARIE
Solitaire?

DAVID
Yes a little lonely.

MARIE
Venir Dîner?

DAVID
Diner? You want me to come to diner?

MARIE
Oui, Oui.

DAVID
Oh I don't know if I could.

Marie looks a little disappointed. David reconsiders.

DAVID
Hell, why not?

EXT. FRENCH SHOP - NIGHT

Malmedy seems deserted as David walks to the shop. He has cleaned up nice and is in his Utility dress uniform, complete with C-Cap no Helmet.

(CONTINUED)

Approaching him is another GI Steven THOMAS (AKA "WHISTLER") (20) from Detroit Michigan. He is a signal corpsman, whistles all the time. Just an average kid that can fix anything. With him is ERIC HYDE (20) a buddy from another outfit. He salutes David.

WHISTLER
Evening Colonel.

DAVID
Whistler what are you two doing out here?

WHISTLER
Helping my buddy here Checking these phone lines.

DAVID
In the dark?

WHISTLER
Only time we can get anything done.

DAVID
That busy?

Eric is stiff as a board, at attention, he doesn't seem to be breathing. There's more too this.

DAVID
At Ease Private.

ERIC
Thank you Sir, Private Eric Hyde, Sir!

WHISTLER
Relax, the Colonel here ain't that formal.

DAVID
Who are you with?

ERIC
Ninety Second Signal Corps.

WHISTLER
We're the end of the line nothings happening here so we figured its good time to keep ahead.

DAVID

Good luck.

At that moment Marie appears at the front door looking good.

WHISTLER

Good luck to you Colonel.

DAVID

That's enough Whistler.

WHISTLER

Yes Sir.

Whistler gives a cat whistle, David rolls his eyes. Then he and Eric turns and leave Whistling Dixie.

DAVID

Good Grief.

EXT. MALMEDY STREET - NIGHT

Out of site, in a dark Alley way Eric and Whistler stop. Whistler pulls out a cigarette and lights it, he gives it to a nervous Eric.

ERIC

That was close.

WHISTLER

Don't worry about it, we're checking the lines we approached him, remember?

ERIC

If word got out about us.

WHISTLER

Nobody gonna find out.

ERIC

Shit! Easy for you I'm Jewish too!

WHISTLER

Double shit storm.

ERIC

That's not funny.

The boys continue their pleasant smoke together.

INT. SHOP APARTMENT - NIGHT

The little two room loft sits directly above the store. Countless generations have probably lived this way. Marie has prepared a small feast saved from whatever rations she could find.

The table is set with some meager china and a candle. David looks at with honor.

DAVID
My, you went to a lot of trouble.

MARIE
You not like?

DAVID
No, I mean Yes, Oui Merci Bo Co.

Marie smiles and leads him to the table.

LATER

The meal is winding down the conversation going deeper. David wiping his mouth.

DAVID
Man that was good.

MARIE
It only uh nourriture en boîte -
can - uh.

DAVID
Canned? K-Rations? yeah we get them
all the time but they don't taste
like this.

MARIE
The GI's give it to us.

DAVID
Sorry about that.

MARIE
No, No we starving, Americana de
share, not like others, who take.

A frown comes across her face as her eyes drift towards the mantle.

ON THE MANTLE

(CONTINUED)

A picture of a young man and Marie happy together, the man is JOACHIM PEIPER but not in uniform.

MARIE
War change people.

DAVID
Yeah I know I'm not like I used to be. Scared always worried I going to make a mistake. Hell even taking a risk like this would not have occurred to me.

MARIE
Risk?

DAVID
That didn't come out right either.

A tender smile from Marie, her hand touches his, not longing but understanding.

MARIE
Do not worry.

David standing going to mantle looking at picture.

DAVID
This your boyfriend?

MARIE
Not anymore.

DAVID
Jes I'm sorry when did he get it.

MARIE
No he only dead to me.

DAVID
Oh ended badly uh.

Marie stands and turns the picture face down. Obviously upset.

DAVID
I'm sorry I didn't mean to pry.

MARIE
No I glad you came.

DAVID

I am too.

David looks at his watch.

DAVID

Oh crap we got duty in the morning.

MARIE

Must leave?

DAVID

Yeah I got too.

Marie moves close, she kisses him on the cheek David touches the spot with his hand.

MARIE

You a good Man get home to wife.

David understanding, he puts on his cap and quietly leaves. Marie closes door then goes back to mantle. She feels in her pocket and pulls out the Map David drew.

MARIE

Alabama.

She then goes to the mantle she picks up picture and looks hard at it. Close on PEIPER'S face smiling it gradually morphs into -

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

PIEPER now in SS Uniform, sitting in the command turret of one of the Mighty Tiger Two Tanks. His communications headset is strapped over his hat and covering his ears. It filters out all the noise so he can bark orders to his other commanders.

The Column of Tiger Tanks fans out on either side of him. The mass of troops is interspersed between each tank. It is an awe inspiring sight. Man and Metal moving forward like some giant automated killing machine.

Walking with the troops is an older Sergeant this is DIETRICH (40) a highly seasoned veteran and trained killer. Peiper looks at him with grim confidence, these two have been through many battles together.

Dietrich is the brawn to Peiper's brains together they are well oiled and efficient war machine. But Dietrich is weary of war and he has other concerns.

(CONTINUED)

Beside him is a a young corporal a Fresh and innocent faced kid, Dietrich'S Son HANS (18). He's Nervous but confident. Dietrich tries to teach him as they go.

DIETRICH
Do not hold the gun to firmly.

HANS
I've been trained Papa.

DIETRICH
But you haven't seen battle.

HANS
We must all do what we must for the
Fatherland.

Dietrich facing his son sternly.

DIETRICH
Do not spout that Nazi propoganda.

HANS
Sorry Papa.

DIETRICH
I promised you Mother I'd get you
home. We may get separated and I
can't protect you all the time.

HANS
Do not worry I can take care of
myself.

Dietrich a little proud.

DIETRICH
So be it, you are a man follow your
orders and do not take chances.

HANS
I will Papa.

The tank column is an impenetrable unstoppable force the ground shakes as they approach their first objective and the start of what would be called the BATTLE OF THE BULGE. The largest land battle in History.

SUPER: NINETY SECOND DIVISION

EXT. CAMP - DAY

The last of the line for the American expeditionary force in Europe, far from the front this is where men go to recuperate from battle. Mainly support personal hardly any infantry or battle ready troops.

Men and material are scattered around in organized chaos. There seems to be no discernible order to anything. Men walk around lazily smoking like there is not a care in the world. The only people that seem real busy are the cooks.

Chow lines are a booming business, as men line up for their meals, growing fat on complacency and non action.

Aside from the Cooks are Davids motley group of combat Engineers. Designed to blow and secure Bridgeheads, build bivouac huts and plow roads. Generally a do it all, fix all group.

Today is just like another day, boring with nothing to do.

SUPER 291ST COMBAT ENGINEERS

INT. COMMAND TENT - DAY

GENERAL WALLACE STYLES (50) hovers over a map. The tent flap folds back and David enters, he snaps a salute.

GENERAL STYLES

At ease Colonel.

DAVID

Thank you Sir.

GENERAL STYLES

You won't after I tell what your going to do.

DAVID

Sir.

GENERAL STYLES

We are now in the construction business.

DAVID

Sir.

GENERAL STYLES

Some bright ass at HQ thinks we have nothing better to do. As if

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GENERAL STYLES (cont'd)
keeping all these bridges between
us and the rest of the army intact
weren't enough.

David moving closer.

DAVID
I'm still not following you.

GENERAL STYLES
Housing for the Grand army of
occupation. Trouble is they aren't
here yet. We have to build bivoac
huts.

DAVID
They will be sir they're saying
this war will be over by Christmas.

GENERAL STYLES
Christmas is less than a week away,
and this is an unbeaten enemy. They
still have crack troops and
intelligence says they are up on
production of their Tiger tanks.

DAVID
If I may sir that's true but their
gasoline supply is dwindling I
don't care how many tanks they have
without gas they may as well be
five ton paperweights.

GENERAL STYLES
That's true but if they knew of all
our fuel dumps in the area they
might get an idea.

Styles points to the map his fingers drift across different
areas indicating bridges.

GENERAL STYLES
Good news they'd pretty much have
to stick to roads. The whole area
is intertwined with rivers and
streams. That makes all these
bridges gold to them and us.

DAVID
General your talking like an attack
is on its way.

(CONTINUED)

GENERAL STYLES

Just worried, and you should be too next in command we are really thin here it wouldn't take much for them to punch through. In a nut shell we are the only thing between them and driving a wedge in the allied lines if that happens the war could go on indefinitely.

DAVID

Sir, please.

Styles pats him on the shoulder smiling.

GENERAL STYLES

Don't worry the Germans never attack in the winter.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

Snow blankets the ground dotted by mid size bivouac tents. David slogs through the snow. He has a big smile on his face. Then back to business, David is a combat engineer he crunches numbers in his head as he walks.

DAVID

Third load bearing, plus two tons-no that won't work.

David walks on through snow. Many soldiers hover over oil drums turned into open stoves.

They heat their coffee and stamp feet to keep warm.

SARGENT ROWDY STUBBS (28) rough, independent, not afraid of anything, pure Texan. He'd rather be on the range with a Horse. He stands over an oil drum fire rubbing his hands.

David passes him deep in thought, Rowdy reacts.

ROWDY

Hey Colonel.

DAVID

(still lost in thought)
And if the weight is-

ROWDY

Colonel, wait up.

David turns slight irritation.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Yes, Sargent.

ROWDY

Got Turkey tonight. Not that you'd care being is you got a girlfriend.

DAVID

Okay what did he say?

Rowdy an innocent look.

ROWDY

I hadn't heard nothin Colonel.

DAVID

Come on give it up.

ROWDY

Yep Gonna feel like home dis Christmas.

It's pointless to argue.

DAVID

Home never had two hundred thousand screaming Germans next door.

ROWDY

Ahs shucks Colonel de ready to give up anyway.

DAVID

I doubt that.

He and David continue on, approaching the others of their small band all surrounding the burning oil drums. Standing and telling a dirty joke to Whistler is TED WINTERS (20) an LA boy.

Blond hair he looks like he belongs on a surf board soaking up sun. You'd never guess he's a vicious killer the body count behind him would stretch for miles.

He and Rowdy are the exception to the group the only ones with combat experience.

TED

He said I can't take sixty seven more of them.

(CONTINUED)

WHISTLER

Your really sick you know that.

TED

The winds of love baby.

Beside him is another book worm type and Mama's boy. A Fresh faced kid from the middle of nowhere Kansas. BAILY STOKES (19). He couldn't look more American if he tried.

Smart but gullible he can whip out a load bearing equation and demolition charge to meet it, with his eyes closed. But wouldn't know which end of gun to shoot. He's also the religious one of the Bunch carries a Bible in his pocket.

Ted is constantly teasing him.

TED

Get that Baily sixty seven.

BAILY

Yeah I get it she farted in his face.

TED

Pretty funny huh what would Jesus say about that?

BAILY

He'd just forgive you.

Ted nudges Whistler laughing.

TED

Hey I'm gonna be saved.

WHISTLER

You need it.

TED

Ah come on you guys are too tight.

BAILY

Life is a little more serious than you think.

Ted a serious grimmer look.

TED

No it's not, your here one minute then your gone. That's it, no great mystery, just the wind that's all.

(CONTINUED)

BAILY

So there's no point in being good
or bad?

TED

There's only winning and loosing.

Another soldier joins the group BERNIE SANDERS (21) from Philadelphia. He's a carpenter can build anything plus he too is good with explosives. Affable but strict on protocol.

BERNIE

Colonel is gonna ride you for
teasing him again.

TED

He don't care.

About that time David appears coming up from behind.

DAVID

Care about what Ted?

TED

(caught)
Nothing sir.

DAVID

Okay gather round.

David moves close to the burning oil drum and takes out some papers. The others form a semi circle around him.

DAVID

We've been given another
assignment.

WHISTLER

What we gonna blow up now sir?

DAVID

Nothing, we're now in the building
business.

BERNIE

Don't say.

DAVID

The wants housing instead of tents.

TED

What does that mean exactly?

(CONTINUED)

DAVID
Wooden Bivouac Huts.

Rowdy looking around at the dense forest just beyond the camp.

ROWDY
Well we've got plenty of trees.

DAVID
And we're going to need a lot of them. Each hut will be twenty by thirty.

BAILY
What do we use for foundation?

DAVID
They'll be pier and stilt.

TED
A what?

BAILY
Floating, the floor will be three feet off ground only four posts to support whole structure.

BERNIE
That'll mean some pretty heavy duty wood at least ten by ten inch beams.

DAVID
There are some big trees out there.

WHISTLER
When do we start.

DAVID
Today. Ted you and Baily scout out the trees.

TED
Ah do I have to have him with me?

DAVID
I don't want any complaining.

TED
Yes Sir.

David turns to Rowdy and Whistler.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Check with supply Command wants us to start right away.

BERNIE

What about me Sir?

DAVID

Your the indispensable man in all this, I need you with me.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Ted and Baily ride along in an open jeep. On the only road leading away from Malmedy. They pass a road sign:

CLOSE ON SIGN

Ambleve 1 KILOMETER

They ride over a Bridge crossing the Muse River. Baily looking at a map.

TED

Man there sure are a lot of Bridges around here.

BAILY

That was the River Muse.

TED

Who cares.

Snow is beginning to fall.

TED

Shit I hate this weather.

BAILY

Reminds me of home.

TED

Oh fuck, not home again.

BAILY

It's almost Christmas it should be snowing.

TED

In LA it's seventy five degrees the babes are all tan.

