

Cross of Iron (1977)

by Sam Peckinpah

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FADE IN
THE CREDITS:

Which are SUPERIMPOSED OVER a SCENE of almost unnatural beauty. A thickly wooded forest which practically shut out the sunlight. All is not serene however. SHOTS RING Out -- and we are privy to a running battle between a German patrol and a band of Russian soldiers. It is a desperate fight -- and several bodies fall. we see the faces of several men whose identity we will learn later. The shooting is still going on when the CREDITS come to an END. Then --

1. THE SLOPE OF A HILL - DAY

The CAMERA is MOVING SLOWLY up the hill. The verdancy of the hill, the intermittent clusters of daisies and dandelions

are evidence of the season -- late Spring. Now the crest of the hill is in sight; above it a patch of blue sky is visible. The mood is pastoral, peaceful.

The CAMERA reaches the crest -- and suddenly a pair of highly polished boots almost fills the SCREEN. The CAMERA comes to an abrupt HALT. Then SLOWLY, the CAMERA PANS UP from the boots to take in a carefully tailored German officer's uniform and then the face of the German officer -- CAPTAIN STRANSKY.

It is a longish face with a high forehead and light blue eyes. It is a face that gives an impression of extreme forcefulness, an impression underlined by the thin - lipped mouth and angular chin. His hair is white at the temples, emphasizing by contrast the healthy tan of his face.

At the moment, Captain Stransky is gazing through a stereotelescope. His expression is grim. Behind the Captain stands LIEUTENANT MEYER, a youngish, good-natured face.

However, it is apparent from his expression that he has no great liking for his Captain. His lips are tight as the Captain moves the knobs of the telescope with long thin fingers. Captain Stransky straightens up, locks back at Lieutenant Meyer, whose expression quickly changes to one of impassivity. Stransky, whose demeanor is angry, says nothing, but turns to peer again through the telescope.

2. VIEW THROUGH TELESCOPE WHAT CAPTAIN STRANSKY SEES

A patch of woods, about a square mile in area.

3. MED. SHOT STRANSKY AND MEYER

Stransky straightens up.

STRANSKY

(angrily)

Incredible -- sheer stupidity.

Those woods should have been

cut down or destroyed by fire.

MEYER

Excuse me, sir, but we retreated
too hastily for any such luxury.

STRANSKY

I disagree. It was an irreparable
oversight, and I shall send a report
to that effect to Regiment.

(looks at the woods,

reaches for cigarette case)

Do you think the Russians are
already in those woods?

(offers Meyer a cigarette)

MEYER

Thank you. We'll know soon enough.
Corporal Steiner is on a reconnaissance
patrol.

Stransky drops his cigarette butt, steps on it.

STRANSKY

Reconnaissance patrols have a way
of not returning.

MEYER

Steiner will be back.

STRANSKY

(angrily)

I did not ask your opinion Herr
Meyer.

Meyer says nothing. We can see that he regrets his impu-
dence. With a mixture of anxiety and curiosity, he waits
to see what will happen next.

The ANGLE WIDENS to TAKE IN a PRIVATE who walks up to the
Captain, salutes.

PRIVATE

Captain Stransky? Lieutenant

Colonel Brandt Would like to see

you at headquarters.

Stransky nods, gazes sharply at Meyer, walks off, the

CAMERA TRUCKING with him. All about him are SCENES of

great activity. MEN are digging bunkers and preparing

positions. SHOUTS fill the air. As Stransky passes,

he is greeted by salutes which he acknowledges with the

briefest of nods.

4. EXT. REGIMENTAL BUNKER

An armed GUARD is on duty. He salutes smartly as .Captain

Stransky comes INTO SCENE, returns the salute without

looking at the Guard, ENTERS the bunker.

5. INT. BUNKER TWO OFFICERS

are examining a map that hangs on the wall. The older of

the two is LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRANDT. About fiftytwo,

a gaunt gray face. The younger officer is a CAPTAIN. In his middle thirties, a tired expression, but his features are intelligent. At the moment, he is Shaking his head.

CAPTAIN

If our main line of resistance is at Novorssysk, What are We doing do??nhere?

BRANDT

(shrugging)

We're playing fire department.

CAPTAIN

Several hundred miles from the heart of the fire? Does that make sense?

The door opens and a CORPORAL announces:

CORPORAL

Captain Stransky.

Stransky APPEARS on the threshold.

BRANDT

Come in, Captain. You know my
adjutant, of course.

STRANSKY

Of course. How are you, Captain
Kiesel?

KIESEL

Awful. Terrible. How are you?

Brandt laughs, Places a bottle of wine on the table.

BRANDT

This might cheer you up, Kiesel.

Stransky inspects the label.

STRANSKY

My respects, Colonel Brandt.

Producing a 1937 Moselle in the

southernmost corner of Russia.

BRANDT

(fills glasses)

A bottle of Moselle is no more

absurd in this region than We

ourselves. Your health, gentlemen.

KIESEL

I am not going to drink to my health.

My health is terrible and doesn't

deserve to be drunk to.

(holds up his glass)

To the end of the damn war.

STRANSKY

Incidentally, Colonel, why does our

presence in the bridgehead strike

you as so absurd?

Brandt looks at Kiesel, then turns to Stransky.

BRANDT

(ignoring the question)

Captain,

Why did you ask to be trans

ferred from France?

STRANSKY

(laughs)

Exactly what my commanding officer

in France asked me. I can't stop

you, he said, since I'm convinced

that without you the eastern front

would collapse in a matter of days.

Go ahead, you heroic fathead.

KIESEL

(quickly)

I withdraw my toast to the end of
the war. To heroic fatheads
everywhere.

Stransky doesn't know quite how to take this, but decides
on a faint, icy smile.

BRANDT

Captain Stransky, is there any
news on Steiner?

STRANSKY

No, sir, not yet.

Brandt shakes his head.

STRANSKY

Incidentally, What sort is he,
Steiner?

Kiesel looks at Stransky closely.

BRANDT

A problem....no respect, but a
first rate soldier so one looks
the Other Way.

Pause.

STRANSKY

(a short laugh)

Of course, I've only been on this
front a few days, matter of hours
actually, but I see -- rather I
sense -- a sort of -- well, it's not
exactly insubordination -- Well, let's
call it -- a lack of respect.

KIESEL

If I hope into a cab which gets
into an accident because the brakes
fail, I blame the driver, not the

company he works for. I'll say
that he should have refused to drive
a cab with defective brakes.

STRANSKY

I'm not sure I know What you mean
by that.

KIESEL

(looks at him a moment,
then easily)
I don't intend to discuss politics.

BRANDT

(angry)
You talk avout lack of respect --
low morale..... it goes hand in hand
with impending defeat.

STRANSKY

Defeat? I refuse to admit that
possibility.

KIESEL

(dryly)

We'll, said, Captain.

STRANSKY

I don't believe that the German
soldier --

KIESEL

The German soldier!

(laughs mirthlessly)

In the early years they saw the
retreating backs of the Russians
too often to be frightened by his
face now. The replacements, on
the other hand, think every Russian

is an infallible fighting machine.

I feel damn sorry for our poor land
sers.

STRANSKY

(frigidly)

In the present state of our nation,
such talk borders on treason. I
am a soldier and as such it is my
duty to subordinate my own ideas
to the interests of my country.

KIESEL

(Smiles easily as he
lifts glass)

We are still doing our duty,
Captain Stransky.

Stransky, his face white, glares at Kiesel.

The PHONE has been RINGING. Brandt picks it up with a
Snap.

BRANDT

Yes? -- What? -- Good, Meyer.

Wonderful. What sort of shape

are they in? -- I see.

(hangs up)

Lieutenant Meyer. Steiner is back.

KIESEL

Of course.

STRANSKY

Naturally, I'd like to talk to him.

I intend to promote him to Senior

Sergeant on the spot.

KIESEL

(wryly)

Most generous of you.

STRANSKY

(saluting)

If you'll excuse me.

Brandt nods. Stransky LEAVES. There is a moment's silence.

6. CLOSE SHOT BRANDT AND KIESEL

BRANDT

Well, what do you think of our

Captain?

KIESEL

(a moment's thought)

Must have the most expensive

tailor in Berlin.

BRANDT

And, of course, he won't rest until

he gets the Iron Cross.

KIESEL

(toasts)

Gets.....not earns?

Brandt, who has lifted the wine bottle, finds it empty.

BRANDT

Oh, to hell with Stransky and

the Iron Cross. And you, too,

Kiesel.

They smile at each other grimly.

DISSOLVETO:

7. LIEUTENANT MEYER

Pacing back and forth in a trench, outside of a bunker door. Occasionally he steals a glance at a group of men who are slumped in various indolent positions on the floor of the trench.

8. FULL SHOT THE GROUP OF MEN

The CAMERA PANS SLOWLY from face to face. There are nine men in the group (all will be identified later individually). At the moment, all look exhausted, dirty and somewhat disgusted. The men, with the exception of two, PASTERNAK and ANSELM, are in the same age range (about 25 to 30). Pasternack and Anselm are younger. SCHNUR BART is distinguished by a heavy beard. KRUGER by a tough weather beaten visage. DORN has the look of an intellectual. STEINER'S extreme gauntness is what catches the eyes. His face is expressionless. The others, MAAG, HOLLERBACH and KERN are nondescript, runofthemill faces.

Meyer walks past the men in silence. They do not pay too much attention to him. Several are smoking cigarettes.

Meyer looks toward the bunker. The CAMERA, following his gaze, MOVES TOWARD the bunker.

9. INT. BUNKER LIEUTENANT TRIEBIG

is seated at the table. He is a very young, very handsome, officer. An orderly. KEPPLER, is busy at a hot plate with a coffee pot. He, too, is very young. After a moment --

TRIEBIG

Is it very hot? Captain Stransky won't stand for anything but hot coffee.

KEPPLER

It is practically scalding, sir.

TRIEBIG

Good.

KEPPLER

Is there anything else you wish, sir?

TRIEBIG

Not at the moment.

As Keppler starts out:

TRIEBIG

Just a minute. You can keep me
company for awhile. I really
hardly know you. Sit down some
where.

Keppler looks around uncertainly. Triebig is sitting in the
one and only chair.

TRIEBIG

Sit on the bed. Are you always
so timid?

KEPPLER

(with a shaky Smile)

No.

He perches on the extreme edge of the narrow bed. Triebig

studies him. Keppler's habitual expression is one of helplessness, accentuated by a mouth he keeps permanently slightly open.

TRIEBIG

Where do you come from?

KEPPLER

Frankfurt, sir.

TRIEBIG

Is that so? I know Frankfurt quite well.

(sits on the cot beside Keppler)

If you get along with me, you'll have a good life here. You may go now. Come to my bunker tonight and arrange my gear.

KEPPLER

(jumping enthusiastically

to his feet)

Yes, sir. When shall I come, sir?

TRIEBIG

Don't come too early. Around ten.

We'll have a chance to talk.

Do your best and I'm sure I shall

be satisfied with you.

Keppler salutes and GOES.

10. EXT. BUNKER

as Triebig COMES OUT. The men are watching Keppler as he

WALKS OFF.

11. MED. SHOT SCHNURRBART AND ANSELM

SCHNURRBART

Not a very robust type, would you

say?

ANSELM

(the youngest of the

group)

Well, Schnurrbart, you're so excessively

masculine, it evens things up.

The CAMERA PANS to Triebig. He seems to sense what the men

are thinking. A bit disconcerted, he turns to Meyer.

TRIEBIG

(sardonically)

Do you think we can get them to

Stand at attention when the Captain

gets here?

MEYER

(grins)

I don't know, Lieutenant. I'll put

it up to them, man to man.

There is some half hearted laughter from the men. Steiner

is noticeably quiet.

SCHNURRBART

I'm not getting up till they want

my Signature On the Peace Treaty.

But he sees someone approaching, and slowly he starts to

his feet.

12. STRANSKY

approaching the trench. In the b.g. the men CAN BE SEEN

reluctantly getting to their feet. Triebig snaps to attention

as Stransky comes in.

TRIEBIG

(a Smart salute)

Captain.

Stransky, barely nodding to Triebig, looks over the men, no discernible expression on his face. Finally --

STRANSKY

Which one is Corporal Steiner?

Steiner takes a step forward, slackly comes to attention.

Stransky studies him -- disappointed.

STRANSKY

You are Corporal Steiner?

STEINER

(almost nonchalantly)

Yes, sir.

(pause)

I am Corporal Steiner.

STRANSKY

I had formed a -- somewhat different

picture of you.

STEINER

(unconcern in his
face)

I'm sorry if I disappoint the Captain.

In the b.g. several of the men permit themselves slight
smiles, which fade immediately at a glance from Triebig.

Stransky looks at Steiner again.

STRANSKY

(loudly)

You are promoted to Senior Sergeant,
promotion to be effective at once.

He watches Steiner's face. It is as if he had spoken to
a tree. There is no surprise in Steiner's face; only a
slight flexing of his arms indicates that he has heard at
all.

STRANSKY

You heard me, Corporal -- Sergeant
Steiner.

STEINER

Yes, sir.

STRANSKY

Your promotion doesn't seem to have
made much impression upon you.

STEINER

No, sir.

There is an involuntary giggle from young Anselm. Stransky
glares and there is silence.

STRANSKY

(to Lieutenants Meyer

and Triebig)

Come in -- you, too, Sergeant.

He starts down the steps to his bunker, Meyer, Triebig

and Steiner following.

13. OMITTED

14. INT. STRANSKY'S BUNKER STRANSKY

is seated behind a table. Steiner, Meyer and Triebig, slightly to the side of him, stand facing Stransky, who has taken out an elaborate cigarette case. He extends it to Meyer who takes a cigarette.

MEYER

Thank you, Captain.

Stransky offers a cigarette to Steiner.

STEINER

No, thank you, Sir.

STRANSKY

(lighting his cigarette)

After what you've been through,

you don't feel the need of a cigarette?

STEINER

No at this particular moment -- sir.

STRANSKY

I'm ready for your report.

He reaches into pocket, lays sheaf of crushed papers on the table. Stransky looks at him in amazement.

STRANSKY

I'd like to hear the gist of your report.

STEINER

Lots of

Russians. Lots of guns.

(grimly)

We should be hearing from them very soon.

STRANSKY

What about your platoon -- any
casualties?

STEINER

Two killed. One missing.

STRANSKY

Two killed. How?

STEINER

(dryly)

Bullets.

STRANSKY

(flushing angrily)

I deduced that. That missing man --

did you look for him, Steiner?

STEINER

(shrugs impatiently)

We had no time to lose. It would

have been irresponsible to risk the
safety of the entire platoon for
the sake of one man.

STRANSKY

There ought not to be a missing man
in such a case.

STEINER

(no expression)

Sorry, sir. I'll try to do better
next time.

STRANSKY

(grimly; after a
moment)

I have the feeling, Sergeant, that
you somewhat overestimate your
importance.

STEINER

(eyes darken; but no

change in voice)

At the moment, I am free of any

such illusions.

The two men look at each other; then Stransky's eyes fall

on the tommy gun Steiner holds in his hand.

STRANSKY

That's not a German gun.

STEINER

No, sir It's all in the report.

We surprised a Russian platoon --

and when they ran, they left

their guns.

STRANSKY

Oh, captured material. Good.

Where is your gun?

STEINER

We couldn't carry both, so we left
ours.

STRANSKY

What! You left your guns for the
Russians!

STEINER

(quietly)

Yes, sir. Our guns for the Russians.

STRANSKY

That I cannot understand. You
must be aware that the quality of
our arms is far superior to that
of the Russians and --

He stops as Steiner shakes his head. Stransky raises his

eyebrows.

STRANSKY

I beg your pardon?

STEINER

...the Russian guns are better!

STRANSKY

(sharply)

That is stupid, loose talk. You
have every reason to be grateful
for the fine equipment the Father
land puts into your hands at the
cost of countless sacrifices.

STEINER

(cannot suppress a
mirthless grin)

I never asked then to put the stuff

in my hands,

Meyer looks toward heaven. Stransky takes a deep breath.

MEYER

(hastily)

sir, Sergeant Steiner is greatly

in need of sleep. I'm positive

that When he --

Stransky cuts him short by turning his back in a gesture of

dismissal. Meyer motions for Steiner to follow him.

15. EXT. BUNKER THE MEN

jump to their feet as they see Steiner and Meyer.

MEYER

Be careful

he's taken strong dislike

to you.

STEINER

(wryly)

Too bad. I'm crazy about him.

MEYER

He can be trouble...

STEINER

(laconically)

I've survived many a battalion
commander. I'll survive Stransky,
too.

16. INT. BUNKER STRANSKY AND TRIEBIG

at his desk, coffee cup in hand, sipping.

STRANSKY

Dammit. This coffee is cold.

TRIEBIG

Sorry, sir. It was heated not too

long ago

There is a LOUD EXPLOSION as a shell lands nearby.

The near miss has shaken up the bunker. Lieutenant Triebig is righting a table that has overturned. Captain Stransky, girm faced, is dusting off his uniform.

TRIEBIG

(placing some papers

on the table; feeble

smile)

Too close for comfort, I should say,

Captain.

STRANSKY

How many more papers are there for

me to sign?

TRIEBIG

Quite a few, I'm afraid.

STRANSKY

(sitting down; crossly)

Let me have the junk.

As he glances through the papers and signs his name. Triebig watches him with his soft eyes, the smile remaining fixed on his face. As Stransky finishes signing he looks up, sniffs the air, looks at Triebig rather strangely.

STRANSKY

That isn't perfume I smell -- is it?

TRIEBIG

Oh, no, Captain --

(apologetically)

Just a bit of after shave lotion.

It -- bucks me up.

STRANSKY

I see.

He fixes his gaze upon Triebig whose smile fades under the

scrutiny. Then, Stransky's manner changes suddenly. He gestures toward a chair, tries to inject a cordial note into his voice.

STRANSKY

(offering him a cigarette)

Where were you stationed before you joined the battalion?

TRIEBIG

(voice softening)

In the south of France -- Bordeaux.

STRANSKY

Ah! Then being transferred must have come here, eh?

(voice casual)

Why were you transferred anyway?

TRIEBIG

(after a moment's

Silence)

I voluntarily applied for a transfer,

sir.

STRANSKY

(suspiciously)

How interesting.

There is mounting apprehension in Triebig's face as Stransky regards him fixedly. Then again there is a sudden change in Stransky's expression. Again it becomes friendly -- to Triebig's great relief.

TRIEBIG

We lived in real mansions right On the beach. Swimming at any hour, day or night. It was indescribable

-- the sea, the palms, the beaches,

the people, everything --

Overwhelmed by his memories, he stops. Stransky is surprised
to see him swallow with emotion.

STRANSKY

(a knowing smile;

winks)

The women, you mean.

TRIEBIG

(raising his head ↻j

I beg your pardon?

STRANSKY

I said, the women. I mean -- in

referring to the people -- you meant,

of course, the women?

TRIEBIG

(shrugging)

Not so much that. I am -- that is--

(suddenly confused)

I didn't have much time to think

about women.

Pause.

STRANSKY

(casually)

Do you like soldiering?

TRIEBIG

(emphatically)

Certainly.

STRANSKY

(nods patronizingly)

I'm glad to hear that.

TRIEBIG

It's like living in an altogether
different world.

The Candle hag burned down. Stransky rises to light another.

STRANSKY

It is indeed a very different
world. A world of danger and a
world of men, a world without women.

(laughs; puffs, gets
thoughtful)

men can get along without
women. I tell you, man's truly
natural destiny is not to breed
children, but to be free, to rule
and fight -- in other words, to
lead a man's existence....

women are no more than a fancy,

a superfluous dessert.

(blows a smoke ring;

looks at Triebig)

Or do you disagree?

Triebig looks at Stransky in some confusion. What is Stransky

getting at. Then he gets a grip on himself. Intertwining

his fingers, he regards his thumb thoughtfully.

TRIEBIG

I don't think I disagree, sir.

(after some

hesitation)

I think that if I have to I Can

live without women.

STRANSKY

I'm pleased to hear that.

He studies the burning tip of his cigarette; then looks up

quickly.

STRANSKY

In other words, you prefer the company

of a man to that of a woman?

TRIEBIG

(greatly troubled

now)

It depends on the situation.

STRANSKY

Really?

Stransky smiles. Triebig does not reply.

STRANSKY

If it will help you, I will put

your thoughts into words for you.

(smilebroadens)

You prefer the society of men to

that of women in any and all

situations.

The words hang in the silence of the bunker. Triebig retreats into himself like a snail sealing itself up in its shell. He stares with mingled fear, assent and hope at Stransky's face which still registers nothing but friendly assent. Then, afraid silence might be interpreted as agreement, he murmurs...

TRIEBIG

I -- don't understand, sir --

STRANSKY

(smiles confidentially)

Let's drop the hide and seek. By

God, Triebig, you don't have to

put up a front with me of all

people. What I said is true,

isn't it? Say yes, man, for heaven's
sake.

TRIEBIG

(with the air of a
man wanting to stop
himself; in a bare
whisper)

Yes.

Stransky springs to his feet, directly in front of him.

STRANSKY

Speak up! You said yes. You said
yes. didn't you? Don't you dare
lie to my face.

At the sight of Stransky's enraged face, only a few inches
from his own, Triebig closes his eyes in horror. Stransky
shakes him.

TRIEBIG

(feebly)

Yes.

STRANSKY

(releasing him;

stepping back)

Stand up!

Trembling, Triebig obeys. Slowly, Stransky looks him up

and down.

STRANSKY

I can assure you of this! If

I catch you trying any of that

stuff, I'll have you hanged,

remember that! Before all the

men! Do you understand that?

Do you hear me?

Triebig is unable to answer.

STRANSKY

Now get the hell out of here and
keep out of my sight for the next
twenty-four hours. You turn my
stomach.

Triebig stands immobile.

STRANSKY

Get out!

For a second Triebig looks at Stransky's distorted face.
Then he wheels around, stumbles across the threshold I end
VANISHES. Stransky remains in the same spot for a moment,
then he fishes for a cigarette, smiles. He is satisfied
with the picture of the complete military, masculine image
he has presented.

DISSOLVETO:

Steiner walking watching men digging in, goes into
Brandt's bunker after looking up at the sky for a long moment.

17. BUNKER COL. BRANDT

The door opens and Steiner COMES IN. The scowl leaves
Brandt's face. He strides forward to meet Steiner;
presses his hand vigorously.

BRANDT

So here are you -- unpunctual and
unsoldierly as ever.

He laughs and propels Steiner toward a chair.

BRANDT

(laughs)

I read your report. It's enormously
valuable. I intend to transmit it
personally to the General -- Ah,

one thing. Captain Stransky has
sent in an official complaint about
the guns. What have you to say to
that?

STEINER

(stolidly)

What can I say? I threw away German
guns to make room for Russian guns.

BRANDT

Why?

STEINER

The Russian guns are better. I know
it. You know it. The men know it.
Captain Stransky seems somewhat in
the dark.

Brandt looks at him.

BRANDT

You're a fresh bastard, aren't

you?

STEINER

Yes, sir.

Brandt looks at Steiner and crumples Stransky's report. He

offers Steiner a cigarette.

BRANDT

Last month I offered to pull

you out of the line and give

you a staff post?

STEINER

Yes, sir --- and I remember refusing.

BRANDT

....something about your feeling of

solidarity with your men. Well --

I renew the offer. I want you on
my staff.

No answer from Steiner.

BRANDT

All right -- what's the reason for
refusing this time?

STEINER

(after a moment)

I don't want to be dependent on
anyone -- not even a regimental
commander.

BRANDT

As usual, I find it hard to under-
stand you.

STEINER

(dryly)

I'm sorry to hear that. A good
sgt. should be completely under-
stood by his superior officer.

BRANDT

Steiner! Are you laughing at me?

(getting up)

Steiner stands up and looks expectantly at Brandt, whose
mouth twitches.

BRANDT

(voice shaking)

Get out!

Steiner half salutes and leaves.

DISSOLVE TO:

18. CLOSE SHOT MAAG

in machine gun emplacement. Darkness has fallen. Maag is
looking out into the night. Suddenly, a Russian sub-

machine gun OPENS UP. Maag, frightened, tries to bury his head in the dirt.

19. MED. SHOT STEINER

walking in the darkness. At the BURST of BULLETS, he has dropped to one knee. Now, there is silence again, and Steiner peers cautiously into the darkness. There is ANOTHER BURST of FIRE and Steiner stretches out flat on the ground. Then there is silence again. Steiner gets up quickly and bounds to the nearest machine gun emplacement -- bumping into Maag, who is trying to get out. Another BURST of BULLETS.

STEINER

(shouting to be heard)

Where are you going?

MAAG

(stammering)

To -- get reinforcements.

STEINER

(angrily)

Leaving your post for that?

He pushes Maag back into the hole. They huddle together till

the Russian machine guns are quiet. Then Steiner peers

through the loophole. A few shells WHINE through the air,

EXPLODE nearby.

MAAG

(gasping)

They must be right in front of

us. In the Shell holes down

there.

Behind them there is the SOUND of RUNNING FEET and Schnurrbart

dives into the emplacement. Behind him come Kruger and

Hollerbach, and Lieutenant Meyer.

MEYER

What's happening?

STEINER

The big craters on

the slope are full of

Russians.

Meyer stands frowning for a few seconds, then:

MEYER

(to Steiner)

Signal for a barrage. Kruger --

get the rest of the company. I'll

inform the Commander.

He hurries OUT. Steiner picks up the flare gun.

Back bent, he LEAVES the emplacement.

20. MED. SHOT STEINER

as he reaches a position in the trench. He inserts the
cartridges in the flare gun. He sends up a FLARE.

21. FULL SHOT SLOPE OF HILL

ILLUMINED by the FLARE. The dark shapes of the Russians are
visible in the craters. Then there is darkness -- then once
again the landscape is ILLUMINED. The dark shapes can be
seen burrowing into the ground.

22. MED. SHOT STEINER

He is looking at his watch with bated breath. Then he smiles
grimly as a hollow roaring SOUNDS above his head. It swells
rapidly to a mighty moan and a moment later comes the heavy
detonation. Steiner turns as he HEARS hasty FOOTSTEPS.
He sees Meyer running past him toward the MG emplacement.
Steiner follows.

23. MG EMPLACEMENT

as Steiner slides IN, followed by Meyer. The men of the

platoon are already assembled.

MEYER

Commander's order. The Second

Platoon is to undertake a counter-

attack at once. You are to occupy

the craters and take as many

prisoners as possible. Sergeant

Steiner, you will command. How do

you think to proceed?

STEINER

(considers briefly)

We'll attack from three sides. Kruger

from the west, Schnurrbart from the

east and I from the south. When the

firing starts We'll need artillery

support -- to keep the Russians pinned

down in the woods. I guess that's
all.

MEYER

(nodding)

Good in theory; let's hope it works
out in practice.

STEINER

(smiles grimly)

It's too simple; it'll never work.

All right -- First Platoon, down the
trench till I step you.

With bent backs, Anselm and Pasternack in the lead, the men
start down the trench.

24. TRUCK SHOT THE MEN

as with bent backs and faces taut with tension they proceed
down the trench. The CLATTER of weapons persists.

The men stop, look at each other -- some with frightened grins.

ANSELM

(With a nervous

laugh)

Sergeant -- could I go make a

telephone call?

A titter, totally Without mirth, runs through the men.

STEINER

(to Kruger)

You and your boys stay here.

Steiner raises his arm. The rest of the men follow him.

25. SPOT FURTHER DOWN TRENCH

as Steiner and the men come INTO VIEW. Steiner raises his

hand in a signal to halt. Then he peers over the trench,

lifts himself over, gives the signal for the men to follow.

26. SLOPE OF HILL

We SEE the shadowy figures of Steiner and the men descending the slope. When they reach the level field Steiner again gives the signal to halt.

STEINER

(to Schnurrbart)

You wait here. Attack in exactly five minutes --

Schnurrbart looks at his watch.

STEINER

As soon as the first shots are fired, we'll come in. Clear?

SCHNURRBART

(grunting)

All Clear.

He shakes hands with Steiner, who walks into the darkness followed by Kern, Anselm and Pasternack.

27. TRUCK - STEINER AND MEN

trudging toward a clump of woods. Suddenly, Steiner drops to the ground.

28. CLOSE SHOT - STEINER ON GROUND

The other men have wordlessly followed his example. Anselm, crawling on his belly, comes INTO THE SCENE.

ANSELM

(whispering)

What's wrong?

Steiner points his head leftward. Anselm follows his gaze.

29. LONG SHOTA COLUMN OF DIM FORMS

moving cautiously through the darkness. They are no more than twenty yards away.

30. STEINER AND MEN

ANSELM

Russkis! At least a hundred of

them!

Steiner is hesitant.

STEINER

How many men has Schnurrbart got --

a dozen? They'll run right over

them.

ANSELM

Why don't we fire on them now?

STEINER

That may louse up the whole counter-

attack.

(bites his lips as

he thinks hard)

Schnurrbart probably won't even

see them coming --

He reaches into his belt for flares.

STEINER

A couple of flares -- and Schnurrbart

can see he's getting visitors --

Then if we start shooting up

their rear --

(shrugs)

Maybe, the confusion --

He sends up two flares in quick succession.

31. LONG SHOT - THE RUSSIAN COLUMN

is taken by surprise. SHOTS RING OUT, several fall.

32. MED. SHOT - STEINER AND HIS MEN

STEINER

All right -- after them. Stick close

together and don't save on hand

grenades.

(ironically)

Remember, the eyes of the entire

German nation are upon you.

He runs in the direction of the Russians, the men following.

33. EXT. CAPTAIN STRANSKY'S BUNKER

The air is crackling with the SOUND of GUNFIRE and heavy

EXPLOSIONS. Captain Stransky comes running OUT of the

bunker, followed by Lieutenant Triebig. A Private comes

running INTO the SCENE from the opposite direction.