(CONTINUED)

BAILY

No Christmas needs snow.

TED

There is no talking to you.

BAILY

Dad probably already got the tree up.

TED

Where the crap do you get a tree in Kansas?

Ted just closes his eyes not wanting to hear his babble.

BAILY

Oh it's one of those fake kind, but that don't matter none. Got the big red blue an green lights the ones that blink. Momma been baking all month long house is full of smells of apple pie, roast, turkey and an assortment of cookies. My brother Sid has probably been playing Christmas records day and night. Presents are all wrapped under the tree.

Ted begins to ease up and listen, a longing coming over his face.

BAILY

Grandma and Grandpa are there. Only live one town over but they like to spend the month. He and Dad will get up early every morning and go hunting I usually go with them. At night we'd go Caroling. As Christmas gets closer more and more kin show up til the house is full of people. Just a warm feeling.

TED

Sounds nice.

BAILY

What's Christmas like at your house?

TED

Don't no were Dad is. Mom usually works and I'll just go to the diner and grab a hot dog or something.

(CONTINUED)

Baily realizing he's struck a bad chord.

BAILY
Sounds simple and nice.

TED
Yeah it sucks.

They pull off the road and go deep into the forest. The jeep jumps and bumps across the rough terrain. Till reaching a small clearing. The men get out seeing a couple of large trees.

Spruces, over a hundred feet tall and almost five feet around. Beyond the tree line where they are standing is an open field between them and another forest beyond.

Baily seems almost awestruck with the sight he remembers.

BAILY
Well I'll be shit.

TED
(stunned)
What did you say.

BAILY
Son of a Bitch.

TED
You, Jesus boy cussing what's up?

BAILY
You know where this is?

TED
Belgium buddy and over there is
Germany.

BAILY
No I mean historically .

TED
I don't keep up with history I make
it.

BAILY
This is where Augustus Caesar lost
an entire Legion. The Visigoths
swooped down from the forest
surrounded and annihilated them.
Augustus was said to roam the
palace at night crying Pompeii
bring back my legion.

(CONTINUED)

TED
How many in a Legion.

BAILY
About thirty thousand.

TED
And this Visigoths how many did they have?

BAILY
Couple hundred.

TED
Your saying a couple hundred men wiped out an entire army.

BAILY
They knew the terrain and used it. The Romans liked to fight in open fields like that in front of us. The Goths lured them into the woods where their superior numbers were no good. They picked em off one by one.

Ted cracking a smile.

TED
Shit your funning me.

All of a sudden the ground begins to tremble, in the distance the sounds of metal grinding. Ted and Baily look at each other.

BAILY
What is that?

TED
I don't know.

They look out across the field towards the other trees. Then the monster appears the huge TIGER TANKS crash through the tree line. Ted takes his binoculars and looks through.

From the binocular POV we see the German Swastika on the tanks and the soldiers flanking them on either side. It is a terrifying image.

TED
Holy fuck!

EXT. FIELD PIEPER'S POSITION - DAY

Peiper Sitting in the turret also using his binoculars from his POV through them he sees Baily and Ted.

Smiling he non-nonchalantly gives the order.

PEIPER
Commence firing.

INT. TANK - DAY

The gunner shoves a shell into the breach then pulls back the hammer.

EXT. TANK - DAY

The rumbling beast roars to life belting out its deadly load. The other tanks follow suit, firing at will as they press the attack.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Peiper giving orders through head set to his other Tank Grenadier Commanders.

PEIPER
All commands split up and proceed
to your assigned objectives.

The mass of tanks and soldiers split into many parts driving towards their respective goals. Dietrich looks over to his son Hans, who heads off with one of the other groups.

HANS
(mouthing)
Good Bye Papa.

Dietrich looks on with dread a sinking feeling he will not see his son again.

EXT. TED AND BAILY'S POSITION - DAY

Rounds hit all around them exploding and showering them with dirt leaves and limbs. They are knocked off their feet.

Coughing Ted gets up and goes to Baily.

(CONTINUED)

TED
You okay?!

BAILY
Yeah fine!

More rounds hit Baily quickly gets up.

TED
We gotta get out here and warn
them.

BAILY
No shit.

TED
Gonna make a soldier outta you yet.

They run and jump into the jeep. Shells continue to pound the area. Firing up the jeep they spin out just before a shell hits their position. Again the jeep traverses the rough terrain but this time complicated by the constant bombardment.

KABOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Explosive craters appear before them more dirt and smoked everywhere. Ted grips the steering wheel for dear life spinning it and shifting gears all at the same time.

Baily does his best to hang on and keep his helmet. They break through the tree line to the road. The sounds of incoming shells is deafening the earth is rocked by the whole ordeal.

Ted swerves to keep the jeep on the road and speeds like hell for the camp.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

David and Bernie are loading up their jeep with supplies. On the boxes they are carrying we see the word Explosives stenciled in black on the side.

BERNIE
We're going to need more gas for
the Bulldozers.

DAVID
I haven't seen a fuel truck all
day.

(CONTINUED)

BERNIE

Them boys is lazy sometimes.

DAVID

Problem is air force gets most of it.

BERNIE

They ain't gonna be flyin in this weather.

DAVID

No I'm afraid their grounded.

BERNIE

Cloud covers thick.

DAVID

Yes it unnerves me too, without protection overhead.

Then a shrill screaming sound.

DAVID

Hear that?

BERNIE

Yeah what-

VEARRROOM BOOM!

He doesn't have a chance to finishes the statement. A shell impacts behind them destroying several jeeps and crates of supplies leaving a huge hole. David and Bernie are thrown to the ground.

DAVID

That was a one o nine.

BERNIE

Rail gun?

DAVID

Fired from fifteen miles away!

More screaming sounds

BOOM!! BOOM!! BOOM!!

The camp is being taken apart, men scatter in all directions. General Styles hurries out of his tent attaching his gun.

KABOOM!

(CONTINUED)

An incoming shell hits him directly he disintegrates before Davids very eyes. Nothing but a crater where once stood a man. Davids heart sinks dread on his face.

It's chaos everywhere. David freezes petrified, time almost stands still as he sees explosion after explosion. Men are caught on fire and run by him like human torches.

From up the road comes Baily and Ted they too dodging the incoming shells. They skid to a stop in front of David. Whistler runs up shouting asking what to do. David stands motionless in shock.

Finally he comes out of his fugue and Whistlers frantic voice becomes audible to him.

WHISTLER

What do we do Sir!

BERNIE

Orders Sir!?

TED

There's a Tiger Column heading straight this way!

Rowdy finally joins the group

ROWDY

Where's the General?!

BERNIE

Vaporized!

ROWDY

That leaves you Sir.

DAVID

Shit.

ROWDY

The rest of the Division is scattered all to hell their CO has orders pull back we're to go with them.

David sees the rest rest of the Division turning tail and running. David remembers the Generals words.

GENERAL STYLES (V.O.)

In a nut shell we are the only thing between them and driving a wedge in the allied lines if that

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GENERAL STYLES (V.O.) (cont'd)
happens the war could go on
indefinitely.

(pause, beat)
Your in command.

DAVID
(reolute)
No we're staying!

ROWDY
Do you know what you're doing?

DAVID
No! Assemble the men.

WHISTLER
What's the rally point?

David thinking quickly.

DAVID
This shelling should stop in a
minute if the tanks are coming they
won't risk hitting them it.

Then the shelling subsides David has guessed well.

DAVID
Gather whatever ammo you can.
Whistler go get me that Deuce and a
Half and bring it over here.

BERNIE
What you thinking Colonel?

DAVID
We're Engineers God Dammit.

LATER

David is leaning over a gasoline barrel throwing up he's
scared to death. The moments bravado gone, reality setting
in, he's scared out of his mind. Rowdy goes to his side.

ROWDY
(softly)
You alright Colonel.

DAVID
No I haven't a clue what I'm doing.

(CONTINUED)

ROWDY
Yes you do.

DAVID
I'm a fucking Engineer!

ROWDY
No you're a soldier.

DAVID
The extent of my command skills
extends as far as what cement to
use in a foundation.

ROWDY
You're taking a stand when everyone
else is running.

DAVID
That's crazy!

Rowdy getting serious, in his face.

ROWDY
No Sir! That's courage.

DAVID
We are cut off, the Germans are
coming up from the south!

ROWDY
That means we'll have to stop them.

David's small contingent of about a hundred men have assembled near the ammo dump. This is a moment of truth for him. The soldiers look terrified, cold and bloody from their recent ordeal.

David keeps a calm demeanor even though he's just as petrified.

DAVID
(to Rowdy)
This everybody?

ROWDY
All that's still alive.

Some of the men call out.

WE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE!

THIS IS NUTS!

(CONTINUED)

One Soldier tries to rally the others to leave.

SOLDIER 1

What are we waiting for?

Another agrees with him

SOLDIER 2

We're engineers not infantry.

A group forms around them starting to leave. Rowdy lets loose on his machine gun firing in the air. It startles and gets the groups attention.

ROWDY

Get back in formation!

DAVID

That's enough!

David trying to put on a good front, in control.

DAVID

Anybody need any medical?

The group solemn, reserved, not responding, unsure.

DAVID

Okay then, it's some shit and we're in it, that's why we're here. I don't like it anymore than you do but that's the way it is. General Styles was a good man to us all and he wouldn't want us to turn tail and run not when we're so close to the end.

(pause, beat)

Alright pep talks over you all volunteered for this so lets get down to business. Anybody know the gasoline capacity of a Tiger Mark II Tank?

David scans the men a lone soldier raises his hand, timid as a rabbit, a skinny private Aiken

DAVID

Yeah soldier, Aiken isn't it?

AIKINS

Yes Sir about two hundred gallons.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID
How many miles per.

AIKINS
(thinking)
Two, three just normal cruising.

DAVID
Straight out no combat maneuvers?

AIKINS
Yeah they eat it up.

DAVID
Okay here's what I figure they've been chewing up forest to get here probably from their base at VERBIL the only reason for them to come through this sector is for our fuel supplies then I believe they are going to punch their way right through to Antwerp. Now if they are able to do that they will effectively cut the allies in half and gain a supply port and all the gas they need.

WHISTLER
Excuse me sir but how are we going to stop that?

DAVID
Geography.

The Soldiers look at one another like he's lost his mind.

BAILY
Bridges?

DAVID
Bridges. This area is honeycombed with bridges, if we blow them up they will waste valuable fuel trying to get around going cross country.

ROWDY
What about Malmedy it's between us and them?

WHISTLER
There's just a company and maybe another platoon or two of signal
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WHISTLER (cont'd)
corpsman there. They'll be
slaughtered not to mention the
civilians.

DAVID
I know it can't be helped.

WHISTLER
I'm going to help, whose with me.

David puts his hand on his side arm Whistler sees it.

DAVID
Stand your ground!

WHISTLER
Gonna shoot me Colonel. What about
her?

Whistler has hit a nerve David had almost forgotten about
Marie, how could he?

DAVID
We'll do what we can, but the fuel
supply first. Okay I want five
teams.

David pulls out his map and the men gather round.

DAVID
First group I want a mortar
emplacement at Ambleve you'll have
to swing through the countryside to
get in front of them. Baily, you
and Whistler divide up the other
groups, you know the drill find
your targets and keep to them.

ROWDY
What about me Colonel?

DAVID
Your with me, I want to see who
we're up against.

EXT. ROAD TO MALMEDY - DAY

A confident Peiper sits atop his turret scanning the area
with his binoculars. From his POV Malmedy appears on the
horizon. He raises his hands signaling the tank column to
stop.

(CONTINUED)

Dietrich his adjutant sees this and hurries over. He quickly climbs on board moving up to Peiper.

DIETRICH
Heir Colonel we cannot stop.

PEIPER
I am in command I'll say when we can stop AND attack.

DIETRICH
She's probably left the area.

PEIPER
Not her precious flower shop.

Peiper reaches in his pocket and pulls out the same snap shot of him and Marie's that was on the mantle.

DIETRICH
She's dead to you!

Peiper quick as a rattlesnake whips out a switch blade and grabs Dietrich by the collar. He pulls him close the blade slightly piercing his flesh.

PEIPER
Do not Question me!

DIETRICH
(nervous)
I was just pointing our our objective.

PEIPER
We will meet it after I have ascertained her condition.

DIETRICH
And if she's there, then what?

PEIPER
She will come with me.

DIETRICH
Don't be blinded by love!

Peiper slings him off the turret Dietrich rolls back off the tank hitting with a thud in the frozen ground. Peiper peels himself out of the turret discarding his headset.

He's in full black SS uniform riding boots and all. Unusual for combat, but Peiper is all about image. He dons his Dress SS Cap with Death's head emblem.

(CONTINUED)

He then jumps down and hovers over Dietrich who is still on the ground. Peiper is an imposing personality his will or nothing. He un-holsters his **WAFFEN SS LUGER P08** pistol and levels it at Dietrich.

Dietrich closes his eyes awaiting his fate even though its freezing, he sweats. The other soldiers look on in terror, fearing Peiper is really going to execute him. He rules with an iron fist of discipline.

PEIPER

I have put hundreds of thousands in their graves for less than what you said!

Peiper raises the pistol holding it up to his side still ready to fire. He then turns to face the mass of troops that have grouped around him.

PEIPER

Insubordination is a fate punishable by death. Discipline must be maintained wouldn't you agree.

The soldiers cautiously nod their heads yes.

PEIPER

But loyalty wins battles! This man has served at my side with distinction the Iron cross with clusters decorates his chest! This is no coward not to the enemy and not me.

Peiper holsters his weapon and offers a helping hand up to Dietrich. Peipers grip is like a vice with steely eyes and in a whisper draws Dietrich up to his face.