PRIVATE

Word from Corporal Schnurrbart,

sir. The Russians have broken

into the trenches.

Triebig looks alarmed.

STRANSKY

(to Triebig)

Take up positions in front of the

bunker with all the men attached
to staff. I'll phone the combat
train.

He turns and runs hack INTO the bunker.

34. CLOSE SHOT - STEINER AND ANSELM

manning a machine gun. They are lying on the slope FIRING
toward the trenches.

ANSELM

We've mowing them down.

STEINER

Who? Ours or theirs?

35. EXT. 2ND. PLATOON'S BUNKER

There is the SOUND of faraway BURSTS of machine gun fire.
Hollerbach and Kern are helping Anselm who is limping
badly. Behind them are Dorn and Kruger. All look weary
and begrimed.

36. INT. BUNKER

as they come IN.

KERN

(to Anselm)

You're a damn fool not to go to

the Field Hospital --

ANSELM

(sinking to the floor)

I'll wait until the holiday rush

is over. Otherwise, they're

just as likely to amputate as not.

HOLLERBACH

Does anybody still have any idea

what the hell went on?

DORN

(who seems dazed)

--- confusion --- confusion --

ANSELM

I couldn't see anything. When

something moved I fired at it.

Probably got as many Germans as

Russians.

HOLLERBACH

Shut up!

ANSELM

Please -- a little respect for a

wounded man.

Steiner comes IN. He has a bandage on top of his head.

STEINER

Kruger, what happened to you at the

signal?

KRUGER

I was Clearing Out the craters --

then I heard the firing from your

direction --

STEINER

I was wondering if you were waiting

for a formal invitation.

KRUGER

You know what you can do with your

fuckin' sarcasm. I saved your ass.

STEINER

Oh, did you? Well, you know what

You can do with my --

37. MED. SHOT. AT ENTRANCE TO BUNKER

as Stransky and Triebig come IN. The men start to come to

attention.

STRANSKY

(curtly)

At ease.

(to Steiner)

That was a bad business. You know
half of 2nd Company was put out of
action?

STEINER

Yes, Sir. Our platoon was hit, too.

STRANSKY

Why didn't the plan go according to
schedule?

KRUGER

We didn't think that --

68. CLOSE SHOT - STEINER

He is now close enough to the beach to stand. He takes an

uncertain step or two to stand, then he falls, his face
down in the water. He makes no effort to rise -- allowing
himself to slide deeper and deeper into the water. Suddenly
Gertrud's hands come INTO THE SCENE, grip Steiner's feet,
pull him back.

69. MED. SHOT - GERTRUD AND STEINER

Struggling for breath, he lies on the ground.

Steiner turns over on his back and looks at her. There is
rage and shame on his face. The blood starts streaming down
his face again. He tries to sit up. She tries to support
him and he knocks her arm back.

STEINER

If you don't leave me alone I'll

smash --

He stands up, takes a few steps to meet the incoming surf,
bends, scoops up a handful of water, washes the blood from

his face.

Then he turns and sees that Gertrud has retreated a few feet up the beach, and stands watching him. The wind is blowing her skirt close to her thighs.

He looks at her a moment, then, CAMERA TRUCKING with him, he makes his way to her side. Gertrud looks at him steadily.

Suddenly he seizes her. She struggles, wordlessly. Steiner forces her to the ground. With one swift movement he pulls her blouse from off one shoulder.

70. CLOSE SHOT - STEINER AND GERTRUD

She has stopped struggling. His face is close to hers.

There is no resistance in her expression, but neither is there compliance. She looks steadily into his eyes as

if there is a battle of wills. Roughly Steiner grabs her shoulders. Suddenly, he releases her, stands up. He

watches her as she slowly sits up, rearranging her clothing.

He stares at her without speaking. Then --

STEINER

(in a low voice)

Why did you follow me?

She doesn't answer. He shakes his head slightly.

STEINER

Nurse Gertrud.

keep your humanitarian

paws off drunken men. It might be

misunderstood.

GERTRUD

(breathing heavily)

You're insane.

STEINER

(laughs harshly)

We are all insane.

(he makes a tiny,

mocking bow)

goodnight.

He walks toward the blackness of the garden. Gertrud turns

to watch him until He is no longer in sight.

DISSOLVE TO:

71. HALL - REST HOME - STEINER

has just reached his bedroom door He is about to go in,

when he stops, hesitates. Then he walks slowly to the next

door, leans forward, listening. He glances up and down the

hall, then Slowly depresses the latch.

72. INT. DARK BEDROOM

A streak of LIGHT coming through a space afforded by the

blowing curtains. As Steiner COMES IN, we SEE Inge's shape

sitting up in bed.

INGE

Who's there?

STEINER

(Closing the door

behind him)

Three guesses.

Inge, her long nightgown trailing around her ankles, approaches him in the darkness.

INGE

Leave my room at once.

STEINER

Out of character, but very nicely said. Don't worry; I just wanted to ask you if you have any aspirin.

Inge comes two steps closer, looks at him. She hesitates.

As she turns toward the door, he grips her shoulders and holds her tightly.

STEINER

Were you going to turn on the light?

INGE

Yes.

STEINER

(feeling along her

arms)

You don't need any light, take my

word for it.

Pretending to struggle, she manipulates the nightgown off her

right shoulder, a maneuver not lost upon Steiner.

INGE

Let me go. I'll scream. I will

scream.

STEINER

Naturally, you'll scream.

She closes her arms tight around his shoulders. When she tries to kiss him he turns his face aside. He picks her up and as he carries her toward the bed:

DISSOLVE TO:

73. LONG SHOT - SUNRISE

framed in a window. CAMERA PULLS BACK to the interior of Inge's bedroom. Inge is lying in bed. Steiner is sitting on the edge of the bed, his back to Inge, looking out the window.

STEINER

Funny -- you boasted about your view of the sunset. I prefer the sunrise.

Inge laughs. She sits up, throws her arms around his chest.

INGE

You know -- never once last night did you say my name.

(strokes his chest)

Don't you like my name?

STEINER

Why shouldn't I like it?

STEINER

Up to this moment I've never met a
girl named Inge. At least not in
bed.

Inge laughs. When Steiner makes a move to get up, she holds
him tighter.

INGE

Where are you going?

He pulls himself loose, walks to where his shoes lying,
picks them up. Inge, blanket up under her chin, watches him.
He turns.

STEINER

Goodnight.

INGE

(angrily)

Aren't you at least going to kiss me?

He stoops and casually kisses her shoulder.

INGE

Is that all?

STEINER

Isn't it enough? Do you want to

get paid?

She starts up as though the pillow behind her had become a

hot iron. Then she throws herself face down on the bed,

begins to sob wildly. Steiner stands for a moment,

looking at her in embarrassment and some remorse.

STEINER

(sadly)

Depend on me to say a few words

to many.

He walks slowly to the door, closes it behind him.

74. DELETED.

75. MED. SHOT - GERTRUD

who has just COME IN and is talking to a MAN at the bar.

76. MED. SHOT - STEINER

He sinks back into his seat, looks off at Gertrud. Then

he rises and, CAMERA TRUCKING with him, winds his way

across the floor to her. Her back is to him.

STEINER

(quietly)

Gertrud --

She turns, flushes as she sees him, but doesn't say a word.

STEINER

I wish -- I were meeting you for

the first time now.

GERTRUD

(looks at him)

I suppose that's as close to an

apology as you, Can ever get --

If you'll excuse me....

He makes a gesture to stop her, but she brushes past him.

We hear Klaus' voice.

KLAUS' VOICE

Rolf --

Steiner turns to face Klaus.

KLAUS

She's here --!

STEINER

(Pre-occupied)

Who?

KLAUS

You know -- Ilse -- the Iron Cross Tits --

STEINER

Listen I don't want --

He has turned automatically to look toward the corner of the bar. At the sight of the GIRL in the nurse's white uniform, Steiner's speech stops; his eyes narrow.

77. CLOSE SHOT ILSE

She is looking toward Steiner, an expectant smile on her face. She is very buxom and very pretty in a coarse way.

78.MED. SHOT. STEINER AND KLAUS

Steiner's face is expressionless. CAMERA TRUCKING with him, he makes his way to the Waiting Ilse. En route he passes Gertrud who, struck by the grimness of Steiner's expression, keeps her eyes on him as he pushes toward Ilse.

79. MED. SHOT - ILSE

Her smile freezes as Steiner STEPS INTO the SCENE.

STEINER

(steadily)

Good evening, Ilse.

She can only stare at him.

STEINER

I can't blame you, Ilse. After all,

it's been -- how long --? More than

a year anyway. Yes, thirteen months --

ILSE

(in a very low voice)

Rolf --

STEINER

-- and the law of averages -- What

right have I to be alive -- Did

you count on that, Ilse?

Suddenly, Ilse lets out a sob, covers her face with her hands, then turns and runs toward the exit. Klaus, who has stood a few paces behind, comes up to Steiner.

KLAUS

I must say -- it's a strange effect you have upon women.

Steiner doesn't answer. Klaus shakes his head, goes after Ilse.

80. MED. SHOT - GERTRUD

Whose eyes haven't left Steiner. She watches him now as he sits down at an unoccupied table. From his inside pocket he takes out a piece of paper. She sees him flag a passing WAITER. A brief conversation ensues between them, and the Waiter lends Steiner a pencil. As Steiner begins to write, Gertrud moves slowly toward him.

81. MED. SHOT - STEINER AT TABLE WRITING

As Gertrud's shadow falls across the table he looks up
briefly, goes back to his writing. Without a word, Gertrud
slips into a chair across from Steiner. After a moment, he
finishes writing, looks at Gertrud.

STEINER

I imagine you want to know what it's
all about?

GERTRUD

No.

STEINER

Be honest.

GERTRUD

Yes, I do. Very much.

Pause.

STEINER

It's not too pretty a story -- and it

isn't very chivalrous of me to tell

it. But, then, one of the first

casualties of the war was chivalry --

(looks at the slip of paper)

A year or so ago I was in a hospital.

In four years of war I have been in

four hospitals.

(harshlaugh)

Some day I must get around to rating

them. Anyway -- Ilse -- Miss Bauman --

decided she would be more than a

nurse to me. After three days and

three nights I told her to be more

than a nurse to somebody else.

(looks at Gertrud's face)

He is silent a moment, his face reflecting the humiliation.

STEINER

She found a way to get even -- result --

Court martial -- degraded -- Six months

in a Penal Battalion --

(pause. Holds up the paper)

Now, I intend to have Miss Bauman's

signed confession --

GERTRUD

Please -- don't be brutal to her --

He gets up.

She looks at him in mute appeal. He shakes his head,

Starts out, Gertrud looking after him.

He gets up.

She looks at him in mute appeal. He shakes his head, starts

out, Gertrud looking after him.

82. MED. SHOT - BENCH ON BEACH - FACING THE WATER

On a corner of the bench, Ilse is huddled, still sobbing.

In the b.g. a figure looms. Then a flashlight, in the

hand of the figure is snapped on. Its beam ILLUMINATES

Ilse, who doesn't move. The figure, holding the flashlight,

moves closer, and we SEE that it is Steiner. Now he stands

beside Ilse, who does not look up.

ILSE

Turn it out -- I can't see.

Steiner snaps off the light. She looks up at him, her face

a study in fury.

ILSE

You Stinking louse.

STEINER

(laughs grimly)

I that What I am?

ILSE

(violently)

Yes. And you always were a louse.

You never knew how to treat a

woman.

STEINER

How right you are. And now, let

me prove your point --

(takes Out the

Slip Of paper)

-- Sign this.

ILSE

What is it?

STEINER

Your confession.

ILSE

Confession. What have I to confess?

STEINER

Oh -- are we going to play games?

All right, I'll read it to you --

(snaps on the

flashlight,

starts to read)

On the night of May 12, 1943, I, Ilse

Bauman, a nurse at the 2nd Base

Hospital in Rostov, stole a wrist-

watch from the room of Corporal

Karl Wachtel, an amputee, and

furthermore, hid the watch among

the belongings of -- Sgt. Rolf Steiner.

Suddenly, Ilse jumps to her feet, starts to run, knocking

the flashlight from Steiner's hands. But Steiner catches

her in two strides. She kicks him and pummels him with her

fists. Steiner drags her down to the water, wades in knee deep and thrusts her head under.

83. MED. SHOT - STEINER

holding Ilse's head under water. Then he pulls her up by the hair.

STEINER

Will you sign now?

She coughs and struggles for breath. He picks her up in his arms, carries her back to the bench, dumps her on it unceremoniously. He picks up the pencil and paper and the flashlight. He flashes the LIGHT on her face. Water is dripping from her hair down her forehead and onto her hands.

STEINER

Maybe in bed you could cry your way out, but not here.

He thrusts the pencil into her hand. He flashes the LIGHT

on the bench so that Ilse can see. With trembling hands,
she signs the paper. Steiner switches off the flashlight.

STEINER

(looking at paper)

All right -- you may go now.

She doesn't stir.

STEINER

(repeats sharply)

You may go now.

Unsteadily, she gets to her feet, looks at him.

ILSE

(tonelessly)

You're going to report me.

He nods grimly.

ILSE

Oh, God. Oh, God, what am I going

to do?

He shrugs. Slowly she walks away, her wet skirt clinging to her legs, head bowed, shoulders twitching.

84. CLOSE SHOT - STEINER

watching Ilse go. There is no pity in his face. Then, he sits on the bench, examines the paper closely. He is deep in thought when there is the SOUND of SOFT FOOTSTEPS in the sand. Steiner looks up, Gertrud stands beside him.

GERTRUD

(quietly)

So you have what you want?

Steiner nods his head slowly, looks at the paper again. Then he gets up, walks to the water's edge. For a moment, he hesitates, then he tears the paper into tiny scraps, tosses them into the water. Gertrud comes INTO the SCENE, stands

at Steiner's side. Together they watch the scraps being carried out on the waves, dancing and scattering until they vanish from sight. There is a moment's silence, broken by Gertrud.

GERTRUD

Why?

STEINER

(shrugs; then, slowly)

I'm not interested anymore
in clearing my name. Doesn't matter.....

He starts away.

GERTRUD

Rolf--

He stops, turns, looks at Gertrud.

85. CLOSE SHOT - GERTRUD

as she looks steadily toward Steiner.

86. MED. SHOT - STEINER AND GERTRUD

He walks to her. Without a word he takes her in his arms.

They cling to each other.

DISSOLVETO:

87. MED. SHOT - NIGHT - CREST OF HILL - GERTRUD AND
STEINER

Gertrud, her knees drawn up, sits facing the sea. Steiner

sits at right angle to Gertrud, his head resting on her

shoulder, as he reads a letter:

STEINER

"-- Well, here I am, back in dear old

Mother Russia, after six weeks in

the hospital. Why did no one ever

tell me before about the pleasures

of being wounded?

That nice, clean hospital -- the food

-- those nurses -- rather, that one

nurse in particular. But why am I
telling you. Every hospital, I hear
has that one particular specimen... "

He turns his head to look at Gertrud. They smile at each
other. Then he resumes reading.

STEINER

Anyway -- "At the moment things are
quiet here, so you can be sure the
Russkis are preparing something
big. I suppose you heard that Dorn
got it. We had finally persuaded
the professor to put in for Officers
Training, and the very next day the
Russkis lobbed over a few shells
to let us know they're still in
business --"

He stops reading. Gertrud looks at him.

GERTRUD

Bad you heard of it?

STEINER

No.

GERTRUD

Were you fond of him?

STEINER

The professor? I don't know -- not

particularly, I guess.

(reflects a moment)

He was a good soldier. Did his

job.

(pause)

I'm sorry he's gone.

(back to letter)

"Well, to get on to more cheerful news. Our darling Captain Stransky is in some sort of trouble --"

(looks up from

letter)

Him -- I can be more definite about.

(resumes reading)

"Seems in the Captain's report on the Russian action, the night we got it, he somewhat overplayed his hand. His report, I hear, pictures Stransky, accompanied by Triebig, appearing at the last moment among his fleeing men, stemming the panic, and leading the counterattack --"

(pauses)

A damned lie!

(back to letter)

"From what I hear, Stransky sat out the engagement in his bunker. Colonel Brandt informed Stransky that he was entitled to the Iron Cross First Class for his actions, but he also pointed out that two witnesses were required. Triebig, that sweet-smelling skunk, naturally signed, but the signature of the Company Commander was also needed. Since Lieutenant Meyer was killed and you were then in charge, it looks like you're elected. We can't wait until you get back and are asked

to sign. So, don't linger by the
wayside. Hurry back and join the
fun. Keep well and watch out that
they don't pick you up and stick
you in some other unit. Things
are supposed to be pretty hot
on the main front. All the best,
your old friend, Schnurrbart."

Steiner looks out at the sea. After a moment...

GERTRUD

You don't want to go back do you?

STEINER

(Pause)

Not now.

GERTRUD

(trying to sound

cheerful)

In the morning you're going

home for a month. I know it

sounds crazy -- out maybe in a

month it'll all be over.

STEINER

It'll never be over. Not for me.

He falls silent. The POUNDING of the SURF can be HEARD.

Gertrud stretches her hand out to Steiner.

GERTRUD

Rolf -- sit beside me.

He takes her outstretched hand, sits beside her, rests

his head on her breast. She puts her arm around him.

He lies quietly for a moment, then lifts his face to kiss

her.

GERTRUD

No, darling -- later -- later -- later --

Her arms around him, she is rocking him almost like a
child as we:

DISSOLVETO:

88. FULL SHOT - STREET - DAY

There are two fleets of army trucks lined up. On one
side of the street the trucks face west; on the opposite
side they face east. SOLDIERS are boarding both fleets
of trucks.

89. MED. SHOT - SERGEANT MULLER - IN THE MIDDLE OF THE
STREET

He calls out to a soldier who is walking hesitantly to-
ward the trucks facing west.

MULLER

You there -- let me see your orders.

The soldier hands his orders to Muller, who looks at them.

MULLER

Where do you think you are going?

(with sadistic glee)

These trucks are going home. You

belong there --

(Pointing to east-

bound trucks)

You're going to the front!

(pointing to west-

bound trucks)

Lucky ones there!

(waves to east bound trucks)

Unlucky ones there!

(laughs again)

90. MED. SHOT - STEINER

standing outside the rest home, near the parked trucks. He

is looking up and down the street -- evidently waiting for

Someone. Muller, who CAN BE SEEN in the b.g. , calls out --

MULLER

Steiner--! Get into your truck.

It's ready to move!

91. MED. SHOT - MULLER

as Steiner walks slowly up to him.

MULLER

What's wrong, Sergeant? For one

of the lucky ones, you sure don't

seem anxious to go.

Steiner doesn't even look at Muller who evidently sees someone

at the west trucks.

MULLER

Hey, you there -- let me see your

Orders --

He runs off, almost colliding with Inge. She looks complacent.

INGE

Goodbye, Sergeant Steiner.

STEINER

I'm touched. Up this early just
to say goodbye to me. Or are you
waiting to welcome the new batch
coming in?

INGE

No. I just thought somebody
should say goodbye to you.

(smiles as Steiner looks
at her)

Gertrud is not coming, Sergeant.

He stares at her. She takes an envelope out of her pocket.

INGE

This is for you.

As he snatches it out of her hand.....

INGE

That's all right. I've already
read it.

STEINER

You're a pig.

(looks at the envelope, but
doesn't open it)

INGE

I'll be happy to read it to you.

She takes the envelope from him. He just stands there,
neither objecting nor assenting. Inge's tone, as she
reads, is not as triumphantly smug as might have been
expected.

INGE

(reads)

"Dearest Rolf -- I can't face you

this morning. How can you and

I know what we feel for each

other? We hate so quickly and

easily, maybe we fall in love

too quickly and easily, too.

There are things I even needed

to tell you about.....

Steiner snatches the letter from Inge. crumples it in

his hand. His face is his usual steel mask again.

He stands still for a moment, then the SOUND of the trucks

MOTORS causes him to look up. The trucks bound for the

front have started slowly off. Steiner looks at the

crumpled letter in his hand, throws it away, runs for the

trucks.

92. MED. SHOT - MULLER

as Steiner runs past him. He stares in amazement as

Steiner jumps onto the back of the last truck heading east.

MULLER

(almost screaming)

No! No! Steiner -- wrong truck!

You're going home. That one's

going to the front! Steiner --

Steiner -- !

But in the b.g. the truck has disappeared around the corner.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN :

93. LONG SHOT - ROAD SKIRTING A ROW OF BUNKERS - DAY

A truck is seen coming to a stop. A lone figure jumps off the

back, waves to the driver. The truck drives on.

94. MED. SHOT - STEINER

standing in the road, looking about him with some curiosity.

Then, CAMERA TRUCKING with him, he starts to walk. He passes several SOLDIERS. We can tell by the cursory glances they exchange that they are strangers to each other.

Steiner enters the bunker.

95. LIEUTENANT TRIEBIG

rounding a corner near the bunker. He HEARS SHOUTS from the bunker and stops. Then he HEARS a half dozen voices CRYING in unison, "Steiner! Steiner! Steiner!" Triebig's face sets. He stands a moment, immobile, then turns, hurries away in the opposite direction.

96. INT. BUNKER

Kruger, Kern, Schnurrbart and Anselm are grouped around Steiner. A NEWCOMER stands off to the side a bit. Steiner is opening a beer bottle.

KRUGER

You're an idiot, Rolf. Why didn't

you go home when you could have?

STEINER

(stony-faced)

Heard it was safer here.

KERN

(nodding)

I was home for two weeks.

THE NEWCOMER

(angrily)

I wish this kind of talk would stop.

It's -- it's gross exaggeration -- and

what's more, it has a terrible effect

on the morale of the troops at the

front!

Everyone turns to look at the newcomer. Steiner regards him

coolly.

STEINER

What's your name?

ZOLL

(defiantly)

Zoll.

STEINER

Thank you, Herr Zoll for worrying
about my morale.

The men laugh.

SCHNURRBART

Zoll is a Party member. He's con-
vinced we're winning the war, and
anybody who doesn't think so, he's
quite willing to turn in to the
Storm Troops.

STEINER

(to Zoll)

My name is Rolf Steiner -- and please
memorize my correct serial number.

I wouldn't want them to come for
the wrong man.

The PHONE RINGS. Zoll answers it.

ZOLL

(very snappy)

Second Platoon. Zoll speaking.

STEINER

God, isn't it wonderful hearing a
real soldier speaking again.

ZOLL

(through the men's
laughter)

Yes, sir -- yes, sir --

(hangs up, turns

to Steiner

Captain Stransky wants to see you

in his bunker.

STEINER

When?

ZOLL

Right away.

STEINER

Good. I missed my Captain Stransky.

97. CLOSE SHOT - STRANSKY'S FACE

The CAMERA PULLS BACK and we SEE that we are in what is
evidently Stransky's bunker. Triebig is facing Stransky.

It is now dark.

STRANSKY

I'll soften him up, don't worry.

How long have we kept him waiting?

TRIEBIG

About half an hour.

STRANSKY

All right. Send him in.

Triebig, still looking worried, goes OUT. Stransky stands for a moment, moves another chair to the table, then sits opposite it. The door opens and Steiner comes IN. He looks at Stransky, his face devoid of expression.

98. MED. SHOT - STRANSKY - AT TABLE

with Steiner in b.g. Stransky's demeanor is carefully matter-of-fact.

STRANSKY

Welcome back, Sergeant. Please sit
down.

(impatiently, as

Steiner remains

standing)

You may sit down.

STEINER

If you order me to.

STRANSKY

Consider it an order.

Reluctantly, Steiner sits down facing Stransky, who moves the kerosene lamp so that he himself is sitting in darkness.

STRANSKY

Are you quite recovered from your wound?

STEINER

Quite.

STRANSKY

Good. Now that you're back, I'm

willing to make a fresh start.

I excuse your past behavior. There
are several important matters I
wish to discuss with you.

STEINER

(his face shows that
he knows what Stransky
has in mind | there is
a pause before he
speaks)

Certain things can be talked about
only man to man, not superior to
subordinate.

STRANSKY

(an attempt at a smile)
You would naturally think that.

But, you know, don't you, that
in civilian life, too, a distinction
is made between people and personalities?

For a fleeting moment Steiner's expression darkens, but he
quickly composes his features. His tone is ingenuous.

STEINER

I don't. But I'm sure you can
explain that distinction to me.

STRANSKY

(smoothly)

I can. The difference is a matter
of ethical and intellectual super-
iority and is caused, whether you
like it or not, by class difference.
Those who are reared in dirt will
never or rarely emerge from it

because they have never learned
to see dirt as dirt. Isn't that
self - evident?

STEINER

(swiftly and quietly)

I disagree. Talent, sensitivity
and character are not privileges
of the upper class.

STRANSKY

(voice less urbane)

I see. May I ask which of the
two categories you count yourself?

It is an open challenge. Steiner sits up in his seat.

STEINER

Is this conversation taking place
between two equal human beings, or

between a superior and his sub-
ordinate?

STRANSKY

(haughtily)

I see no reason to throw the weight
of my rank into the balance.

STEINER

(quietly)

In that case, I am free not to
answer your tactless question.

There is a silence as fury mounts in Stransky's eyes, but
he controls his voice.

STRANSKY

You are forgetting yourself, Steiner.

STEINER

(coldly)

If you feel insecure about standing
on your grounds of equality, we
can easily go back to our regular
relationship.

STRANSKY

(looks at his hands,

speaks softly)

Your impertinence can only come from
stupidity -- and digging holes.

(stands up brusquely

and paces the room

several times be-

fore he comes to a

stop in front of

Steiner)

I have met more than one person of

your type -- and I have always crushed
them like vermin. I consider you
nothing more than an insolent lout
who cannot keep his hands off his
comrades' property.

99. CLOSE SHOT - STEINER

as he stands up slowly. He makes a visible effort to
control himself.

STEINER

(voice steady and
quiet)

You'll regret that.

100. MED. SHOT - STRANSKY AND STEINER

Steiner wipes his sleeve with his right hand.

STRANSKY

For that remark alone, back home

I would have had dogs chase you

over the fields until your feet

were bleeding straps.

STEINER

We're not back home.

STRANSKY

You'll wish you were before long.

(turns his back on

Steiner, picks up

the phone)

Triebig? Come in here!

He hangs up, turns, sees that Steiner is leaning easily

against the wall.

STRANSKY

Stand at attention!

Steiner takes a half step forward, lets his arms dangle.

The door opens and Triebig COMES IN.

STRANSKY

How far has my new bunker progressed?

TRIEBIG

About a foot and a half.

STRANSKY

The bunker is to be ten feet deep.

Sergeant Steiner will work on it

tonight until that depth is reached.

TRIEBIG

(astonished)

Tonight?

STRANSKY

Tonight. I shall hold your respon-

sible for having that bunker ready

by tomorrow morning.

TRIEBIG

Yes, sir.

Steiner has listened with an impassive face. Now, without change of expression, he holds the door open for Triebig, then he turns to look at Stransky. without a word, he GOES OUT.

101. EXT. BUNKER- TRUCK SHOT - TRIEBIG AND STEINER

as they walk toward the spot (seen in b.g.) where the new bunker is being dug. They walk in silence a moment.

TRIEBIG

I want you to know I have nothing to do with this business.

STEINER

That's lucky for you.

(pause)

Where's your "friend"?

TRIEBIG

(looking straight

ahead)

He's dead.

STEINER

Oh -- too bad.

(sardonically)

Well -- bear up. Fresh recruits are

coming in every day.

Triebig looks at him and his voice shakes with hatred.

TRIEBIG

I have only one wish, and the

Commander shares it. We could

court martial you or get rid of

you some other way. But we want

to have the pleasure of seeing

you -- croak.

STEINER

(smiles)

You'll have to take very good care

of yourself if you want to outlive

me.

Triebig clenches his fists in helpless fury.

TRIEBIG

Thank you for the warning.

STEINER

You're entirely welcome.

By this time they have reached the pit where four men are

digging.

TRIEBIG

(to the men)

All right -- you're relieved. You

may return to your quarters.

The men, seeing only Steiner with Triebig, don't quite comprehend.

TRIEBIG

(shouting)

I said you may return to your quarters!

The men hastily drop their shovels, clamber out of the pit, and walk AWAY. They keep looking back at Triebig and Steiner, still not certain of what's going on. Triebig turns to Steiner.

TRIEBIG

If I were you, I'd make sure it was done by morning.

STEINER

It won't be for lack of trying,

sir.

Triebig glowers at him, walks AWAY. Steiner jumps into the pit, starts to shovel. The CAMERA notes that Steiner is up to his kneecaps in the pit.

DISSOLVE TO:

102. CLOSE SHOT - PAIR OF MUDDY BOOTS

The CAMERA PANS UP from the boots to Steiner's face.

Steiner is asleep in a chair, his feet stretched out.

The scene is the outer room of Brandt's command post.

After a moment, the inner door opens and Kiesel and

Triebig COME OUT.

KIESEL

You'll wait here, Lieutenant.

Triebig nods nervously, Kiesel looks at Steiner, shakes his head.

KIESEL

Steiner!

Steiner opens his eyes, stumbles to his feet, straightens up. Kiesel holds the door open. Steiner looks at Triebig, then walks IN.

103. INT. BRANDT'S ROOM

Brandt is sitting behind a huge, clumsy desk piles with all sorts of useless objects. He holds a lighted cigarette between his fingers. Steiner and Kiesel COME IN.

BRANDT

So there you are. Next time you're wounded, give me a week's notice that we're going to lose you, ha, ha. How are you, Steiner?

STEINER

I can't complain.

Brandt stands up, shakes hands heartily, then gestures
toward chair.

BRANDT

Make yourself comfortable.

(extends cigarette

case to Steiner)

How was it in the hospital?

STEINER

(laconically)

Pretty good.

BRANDT

And the Rest Home?

STEINER

I recommend it.