PEIPER

There will not be a next time, understood. It is only my friendship to you which prevents me from taking the appropriate action.

DIETRICH

Yes Sir.

Peiper's demeanor changes just that quick becoming a kind benefactor.

(CONTINUED)

PEIPER

Good, let us not speak of it again.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

David and Rowdy creep through the woods, with the tank column now opposite them, visible through the thin trees. The tremendous noise of all those tanks and men mask their movement.

Inching closer to the front David sees Malmedy ahead through the brush. Then suddenly the tanks stop it goes deathly quiet.

David thinks quickly have we been spotted, Rowdy jerks him down to cover.

ROWDY

Colonel you got a lot to learn.

A common German foot soldier walks towards the trees nearing David's and Rowdy's position. Rowdy quietly cocks his weapon. The German stops seeming to hear something, an eternity passes, then he unzips his pants and starts to pee.

Relief coming across his face, as well as David and Rowdy. Finishing, he zips up and returns to his line.

EXT. MALMEDY - DAY

Eric observes the stopped column of tanks. His CO a rough looking Captain next to him reconnoiters the situation through his binoculars.

ERIC

Why have they stopped?

CO

I don't know.

ERIC

Probably don't even know we're here.

CO

I doubt that.

ERIC

Maybe they want the town?

(CONTINUED)

CO

Could be, wait a minute.

From his POV Peiper is walking towards the town. Dietrich next to him fastens a white flag to a stick and waves it.

ERIC

Are they surrendering?

The Captain gives him an are you kidding look.

ERIC

No, right.

CO

Damned weird

EXT. WOODS - DAY

David and Rowdy keep close to the undergrowth trying to get as close as possible without detection. Like two Sioux Indians on a hunting party they do not make a sound.

They lay down prone to the ground trying to be as small as they can. David slips out his binoculars. From his POV he sees Peiper walking confidently towards the town, under a flag of truce.

A moment then he remembers the face from Marie's flat. It's the man with her in the picture on the mantle.

DAVID

What the fuck?

ROWDY

Sir?

David continues to watch from his POV Peiper and Dietrich head into town finally disappearing from view over the rise.

EXT. MALMEDY - DAY

Like High Noon, and the bad guys have just arrived Peiper and Dietrich walk towards the towns center. They seem to know their way around.

Eric shakes watching them approach the CO pats him on the shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CO
Maybe they want to talk terms.

ERIC
There's only a handful of us.

CO
I know, dammit.

The CO full of resolve cocks his machine gun and stands up in plain view of both of them. Dietrich reacts readying his gun. Peiper a little surprised, calmly.

PEIPER
Wait.

CO
That's far enough.

PEIPER
My friend your outnumbered.

CO
(bluffing)
Your Surrounded.

PEIPER
Brave words, this is not some gangster movie where the cops come to the rescue. No matter, I am here to see someone.

Behind the CO and Eric is Marie's Flower Shop.

INT. MARIE'S FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Marie stands at the window watching the drama unfold. She bites her lip, decision time she bolts out the door.

EXT. MARIE'S FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Marie interceding, Peiper spots her behind the men, she cries out.

MARIE
Joachim, arrêtez! - Stop!

Eric turns in wonder.

(CONTINUED)

ERIC
You know him? Uh I mean - Tu le
connais?

MARIE
Oui.

ERIC
Ah Shit.

The CO doesn't get it.

CO
What?

ERIC
I'm not sure but I think he's a
friend.

CO
Like a real good friend.

ERIC
I think so.

The CO thinks for a moment then holds up his hand to Peiper
to wait a second.

CO
Miss I know this is awkward but
your the only one between us and
the almighty, can you help us?

Marie halfway understanding.

MARIE
I try.

The CO motions for Peiper to come on over. The CO bows out
as Peiper approaches. Per military courtesy they salute one
another.

Pieper takes Marie gently by the arm and guides her back
into the shop.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Inside Peiper releases her he takes off his gloves and hat
he strolls around the shop like any other customer. He stops
and smells a vase full Blue Bells.

This sequence will be all in English.

(CONTINUED)

PEIPER
Reminds me of that summer remember?

MARIE
We were younger then.

PEIPER
Not that much younger.

MARIE
You changed Joachim.

PEIPER
I came to realize the truth as you
should.

MARIE
This war is not going to turn out
the way you want.

Peiper slams a clenched fist onto the shelf holding the vase
it almost topples over. Marie jumps, a little frightened.

PEIPER
Defeatist!

Marie feeling the moment moves closer. Piepers piercing blue
eyes starring into hers. Her hand drifts across the shelf
tenderly touching his it moves up to his check.

Pieper seems to take on a softer air, his eyes close as he
takes her hand and holds it to his face not wanting to let
go, lost without her.

MARIE
No Joachim a realist.

PEIPER
You need to come with me.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Eric, his CO and Dietrich face off eying one another across
the small gulf. Eric decides to break the tension he puts
down his weapon, then eases his hand into his Coat Pocket.

He retrieves a pack of Lucky Strike cigarettes.

ERIC
Zigaretten?

(CONTINUED)

Dietrich stoic. Eric lights one then throws him the pack. Dietrich catches them then one handily and shuffles one up. Taking it with his mouth he stands there still prepared for battle.

Eric cautiously walks forward and flips his lighter on. He hold the flame up and Dietrich leans over igniting the cigarette. Dietrich takes a long drag.

DIETRICH
Gut Zigaretten.

ERIC
Yeah good.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Peiper has moved closer to Marie he holds both her hands tenderly like a long lost lover. They are a striking couple together pure Aryan both blond hair and deep blue eyes.

PEIPER
I have my orders.

MARIE
Obey your heart Joachim this is not right and you know it.

PEIPER
My fuhrer has given me a directive.

Marie releases his hands, disgusted turning away.

MARIE
Fuhrer, Fuhrer, Fuhrer is that all you believe in?

PEIPER
He's my leader I must obey.

MARIE
And if Heir Hitler says walk off a cliff you'll do it?

PEIPER
If it is for the greater good? Yes!

MARIE
Then you're not the man I remember ,a fool, and Heir Hitler is a monster.

Peiper has had enough, he back hands her hard.

(CONTINUED)

PEIPER

I am tired of this discussion we
must go NOW!

Marie backing up to the counter Peiper inches forward almost on top of her then he notices something. There next to register is the Map David drew.

Peiper picks it up and examines it.

PEIPER

Alabama, Americana?

MARIE

Yes.

Peiper grabs her arm again in a vice grip Marie winces with pain.

PEIPER

You had an American in here! Did
you?! Are you seeing him!?

Marie defiant wanting to illicit a reaction.

MARIE

Yes Joachim and he is better than
you.

PEIPER

(roaring)

You whore! Jew lover!

Peiper draws his pistol backing up and aiming at her.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Eric and Dietrich pleasantly smoke then a shot rings out, Dietrich drops the cigarette cocking his weapon the CO does the same, Eric is frozen in the middle. Peiper marches from the flower shop donning his hat and holstering his pistol.

He and Dietrich leave but Dietrich backs up still holding his gun at the ready. They continue till they are around the corner and out of sight.

Eric and the CO run into the shop.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Marie sits crumpled on the floor crying but unharmed, the vase of Blue Bells shattered by the gun shot.

EXT. MALMEDY ROAD - DAY

A firm determined Peiper walks with Dietrich

PEIPER

I should have listened to you old friend she is dead to me.

DIETRICH

And the town.

PEIPER

Obliterate it.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

David and Rowdy watch as Peiper climbs back into his tank. The tanks take up a siege line.

DAVID

Looks like she didn't convince him.

ROWDY

Sir?

DAVID

There's always a girl.

Then the tanks let loose their massive eighty eight millimeter guns. The bombardment of Malmedy begins. The noise is deafening.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

ROWDY

He could by bypass the town.

DAVID

No this is revenge.

David sorrowful, regretful.

DAVID

And it buys us some time. Give me the radio.

(CONTINUED)

ROWDY

Those boys will be massacred.

DAVID

And the town.

He keys the hand set.

DAVID

Whistler you there?

EXT. STAVLOT BRIDGE - DAY

Whistler and his group have set up a bazooka team opposite the Stavlot bridge. Engineers plant mines across the road, while others are on the underside of the bridge wiring it for demolition.

Whistler despite the situation whistles a pleasant tune while everyone works, but it's annoying to some.

BAILY

Don't you know anything else.

WHISTLER

I have a good repertoire.

BAILY

Do you even know what that word means?

WHISTLER

(smiling, sarcastic)

It means I'm quite versatile.

BAILY

Almost.

Whistler blows him a kiss then his radio squawks on he brings it to his ear hearing David.

WHISTLER

Yes Sir.

DAVID (O.S.)

How's it going?

WHISTLER

They'll have a hard time getting across here. I have a bazooka team and I'm rigging the bridge now.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID (O.S.)
Make sure they don't, that's the
main road it's a clear shot to
Antwerp from there.

WHISTLER
Don't worry.

DAVID (O.S.)
I'm counting on you.

From the distance the sound of the shelling rolls across the
foothills. Whistler hears it, a look of shock and horror.

WHISTLER
Is that Malmedy?

DAVID (O.S.)
Affirm.

Whistler readying himself for action strapping on grenades
and getting extra ammo.

WHISTLER
We have to help them!

DAVID (O.S.)
Stand down, do your job.

Whistler won't hear of it, he clicks the radio off, handing
it to Aikins.

AIKINS
What are you doing?

WHISTLER
Something, when nobody's doing
anything.

Whistler leaves sprinting towards Malmedy, leaving a
dumbfounded Aikins.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE DAVID'S POSITION - DAY

An irritated David keeps clicking the handset on the radio.

DAVID
Hello, Hello! Whistler come in!

Nothing but static. Then Aikins blurts on.

(CONTINUED)

AIKINS (O.S.)
He left sir.

DAVID
Gawd Damn him.

David hands the radio to Rowdy and starts stripping off extra armaments making himself lighter and more maneuverable.

ROWDY
Where in de hell you goin?

DAVID
After him.

ROWDY
Oh no you don't.

DAVID
I'm faster and I know where hes'
heading. Get back to the fuel dump.

ROWDY
Sir.

Rowdy for the first time with a loss for words.

DAVID
Don't worry I'll be along.

With that David sweeps off along the wood line. Rowdy heads back in the opposite direction.

EXT. ROAD TO STAVLOT - DAY

Bernie and his band are hurrying towards another small bridge between Malmedy and Stavlot over Lienne Creek. In the distance the rumbling of tanks. The ground starts to tremble.

EXT. SOUTH OF LIENNE CREEK - DAY

Peiper's other division of Tanks is driving towards **LIENNE CREEK**. The lead Tank has another SS Grenadier Tank Officer sitting in the turret. From his POV we see the **LIENNE CREEK BRIDGE**.

All is still he calmly orders his driver to proceed.

(CONTINUED)

GRENADIER

Vorgehen!
(Proceed)

His column advances single file up the road, German troops fan out to either side. But they are hampered by the deep snow drifts.

It is almost blizzard conditions.

EXT. ROAD BERNIE'S POSITION - DAY

Bernie is struggling against the winter blast. But they put their jeeps in gear and accelerate on the slippery roads.

Nearing the bridge Bernie's jeep hits an icy patch, the jeep swerves. He tries to maintain control but to no avail. The jeep flips over sending its contents into the snow.

Bernie is tossed out, roughed up but able to function. The jeep is a smoking wreck. Realizing the situation he struggles to his feet the other men dig in the snow trying to find the demolition charges.

BERNIE

It's no use the wet snow renders
them inert.

Another Private manages to pull out some Daisy Chain Mines from the burning jeep. Bernie is panicked from his POV the Germans are advancing around the bend.

Bernie judging.

BERNIE

About a mile or so.

Back to Bridge.

BERNIE

We can cover that! Grab the
Bazooka!

His ten men team gather what they can from the wreckage and take off. Bernie spies some smoke grenades and a BAR Rifle machine gun. Then the mortar launcher and ammo. He stuffs the grenades in his pockets.

Handing the mortar launcher to another soldier.

(CONTINUED)

BERNIE

I want'em to think we're fucking
army!

SOLDIER

Custer's last stand

BERNIE

Something like that.

BERNIE

We can't blow the bridge but we can
slow them up.

With mechanical efficiency the soldiers rattle off with their killing gear. Trudging and sloshing on the snowy tundra, their green fatigues stick out like a soar thumb.

Bernie notices then just as he does **KABOOM!** A shower of show blankets them the Germans have spotted their approach.

BOOM! BOOM!

Sitting ducks, Bernie drops his gear and retrieves the smoke grenades for his pockets. Popping the tab he hurls the first one in a long winding arc.

BAM! It hisses a cloud of black smoke.

At a running gate Bernie pops another grenade tossing it near the other. More smoke, they are totally obscured. Within in a hundred yards of the bridge two of the soldiers stop and set up the mortar.

Almost before it's secured the soldier inserts the first mortar. With a -

SHUNT THWACK the shell spurts from the mouth whining through the air.

TWANG BOOM! it impacts among a cluster of German infantry throwing them into the air, a mangled man screams as blood spurts from his arm.

BRRRR-AAAAAAT! Bernie opens up with the machine gun at a run. He hits the ditch to the side of the bridge with the others following him up.

They are out numbered ten to one but the Germans don't know it. The lead tank keeps coming starting across the small bridge. Smoke swirls all around compounded by the blinding snowy conditions.

(CONTINUED)

Another PRIVATE lands beside Bernie as bullets fly all around them. He has the **DAISY CHAIN MINES** in tow. Bernie thinking aloud.