BRANDT

(laughs, then, casually)

That night you were wounded -- did
you know that Captain Stransky
led the Second Company's counter-
attack?

STEINER

That's what they tell me.

BRANDT

Is it true?

STEINER

The counterattack was led by
Lieutenant Meyer. Captain Stransky
was nowhere in sight.

Brandt and Kiesel exchange glances.

KIESEL

Are you sure of that?

STEINER

Absolutely. In the first place,
I would have seen him, and in the
second place, Lieutenant Meyer had
to report to the Captain what had
been happening in the lines.

KIESEL

How do you know that?

STEINER

I was there when Lieutenant Meyer
phoned.

BRANDT

A-ha!

(sharply, to Kiesel)

Fetch Triebig.

Kiesel GOES OUT.

BRANDT

(grimly)

I think you're entitled to a little
fun.

104. MED. SHOT -AT DOOR

as it opens and Triebig and Kiesel COME IN. Triebig looks
very worried. For a moment, Brandt just looks at Triebig
who bites his lip. Finally, Brandt speaks. His voice is
unusually soft and low.

BRANDT

You signed your Captain's report,
Lieutenant Triebig. Were you
present when Captain Stransky
led the counterattack?

TRIEBIG

(after a notice-
able hesitation)

I accompanied the commander to the hill and saw him calling several men around him. Then he sent me back to the command post.

BRANDT

Then how do you know that Stransky really led the counterattack? You signed a statement to that effect, Lieutenant Triebig.

TRIEBIG

I -- I learned of it from wounded men who were returning.

BRANDT

Can you give me the name of one of these wounded men?

TRIEBIG

They weren't staff men -- just company

men. I -- I knew them only by sight.

Besides, it was pitch dark when I

spoke to them.

BRANDT

(icily)

I want you to know, Lieutenant

Triebig, that I have had your

statements checked. Captain

Kiesel will inform you of the

results of our investigation.

Steiner watches closely as Kiesel takes a sheet of paper

out of his pocket, studies its contents for a moment.

KIESEL

(placidly)

Our investigation so far has

disclosed that at the moment
there are forty-two men in 2nd
Company who took part in that
counterattack. They declare
Unanimously that the attack was
led by Lieutenant Meyer. None
of them saw Captain Stransky, and
none of them heard that he was
even with the company.

Brandt turns to Triebig, who looks as if he were standing
against a wall watching an execution squad line up in front
of him.

BRANDT

To my mind, there is nothing more
contemptible than snatching the
laurels that properly belong to

a man who died in action. I shall
abide by Sergeant Steiner's testimony.

If he stands by his statement that
Captain Stransky was not with the
company, I shall be compelled to
institute disciplinary proceedings
against the Captain. You may go
now. You are no longer needed
here.

TRIEBIG

Yes, sir.

He doesn't look at Steiner as he LEAVES the room.

105. MED. SHOT - BRANDT, KIESEL AND STEINER

BRANDT

(to Steiner)

Very well. Do you stand by your

statement?

To Brandt's surprise, Steiner doesn't answer immediately.

Then, after some hesitation:

STEINER

Would it be possible for me to
think it over for a few days?

BRANDT

(anger and disappoint-
ment in his voice)

Think it over? What is there to
think over? Did you see Stransky
or not?

Steiner doesn't answer.

BRANDT

I don't understand you. Are you
a friend of Stransky's? My im-

pression is that you wish him

in hell.

STEINER

My differences with Captain Stransky

are a private matter.

BRANDT

(losing patience)

Oh, they are? Why were you

ordered to dig Stransky's bunker

tonight?

Steiner compresses his lips.

BRANDT

I asked you something!

Steiner looks up, their eyes meet.

STEINER

Do you want to hear lies?

BRANDT

(leaning forward)

Do you know that Stransky intends
to recommend disciplining you?

STEINER

(a growl)

If I were he, I wouldn't lose a
minute about it.

BRANDT

(to Kiesel)

I really think I should place a
guard over him and have him dig
holes until he's blue in the
face.

KIESEL

(shrugs)

Why try to revise the decisions of
Providence?

BRANDT

(sternly, to Steiner)

Listen to me. You know I've always
shown a great deal of understanding
for you. But I am beginning to
get tired of battling with your
superiors over you.

STEINER

(defiantly)

I didn't ask you to.

AS soon as the words are out, it is obvious from Steiner's
expression that he regrets going that far, but it is too
late. Brandt rises and leans on his desk. His voice is
hoarse with rage.

BRANDT

Didn't ask me to! You didn't ask
me to! Have you gone clean out
of your mind? Do you have any
idea what you're saying?

KIESEL

Steiner -- you ungrateful idiot --

For a second, Steiner closes his eyes. Se is struggling
not to let the words out -- but they come pouring forth
violently.

STEINER

What are you asking me, Captain
Kiesel? To love Colonel Brandt?
I hate Colonel Brandt. I hate
you, Captain Kiesel, and Stransky
and Triebig, and ever since I've

put on this damn uniform I've hated
everybody and anybody connected
with it. If I get into any trouble,
if I have any problem with anything
or anybody, I'll solve them myself --!

Thank you very much!

Me pauses, shaking. There is a dead silence in the room.

Brandt is breathing heavily. His unsteady hands grope
across the top of his desk.

BRANDT

(his voice broken)

Get out. Get out of here at once!

Steiner doesn't move for a split second, then he GOES OUT.

Brandt tries to regain control of himself. Kiesel looks
at the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

106. PANORAMIC SHOT - LINE OF TRUCKS AND MARCHING MEN -
DAY

all headed west. This is followed by QUICK CUTS of the
troop-laden trucks. The total impression is of a gigantic
exodus.

107. INT. SECOND PLATOON'S BUNKER

Steiner, Schnurrbart, Kruger, Zoll, and Anselm are all
present. They have packed all their belongings, ready
to move out. Schnurrbart and Kruger are playing cards.
Steiner is sitting quietly on his bunk. The others are
moving about -- obviously beset by impatience.

KERN

Why the hell aren't we moving
out?

ZOLL

What's everybody so worried
about? Moving a regiment is
quite a job, let me tell you.

It doesn't move all at once.

The PHONE RINGS.

ZOLL

Ah -- that's probably our orders
now.

AS Steiner goes to the phone, everybody makes for their
packs, ready to leave at the word.

STEINER

(into phone)

Yes -- yes, sir -- I see --

(no change of

expression)

Yes, sir -- at what time? -- Yes,
sir.

KRUGER

(to Steiner, who
has hung up)

What's the good word?

STEINER

The good word is that we've been
elected.

KERN

(cautiously)

Elected to -- what?

STEINER

Captain Stransky's paid us a great
honor. We -- that is, our platoon --
is to stay here as a rear guard

until dark. For two hours. Maybe
three.

The men are frozen in disbelief.

STEINER

I think we ought to feel very
proud.

ANSELM

Those idiots are crazy.

SCHNURRBART

Not so crazy. They're pulling out,
we're not.

STEINER

(takes a map from
his pocket, spreads
it on the table,
traces with his thumb)

The division is moving back to new
positions east of Krimskaya --

ZOLL

(nodding)

Much easier to launch an offensive
from there.

SCHNURRBART

Why us? Of all the platoons in the
battalion, why us?

KERN

(violently)

Because our sergeant is such a pal
of Captain Stransky'e! That's
why us!

STEINER

I'm sorry. In the next war I'll try

to pick my enemies more carefully.

108. MED. SHOT - STAFF CAR - DAY

The car stands outside Stransky's bunker. A military

CHAUFFEUR is at the wheel, and the MOTOR is RUNNING.

A steady stream of trucks and equipment, headed west,

flows past the staff car. In the b.g. the door to Stransky's

bunker flies open and the Captain with Lieutenant Triebig

behind him, STEPS OUT. As they make for the car, the phone

within the bunker is HEARD RINGING.

109. INT. BUNKER- AT PHONE

as Stransky comes INTO the SCENE, picks up phone. Triebig

is in the b.g.

STRANSKY

Captain Stransky -- Yes, yes,

Captain Kiesel, we were just

about to leave -- Yes, sir --

What's that, sir?

(his expression is

cloudy as he listens)

I see, sir. Yes, sir. I'll attend

to that immediately. Yes, sir.

He hangs up. Triebig looks at him inquiringly.

STRANSKY

Intelligence reports that the

Russians are already on the high-

way. Regiment feels that it would

be not only useless but suicidal

to leave behind any rear guard

platoons. They're to join the

evacuation immediately.

TRIEBIG

I see.

He and Stransky exchange glances.

TRIEBIG

Shall I call -- I believe it's

Sergeant Steiner's platoon, is

it not?

Stransky nods. Triebig waits for him to say something,

but he doesn't so Triebig picks up the phone.

STRANSKY

Just a second, Lieutenant --

Triebig turns to face Stransky.

STRANSKY

What do you think of this story?

We tried to establish telephone

communication with Steiner's

bunker, but evidently his wires

had already been cut. You, Lieuten-

ant Triebig, upon personal investigation,
discovered their bunker abandoned.

Apparently, the platoon had already
left to take up its forward position.

The two men look at each other. Then!

TRIEBIG

(slowly)

I think it's an excellent story.

STRANSKY

Just a story?

TRIEBIG

Much more than a story. I think

it's fully justified.

STRANSKY

You do? Why?

TRIEBIG

(after a moment's

thought)

It is my firm conviction that the

Third Reich would be better off

without the likes of Steiner and

his cronies.

The two men stand looking at each other without speaking.

Then Stransky takes the telephone wire in his two hands

and yanks it out of the wall. He doesn't look at Triebig

as he strides from the bunker. Triebig follows.

DISSOLVE TO:

110. EXT. BUNKER

All the men, with the exception of Steiner, are present.

They are busy packing ammunition boxes.

ANSELM

Damn it. I hate to leave this
place. We worked weeks fixing
this place up -- this damn army.

ZOLL

The trouble with you is -- you're
scared stiff.

ANSELM

(looks at him)

You don't know how grateful we are
that you were sent to us. It's
nice to have one brave man in the
platoon.

111. MED. SHOT - AT DOOR

as it opens, and Steiner, his uniform wringing wet, COMES
IN.

STEINER

Well -- are we all still here?

KERN

What do you mean "still here"?

STEINER

(pretending surprise)

No deserters?

(walking to table)

All right, then, let's have a look

at the map before we start.

He looks at map. The men gather around him.

KERN

How far is it to Krimskaya?

STEINER

About twenty miles.

(staring thought-

fully at the map)

The stuff between is regular
wilderness. And a stream
running through.

(MORE)

STEINER (CONT'D)

How big a stream? Suppose there's
no bridge? And the whole region
is marshy. The big question is
whether we can get through.

KRUGER

Then let's use the highway.

Steiner just looks at him.

KERN

(anxiously)

What does that look mean? Did
you see any Russians on the high-

way?

STEINER

Infantry, trucks, tanks, the whole

damn Russian army.

There is a moment's silence.

KERN

On the highway?

STEINER

Not in the air, take my word for

it.

ANSELM

(strapping on ammuni-

tion box)

How are we going to cross the highway

with the Russians on it?

STEINER

It's dark, it's raining--and there
are bound to be a few gaps in the
procession. We'll wait for the
right moment and scoot across.

KERN

It's hopeless. It's just plain
suicide.

ZOLL

(slinging his tommy
gun over his shoulder)
We're eight self-reliant, resource-
ful Germans. We'll make it.

STEINER

(sardonically to Kern)
There! Do you feel better?

KERN

Suppose we do make it. The Russians

will be in Krimskaya before us.

That means to get to our lines,

we'll have to cross theirs. How?

How, I'm asking?

STEINER

(his boxes are

strapped to him)

We can tunnel beneath the Russians

-- or we can pole vault over them.

Are we all ready?

KERN

(groaning)

You can joke, but we're finished.

Finished.

STEINER

Of course we are. No doubt about

it. And because you have so

brilliantly pointed that out,

you may lead the way.

He flings the door open I motions for Kern to start the

exodus. Kern looks sour, but leads the way. The others

squeeze past Steiner at the door. When they are GONE,

Steiner kicks the stove so that it falls over, spilling

its golden embers on the floor. Then he GOES OUT, closing

the door behind him.

112. FULL SHOT - THE PLATOON

huddled together in the rain, waiting for Steiner. After

a moment, he comes INTO the SCENE. He jerks his head

in the direction he wishes them to take. Then he starts

off. The men exchange glances, but no one says a word.

They trudge off.

DISSOLVE TO:

113. OPEN PLOWLANO - NIGHT

It is still dark, but in the east the sky is beginning to lighten. In the distance WE SEE the line of men walking slowly, their heads bent against the rain.

114. MED. SHOT - THE MEN WALKING

The ANGLE FAVORS Zoll and Kern. They are panting under the burden of their machine-guns and boxes of ammunition.

They are cursing under their breaths. The CAMERA PANS DOWN to their boots. They are caked with great lumps of muddy soil.

115. MED. SHOT - STEINER - AT HEAD OF LINE

His face expressionless, he is walking steadily on. Ahead of him the terrain begins to slope upward. Suddenly, Steiner stops in his tracks r holds his hands up for the men to stop.

116. MED. SHOT - KERN, KRUGER, ZOLL AND SCHNURRBART

KRUGER

What the devil's the matter now?

No one answers. Schnurrbart motions for them to listen.

After a moment, the low DRONE of big MOTORS, the CREAKING of heavily laden TRUCKS is HEARD. Also an occasional windblown SHOUT is HEARD.

ZOLL

(whispering)

Russians.

KERN

(nervously)

A whole army.

With quivering fingers he unthinkingly reaches for his cigarettes and thrusts one between his lips. As he strikes a match, Steiner suddenly APPEARS in front of him. There

is a sharp SLAPPING SOUND, followed by a RAIN of SPARKS from the crushed cigarette. Kern utters a whimpering sound and presses both hands against his mouth.

STEINER

(voice thick with rage)

You idiot!

The men look at him in alarm, but he whirls around and runs forward, signaling for the men to follow.

117. MED. SHOT - KERN

as he walks along. There is a burn on his upper lip which he pats tenderly. His face is clouded with resentment. The VOICES ahead become increasingly distinct. The crisp TREAD of nailed boots is very marked -- grows even louder.

118. MED. SHOT - STEINER

signaling for the men to halt. He walks back to the group.

STEINER

(to Schnurrbart and

Anselm)

You come with me. The rest will

wait here.

Steiner, Anselm and Schnurrbart run off. The men watch them

as, bent low, they DISAPPEAR into the darkness. Then,

one by one, the men sink down onto the wet ground. For a

few moments no one has the strength or the inclination to

speak. Then --

ZOLL

He shouldn't have hit you.

KRUGER

Why not?

ZOLL

What's more important than the
treatment of one German soldier by
another -- I'd like to know.

KRUGER

I'll tell you what's more important --

(MORE)

KRUGER (CONT'D)

(brings his face

close to Zoll's)

It's more important that we have to
get out of here. And you know why?

I'll tell you --

He pokes his finger into Zoll's chest. Zoll moves indignantly
back.

KRUGER

We have to get out so that we'll
be on time to get into the next
mess. Out of one mess into the
next. That's been going on for
three years, and it'll go on until
we get into one mess good and deep
and don't come out of it --

He has worked himself into such a rage that he can't go on.

There is another morose silence. Zoll sits up on one
elbow, listens.

SCHNURRBART

I think all that activity on the
highway is slackening.

KERN

Don't worry. We'll never get
across.

He stops, for everyone is listening intently. He listens too. There isn't a sound from the direction of the highway.

KERN

(whispering)

I don't hear a thing....

KRUGER

Here comes somebody --

Every head turns.

119. LONG SHOT - A FIGURE COMING OUT OF THE MIST

From the group's P.O.V. The figure stops.

120. FULL SHOT - GROUP

SCHNURRBART

It's Anselm.

Anselm stops, waves his fist in the air.

KRUGER

Let's go.

They snatch their guns, run up the slope, DISAPPEAR into
the mist.

121. CROWN OF HILL

Beneath it lies the highway in the gray dawn LIGHT.

Deserted. In the b.g. WE SEE the platoon slipping down
the steep decline and racing across the trampled, rutted
width of the road toward the edge of the woods which rise
like a dark wall against the further mountains.

122. MED. SHOT - STEINER

He is standing about 100 yards in the forest, looking toward
the highway. The men can be seen running towards him.

In a few seconds, they reach Steiner. As they fight to
catch their breaths, Steiner looks at them, triumph in his
eyes.

KERN

Well --

Steiner holds up his hand for quiet. They listen. The
rumble of vehicles can be HEARD from the highway.

KRUGER

(grinning)

Now that we're here that sounds
like music to me.

STEINER

(dryly)

I think it's a little early for
congratulations.

(picks up his gear)

We're ready.

ZOLL

Sergeant --

Steiner turns to regard him.

ZOLL

Before we start, there's a matter

I'd like to bring up. The matter

of your treatment of a comrade,

Private Kern.

Steiner looks at him closely.

ZOLL

One soldier of the Fuhrer is just

as -- good as --

He wilts under Steiner's gaze, stops.

STEINER

(coldly)

Please continue. Just as good as

what?

ZOLL

(weakening)

Anyway -- I believe I speak for

all the others --

Steiner looks at the others.

KERN

(to Zoll)

Why don't you mind your own lousy

business! It was idiotic of me

to light that cigarette. Now,

let's go.

Steiner looks at Zoll, then, without a word, turns and

starts walking. The others follow.

DISSOLVE TO:

123. STREET - IN KRIMSKAYA - DAY

The scene is one of great bustle and activity. Trucks are

unloading. Anti-aircraft guns are being set up on empty

lots between houses. A Staff car speeds INTO the SCENE,

jolts to a stop before one of the houses. Captain Kiesel

alights, taking a salute from the SENTRY, ENTERS one of
the houses.

124. INT. HOUSE - STRANSKY AND TRIEBIG

are supervising the installation of phones. Kiesel comes

RUNNING IN.

KIESEL

You're slow with those phones,

Captain. Regiment has been trying

to speak to you.

STRANSKY

They'll be in any minute, Captain

Kiesel.

KIESEL

with the Russians breathing down

our necks, the Colonel wants a

patrol out front. I think Steiner's

the most experienced --

STRANSKY

Sorry, Captain. I haven't the faintest idea of the whereabouts of Steiner and his platoon.

KIESEL

What do you mean by that?

(stares at Stransky)

You mean you didn't pull him out of line and bring him back? You had your orders.

STRANSKY

I tried to contact Steiner immediately -- wasn't that so, Lieutenant?

TRIEBIG

Yes, Captain.

STRANSKY

But he had already moved his platoon
from the bunker.

KIESEL

Why? He had orders not to move till
dark.

STRANSKY

(shrugging)

You know Steiner Disobeying orders
is a speciality of his.

KIESEL

How the devil is he going to get
back here? He's got the whole
Russian army to get through.

STRANSKY

He had his orders--he disregarded

them.

KIESEL

It doesn't sound like Steiner.

He'd risk his own neck, not a

whole platoon's --

(looks at Stransky

closely)

I think I can promise you a full

investigation, Captain Stransky,

when Steiner gets back. If he

gets back.

He turns and walks OUT rapidly. The telephone men are

still in the room, so Stransky and Triebig can only exchange

covert congratulatory glances. The CAMERA MOVES to the

window, THROUGH IT to an open field and as it MOVES EAST...

DISSOLVE TO:

125. OVERHEAD SHOT - THICK WOODS - DAY

The CAMERA MOVES DOWN through thorny undergrowth until it picks up Steiner's platoon, fighting their weary way through. The undergrowth has ripped the men's uniforms and scratched their hands and faces. Sweat is pouring from their faces. They are almost continually s lapping at almost invisible stinging mites which hover about them.

The CAMERA PANS DOWN to two pair of boots slogging through the marsh. It is evident that they are suffering a great deal.

126. LONG SHOT - THE SUN LOW IN THE SKY

It will be dark in a little while. From THIS ANGLE the CAMERA ZOOMS DOWN into the forest. It picks out Steiner trudging in water that is halfway up to his knees.

There is no one in sight behind him. Suddenly, from the rear there are HOARSE SHOUTS. Steiner stops, turns,

listens. The SHOUTS are HEARD again. Steiner starts back, CAMERA TRUCKING with him. There is a slight rise in the terrain, which is firm and dry. Most of the men are stretched out on the ground.

STEINER

What's the trouble?

SCHNURRBART

You'll have to call a rest, Rolf.

STEINER

(tersely)

We're not even half way yet.

SCHNURRBART

I know, but what can't be done

can't be done.

STEINER

(reluctantly)

All right.

He notices Zoll, who is lying on his stomach off to one side, his head pillowed in his arms.

STEINER

Where are your ammunition boxes?

The others become attentive. Zoll doesn't stir. Steiner digs the toe of his boot into Zoll's side.

STEINER

Didn't you hear me?

ZOLL

(a grunt)

Leave me alone.

KRUGER

He had them ten minutes ago. The swine must have dumped them.

STEINER

Then he'll go back for them.

Zoll still doesn't move, so Steiner grips him by his cartridge belt and pulls him to his feet. Face twisted with fury, Zoll whirls, snatches up his rifle, brandishes it.

ZOLL

(hoarsely)

Keep your dirty paws off me.

If you touch me again.

Steiner looks into Zoll's rabid face with a sort of curiosity.

STEINER

(quietly)

You're too much of a coward.

Watch!

He drops his tommy gun and gestures Schnurrbart and Kruger

back. They watch worriedly as Steiner steps so close to Zoll that the barrel of his rifle touches his stomach. Quietly he reaches out, grasps the rifle by the barrel and takes it from Zoll's hands. A sort of relieved sigh goes up from the men. Zoll stands motionless, his face reflecting fear, rage and shame. Steiner picks up his tommy gun.

STEINER

Get those boxes.

Zoll hesitates for just a second. Then he turns and walks off INTO the brush. The men look after him grimly.

127. MED. SHOT - STEINER - IN A TREE

making his way to the top. When he nears it, he pushes aside two branches to give himself a view.

128. LONG SHOT - FROM STEINER'S POV

An enormous expanse of reeds cuts a swath across the

woods. Brown water shimmers along the thick stems. Then there is a hundred yard width of muddy water, then more weeds.

129. MED. SHOT - STEINER

He looks grim as he starts his descent.

130. FULL SHOT - THE MEN

as they wait for Steiner.

KERN

I bet this is the only dry spot for miles around. Why don't we just stay here?

ANSELM

Don't be silly. They won't know where to send our pay. Ah --

For Steiner has dropped out of the tree.

SCHNURRBART

Well -- ?

STEINER

Reeds, swamp, open water, more reeds,

more swamp. Worse than I thought

it would be.

Steiner spreads the map on the ground. The men look over

his shoulders. Steiner points to something on the map.

STEINER

(nods)

Tomorrow morning we'll start

before dawn.

KRUGER

(querulously)

Straight into the creek?

STEINER

Shut up! We'll march north to the
road.

KERN

How far is that?

STEINER

About thirty miles.

KRUGER

Thirty miles! It's crazy! This
way we're no more than eight miles
from Krimskaya!

STEINER

Sure. If we could cross that
swamp, and we can't!

KRUGER

Before I march thirty miles I need
something to eat.

STEINER

If you've got to have something
to eat, try tree bark. Boiled in
soft water it's supposed to be
edible. Damn it all, don't act
like a bunch of children.

They look shame-faced, but Kruger growls...

KRUGER

You've seen what the water looks
like. Like a hundred cows have
been scheissing in it.

STEINER

Then boil it and skim it. You
won't mind the filth -- you've got
a pig's stomach anyway.

The men grin.

STEINER

We'll make a soup. Put the meat
and bread right in it. Kruger
and Schnurrbart fetch water. But
don't anybody try drinking the
muck before it's boiled. The rest
of us can gather wood.

The men make a movement to start.

STEINER

Wait a minute -- we may as well
settle this now. We'll need a
volunteer for sentry duty tonight.

At least to start it off --

Nobody answers. The men don't look at each other.

STEINER

I know you're all tired, but --

KERN

Sergeant, I --

At this moment, a NOISE in the brush causes all heads to turn. An exhausted Zoll, lugging the ammunition boxes' struggles INTO the SCENE. Steiner looks at him, then turns to Kern.

STEINER

That's all right. The problem is solved.

The men laugh, start off. Zoll looks puzzled by the laughter.

DISSOLVE TO:

131. CLOSE SHOT - SMALL SMOLDERING CAMP FIRE

The CAMERA PULLS BACK to REVEAL Kruger, Schnurrbart, Kern and Anselm asleep on the ground in various uncomfortable postures. Pawn is breaking in the sky. The air is filled with the croaking SOUND of FROGS.

132. MED. SHOT - KRUGER

as he slowly awakens. It is a moment before he is fully awake. He reaches out and nudges Kern awake.

KERN

Huh? -- What? -- Oh -- what's up?

KRUGER

Where's Steiner, do you know?

KERN

He just got up sometime ago and went off somewhere.

KRUGER

Did he say where?

By this time the conversation has awakened the other men.

KERN

I asked him, but you know Steiner -- he just gave me a look and off

he went. I got the shits.

SCHNURRBART

(grimly)

Steiner goes -- and you get scared'

huh?

KRUGER

(looks around at all

the faces)

We're all scared the minute Rolf's

not around to hold our hands.

SCHNURRBART

(tosses a branch into

the fire, sending up

a shower of sparks)

He'll be back. Anselm, relieve Zoll.

ANSELM

(rebelliously)

Why me?

KRUGER

Hurry up and relieve Zoll. On the

double.

ANSELM

You and Schnurrbart -- big shots!

Lousy noncoms! You're all alike.

Rank goes right to your heads. It

stinks. The whole damned army

stinks. And you, Kruger, stink

worst of all!

Kruger picks up a dry stick of wood which is only partially

in the fire and tosses it at Anselm, who barely throws his

hand up in time. Then, with a cry of rage, he jumps across

the fire and onto Kruger's neck. The two men struggle on

the ground.

KERN, SCHNURRBART

(simultaneously)

Come on, now - stop it. Kruger!

Anselm!

Zoll comes running IN from his sentry post.

ZOLL

What's going on here?

Zoll, assisted by Kern, tries to separate the two men who are locked together on the ground.

KERN

Watch out -- somebody's going to get

burned in the fire!

Suddenly, Steiner's voice is heard.

STEINER'S VOICE

Zoll -- Kern! Let them fight it out.

133. MED. SHOT - STEINER

His gun is in the back of an elderly RUSSIAN. The others
are in the b.g.

STEINER

Why shouldn't they kill each
other? Why should the Russians
have to do it?

SCHNURRBART

Who the hell is that?
The old man sinks to the ground.

STEINER

It's my guess he's a very old
Russian -- what's yours?

KRUGER

Where did you find him, Rolf?

STEINER

There's a dirt road about four
miles from here. The road leads
to a bridge. He was guarding it.

ZOLL

A bridge! A bridge that crosses
the swamp, you mean?

SCHNURRBART

Eureka, that means we don't have
to march thirty miles to the
highway, doesn't it?

KERN'S VOICE

Not to mention the forty more to
Krimskaya.

ANSELM

(feeling his
throat)

Doesn't anybody care that my neck
is broken?

STEINER

Not so fast. On the other side
of the bridge there's a house. and
there are Russians in the house.

Pause.

KRUGER

How do you know -- did you see any?

STEINER

No, but there was smoke coming out
of the chimney. You ask him how
many there are.

Kruger talks in Russian to the old man, who replies. Then!

KRUGER

He says there's two wagons and

two horses.

STEINER

To hell with that. Ask him how
many men there are in that house.

Kruger speaks in Russian, but the old man just shakes his
head.

STEINER

How many men are there in the
house?

Kruger speaks to the old man who closes his eyes and turns
his head aside.

KRUGER

He won't say.

STEINER

(putting the muzzle
of his gun against

the old man's head)

He has to. Ask him again.

Kruger expostulates with the Russian, illustrating his words

with unmistakable gestures. The Russian slowly opens his

eyes. Steiner is regarding him without expression. A

brief smile passes over the Russian's wrinkled, parchment-

like face, and he says a few words.

STEINER

What is he saying?

KRUGER

He says he is an old man.

STEINER

(calmly)

We can see that. I admire him, but

I'm going to have to shoot him.

SCHNURRBART

Isn't it dangerous, firing a shot?

There may be some of them around,

looking for him.

STEINER

You may be right. On the other

hand, we can't waste time hanging

him.

Pause.

ANSELM

Well, let's see -- there's strangulation,

drowning, stoning --

STEINER

If we had the time we'd let you

talk him to death.

Pause. Steiner takes a knife from his scabbard. The men

are very silent.

STEINER

Any volunteers?

ANSELM

(after a moment)

How about you, Zoll? You were a
butcher in civilian life, weren't
you?

The joke falls flat, even with Anselm.

ZOLL

(after a moment)

If everybody's scared, I might
have a try at it.

STEINER

No. I'll make it quick and clean.

(lifts the Russian

to his feet, to

Kruger)

We'll give him one more chance.

Tell him what I'm going to do.

Kruger speaks to the Russian who says nothing, doesn't
even shake his head.

STEINER

All right, then --

He pushes the Russian ahead of him toward a grove of small
trees, CAMERA TRUCKING with them.

134. FULL SHOT - GROUP

They stand around in silence. A low GASP is HEARD O.S.

The men tense. Anselm ventures to look off.

135. LONG SHOT - ANSELM'S POV

Steiner is seen bent over, leaning against a tree.

136. FULL SHOT - GROUP

ANSELM

I'll say this for Steiner. At

least he's throwing up.

All eyes are fixed o.s. After a few moments, Steiner

comes back IN. His knife and scabbard are both gone.

STEINER

All right, get your things together.

SCHNURRBART

I wonder how many Russians there

are in that house.

STEINER

Since we've got to cross that bridge,

it doesn't matter how many there are.

KERN

Aren't we too few for the job?