BERNIE

You fast kid?

PRIVATE

Like a jack rabbit!

Bernie's eyes gesture to the oncoming tank. The Private understands. He quickly hands Bernie the mines, who arms them then hands one end back to the Private.

Standing in unison the Private sprints to the other side, Bernie with him they sling the string of mines under the behemoth lead Tank.

They dive for the safety of the other side between the ditch and wall of the bridge.

KABOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM! the massive explosion just in the nick of time tears open the fuel tank of the mighty vehicle rupturing it and splitting it in half. The downward concussion of the blast breaks through the bottom of the bridge. Concrete and the rest of the tank disappear into the creek. The Bridge is no more.

Bernie a big smile. Then the pissed off German infantry rake the area with machine gun fire. **RAT-AT-AT-AT-AT-AT-AT!** The tracer bullets ripping through smoke like devilish fire flies.

SPUT, SPUT, SPUT! The bullets hit the snow bank in front of them. Bernie's men continue to lob mortars to the other side of the creek.

MORE EXPLODING SHELLS -- Incredibly loud. Shrapnel PINGS off the sides of the big tanks. Men screaming, machine gun fire. A disarray of uncoordinated effort, the Germans are caught off guard.

On the Bazooka team the Soldier sets up aiming. Bernie's men are keeping the pressure on, not letting them have a break.

FWOOSH! the bazooka team fires a round at the tank next in line on the other side. But it has little effect on the Armour of a Tiger II.

In retaliation the beast lets loose on the only fixed target it can find. **KARRANG BOOM!** point blank it obliterates the bazooka team. Bernie cringes seeing his men killed.

(CONTINUED)

However the Germans can't advance stuck on the other side. The sounds of disorientation, confusion coming from the Germans.

With The lead tank gone as well as it's commander the other tanks put their vehicles in reverse. The infantry lays down a retreating covering fire. The firing slackens. And stops. Just the occasional burst from a machine gun.

BERNIE

I think we did it.

The machine gun fire dissipating and the sound of the tanks getting dimmer, Bernie peeks over the snow bank with his binoculars.

From his POV the tanks are moving away heading cross country through the blinding snow. Bernie gets up the mortar crew stand like ghosts, the adrenalin drained from them.

There is no celebration. No back slapping. They know that only more hard fighting awaits them. One of the soldiers approaches Bernie a grim solemn look on his face.

He gestures toward the crater that used to be the men of the Bazooka team.

SOLDIER

Got most of the ammo too.

BERNIE

What's left?

SOLDIER

Just whats in our clips a few mortars and grenades that's it.

BERNIE

We still have another bridge in our sector!

Bernie looks off to the distant German tanks gradually disappearing in the snow. It is starting to get dark.

EXT. FUEL DUMP/BASE CAMP - DAY

Rowdy makes it to the fuel dump there is only a barbed wire fence surrounding the thousands of gasoline drums. War's may be waged by men but it's fueled by gasoline.

No army however strong, cannot survive without it's life blood **GASOLINE**. More precious than gold. A pitiful band of about twenty men guard it.

(CONTINUED)

Now dark and dirty these soldiers look scared and miserable. An incredulous Rowdy trots towards them. A slack jawed weary Combat Engineer loosely holds his field rifle. The sight angers Rowdy!

ROWDY

Where's everybody else!?

COMBAT ENGINEER

They run off Sarge.

ROWDY

Why didn't you stop em?!

COMBAT ENGINEER

Hell with what, we's just engineers.

Rowdy **FUMING MAD** has to hold off from decking this little wretch. He carefully explains in deadly earnestness.

ROWDY

We got about twenty Mark II Tiger tanks coming this way and about three hundred troops. They ain't gonna be nice and ask can we please have some gas! These are SS troops they don't take prisoners. Nobody's coming to save us do you understand!

The man gulps with fear the whites of his eyes stare out from the deep black holes of the sockets.

COMBAT ENGINEER

Yes Sir.

ROWDY

Okay then how are we on ammo?

The Engineer leads him over to several crates they salvaged. Rowdy opens them revealing a whole bunch of rifles. He keeps going through each crate frantically searching each one. He then stands disgusted.

ROWDY

Where's de God Damn Bullets!

COMBAT ENGINEER

Sir?

ROWDY

Bullets Dumb ass! Guns ain't no good without em, and grenades.

COMBAT ENGINEER

I guess the other guys took em.

Rowdy really wants to throw a temper tantrum, his face is red with aggravation. A moment, he takes out a pack of cigarettes from his pocket and shuffles one up and takes it in his mouth. He then flips out his lighter.

The Combat Engineer has a look of fear on his face.

COMBAT ENGINEER

Don't do that Sir!

ROWDY

Why de fuck not.

The ENGINEER indicates the obvious gasoline filled drums behind him.

COMBAT ENGINEER

Fumes everywhere! A spark and Whoosh the whole place goes up.

Rowdy smiles an idea brewing.

ROWDY

Okay Engineer you have no ammo or grenades how would you defend this position?

LATER

One of the Engineers uses the tools of his trade a bulldozer equipped with a plow behind it. It digs a long furrow in the frozen tundra, even cutting a troth across the dirt road leading to the fuel dump.

Rowdy has the men rolling the fuel drums out to it. They crack open the spouts of the drums and turn them over spilling gas into the now two foot deep trench.

COMBAT ENGINEER

The frozen ground will keep it from seeping into the earth.

ROWDY

And the snow will keep em from seeing it till they are right on top of it.

(CONTINUED)

Then the ground begins to tremble Rowdy looks up over the low rise he sees the column of tanks and enemy troops. Rowdy whistles.

ROWDY

Alright everybody back across the line.

The white camouflaged Bulldozer gears up and heads back in.

EXT. LEAD TANK - DAY

The SS Commander watches from his command turret scanning the area with his binoculars. From his POV he sees the few men of Rowdy's command scurrying around. Beyond them the fuel dump.

He issues a warning order to all his men.

SS COMMANDER

No firing we need that petrol. I do not believe these Americans will want a fight anyway.

Cooley calculating they proceed onwards in the dimming light of day. The proud good natured Hans walks with them.

EXT. FUEL DUMP - DAY

The sun is fast going down the overcast day making it seem darker than it really is.

ROWDY

Good keep on a comin.

Rowdy crouches behind one of the drums. The other men are fanned out on either side with fuel drums on their sides ready to roll down the sloping hill in front.

COMBAT ENGINEER

Giant firebombs?!

ROWDY

Exactly.

Rowdy loads a single tracer bullet into his rifle.

ROWDY

Tracers are nothing more than hot phosphorus when it hits dat gas, Boom!

(CONTINUED)

CLOSE on the treads of the tanks rumbling on. The trench dead ahead, German troops trudging along the rifles slung over their shoulder. It's gonna be a cake walk.

Rowdy taking aim, through his site the trench filled with the combustible liquid.

On and on they come tank treads and marching feet inches away now. Rowdy squints locking on target. His finger on trigger squeezing -

KAPOW! The tracer leaves the barrel streaking to its goal.

VARRROOOOM SWOOSH! the trench ignites sending up a wall of flames ten feet high. Men are caught in it, burst into flames. The tanks topple into the trench their front axles stuck.

The flames start to melt the rubber on the treads totally immobilizing them.

Hans is behind the first group of men terror hits him first. Instinct tells him to run away. He backs up, then another explosion **BOOM!** The force of the blast knocks him to the ground.

Half conscious he tries to move but he can't. The Malay of battle goes on around him.

ROWDY
Let em have it!

The other engineers let loose their barrels rolling them down the embankment. Hobbling and rolling gaining speed until they crash into the tanks.

KARRANK BOOM!! The fuel drums explode on impact. Fireballs light up the sky, it is a scene from Dante's inferno.

The German's caught off guard quickly try to regroup. The infantry kneel down setting up a defensive line. Through instinct they start firing at Rowdy's men.

Several are cut down Rowdy screams a murderous battle cry and raises up letting loose on his machine gun. He breaks forward towards the Bulldozer.

Bullets ricochet off of it as he climbs in. Putting it in gear he maneuvers its around to a stack of fuel drums. Raising the lifter he pushes over the stack sending more drums plummeting towards the German troops.

A frantic SS Tank Commander in another tank yells to anyone listening.

(CONTINUED)

SS COMMANDER
Feuer einstellen!
(Cease Firing!)

Too late they hit the drums coming at them creating a vast inferno. One drum hurls through the air hitting the tank of the yelling SS officer it **EXPLODES** on impact incinerating the Officer and tank.

If things couldn't get any worse for the Germans a stray bullet finally finds its mark amongst all the barrels in the middle of the fuel dump.

Bad news for just about everybody except Rowdy who is safely tucked away in the Bulldozer.

SHRAAAAANK KABOOM! A massive fireball erupts most of Rowdy's men are burned alive. The Stunned German troops can only watch helplessly as the gasoline goes up in smoke.

Hans wakes up out of his fugue just in time to see the hell on earth unfolding before his eyes. If this is truly war he wants no part of it. He wants to run but is petrified with fear.

From his POV Rowdy's men run around like flaming torches. The German's with a little pity in their eyes shoot them putting them out of their misery. Hans feels for them as well taking up his gun and doing his part.

He then drops his gun to the ground, the other Germans do not notice they are too busy trying to re-group. Hans makes a fateful decision and steals away into the darkness now a deserter, knowing full well what happens if he's caught, but he doesn't care anymore his eyes are finally opened to the truth.

Now with ten tanks gone the last SS COMMANDER sits in his turret watching hopelessly.

SS COMMANDER
WAHNSINN!
(Madness)

Rowdy too is caught off guard by the carnage, regret and anguish comes across his face. Survivor syndrome.

EXT. PEIPER'S POSITION - NIGHT

The curling flash of the big explosion lights up the night sky for miles around. It catches Pieper's attention over the roar of his own tanks pounding Malmedy.

He quickly turns in his turret, binoculars in hand he peers through them. From his POV the mushroom cloud still illuminated by the burning fuel rolls into the sky.

In an instant he knows what it is, cursing.

PEIPER
Verdammt benzin!!
(damnit the gasoline!)

He pounds his fist on the tank turret. Dietrich at a sprint crawls up onto the tank.

This dialogue will be in English

DIETRICH
It must the fuel dump!

PEIPER
Idiot of course it is.

DIETRICH
We must stop this action and bypass
Malmedy.

PEIPER
And leave troops in our rear, hell
no.

Dietrich getting some back bone at this point he doesn't care what happens to him.

DIETRICH
My son was in that unit and he's
probably dead, how many other
mothers sons are you going to
sacrifice!

Pieper unmoved speaks into his control MIC.

PEIPER
Continue firing.

INT. MALMEDY - NIGHT

Most of the town is demolished. Eric huddles in the ruins of a building his dead CO beside him. He shivers in the billowing snow. Shells continue to pound the town, but the American's are putting up a stiff resistance.

Another soldier in an MP outfit dives for cover near Eric. He holds his gun close, as he looks over the rumble at all the other Americans scattered around and fighting. Eric surprised at seeing an MP

MP SOLDIER

Shit we're getting murdered.

ERIC

Where did you come from?

MP SOLDIER

Our unit is scattered all the hell in back.

ERIC

Yeah me too.

The MP Soldier notices the Eric's dead CO.

MP SOLDIER

Was he in command?

ERIC

He was.

MP SOLDIER

Guess that leaves you.

Then Eric notices the Oak Clusters of a Colonel on the MP's lapel. Odd an officer saying that to a Private.

ERIC

What about you?

MP SOLDIER

Not me, don't you think we ought to surrender?

Again another odd statement.

ERIC

What unit did you say you're with?

(CONTINUED)

MP SOLDIER
(thinking)
Uh the two ninety first.

ERIC
Those are engineers.

The MP realizes he's caught, he's a German impersonating an American Soldier. He cocks his weapon and aims it directly at Eric's head, all Eric can do is close his eyes.

MP SOLDIER
(in German)
Dummer Amerikaner
(Stupid American)

Then another voice from behind the German

VOICE (O.S)
(in German)
Dumm Deutsch
(Stupid German)

Then a single gunshot to the back of the head of the soldier he drops dead in Eric's lap. Revealing behind him Marie with a still smoking pistol. Relieved Eric gets up.

ERIC
How did you know?

MARIE
They forget Women remember faces.

ERIC
There's probably more of them.

The tanks continue their relentless assault, soldiers are dieing everywhere.

ERIC
German's disguised as American's
crap!

MARIE
You cannot give up.

ERIC
Perhaps he was right.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! The two of them are showered with dust and debris.

(CONTINUED)

ERIC

If we wait any longer the town will
be completely destroyed.

The GI's are putting up a brave fight but supplies are
dwindling.

Over the noise we hear men calling out:

Anybody got in bandoleers

I'm Out!

I Need some grenades!

Eric listens intently he then sees another MP Soldier, he
makes a supposition. He makes his way over to the man who is
crouched in a corner of some rubble. Eric stumbles over a
crate, it's C4 Charges for demolition.

He reaches down and cracks open the crate he takes out a few
of the explosives some wiring and a small small detonator.
He hides them in his field jacket.

Eric an idea brewing, a moment of surrender or something
more, he continues on to the MP Soldier putting down his gun
and raising his hands.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS MALEMDY PIEPERS POSITION - DAY

Dawn is beginning to break after the night of bombardment.
Peiper observes through binoculars, the town is lit up by
fires.

Through the binoculars he sees a white flag then an American
MP officer. He is followed by whats left of the weary
Malmedy defenders Dietrich crawls onto the tank.

PEIPER

Good one of our SS operatives have
persuaded them to give up.

Peiper calmly gives orders through his head set MIC.

PEIPER

Cease fire.

The tanks go silent.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The sun is quickly lighting up the still mostly gray day, the snow is still falling. Whistler comes crashing through the brush to the rescue. Clearing the woods and sees the line of tanks overlooking the town. Malmedy smokes in the distance.

His heart sinks, too late then he sees the strangling soldiers coming out under a flag of truce. Hope, maybe this is a good thing.

Whistler keeps down and works his way closer. Making it to within a hundred yards or so of the unfolding drama. He crouches behind a tree out of site. Picking up his binoculars again from his POV he scans the survivors.

Up and down no Eric then his attention moves to the MP Soldier that has moved way out ahead of them. Unusual why isn't he with the group.

Whistler squints through the billowing snow adjusting the binoculars to a higher setting. Focusing, the MP comes into crystal clear view its Eric!

WHISTLER
What the shit?!

EXT. ERIC'S POSITION - DAY

CLOSE ON ERIC'S FACE

Calm reserve like a man resigned to his fate, Eric recites the *Shepherd Prayer* **PSALM 23**.

ERIC
The LORD is my shepherd; I shall
not want.

He then adjusts something in his pocket he pulls it up to check on it, its a detonator.

EXT. WHISTLERS POSITION - DAY

Whistler scans his friend and sees a wire emanating from Eric's pocket and traversing into the field Jacket. Then he notices the detonator in Eric's hand. He sees Eric maneuver his coat over something bulky he's trying to hide.

Whistler spies the charges taped to Eric's torso, a few grenades dangle around his belt loops and collar harness. Eric is a walking bomb.

(CONTINUED)

WHISTLER
Oh sweet Jesus!

EXT. PIEPERS POSITION TANK - DAY

A smiling Pieper peels himself out of the tank fixing his hat. Next to him his constant escort Dietrich.

EXT. ERIC'S POSITION - DAY

Eric still moving forward determination in his eyes.

ERIC
He maketh me to lie down in green
pastures: he leadeth me beside the
still waters

EXT. WHISTLERS POSITION - DAY

Whistler frozen not knowing what to do.

WHISTLER
Eric please.

EXT. PIEPERS POSITION TANK - DAY

Pieper stepping in front of his tank, the conquering master removing his gloves and calling out in a loud voice.

PEIPER
Brave soldiers you have done the
right thing.

With a flip of his hand he indicates to some of his troops to move out and cover the new prisoners.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The Germans take up a firing stance cocking their machine guns.

EXT. ERIC'S POSITION - DAY

Eric a little caught off guard by this action, *keep going or not?* A fateful decision move on.

(CONTINUED)

ERIC

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me
in the paths of righteousness for
his name's sake

EXT. PEIPER'S POSITION - DAY

Peiper now completely full of himself.

PEIPER

You took on the mightiest army in
history and lost, nothing to be
ashamed of.

Dietrich looking closer at the oncoming MP. Peiper now
congratulates his effort in a job well done.

PEIPER

Commerandedn ust don vel
(Soldier you have done well)

Eric keeps coming Dietrich now a little suspicious.

EXT. ERIC'S POSITION - DAY

ERIC

Yea, though I walk through the
valley of the shadow of death, I
will fear no evil: for thou art
with me; thy rod and thy staff they
comfort me

EXT. WHISTLER'S POSITION - DAY

Whistler readying himself for battle. From behind comes
David he doesn't hear him, too caught up in the drama.

EXT. ERIC'S POSITION DAY

He's going for it.

ERIC

You prepare a table before me in
the presence of my enemies; You
have anointed my head with oil; My
cup overflows.

Eric connecting the wiring turning plunger to firing
position. Other German Soldiers coming to him, lowering
their weapons thinking he is one of their own.

EXT. PEIPER'S POSITION - DAY

Peiper finally now looking closer. For the first time he realizes it's not a German, but Eric from the day before.

Dietrich noticing the plunger

DIETRICH
Look out mine heir!

Dietrich dives for Peiper.

EXT. ERIC'S POSITION - DAY

Eric only feet away

ERIC
Surely goodness and loving kindness
will follow me all the days of my
life, And I will dwell in the house
of the LORD forever.

With that Eric turns the detonator plunger the electrical zinging noise of it connecting to the explosives on him **WHIZZBANG CRUNCH KABOOM!**

Dietrich flies through mid air covering Peiper knocking him to the ground. The explosion catching Dietrich square in the back protecting Peiper from the force of the blast but at the cost of his own life

Eric explodes taking about a dozen or so German soldiers with him. A signal to the the other Americans to run and scatter.

But the German guards are quickly on them leveling their weapons a futile attempt to run away.

EXT. WHISTLER'S POSITION - DAY

Shock horror, Whistler screaming for his buddy lover.

WHISTLER
Eric!

He starts to run David behind him tackles him, trying to console him, He puts his hand over his mouth, frantic to keep them from being spotted.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID
Shush!, Quiet.

WHISTLER
Eric, Oh Jesus.

DAVID
He's with God now.

WHISTLER
Bastards!

Whistler buries his head in the snow a part of him gone.

EXT. PEIPER'S POSITION - DAY

The smoking body of Dietrich covers his commander. Peiper stunned shoves him off then realizes. A moment of deep sorrow. Dietrich tries to speak.

Peiper too, a deep loss, tears welling in his eyes.

PEIPER
Don't speak mine friend.

DIETRICH
(struggling)
Sir end this.

Dietrich means something else, Peiper knows it, as he takes his last gasps. His head lolls to the side and eyes' fix and dilate the life leaving his body.

Peiper takes his words for his own meaning and with extreme anger and revenge churning up through him stands raging at the other troops.

PEIPER
Töte sie alle!!
(Kill Them All!)

The guns train on the helpless prisoners. Another figure comes running from the ruins of Malmedy, Marie. Not in the best of shape herself her clothes torn and face smudged with soot she screams to Pieper.

MARIE
Joachim Stop!

She continues to run towards them she struggles in the snow. Peiper watches her come on unfazed. He readies his hand a signal to fire. Then he lets it drop.

(CONTINUED)

The German troops let loose on the American GI's

BRRRRATTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT!!!

The GI's are mowed down, bullets chewing through them in a cloud of smoke and blood. The men fall face down in the white snow. It gradually turns to a soft pink from all the blood.

MARIE

NOOOOOOO!

She crumples to her knees at the horrific sight. Pieper's steely blue eyes meet hers. The gulf between them now impassable.

EXT. WHISTLERS POSITION - DAY

David witnesses the atrocity now knowing the full measure of resolve in this enemy. A hard look from David who keeps consoling Whistler.

He sees Marie on her knees crying a certain amount of relief comes over him. Then Peiper getting back up into his tank, he's done what he came to do putting fear into the populace.

The Germans do not bother to gather their dead nor cover up the slaughter of the GI's. The falling snow will erase their crime till spring and by then the war will be theirs.

The Tanks get in gear and move off, on to their next objective.

DAVID

No it's not over, I swear.

EXT. FUEL DUMP - DAY

Pieper and his column of tanks pull into the still burning facility to see if there is anything they can salvage. What he sees is a hopeless mess of ruptured fuel drums and burning tanks.

Pieper pulls himself up atop the turret and sits there almost stunned at all he sees. Looking at his watch nine am he is twelve hours behind schedule.

A German Private a SCOUT comes running up with a report.

(CONTINUED)

SCOUT
Eighty eight barrels sir.

PEIPER
Good Christ.

The snow begins still sputters but not the blizzard conditions as before. He gets down off his turret and begins to physically survey the destroyed fuel dump.

The Scout takes up beside him. Looking around he sees something on the ground, picking it up it is a blasting cap. Recognizing it points it out handing it to Peiper.

SCOUT
Look Sir a blasting cap.

Peiper examines it. Something clicks in Piepers head.

PEIPER
Engineers.

SCOUT
Sir according to reports there is another fuel supply depot beyond the Stavlot.

Peiper gets out his map, studying it.

PEIPER
It would be difficult through these woods.

SCOUT
Perhaps if we had not delayed.

Pieper glares at him, this kid is brave.

SCOUT
Task Force C will soon engaged there.

PEIPER
But perhaps we can get there sooner.

Pieper points to the Suane River Bridge

PEIPER
We will take this one.

SCOUT

We are picking up stragglers from
Task Force B.

PEIPER

How many tanks?

SCOUT

Ten Sir.

Devastation, Peiper then looks around carefully and does a mental count of his wrecked Armour. Smoldering hulks it's true, ten of his finest Tigers destroyed.

EXT. SUANE RIVER BRIDGE - DAY

Ted and Baily have managed to set up a good defensive position with their meager force. They lay land mines on the road approaching the bridge.

Under the bridge Engineers swing from pulley ropes securing charges to the underneath carriage of the expanse.

TED

How many land mines?

BAILY

We have about fifty along the road.

TED

Put more in the field you won't even have to bury them they'll sink in the snow and be quickly covered. I'm more worried about infantry those little Tellerite mines won't do anything to a Tiger.

Baily hurries off to do what he's told. He and another soldier scurry around with armfuls of the mines. They toss them into the field like Frisbee. It almost becomes a game for them.

BAILY

Hey watch this.

Baily takes a stance like a discus thrower, winds up and hurls the flat round metal mine and skips it like a stone on water across the snow field.

The mine glides to a stop then settles under its own weight about a half foot into the powder. Like Ted said the blowing snow quickly covers it over.

(CONTINUED)

The rest of the men make easy work of it, laying what seems to be hundred of mines. Baily has pulled out way ahead of the others. Dangerously beyond the safety of the perimeter.

Kind of carefree he drifts in his thoughts planting mines. He leans down to place another one, then a boot. It startles him jumping back, Hans has stumbled into their work.

He's scared shitless too and quakes as Baily quickly cocks his weapon, Hans throws up his hands in surrender.

HANS

Ich gebe auf!!
(I surrender!)

Baily shaking too, this is the first time he's seen the enemy up close.

BAILY

Stop, Halt I'll shoot!

HANS

Bitte töte mich nicht!!
(please don't kill me!)

BAILY

Stay way you are, don't move!

HANS

Ich will nicht, um zu sterben!
(I don't want to die!)

Tears are streaming down Han's face Baily is equally confused, scared and nervous. Hans moves a little closer, his hand reaches into his pocket

BAILY

Don't move I said!

HANS

Meine Familie!
(struggling english)
I - I ant to go home.

BAILY

Family? Home?!

HANS

Ja! (Yes)

(CONTINUED)

Finally some communication, Hans continues to reach into his field jacket then POW! A bullet rips straight through Hans chest splattering Baily with blood. The look of shock on Baily's face horror on Hans as he realizes he's dying. He collapses face first in the snow.

Behind Baily is David with a smoking forty five, nothing but total contempt on his face. David has now taken the leap to killer. Whistler beside him watching with grim satisfaction.

BAILY

He was unarmed!

DAVID

How do you know that?

Baily bends down and turns Hans over and reaches in to find what Hans was pulling from his pocket. In Hans hands a picture of him with his family. Hans struggles, dying. Baily realizing shows him tenderness, he won't leave him alone. Baily takes out his small Bible.

Hans sees it and puts his bloody hands on it like it is some sacred chalice wanting it to heal him. Baily looks at David half mad half sad, reconciled this is what war is all about.

He rubs Hans forehead cradling him like a Priest and Mother all in one.

BAILY

Shush. You'll be with God soon.

HANS

(struggling)

Geben Sie diese, um meine Familie
(Give this to my family)

BAILY

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
If I die before I wake
I pray the Lord my soul to take,

Hans holds tightly to the picture, then he gently stops breathing his eyes fix and dilate.

BAILY

Amen.

WHISTLER

Good one less we'll have to kill.

(CONTINUED)

BAILY

He was a human being, scared like me.

WHISTLER

He's a killer born from a race of killers.

Whistler jumps down beside them he jerks Hans arm away from Baily and rolls up the Dead boys sleeve, There in the crook of Hans elbow is the SS TATTOO BRAND.

WHISTLER

He was fucking HITLER YOUTH and SS!

DAVID

The troops defending Malmedy tried to surrender, but they cut them down. They were unarmed.

BAILY

How many.

DAVID

I don't know.

WHISTLER

It was more than fifty, Eric tried to save them.

Somehow Baily knows Eric was special to Whistler.

BAILY

I'm sorry.

WHISTLER

Yea me too.

Again the ground begins to shake the telltale sign of the Germans approach. Ted runs up to the group.

TED

Their coming Sir

DAVID

I know at least they give us a heads up.

A smile from the group as they take off back to the perimeter on the other side of the bridge.

EXT. SUANE RIVER BRIDGE - DAY

David and the others scurry for cover. This is a well fortified position and they haven't been spotted yet.

Then the Germans come into view a perfect formation of men and tanks. Baily takes it in it is a scary site. The ground shaking beneath them adds to its terror.

BAILY

Shit fuck!

A smile from Ted.

TED

Gonna a make a soldier outta you yet.

DAVID

Quiet.

TED

Hell they can't hear us.

DAVID

Not you, I'm thinking.

David darkening taking up his field glasses. From his POV he sees Pieper in the lead tank turret. It's become a contest of wills

DAVID

Come on you Bastard.

TED

Sir?

BAILY

Captain Ahab got to hunt his whale.

WHISTLER

Shut up you fuck.

Baily indicates to Ted to come closer a secret to reveal.

TED

What's up?

BAILY

(whispering)

I think the Colonel is losing it.

(CONTINUED)

TED

Your Crazy.

BAILY

No really he just killed an
innocent kid.

TED

Whose innocent anymore? This is no
time to psychoanalyze a situation.

BAILY

It can interfere in his judgment.

David half hears the conversation interdicts.