STEINER

No. There's only the front door

and one window on the side. We'll
smoke them out with grenades, then
mow them down as they come out.

(looks at Zoll)

And hang on to your ammunition boxes.

We're going to need them.

Steiner picks up his pack.

137. LONG SHOT - A ONE-STORY HOUSE - DAY

It is made of massive logs. Smoke is pouring from one of
the chimneys. The CAMERA STARTS PULLING BACK and we see
that a creek flows parallel to the house. Its bank is
overgrown with shoulder-high reeds which sway gently in
the wind. Two unhitched wagons, their contents concealed
under dark brown canvas' stand by the side of the house.
Then we see a primitive but wide wooden bridge with rails
on both sides. In the center, leaning against the narrow

slats of the railing, stands a GUARD -- an elderly man with a yellow, wrinkled face. His cap is pushed back on his head and he is staring dully at the dirty surface of the water. His tommy gun is slung diagonally across his back. The CAMERA CONTINUES BACKWARD across the bridge into the reeds. Finally, it comes to rest on the flattened shapes of Steiner and his platoon who are gazing intently at the sight. The men speak in whispers.

STEINER

You realize how important it is that no one -- not a single one -- escapes?

KERN

We won't be able to get them all.

STEINER

We have to get them all. Once the

Russians find out there are Germans

behind their lines there'll be

hundreds of them beating the bushes

for us.

He looks at the men significantly. They nod grimly.

STEINER

Anselm -- you and Kruger stay here.

Set up the machine gun -- see that no

one gets past this way. The rest

will come with me. Keep your heads

behind the trees -- and remember, if

one of them gets away we're sunk.

with bent back, he moves forward, the men following.

Anselm starts setting up the machine gun.

138. MED. SHOT - STEINER AND MEN

walking cautiously through the woods to get on the other

side of the house. The CAMERA FOCUSES on Zoll, who is last in line. His eyes are fixed on the ground, on small patches of SUNLIGHT on the ground. They change shape, expand and contract each time the leaves stir overhead. Suddenly Zoll takes mincing little steps, now jumping or skipping to avoid a band of SUNLIGHT. He becomes so absorbed in this that he is oblivious to everything else. He doesn't notice that Steiner is standing in his path, watching him curiously. Zoll is on the point of jumping over a broad s trip of LIGHT when his eyes meet Steiner's. His intended jump becomes a halting step that carries him right into the middle of the SUNLIT band. Zoll stands still, looking into Steiner's face.

ZOLL

(weak smile)

Just a game --

STEINER

(incredulously)

A what? A game?

ZOLL

(apologetically)

When we were kids -- a came -- we'd
race through the woods. No one
was allowed to step on a spot of
sunlight --

STEINER

I see. And would you like us to
join you in the game? Perhaps we
could find the time.

ZOLL

I only thought -- silly idea -- if I
don't step on a spot of sunlight

now I'd come through this all right.

He smiles an abject, apologetic smile. Steiner's face is expressionless. He turns to the men, motions them to the ground. Zoll is the last to obey.

139. MED. SHOT - STEINER ON THE GROUND

The men behind him.

STEINER

I'll take care of the gentleman on the bridge. When I run -- you follow me --

(looks at Zoll)

-- taking special care to avoid the spots of sunlight.

Zoll flashes a look of hatred at Steiner, but remains quiet.

Steiner lifts his tommy gun, sights it at the man on the bridge. He takes his time. Beside him, Kern is trembling

visibly.

140. LONG SHOT - THE GUARD ON THE BRIDGE

He has not changed his position.

141. ANGLE - OVER STEINER'S SHOULDER

SHOOTING TOWARD the Guard in the b.g. Steiner is still
aiming.

Then he FIRES -- a whipping round of SHOTS. In the b.g., we
SEE the man on the bridge start to move as though he stood
on a whirling disc. Then his hands grip the wooden railing
for support. His legs sag, and he slides, knees first,
underneath the railing and into the dirty water. Steiner
jumps to his feet, runs madly for the bridge, the men
following.

142. OTHER SIDE OF BRIDGE

as Steiner comes across, throws himself flat on the ground.

The others, close behind, do the same. They all SHOOT

round after round at the doors of the hut. Then --

STEINER

(holding up his hand)

Stop!

A FINAL BURST from Kern and then there is stillness. The men look toward the house.

143. LONG SHOT - THE HOUSE

There is not a sound from the house. Not a single sign of any activity.

144. MED. SHOT - THE MEN

still lying flat on their stomachs. They turn their faces to look at each other questioningly.

ZOLL

(hopefully)

Maybe there's nobody in the house.

STEINER

Don't worry, there is.

ZOLL

Well, it can't be too large a
force.

KERN

Enough to give us a hero's death.

SCHNURRBART

(to Steiner)

What do you make of it?

KERN

(excitedly)

Look -- !

A figure is rushing toward them.

STEINER

Don't shoot -- it's Kruger!

Kruger comes RUNNING IN, out of breath.

KRUGER

Rolf --

STEINER

(sharply)

Why did you leave your post?

Anselm can't handle them alone.

KRUGER

Anselm is in the house.

STEINER

What?

KRUGER

Didn't you hear the screaming?

STEINER

Screaming?

(looks at the men

for confirmation)

KRUGER

Women's screams, then moans. So

Anselm went in.

KERN

(bitterly)

Naturally. If it's anything to

do with women --

STEINER

What do you mean, women?

KRUGER

I mean women! Anselm says to come

over.

STEINER

Well, it's nice of him to invite

us. Kern, you stay outside. Fire.

one shot if you see anyone coming.

He gets up, runs toward the house, the men following.

145. EXT. HOUSE

as Steiner comes INTO the SCENE, kicks open the front door.

146. INT. HOUSE - HALL

It is a narrow hall, which separates two rooms. From the left room comes a weird MOAN. The men look at each other.

Steiner walks to the room.

147. INT. ROOM

The entire long wall of the room is taken up by a heap of straw covered with blankets. Crowded together in the rear half of the room, faces half-defiant, half-terrified, are about a dozen and a half WOMEN in Russian uniforms. They carry no weapons. Most of them are big breasted, stocky women. Their full blouses, reaching down over their hips, are gathered at the waist by broad belts. One or two

are fairly young and attractive, and there is one exceedingly pretty GIRL. At the women's feet, bedded down on the straw, lies a young WOMAN, the clothing stripped away from the upper part of her body, a blood-soaked bandage covering her right breast. Her eyes are closed, she emits the weird MOAN.

Anselm is guarding them. Steiner and the men stop in their tracks as they see the women.

ANSELM

(grinning broadly)

I hope you put me in for the Iron

Cross, Sergeant. I took them

single-handed.

KRUGER

Well, what do we do with them?

STEINER

What do you do with armed guerrillas,
male or female?

SCHNURRBART

These are not guerrillas. They're
regular uniformed troops. Besides
-- they had no arms.

STEINER

If they're regular troops, we'll
treat them as we must treat all
prisoners in our situation.

SCHNURRBART

(gasping)

You mean, shoot them?

STEINER

Do you see any other way? If
one of them escapes and gets to

the Russian lines before us, we're
done for.

ZOLL

Steiner is right. The women must
be killed.

STEINER

(looks at Zoll)

Despite the fact that you agree
with me, I still feel I'm right.

His glance falls on the wounded woman. She is looking at
him with an expression of wild horror. An older WOMAN
beside her speaks in Russian.

STEINER

What did she say, Kruger?

KRUGER

She says there's a kettle of hot

water in the room across the
hall. Please help the girl, she
says.

STEINER

Anselm, get the water. We'll clean
the wound.

ANSELM

(bewildered)

What's the sense of fixing her up,
if you're going to shoot her?

STEINER

(sharply)

Get the water.

Anselm shrugs, GOES OUT.

STEINER

(to Kruger)

Ask them where they come from
and where they were going. Tell
them if they lie to us we'll throw
them in the creek.

Kruger talks in Russian, the older Woman, who appears to
be an officer, replies.

KRUGER

(to Steiner)

They belong to the Birth Women's
Mortar Battalion and are on their
way from Maihop to Krimskaya. I
think she's telling the truth.

Steiner looks grim. Anselm COMES IN with a bowl of hot
water, sets it on the floor.

148. MED. SHOT - STEINER AND WOUNDED WOMAN

as he bends down beside her. She tries to roll back

against the wall.

STEINER

Take it easy. What do you think

I want to do?

He lifts the bandage. We do not see the wound, but from

Steiner's face, we know that it is a serious one.

STEINER

(opening his first

aid kit)

Are you in pain?

The woman understands, nods.

STEINER

(enigmatically)

The pain will be over soon.

He starts to wash the wound. In the b.g., we CAN SEE that

the other women have not changed their posture. They

are still huddled together against the wall, fearfully watching his movements.

Steiner lays a compress on the wound.

KRUGER

This is ridiculous. A nice clean

bandage -- then a bullet.

Before Steiner can reply there is a NOISE at the door.

149. MED. SHOT - KERN AND OLD RUSSIAN

Kern has his gun in the Russian's back. The Russian is squat and stocky and despite his age looks powerful.

KERN

(grinning proudly)

He practically walked into our

arms --

OLD RUSSIAN

(to Steiner, raising

his hand pleadingly)

Captain --

Steiner pushes him in the direction of the women, motions for him to lie down. As the old man reels, several of the women SCREAM.

KERN

I had a look at the wagons, Sergeant -- there's plenty of food. Canned. stuff.

STEINER

Good. Zoll, you stay here. If any of the women starts anything, shoot her at once.

ZOLL

(as they walk off)

When do I get to eat?

STEINER

Don't be in such a hurry. Who

wants to eat?

He starts OUT.

150. CLOSE SHOT - PAIR OF HIGHLY POLISHED OFFICER'S BOOTS

CAMERA PANS UP to a MED. SHOT of Colonel Brandt on the

telephone. The scene is obviously his new headquarters

in Krimskaya, the second floor of a Russian building.

Captain Kiesel stands near the window, listening.

BRANDT

Yes, General.... Yes, General,

we're so solidly dug in, it seems

almost a shame --

(smiles ironically

at Kiesel)

I say that, General, because in

four or five days -- we'll be driven
out of these beautifully dug-in
positions.

(another smile

to Kiesel)

Certainly, General. I know about
German valor. without that valor,
I wouldn't give us more than two
days -- Yes, General. I will, sir.

(hangs up, shrugs

in Kiesel'S

direction)

The General was short with me; but
he knows the truth as well as I do.

KIESEL

Of course. It's always he who

orders us to fall back, isn't it?

There is a KNOCK at the door.

BRANDT

Come in.

An ORDERLY opens the door for a CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN KILIUS

Captain Kilius reporting, sir.

BRANDT

Oh, yes. You have your orders?

KILIUS

Yes, sir. And a letter for you.

BRANDT

(as he opens the

envelope)

This is Captain Kiesel--

Kiesel and Kilius shake hands.

BRANDT

Captain Kilius comes to us from
the Western Front.

KIESEL

Really? Whatever induced you to
leave, Captain?

Kilius smiles wanly. Brandt, reading the letter, snorts
loudly.

BRANDT

Didn't you once mention Captain
Stransky's good connections?

KIESEL

There is a Major General Stransky
attached to Army High Command,
South. He is, I think, a cousin
of Captain Stransky's.

BRANDT

I see.

(tosses letter on

table as if it

were filth)

You can guess what that is, can't

you?

KIESEL

His transfer, of course.

BRANDT

(grimly)

Exactly. Herr Stransky is to report

to Paris within a week.

There's a silence in the room as if both men had forgotten

the presence of Kilius. Then Brandt recovers. He turns

to Kilius.

BRANDT

Please excuse me' Captain. My
orderly will arrange for your
billeting.

KIESEL

Don't unpack too thoroughly.
We'll be on the move soon.

KILIUS

(smiles)

Thank you, Colonel Brandt.
Se salutes, LEAVES.

KIESEL

He's so new here, he didn't even
ask in which direction.

BRANDT

That bastard, Stransky!

(shrugs)

without Steiner to contradict him,

he'll get his Iron Cross and strut

all over Paris. That arrogant

bastard!

(pause)

So Stransky will be in Paris, while

Steiner --

(looks glumly out

the window)

God knows where he is --

151. CLOSE SHOT - STEINER

stuffing food into his mouth. The CAMERA PULLS BACK to

show the scene as the exterior of the house, at one of the

wagons.

The other men are eating greedily too. Steiner turns,

looks toward the window of the house.

152. CLOSE SHOT - ZOLL'S FACE - AT WINDOW

The CAMERA PULLS BACK to take in the Russian female prisoners and the old man. The women are still huddled close together as close to the wall as they can get. They are asleep or pretending to be asleep. The wounded woman lies with her head on another woman's lap. Her eyes are closed and she MOANS softly in her sleep.

153. MED. SHOT - OLD MAN AND YOUNG GIRL

They are sitting in the forefront, and are the only ones not asleep. Their heads are together and they are whispering. The girl is no more than twenty and very pretty. The old man's expression is very worried.

154. MED. SHOT - ZOLL

as he turns from the window. He sees the old man and the young girl whispering.

ZOLL

Shut up, you two!

The old man and young girl draw slightly apart. The girl looks at Zoll and her expression is frightened.

155. CLOSE SHOT - ZOLL

as he looks at the girl. His eyes glide searchingly over her figure. It is very evident what he is thinking.

He looks at her quite a while, then, with an effort, turns away, walks to the door, stands with his back to it, tries not to look at the girl.

156. MED. SHOT - GIRL AND OLD MAN

The old man has moved closer to her, and has cautiously resumed his whispering. The girl's expression is still tense. She draws back in fright as Zoll suddenly comes INTO the SCENE.

ZOLL

I told you to be quiet, didn't

I?

He lifts his foot and, kicking his boot against the old man's shoulder, sends him sprawling on his back. The old man looks up at him, then, as if resigned, turns over on his side. Zoll looks at the girl. It is some time before he takes his gaze away. Then, he walks to the window, looks out again. In the b.g., we SEE the men grouped around the fire, evidently eating. After a moment, Zoll turns away from the window. The CAMERA is CLOSE on his FACE and we SEE him gape and stand rooted to the spot. The CAMERA PULLS BACK to take in Zoll and the young girl. Her head is bowed and she is fingering her blouse. The top button is already open. She doesn't look at Zoll and she slowly unfastens the second button. Zoll gulps, then looks at the old man who is lying on his side, eyes closed.

Zoll's eyes take in the rest of the room, the CAMERA PANNING with his gaze. Most of the women seem to be asleep, or are sitting with heads drooping, staring at the floor. Then, the CAMERA comes to rest on the young girl again. She is looking steadily toward Zoll who watches her in fascination. She unfastens another button. Then she closes one eye in a slow wink and smiles at Zoll.

157. CLOSE SHOT - ZOLL

He holds his breath. He is perspiring slightly.

158. MED. SHOT - ZOLL AND GIRL

The door to the hall is in the b.g. The girl has now unbuttoned the last button and is looking smilingly at Zoll, who stands hesitant. 'But now, the tread of heavy BOOTS is HEARD in the hall. Zoll hurriedly jumps to the wall and comes to an attitude of strict attention. The door opens and Schnurrbart APPEARS.