DAVID

Quiet! This enemy takes no
prisoners! Remember that!

WHISTLER

We don't either.

EXT. FIELD GERMANS POSITION - DAY

German troops continue the advance through the heavy snow
laden field. It's a slow go sinking up to their mid calf in
the white powder.

CLOSE on on German he takes out a candy bar

His FOOT stepping down a slight click

KABOOM! The man is blown to bits stepping on a mine. Then
others around him **BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!** Men disappear in puffs
of smoke and snow.

Another German soldier realizing.

GERMAN SOLDIER

Aufhören! Kreig mines!
(Stop Land Mines)

The other infantry within the sound of his voice freeze in
place. For the moment they are unsure immobile.

EXT. SAUNE RIVER BRIDGE - DAY

David is pleased, Ted too.

DAVID

Good job!

From their POV the whole line of infantry is stopped in their tracks too scared to move.

DAVID

Let em Have IT!

The Bazooka team is the first to open fire. Loading the Bazooka **THUNK SWOOSH!** The missile leaves the barrel impacting amongst a cluster of Germans.

David's men react with cheers that would make any football fan proud. Then down to business the ratcheting sound of a machine gun loading it's breech.

BRRRRAAAAAAAAAATTTT! Bullets fly from the muzzle like angry hornets. Riddling the motionless German infantry. They backtrack from whence they came hoping not to get blown up. Some do, **BOOM! BOOM!**

EXT. PEIPER'S POSITION TANK - DAY

Reacting quickly Peiper shouts order into the MIC.

PEIPER

Target three zero degrees.

The turret rotates with pin point precision, locking in place. Peiper cooly.

PEIPER

Fire.

Deadly accuracy Peipers keen eye has zeroed in on the machine gun nest obliterating it. David and the others are showered with dirt guts and debris.

Peiper again giving orders the tanks disperse around him heading into the mine field. He's guessed their game the tanks are not affected by the small explosives and quickly clear a path for the troops.

David's advantage is short lived. Machine guns from the approaching tanks spray the area peppering the ground. David and his men jump down for cover unable to keep up with their assault.

EXT. SUANE RIVER BRIDGE - DAY

Ted sees the charges haven't been set to the detonator, the withering fire is keeping their heads down.

TED
Sir the detonator?

Ted pointing it out. David an oh *shit look*, he gets up into position to run and set it. Ted pulls him back down by the belt loop.

TED
You fuckin crazy the way you run?

DAVID
Try and stop me.

Ted takes out his forty five and presses it against David's temple.

TED
You may have some sort of death wish but these guys need you.

DAVID
I could court martial you!

TED
If we survive this, be my guest.

Ted waits for a break in the oppressive fire then scrambles over the top and shimmies on his belie to the detonator.

EXT. PEIPER'S POSITION - DAY

Peiper peers through the binoculars from his POV he sees Ted crawling fast across the the ground. He then spies what hes after, the detonator!

CLOSE ON the wiring leading to the charges under the bridge. He follows its line to it's destination.

Ted grapples to get the wiring attached to the detonator.

Peiper seeing him, an urgency in his voice.

PEIPER
Twenty meters! Five two degrees!

The Tank turret taking up position.

EXT. SUANE RIVER BRIDGE DITCH - DAY

Baily seeing the tiger taking aim. Then back to Ted. Baily realizing Ted's doom tries to get out of the ditch. David taking notice, he frantically stops Baily from going after him.

Baily struggling to free himself and help his friend. It is all David can do to manhandle him into submission.

BAILY

Ted! Get out of there!

DAVID

It's too late.

Ted hearing his friends voice finishes up the wiring attachment. He's got it, his hand is on the lever, he can do it.

EXT. PEIPER'S POSITION - DAY

PEIPER

Fire!

Roaring to life the massive eighty eight millimeter cannon belts out a shell. **VARROOM BOOM!** the Tiger rocks in the recoil.

Ted disappears in ash and smoke. Peiper looks relieved the bridge is still intact. Then a **WHINE** of an electrical connection being made.

CAROOOOM SWOOSH BANG! A deafening explosion the Suane river Bridge goes up in a mighty blast, destroying it. In that last millisecond of life Ted hand managed to turn the lever on the detonator.

Peiper looks on crestfallen another objective disappears before his eyes. Peiper enraged peels himself from the tank.

PEIPER

Verdammt ingenieurs!

(Those damned engineers!)

EXT. DAVIDS'S POSITION SUANE RIVER BRIDGE - DAY

David a solemn look his men are dwindling and so are supplies. Baily looks sad, again like with Bernie there is no celebration yet. Besides Ted, David looks around seeing the other men cut down by bullets, dead and dying. Whistler is attending to them.

(CONTINUED)

BAILY

I was just getting to know him.

DAVID

Ted was a good guy.

Whistler runs back to David with a report.

DAVID

How bad?

WHISTLER

We lost twelve including Ted.

DAVID

Ammunition?

WHISTLER

A few clips each, pretty good on C-4 but just a couple of blasting caps.

DAVID

Shit.

David reaches into his pocket and takes out his map.

CLOSE ON MAP. David's finger glides across it there is Stavlot and three bridge icons. Then his finger moves over to another area away from the city another bridge icon.

DAVID

The Suane is gone, you heard from Bernie?

WHISTLER

Not a peep.

David taking his radio, clicking the hand set.

DAVID

Bernie? David over.

EXT. BERNIE'S POSITION - DAY

Bernie has his walkie-talkie slung over one shoulder it **SQUAWKS**. Bernie quickly presses receiver.

BERNIE

Yes Sir?

(CONTINUED)

DAVID (O.S.)
What's your sit rep?

BERNIE
The Lienne Bridge is gone they
won't be coming that way.

DAVID (O.S.)
Same with the Suane.

BERNIE
I guess you saw the fuel dump go
up?

DAVID (O.S.)
Yeah but they'll be trying for the
one beyond Stavlot.

BERNIE
There's three bridges there!

DAVID (O.S.)
But only one road strong enough for
tanks. Plus there's is another
Bridge about a mile from there if
they come across it they could get
behind us.

BERNIE
They'll try and swing the infantry
over to secure that one.

DAVID (O.S.)
How far away are you?

Bernie checks his map and compass

BERNIE
Bout thee miles, from Stavlot four
from the other Bridge

DAVID (O.S.)
Divide up, meet me at grid 429, Get
there fast!

BERNIE
Yes sir.

Bernie motions for the rest of his men to double time it
over the terrain to Stavlot.

EXT. PEIPERS POSITION - DAY

The Scout from earlier comes up beside him, making an off comment.

SCOUT
Geschlagen verdammt ingenieurs.
(Beaten by damened engineers)

Peiper turns suddenly and pulls out his lugar pistol and POW! shoots the scout directly in the forehead. The Scout falls dead away, Pieper seems to have gotten some frustration out.

He holsters his weapon and takes out a cigarette and lights it and takes a long drag and exhales. Another German Junior officer beside the dead Scout shakes in his boots looking at Peiper - this guy is crazy!

Pieper motions him over as Pieper takes out his map and spreads it on the hood of the tank. Then with the calm of someone who just squashed a bug relates to the officer.

PEIPER
I underestimated them not again.
Radio!

A Radio Infantry man with a large field unit on his back runs up. Peiper takes the receiver, he takes out his map studying it

PIEPER
TASK FORCE C send a deployment of
infantry to secure the area of
Three Bridges beyond Stavlot. Meet
us at Grid coordinates 429 there is
a bridge beyond Stavlot that will
support our wieght.

EXT. TASK FORCE C POSITION - DAY

The comfident SS Grenadier commander also blond and blue eyed sits in the turret of his lead tank. He's listening to his orders over an open radio channel.

SS GRENADIER
Ja Kommandant!
(Yes Commander)

EXT. PIEPR' POSITION - DAY

PEIPER

We will catch them between us.

EXT. STAVLOT - DAY

Stavlot lies along the Ambleave river on a slopping bank. Day is quickly turning into night. Bernie and the rest of his men crest the rise above the town.

Bernie scans the area with his binoculars. From his POV nothing, the town seems quiet. Bernie motions for his men to huddle up they form a school circle.

Bernie draws an outline of the town in the snow indicating the main road and the two bridges to the east and west of it

BERNIE

Okay here it is, I want two squads on either of these two bridges. Aiken I want you to set the charges on the main bridge.

AIKINS

Where are you going?

BERNIE

There's another bridge about a mile south of here, Baily your with me.

BAILY

Right Sarg.

Bernie starts loading himself up with some of the C-4 and dentonators. Baily does the same suddenly Aikins realizes.

AIKINS

I ain't never set no charge before.

BERNIE

Easy.

Bernie takes out a block of C-4 Plastic from his bag then the small detonator cap and sticks it in.

BERNIE

There just connect the wire to detonator and your good to go.

Aikins still nervous shakes his head that he understands.

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE STAVLOT - NIGHT

Bernie and Baily walk alone up the pitch black road outside Stavlot, snow flurries all around them.

BAILY
Sure is pretty.

BERNIE
Yeah, you won't ever look at
Christmas the same again.

BAILY
I don't know.

BERNIE
You are the eternal optimist

It is still and peaceful, walking quietly with his rifle at the ready. Suddenly he hears a PSSST! PSSST! Bernie turns in the direction of the sound. Then a voice in a loud whisper.

VOICE (O.S)
Hey Bernie!

BERNIE
What?!

VOICE (O.S)
Over here.

Bernie's eyes try to adjust to the darkness. He makes out two shapes, figuring that they could have shot him already he walks over. Getting closer they sees its Rowdy with another dead GI and a Bazooka. A welcome sight.

BERNIE
Where the hell did you come from?

ROWDY
Got separated.

Rowdy extremely shell shocked and rattled. He nervously holds the Bazooka like a comfort blanket. Bernie gets a feel that things are tenuous at best. He tries to keep his nerve.

ROWDY
Hell is exactly the place.

BERNIE
The fuel dump?

(CONTINUED)

ROWDY

Twenty men up in smoke, my fault.

BERNIE

Did the Germans get the gas?

ROWDY

No, I don't think so.

BERNIE

I saw the blast.

ROWDY

I was trying to stop em protect the others, ya know.

For all his rough and tumble Texas veneer Rowdy is on the verge.

BERNIE

You did good, forget it.

ROWDY

Dis is more than war.

BERNIE

Straighten up we got a job to finish, Baily stay here I'll scout ahead and see where they are. Stay sharp.

BAILY

Yes Sir.

Bernie looks concerned for his battle hardened friend. He continues on his way down the dark road.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

A low soft rumble begins Bernie bends down to feel the road it vibrates. He glances back the quarter mile to Rowdy then takes his walkie-talkie.

BERNIE

Hey you guys we got company.

EXT. ROWDY'S/BERNIE'S POSITION - NIGHT

Rowdy still a little disoriented tries to shake it off. He picks up the Walkie-Talkie.

ROWDY
Yeah okay.

BERNIE
You alright?

ROWDY
Fine I'll handle it.

BERNIE
No, No stay there.

Bernie clicks off from Rowdy, turns dial and presses hand set, to radio his other men.

BERNIE
Aikins what's your position?

Aikins on the other end answers in a hushed voice.

AIKINS (O.S.)
We're a little busy.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS STAVLOT - NIGHT

Aikins and the others are on the outskirts of Stavlot, crouched down behind some bushes and a small retainer wall. German infantry has gotten there first and is passing just a few yards away.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The distant rumbling of tanks is getting closer. Bernie steps off into the woods. He notices how pitch black it is, and the deep ditches on each side of the road. Bernie thinking. He gets back on the Walkie-Talkie.

BERNIE
Rowdy load you Bazooka, is there a mortar launcher there?

ROWDY (O.S.)
Affirmative.

(CONTINUED)

BERNIE

Listen I don't think they know how many of us there are. Let's make it look like we're a fucking army.

Bernie steps back into the road the noise of the approaching tanks is growing louder.

BERNIE

They can only come straight up the road they've got bogged down in the ditches on either side. Can you see my lighter?

Bernie takes out his lighter and flips it igniting the flame.

ROWDY (O.S)

That's a rog.

BERNIE

Okay when I light my cigarette light em up.

ROWDY (O.S)

(worry in his voice)

What are you going to do?

BERNIE

Remember my Poker face.

ROWDY (O.S)

Oh shit.

BERNIE

That's right.

EXT. ROWDY'S POSITION - NIGHT

Rowdy heaves the Bazooka on his shoulder, Baily secures a salvaged mortar launcher.

BAILY

What are we doing?

ROWDY

Ever play Chicken?

The Baily gulps nervous.

(CONTINUED)

GI

Why us?

ROWDY

Because we're here, nobody else.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Bernie stands in the road with only his M-1 Rifle. The tanks round the bend their headlights scanning the area.

Coming closer Bernie just waits standing hard and reserved a fierce face. The lead Tiger tank only ten yards away, finally the search lights catch him in full view.

Bernie stands silhouetted in the beam of light surrounded by darkness the Giant Tiger right in front of him coming closer. Bernie motions for them to stop.

BERNIE

That's far enough.

EXT. TIGER TANK TURRET - NIGHT

The SS German Grenadier is perplexed by the sight of a lone American facing him.

SS GRENADIER

Halt Panziers.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The tank lurches to a stop the purring diesel engine sounds like a snarling coiled lion about to pounce.

BERNIE

I'd turn around if I were you.

Bernie can hear the German soldiers in the background hidden by the black of night. Monsters waiting for the word but they too seem a bit hesitant. Why would a lone soldier face them if he didn't have good back up.

In the background questioning voices of Germans can be heard.

Verrückt amerikanisch!? (Crazy American)

Es ist eine Falle! (It's a trap)

Ganze es armee amerikanisch!? (the whole american army)

(CONTINUED)

BERNIE

You see Patton's Third Army is
right behind me.

A few gasps in the background

Un Patton es Armee dritte! (Patton's Third Army)

The SS Grenadier wondering under his breath

SS GRENADIER

Es Patton?

EXT. ROWDY'S POSITION - NIGHT

Tensely Rowdy watches the whole thing.

BAILY

They're not buying it.

ROWDY

Hold up.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

A Mexican stand off silence prevails.

BERNIE

I'll give you one last chance to
surrender.

SS GRENADIER

Es gibt kein Patton.
(there is no Patton)

The tone is final Bernie gets it, the jig is up the sound of
cocking weapons. Bernie takes out a cigarette, a sudden
move, some German soldiers appear from behind tank.

Baily Loading Bazooka

BAILY

(Quietly)

Loaded.

ROWDY

Ready on mortars.

Baily Taking up position readying Mortar fire.

Bernie placing Cigarette in mouth.

(CONTINUED)

BERNIE

Now we can do this one of two ways,
you can turn around and leave or -

Lighter coming up to cigarette.

Flipping open lighter, igniting

BERNIE

OPEN FIRE!

Bernie dives for cover just as the shell passes his head.

SVWOOOOSH! KABOOM the Bazooka round impacts the lead Tiger,
creating a fire ball.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Mortar rounds scatter the German troops.
Fear in the SS Grenadiers voice shouting orders into MIC.

SS GRENADIER

Gegenfeuer! Untermauern!
(return fire! Back Up!)

Because of the narrow road and deep ditches the column of
tanks can't fan out every vehicle goes into reverse using up
valuable fuel.

SS GRENADIER

Rückzug seine es Patton armee!
(retreat it's Pattons army!)

Bernie scurrys down the ditch to Rowdy who keeps pouring it
on. He climbs into nest to help them firing his weapon. It
sounds like an arsenal.

POP! POP! POP! bullets hit the snow around him

BERNIE

I think we got em on the run.

ROWDY

Good! cause I'm almost out!

The Germans are in complete disaray. They vainly try and lay
down a rear guard action. The Tanks are in full reverse.

KTHUNK BOOM! KTHUNK BOOM! Baily inserts mortar after mortar.
He's nervous and scared out of his mind but keeps going.

Finally the tank sounds are getting dimer and just the
occasional sporatic machine gun fire in the distance.

(CONTINUED)

ROWDY
They're going away.

Baily plops down on the ground exhausted.

BERNIE
Let's get to that other Bridge.

It's now a race heading out on open ground in daylight in these conditions is bad enough. The snow is thick and arduous. Rowdy, Bernie and Baily are struggling carrying charges and other equipment.

LATER

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

A sturdy concrete bridge it could easily hold a Tiger. Isolated with flat ground all around, just a few buildings around it. Infantry could readily cross the low stream if the Bridge is blown.

BERNIE
I don't like this, too open.

ROWDY
Yeah.

Bernie tries to discern any shapes in the the blowing snow and all the blackness.

BERNIE
Where are they?

GI
Who?

Then drifting up along the wind the tune of Dixie being whistled off key. A smile comes across the three men's faces as David and Whistler appear coming across the bridge.

David and Whistler hussle up to them.

BERNIE
Still off key.

WHISTLER
Wanted you to know it was me.

It is getting lighter. The sun is coming up fast.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID
Better hurry I'm not
underestimating this guy again.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

Rowdy is busy under the Bridge setting charges, Bernie bends over the side handing them to him. Whistler and Baily are out a few yards ahead setting mines. Whistler takes off his back pack setting it down.

He takes out what few mines he has, Baily surprised.

BAILY
That's it five mines?!

WHISTLER
One goes off they'll think they're
in a mine field we'll be outta here
soon.

They stagger a line of the mines on either side of the road.

David unfurls the wiring for the explosives, everyone is moving in high gear getting it done.

A complete sense of urgency, nerves are frayed. Rowdy reaches up from under the bridge.

ROWDY
Hand me those wire cutters.

Bernie bending back picking something up then back over the railing.

BERNIE
Hurry it up will ya.

ROWDY
If I don't set this right you won't
have worry about a Tank.

BERNIE
We've been lucky so far.

ROWDY
How you figure that half the men
are dead we have very little C-4
left and WE really don't know how
many is coming at us.

(CONTINUED)

BERNIE

I was thinking about last night.

ROWDY

Last night was stupid.

David hurries over to them throwing the detonator wiring over the edge. Rowdy catches it with one hand.

Bernie a moment of reflection asking David directly.

BERNIE

Sir we gonna make it.

DAVID

Sure.

BERNIE

No I mean us.

David straightens up facing him.

DAVID

It doesn't matter if WE do. What matters is they don't get to the gasoline.

Just that, matter of factually, David is completely obsessed now, he heads off to another task. Bernie a bit shocked at the answer, not what he was looking for, he glances at Rowdy whose pulling himself over the railing.

BERNIE

A little reassurance would've been nice.

ROWDY

What'd ya expect.

Baily and Whistler are done they run back to the bridge.

Suddenly **BRRAAAAATTTT!** A machine gun burst. Whistler hits the dirt. Baily still standing.

WHISTLER

Get down!

Close on Baily's face shock, he looks down at his chest four bloody holes still smoking. Sorrowful a pitiful look to Whistler.

(CONTINUED)

BAILY
They killed me.

It's the last thing he says as he falls face first into the soft snow. Whistler scrambles to him turning him over to check for a pulse, nothing.

POP! POP! POP! Bullets hit all around him, a quick look German infantry at the run towards the bridge. Whistler takes a grenade from his belt clip. Pulls the pin and lobs it over his shoulder.

KABOOM!

It lands between the two men killing them. From his POV Rowdy grabs his machine.

ON ROWDY

He lays down a withering cover fire.

ROWDY
Come On!

Whistler keeping his head down scrambles for the safety of the Bridge. Behind him a whole platoon of German infantry and officers at a run for the bridge.

A cluster of them hits one of the land mines

BOOM! Men go flying.

David grabs the detonator plunger and runs for a nearby ditch. Tracer bullets everywhere.

Rowdy behind the railing of the Bridge. He grabs a grenade pops it then hurls it at the running men.

BOOM! Then he unleashes a blood curdling rebel yell and runs at them with Machine gun Blarring

BARRRRAAAAT!

He's gone nuts a killing machine stopping, popping another Grenade throwing it **KABOOM!**

MACHINE GUN - BARRRRRRATTTT!!!!

The Germans are waylaid with his assault then they drop to one knee to set up firing positions. Whistler sees Rowdy loosing it he dives for him catching him in the mid section.

THEY BOTH TUMBLE INTO THE DITCH

(CONTINUED)

GERMANS RUNNING! Guns blazing they're at the bridge some try and climb over the railing to to get the charges.

DAVID WAITING

WHISTLER
Blow the God Damn thing.

More germans on the Bridge an eternal moment

CLOSE O DAVIDS EYES

His hand the detonator, he turns the lever

WHZZZZZZ ZING! the electrical connection is made to the explosives

AVROOOOOOM KABOOM! It's massive David waited till most on the Germans were on the bridge killing them all. Only two German OFFICERS are left standing on the other side wide eyed with disbelief.

Rowdy jumps up hollering at them, Whistler all smiles too.

ROWDY
That's how it done!

WHISTLER
Fuck Hilter you Nazi bastards!

David exhausted the adrenlin draining from him.

BERNIE
That was pretty good.

DAVID
There's still one more bridge.

EXT. BRIDGE GERMAN SIDE - DAY

The walkie-talkie squawks the voice of a frantic SS Grenadier.

SS GRENADIER (O.S.)
Was passiert?!
(What's happened)

OFFICER
Es Brücke ist weg.
(the bridge is gone)

(CONTINUED)

SS GRENADIER (O.S.)

WAS!?

The two officers look at one another, failure. Then turn back and look at the big hole that once was a bridge. On the other side David, Rowdy and Bernie gather what they can and scurry off.

EXT. SS GRENADIER POSITION - DAY

The once confident officer is now scared as he has to make his report to Peiper. He speaks into the headset trembling.

SS GRENADIER

Mein heir, Es brücke ist weg.

Silence from the other end sheer torment for the SS Grenadier.

SS GRENADIER

Mein heir, hast du mich gehört?
(Sir did you hear me?)

EXT. PEIPER'S/SS GRENADIER'S POSITION - DAY

Peiper just wears a solemn face, he's behind schedule, as he listens to the fateful report.

PEIPER

I have wasted valubale gas coming to you, now I will have to turn around.

SS GRENADIER

Sorry Mine Heir.

PEIPER

It's not me you'll have to explain that too, but our FURHER!

SS GRENADIER

Yes Mien Heir

Pieper disgusted clicks off his receiver.

The SS Grenadier is in deep trouble and knows it. He sits stoicly in his turret.

SS GRENADIER

Fahren Sie mit redezvous mit Task Force A.

(CONTINUED)

(Proceed to Rendezvous with
Task Force A))

Peiper has been heading in the wrong direction now he must turn his tanks. The unyielding giant tanks belt diesel fuel as the turn in the snow heading for Stavlot.

EXT. STAVLOT - DAY

Aikins and his men have engaged the enemy. It is not going well the battle is heated bullets fly everywhere.

Aikins huddles at the corner of a building overlooking one of the foot bridges. German's pour over it lots of them, his men are about to be out flanked.

He's in over his head but he's in charge he got to get it together. Another GI runs up and takes cover with him. Bullets ricochet off the mortar of the building.

GI

Crap we're getting murdered.

AIKINS

Tell me something I don't know.

He looks around in desperation, then a thought. He spies one of his guys with a back pack of explosives.

Aikins calls out for him.

AIKINS

Over here! We'll cover you.

The nervous soldier acknowledges.

AIKINS

One, Two, Three NOW!

Aikins and the other GI Stand in unison firing away. The Soldier with the explosives skittles to them. Bullets impacting at his feet as he runs.

POP! POP! POP!

The soldier makes it.

SOLDIER

Yes Sir.

(CONTINUED)

AIKINS

Don't call me sir see any stripes,
never mind. Got any comp-B in
there?

SOLDIER

Bout all I do have and some C-4 no
blasting caps!

Aikins hurriedly gets the back pack off and takes out the different compounds. Holding each in different hands he thinks. Then starts unwrapping C-4 he takes a grenade and molds it around the little pineapple shape.

AIKINS

There, that otta give us more bang.

The others get what he's doing and do the same with their grenades.

AIKINS

Okay on three, One, two, three

The three men stand pull their pins on the super sized grenades and hurl them in unison at the foot bridge.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The effect is more devastating then they can imagine the wooden foot bridge goes up in splinters as do the Germans.

AIKINS

Shit it worked.

But there is the matter of the other bridges, the german's are relentless.

Another German soldier spot s their position he carries a Panzser-Faust Grenade launcher, he drops to one knee and fires.

VAROOOOM WOOOSH! The shell impacts on the building just above Aikins position causing a partial collapse the two men beside him are burried in the rubble a large chunk of mortar falls catching him in the shin and breaking his ankle.

He crumples in pain, out of commission.

EXT. PEIPER'S POSITION - DAY

Now re-grouped Pieper and Task Force C crest the rise over Stavlot. Quickly taking his binoculars he surveys the situation. From his POV through the glass he sees the faltering American's.

A smile drifts across his face, but there is also a sense of urgency in his voice, he barks the orders.

PEIPER

All Tigers flank speed expend all
ordinance I WANT THAT BRIDGE!

The column of tanks shift into high gear their diesel engines belch with smoke moving forward and down the ridge. Crashing into trees and flattening them the massive eighty eight millimeter guns fire pulverising anything in their path.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! The sounds of explosions and the approaching tanks is deafening Pieper will not be deprived of his prize.

INT. PEIPER'S TIGER TANK - DAY

Close on fuel gauge about a quarter of a tank, not good the TANK DRIVER radios Pieper.

TANK DRIVER

Sir we do not have enough fuel to
maintain the attack.

PEIPER

Hold you course do not slow down!

The reluctant Tank Driver turns back to mind his task.

EXT. STAVLOT - DAY

Aikins small band is being pummeled taken apart by the shattering shells. Into the fray run David, Rowdy, Bernie and Whistler it seems like their the last survivors of this whole ordeal.

As shells explode all around him he sees Aikins curled up in the debris of the building. They run for him scidding to a stop beside him under cover of the collapsed building.

Aikins coughs he's in pittiful shape. David looking around dead GI's everywhere. Bullets zing by.

(CONTINUED)

AIKINS

Sorry Sir couldn't hold -

Aikins passes out from the pain.

DAVID

Good boy.

ROWDY

Didn't we just leave this party!

BERNIE

Sir we've lost Stavlot we have to re-group.

David the look of a devil and possessed man.

DAVID

NO! Damn you!

ROWDY

Sir this is untenable.

DAVID

(calming down)

Look up!

ROWDY

Look up?!

Rowdy glances skyward the snow has stopped the sun is peeking through. Rowdy and Bernie big smiles.

DAVID

I'm sure command is aware of the situation if we can delay them just a little longer there will be planes buzzing around all over the place. But we need to blow that Bridge!

ROWDY

Why don't they just bomb the fuel dumps!

WHISTLER

Cause we need the gas too!

ROWDY

(a smile)

Good point.

(CONTINUED)

David looking through binoculars his POV the Stavlot Bridge untouched, no Germans either. From his POV moving there are some trees lining the causeway but it's all open ground.

DAVID

Crap no way to get at it.

Then David notices the many vehicles left behind by the Americans in their hasty retreat.

EXT. PIEPER'S POSITION - DAY

The road to Stavlot is the only one that leads to the bridge it falls away sharply to one side.

PEIPER

Tiger twenty advance on perimeter.

The Tiger to Peiper's immediate left veers off in a flanking move peeling away sharply making a run for the road.

It advances at break neck speed for such a giant vehicle

KABOOM! BOOM! BOOM BOOM!

The tank has hit some mines laid out in tandem to explode individually if one is hit.

EXT. DAVID'S POSITION - DAY

David seeing this a grins.

DAVID

Well God's luck favors children,
small animals and Engineers.

ROWDY

Some of the 309th must have had
time to put out some mines.

BERNIE

I'll be damned.

EXT. PEIPER'S POSITION - DAY

Dismay of Pieper's face seeing his lead tank stopped in it's tracks. He now has a better vantage point and takes a closer look at the town.

Now visible from his POV are the many vehicles left by the American's. Indecion on his face, then a moment.

(CONTINUED)

PEIPER
Halt all commands. Infantry pull
back and report.

EXT. GERMAN INFANTRY/PEIPERS POSITION - DAY

A stunned German officer hears the command over his radio.

GERMAN OFFICER
But Sir.

PEIPER
I need to know the strength before
I commit my Tigers.

The firing subsides.

EXT. DAVID'S POSITION - DAY

David perplexed.

ROWDY
Now what?

DAVID
They must be confused by all these
vehicles.

BERNIE
They don't know how many of us.

With a momentary reprieve they scramble to the nearest jeep.
Peering in surprise on their faces, full gasoline drums.

DAVID
They must have been moving it to
the rear.

David a look to Bernie they are both thinking the same
thing. Rowdy scurries to another Duece and a Half truck, he
folds flap back more gas drums. Then runs back.

ROWDY
Found more over there

BERNIE
A giant bomb!

DAVID
Could by us some time.

(CONTINUED)

He notices the spill way leading out of town, and the drainage ditch along the river on the opposite bank. Looking to other side the Germans are crouched in defensive positions in the buildings.

DAVID

It's a sloping grade.

BERNIE

What are you thinking?

DAVID

Whistler set up a firing position over there catercorner to the bridge, I need some cross fire on it in case this don't work.

WHISTLER

What you planning?

DAVID

Set a charge and drive it right down their throat.

ROWDY

You'd be killed.

DAVID

No I don't intend to die. I'll start it up and wedge a piece of wood on the gas. You guys follow me in the truck, when the jeep goes up, jump out and pour gas in the trenches. Whistler keep them occupied.

Whistler jumps at the order and manuevers skillyfully to his firing nest.

ROWDY

Like at the fuel dump, instant tank trap.

DAVID

That should give us time to set the charges.

The smoke from the recent battle is still hanging low giving David and the others added cover, as they get into their respective vehicles.

INT. JEEP - DAY

David gets behind the wheel and fires it up.

INT. DUECE AND HALF TRUCK - DAY

Rowdy does the same.

BERNIE

I hope he knows what he's doing?

ROWDY

(uncomfortable)

Me too.

He pushes the starter and revs the engine.

EXT. PEIPER'S POSITION - DAY

Peiper observes the strange activity the POV of the binnoculars.

PIEPER

What are they doing?

INT. JEEP - DAY

David takes out a C-4 Charge from his pack then attaches a small timer deice to it. He set the time then clicks the start and places on top of the gasoline drum and revs the engine and peels out down the bridge twaords the opposing troops.

On Cue Whistler starts his asault

BRRRRRRAAAAAAAAAATTTT!!!

The Germans react firing their machine guns, Whistler jumps back as bullets richocet everywhere.

BRRRRAAAAATTTT!!!! They turn their attention to the oncoming vehicle **BAM! BAM! BAM!**

The windshield shatters David covers his face he grabs the wooden plank and wedges it on the gas peddle. Almost to the other side he pops the door and rolls out the jeep careens into the nest of Germans exploding.

KARROOCOMM BOOM! Men ignite like matches and run shrieking as they burn up.

David clamors up and over the side of the bridge.

INT. DUECE AND HALF TRUCK - DAY

Rowdy puts the truck in gear and grinds it as he spins out.

ROWDY

Yee Haaa!

BERNIE

Don't do that.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

They fly past David and screech to a stop, piling out they run to the back of the truck. Bernie jumps in he pushes the drums out as fast as he can it is a superhuman effort.

They bang on the ground, Rowdy easily busts them open pouring gas into the trench. Drum after drum it quickly becomes a river of gasoline.

The other Germans are regrouping fast Bernie sees this he pops a couple of grenades and lobs them.

BOOM BOOM!

ROWDY

Come on!

Bernie runs back.

Close on a German taking aim, he fires.

It catches Bernie in the leg he falls yards shy of the ditch the Germans are movomg up fast. Rowdy drops what he's down and runs for him. Bernie motions him back.

BERNIE

No go back burn it.

Rowdy won't hear of it he's not leaving him. He grabs Bernie under the arm and drags him back to safety.

As he runs the Germans are spraying the area with bullets. Bernie struggles to get out his lighter he flips it and slings it behind him as he runs, it's a HAIL MARY MANUEVER.

EXT. PEIPER'S POSTION - DAY

From Peiper's POV through the binoculars he sees the lighter it's in slow motion.

PEIPER
Oh Shit den Gas!

EXT. BRIDGE TRENCH - DAY

The ligher seems to hang in mid air then down into the voliotile gasoline.

VARRRRROOM! A wall of flame bursts up.

EXT. UNDERNEATH BRIDGE - DAY

David dangles one handidly as he attaches each charge. Over the side appears Rowdy who hands him the wiring. David a look where's Bernie?

ROWDY
He's okay.

David finsihes up attaching the wire he reaches up for Rowdy who grabs his hand and hauls him over.

EXT. PEIPER'S POSITION - DAY

Peiper frantic.

PEIPER
All tanks forward flank speed

All the tanks seem to get what's going on they shift into high gear and proceed up the road. Pieper in the lead tank pours it it on, firing relentlessly

PEIPER
Fire! Fire!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

EXT. BRIDGE - FDAY

The shells impact all over the place David, and Rowdy hauling Bernie struggle to stay on their feet and alive. David unfurling waiting as they go. In what seems like an eternity they make it back to Aikins position.

(CONTINUED)

A near panicked David manages to get the detonator plunger out of the unconscious Aikins back pack.

Finally it's loose he breaths then thinks and attaches the wiring. Looking up it seems he and Piepers eyes meet

Peiper gazing fiercely at him. David smiling.

DAVID
Not this time.

David turns the detonator.

KAROOOSH BOOM!! The main Stavlot bridge disintegrates right in front of Peipers eyes.

Peiper is showered in dust and debris he knows he has no chance now to salvage the situation. The fire trench continues to burn in front of him all his gas going up in smoke he looks like the devil himself surrounded and consumed by the flames of hell.

PEIPER
(solemn resigned to his fate)
Jene verdammt ingenieurs, Jene
verdammt ingenieurs.
(Those damned engineers, those
damned engineers)

A noise overhead, Peiper looks up the sky is clear and blue. The noise the drone of **AMERICAN AIRCRAFT!**

A P-51 MUSTANG buzzes their position, it banks and comes around again guns blazing from its wing machine guns.

It straffs Peipers men ripping them to shreds more aircraft appear this time they are dropping tank buster bombs.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Heavy explosions several of Piepers Tanks are knocked out of commission instantly. Peiper trying to save his men issues useless orders.

PEIPER
Form up on my command.

The heavy beasts try to respond then the awful sputtering, spurting sound of engines running out of gas! Tank by tank they lurch then crawl to a stopping as each one runs out. Peiper's does the same finally stopped in his tracks only a mile from his objective.

(CONTINUED)

The Mighty Tiger II the most feared weapon on the battlefield has now been reduced to a giant paperweight. Some of his men try to thwart off an attack with what ammo they have left, but unable to aim it is pointless.

One by one tank crews abandon their steel nests and run off. Peiper looks on helplessly as his once invincible army now turns tail and runs back to Germany.

Across the expanse that was once the bridge David, Rowdy and a propped up Bernie wave good bye to their foe. Peiper smiles at the irony of it all and turns and snaps a salute.

From over the rise behind their advance comes more Americans like ants from mounds thousands of them. They quickly round up the Germans.

Some GI's among them Whistler, enact revenge for the atrocity at Malemedy and summarily execute the surrendering German's. They cut down hundreds, till an Officer intervenes and stops the action.

Whistler breaks away seeing Peiper getting away he runs after him. Before he can get to him Pieper is intercepted by two American officers. Peiper knows the gig is up and throws up his hands in surrender. The officers take him into custody.

Whistler determined comes up on them leveling the gun at Peiper. Peiper calm stands at attention awaiting his fate. The officer jumps in front of him.

OFFICER
Hold up soldier!

WHISTLER
Get out of the way!

OFFICER
He'll stand trial!

WHISTLER
He murdered hundreds!

Whistler like a baby cries.

WHISTLER
Killed my friend.

The officer takes out his side arm and points it at Whistler.

(CONTINUED)

OFFICER

Stand down!

Whatever blood fever and adrenalin has been keeping Whistler going finally drains from him, he drops his weapon and collapses on the field crying uncontrollably.

EXT. DAVID'S POSITION BRIDGE - DAY

The war weary and disheveled David looks on with a mixture of satisfaction and dread. Rowdy looks on satisfied.

ROWDY

Got what they deserved.

DAVID

Are we any better?

EXT. MALMEDY - DAY

The now coordinated American's clean up the town after the tremendous battle. The corpses of the Americans massacred are being dug out of the snow and placed in awaiting trucks.

A processing station has been set up for prisoners of war. Each German is stripped of their rank and insignia and given a cardboard tag to wear around their neck with a number scrawled on it. Peiper steps up to the field desk in perfect german officer fashion snapping his heels. A lowly Private takes his information.

PRIVATE

Name, uh - Nom.

For the first time Peiper speaks in perfect English

PEIPER

Stormgruppenfuehrer Joachim Peiper.

Marie is outside what is left of her store picking up the pieces. From behind her comes David looking dirty a bit older and maybe wiser. He touches her on the shoulder she jumps, startled then turns and sees his smiling face.

She wraps her arms around him so glad he is alive.

MARIE

I-I thought the worst.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Me too.

David fingers his wedding ring, he wants more she knows it.

MARIE

Your wife will be happy.

A reminder.

DAVID

Yeah but I'm not sure I am.

MARIE

It will pass in time.

DAVID

I did things, stuff I-

David trembling. Marie puts her finger to his lip.

MARIE

Tell your wife not me.

She glances over to the German Prisoners. A handcuffed Peiper is being lead to a jeep. Peiper sees her looking at him for a moment their eyes meet maybe a little pity relecting in her expression.

Peiper stops taking it in then gets in the jeep. The MP Guard gets behind the wheel and pulls away.

MARIE

What will happen to him.

DAVID

He'll be tried for war crimes.

MARIE

Will he die?

DAVID

Probably.

Marie glances down at the ground.

DAVID

You still feel for him.

MARIE

Not for what he became but for what he once was.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

We can all say that.

The bustle of activity obscures the two, smoke and the remnants of war. Fading to:

MUCH LATER:

EXT. DAVID'S HOME - DAY

David is in his flower garden attending his roses. His wife comes up and helps him smiling.

EXT. PRAIRIE - DAY

Somewhere on the plains of West Texas Rowdy is on his horse corraling Steer.

INT. FURNITURE SHOP - DAY

Bernie is at his workbench working at finishing up a nice piece of furniture. He polishes the wood grain then steps back admiring it.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Marie has rebuilt her business women customers check out her flowers.

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

The War Crimes trial at Nuremburg. Peiper sits in a gallery surrounded by other German Prisoners, with the cardboard number hanging around their necks. The balif stands and calls Peipers number no name just reduced to a number.

BALIFF

Prisoner 180089.

Peiper stands holding his number up the Judge reads the verdict.

JUDGE

Prisoner 180089 having been found guilty of 130 counts of war crimes is hearby sentenced to death by hanging. To be carried out no later than July of this year.

(CONTINUED)

Whistler sits in the audience in his dress uniform satisfied, he stands by himself applauding, no one else joins in. Peiper catches his glare, Whistler makes the motion of the axe man across his throat.

Peiper is led out of the courtroom.

SUPER 1977: LIENNES FRANCE

EXT. LIENNES FRANCE - NIGHT

The small village of Liennes has been rebuilt the war has been long forgotten

NARRATOR

Due to a clerical error Peipers death sentence was cummuted to time served he was released in 1957 and retired to a life of solitude in France not far from Malmedy.

INT. PEIPERS HOME - NIGHT

A soft pleasant Summer evening Peiper sits reading at his desk. Now in a casual dress shirt and sweater. He looks more like a teacher now than the cruel officer he once was. Peiper is married now we see a wedding ring on his finger.

On his desk a picture of a woman but it's not Marie. He seems a little edgy. The house is quiet he's alone in the structure. The phone rings he gets up and answers it.

VARROOOOMMM!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! KABOOM!!

The house and Peiper are completely obliterated. Outside about a block away the shadow of a man in a phone booth.

Close on a man's gloved hand hanging up the reciever. He opens the door and steps out his back too us. As he walks away the off key tune of Dixie is being whistled floating on the now still night air.

Behind him Peipers house is gone nothing but smoking ash and ruins the debris settles to the ground.

OVER BLACK

No one was ever charged in connection with the assassination of Joachim Peiper. When asked later locals recalled someone whistling Dixie just after the explosion, the case remains open to this day.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

107.

THE END

Fade Out