SCHNURRBART

Everything all right?

Zoll manages to nod indifferently. Out of the corner of his eye he looks toward the girl. She is holding her blouse closed and staring vacantly at the floor.

SCHNURRBART

As soon as Kern has finished eating he'll take over so you can eat.

(his eyes rove over

the prisoners)

They asleep?

ZOLL

(curtly)

They seem to be.

He is anxious for Schnurrbart to leave, but Schnurrbart takes his time. He comes all the way into the room, his

eyes on the prisoners.

ZOLL

(impatiently)

What do you want? Everything

is all right.

SCHNURRBART

Doesn't it seem funny to you that

they're all asleep?

ZOLL

Why is it so funny?

Schnurrbart shrugs, goes OUT. Zoll kicks the door shut,

quickly turns to look at the girl.

159. MED. SHOT - THE GIRL

She has opened her eyes and is looking encouragingly at

Zoll. When he doesn't stir, she spreads her blouse open,

puts her hand under her undershirt. with her other hand

she beckons to Zoll.

160. CLOSE SHOT - ZOLL

He digs his teeth into his lower lip. He stands as if nailed to the spot. His eyes sweep over the heads of the other prisoners. pause upon the face of the man.

Although the old man is lying with closed eyes, Zoll looks at him suspiciously. But then he looks toward the girl again --

161. MED. SHOT - THE GIRL

She smiles at Zoll and begins to push herself along the floor toward him. This overcomes Zoll's fears. He takes one last look at the old man, then beckons to the girl with a movement of his head.

ZOLL

(softly)

Come. Come with me.

She hesitates and glances at the old man for the briefest moment. His eyes are still closed, his back is to them.

ZOLL

(hoarsely, with

another gesture)

I said--come.

The coquettish smile on the girl's face has vanished. There is fear in her eyes. She doesn't move. He takes one long stride to her, grasps her shoulders tightly, pulls her to her feet. He throws another glance at the old man who doesn't stir. Abruptly, Zoll pulls the resisting girl by the waist to the door. He throws open the door, pulls the girl into the hall.

162. MED. SHOT - IN HALL - ZOLL

looks madly around. There is a door on the opposite side

of the hall. He turns to the girl, sees that she is trying with her free hand to button her blouse. Zoll shoves her toward the opposite door.

163. INT. OPPOSITE ROOM

as the door is flung open and Zoll, dragging the girl, COMES IN. The room is sparsely furnished, its chief feature being a huge wardrobe closet against the one wall. As Zoll lays his tommy gun down in a corner, the girl suddenly breaks loose and runs toward the door. In two bounds, Zoll is at her side. He throws her to the ground, falls on her, panting with exertion and excitement. She tries to defend herself, her clenched hands battle against his face and she begins to scream. Zoll, who has ripped her blouse off her shoulders, drags one of the blankets over her face, smothers her screams.

164. HALL - THE OLD RUSSIAN

stands hesitant as he HEARS the MUFFLED SCREAMS.

Then he runs to the front

door, peers cautiously out, RUNS OUT.

165. EXT. HOUSE - AT WAGON - THE MEN

have just about finished eating.

KRUGER

(sitting up suddenly)

What was that?

ANSELM

What was what?

KRUGER

(overlapping)

I thought I heard a shot.

STEINER

I heard it. It was a shot, all

right...

KERN'S VOICE

(faint and far off)

Rolf -- Kruger --

ANSELM

It's Kern!

He and Kruger RUN OFF. Then the others follow.

166. FULL SHOT - KERN LYING ON GROUND

Anselm and Kruger run in, bend over him. Steiner and

Schnurrbart COME IN.

KRUGER

He's hurt -- Kern is hurt --

Steiner looks grimly in the direction of the hut.

ANSELM

Maybe a company of Russians has

come up.

SCHNURRBART

One shot, and it's a company of

Russians!

KERN

(gasping)

The old Russian -- he ran past --

STEINER

What!

KERN

Sorry, Steiner -- I was in no position

to -- he grabbed my gun --

He falls silent, his eyes close. Steiner bends over to

examine him.

KRUGER

How bad is he?

STEINER

(getting up)

He's probably finished. Do what

you can for him.

(looks grimly

toward hut)

I think I'll have a few words with

Herr Zoll.

As he starts away, the men look down worriedly at Kern.

167. INT. HALL - OF HUT

as Steiner comes RUNNING IN. He is about to enter the

room on the right when he HEARS WHIMPERING from within

the room on the left. He listens for a moment, then the

WHIMPERING IS HEARD AGAIN. Steiner lifts his foot, kicks

the door in.

168. INT. ROOM- ZOLL

who is fastening the buckle on his belt, whirls around as

the door flies open. The girl lies on the floor naked

and whimpering. Zoll stares incredulously at Steiner
in the doorway. For a few seconds they merely stare at
each other.

Then Steiner comes slowly into the room and slowly approaches
Zoll until he is right in front of him. The WHIMPERING of
the girl STOPS.

STEINER

I hope you had a good time,
because you're going to pay
quite a price for it.

He raises his gun. Zoll takes a step backward in terror.

ZOLL

(incredulously)

You're not going to shoot me?

STEINER

You left your post, you let a

prisoner escape, you've endangered

all our lives.

ZOLL

But Steiner, he was asleep -- I swear

it -- he was asleep.

Steiner hesitates, then his eyes fall on something.

169. CLOSE SHOT - THE SINGLE-DOORED WARDROBE

It fills the entire left corner of the room. It is
massively built, but has no lock, the door can only be
closed by a wooden catch.

170. MED. SHOT - STEINER AND ZOLL

STEINER

(to Zoll, indicating

wardrobe)

Open the door.

Zoll doesn't move, his face reflecting fear. Then, invol-

untarily, he glances toward his tommy gun -- out of reach in the farthest corner of the room. Steiner catches his Glance.

STEINER

(coldly)

Don't try it. You couldn't get there. Come on, open the wardrobe.

ZOLL

Not until you tell me why you want me to open it.

STEINER

(in sudden fury)

Go on, go on, hurry up.

Zoll turns quickly, walks to wardrobe, opens the door a little.

STEINER

More.

Zoll pulls the door wide open. The wardrobe is empty inside,
Steiner nods in satisfaction. He turns his head for a
moment to see that the girl's gaze is fixed upon him. He
turns to Zoll.

STEINER

If she had a gun she'd fill us
both. Get into the wardrobe.

Zoll, his eyes wide with fear, takes a quick step to the
side. Steiner steps up to Zoll, whacks him across the
face with the heavy barrel of his gun. Zoll lets out a
wild shriek, presses both hands against his nose, which
streams blood. Steiner, ignoring his cries, shoves him
into the wardrobe. Steiner slams the door shut, pushes
the wooden catch down. From within, comes Zoll's MUFFLED
VOICE -- "Steiner -- Steiner --"

STEINER

(loudly)

If you make a sound, I'll fire

through the wood.

From the side he tugs at the wardrobe until he has moved it somewhat away from the wall. Then, he squeezes between the wall and the rear of the wardrobe. He braces his back against the wall and, with a mighty shove, pushes the wardrobe over. It crashes to the floor, sending up a cloud of dust, behind which appears the girl's white face. For a few seconds there is silence, then Zoll begins to SHOUT and KICK. Steiner hammers the butt of his gun against the rear wall of the wardrobe. The SHOUTING STOPS.

STEINER

Stop the racket. And don't be ungrateful. For you, the war is over.

(he turns to the

girl; gestures)

You stay here.

He looks at the wardrobe with grim satisfaction, WALKS OUT.

171. INT. HALL

as Steiner COMES OUT. He HEARS a woman SHOUTING from the other room. Steiner crosses to the room.

172. INT. OTHER ROOM

as Steiner COMES IN. A woman SHOUTS at him.

STEINER

(looks at the

wounded woman}

How do you feel? Any better?

The woman just stares up at him. Steiner kneels, looks at the bandage.

Anselm, Kruger and Schnurrbart come RUNNING IN, in a

state of great excitement. The former has a roll of maps in his hand, the latter carries a walkie-talkie.

ANSELM

Sergeant -- we were rummaging through the second wagon and look what we --

STEINER

You picked a lovely time to go souvenir hunting. What good is a Russian walkie-talkie to us?

What have you got?

ANSELM

A pretty goddamn good map. It's not only got their positions in front of Krimskaya -- it's got ours, too.

STEINER

Why, that's almost German efficiency.

He spreads the map on the table, looks at it critically.

KRUGER

What do you make of it?

STEINER

A work of art. What Colonel Brandt

wouldn't give to have this.

(looks at map again)

Their Company Three is pretty well

spread out. Right opposite is a hill

marked on our side.

(again examines

map)

The best spot to cross looks like

Number Three's spot.

KRUGER

Through a whole company?

ANSELM

And in our gorgeous gray-green
uniforms, some chance we'd have.

STEINER

It's the only chance we have. The
dark will give us some --

He pauses, as his eyes fall upon the Russian women. He
stands silent as the men look at him. Then he turns to
Kruger.

STEINER

Tell them to undress.

KRUGER

Who?

STEINER

(impatiently)

Them, the women. Tell them to

undress.

173. CLOSE SHOT - WARDROBE - ZOLL

can be HEARD BANGING FEEBLY on the door.

174. OTHER ROOM

The men are in various stages of jinning the women's uniforms. They are grumbling.

SCHNURRBART

Where in hell is Zoll?

There is a sudden silence. The men look at Steiner, who is searching around for a blouse.

STEINER

I don't think we have to worry about him.

KRUGER

Has he skipped out?

STEINER

What would you have done in
his place? Hurry up, or we'll
have a Russian regiment on our
necks.

KRUGER

(bursting out)

Suppose we do sneak through the
Russian lines? Our own men
will mow us down, us looking like
a pack of damned Russians!
A silence falls upon the men.

STEINER

Don't you prefer a German bullet
to a Russian one? Where's your
national pride?
Bitter, raucous laughter from the men.

The men, the uniforms in their arms, start for the door,
with backward glances at the women. The men GO.

175. MED. SHOT - STEINER AND KRUGER

who are bringing up the rear. The old Russian woman
SHOUTS some thing.

STEINER

What did you say?

KRUGER

She still wants to know where
the young girl is.

STEINER

Tell her when we're gone, to
look across the hall.

Kruger speaks to the woman. The wounded woman moans.

Steiner, his face expressionless, bends, lifts the
bandage. inspects the wound.

KRUGER

How does it look?

STEINER

(getting up)

She's a goner. Very soon now.

The wounded woman, looking up at them intently, speaks in low, halting tones. Steiner looks inquiringly at Kruger, who shrugs.

KRUGER

She says how do we like it now that they have us on the run? Steiner is silent a moment.

STEINER

Have you got an answer to that?

KRUGER

No.

STEINER

(grimly)

Then, let's go.

He stalks OUT, followed by Kruger.

176. FULL SHOT - THE WOMEN

are donning whatever clothing the men have left behind.

Others have draped blankets around themselves. Three

women are bending over the wounded woman. From the ex-

pressions on their faces we know that the end is near for

their wounded compatriot.

177. MED. SHOT - WOMAN AT WINDOW

She is peering out cautiously. After a few moments. she

turns and says something in Russian to the other women.

Several come hastening to the window, look out.

178. LONG SHOT - WOMEN'S POV

In the b.g., we SEE the men walking off. with Steiner in

the lead, they DISAPPEAR into the woods.

179. MED. SHOT - WOMEN - AT WINDOW

They turn and their faces express grim satisfaction.

Then, a large woman, evidently the leader, looks through the open door, across the hall to the door beyond. Her face sets. The women follow her gaze.

180. INT. OPPOSITE ROOM - THE WARDROBE

is lying flat on the floor. The CAMERA MOVES UP CLOSER to it.

181. INT. WARDROBE - ZOLL

is lying on his stomach, his head resting on his arms, his mouth to a small crack in the planks. After a moment, he raises himself up on one elbow, listens carefully. He thinks he hears something -- but evidently he is mistaken. He lies flat on the floor again. Then he reaches for his glasses which are lying by his side. He inspects them;

they are broken. He shakes his head in anger. He presses his mouth to the crack again, breathes. The heat is intense. He wipes the Perspiration from his face. Finally he opens the buttons of his shirt, pulls down his trousers and turns over on his back. He lies still and quiet for a few moments, then an expression of great fear comes into his face. He calls out!

ZOLL

Steiner -- ! Steiner -- Kruger -- !

Schnurrbart! I'm in here -- !

There isn't a sound, and Zoll's fear grows.

ZOLL

(yelling)

Steiner -- do you hear me! Let me

out! Schnurrbart -- it's Zoll, I'm

in here -- !

His shouting has become frantic. He pounds on the door.

He crooks his body and beats his heels against the bottom

of the wardrobe. He digs his hands into the crack of the

door and pulls until his fingers are bleeding. At last,

he lies still, punting for air. Then, his expression

freezes. There is the SOUND of softly advancing FOOTSTEPS.

The wardrobe begins to move. Twice, Zoll is jolted against

the wood -- and suddenly there is DAYLIGHT.

182. EXT. WARDROBE - THE CROWD OF WOMEN

are grouped around the wardrobe, the door of which has

been smashed open.

183. MED. SHOT - ZOLL - ON FLOOR OF WARDROBE

Stunned, he pulls himself up to a half-sitting position

and blinks in speechless terror at the crowd of mocking

faces that are bending over him, at rows of breasts

bulging out of dirty underwear. Suddenly, dozens of

hands reach into the wardrobe, grip his hair, his clothes, his limbs, pull him up and hurl him to the floor of the room. As he starts to defend himself, his arms and legs are pinioned, his clothes torn off, and a rain of merciless blows beat down upon him. Russian CURSES fill the air.

184. CLOSE SHOT - ZOLL'S FACE

as the blows rain on him. Just above him is the face of the young Russian girl he has raped. Her hair hangs in tangled strands over her forehead, her eyes gleam like green glass lighted from within. She does not strike him or curse him as the others are doing. She only stands stooped above him, staring at him in silence. And as Zoll looks into her face, the blood runs down his forehead, bubbles out of his nose and mouth. He jerks and writhes under the kicks and punches.

185. FULL SHOT - WOMEN

as they beat Zoll, who is hidden from the CAMERA.

Suddenly, there breaks from him a SCREAM that no longer resembles anything human. The scream paralyzes the women.

For a moment, they stop the beating. Several hold their hands to their ears. Then, one woman shakes off the paralysis. with both feet at once, she jumps on the bellowing, twitching, bleeding body. The others spring on him, too, stamping, screaming and kicking.

186. CLOSE SHOT - DOZENS OF BOOTS

as they jump up and down mercilessly on Zoll's body.

187. LONG SHOT - FROM HALL - THROUGH OPEN DOOR

at the spectacle. Gradually, the kicking and jumping stop. The women turn, file slowly OUT of the room. Two of them have their arms around the softly weeping young girl. When the last have walked PAST the CAMERA, it STARTS to MOVE SLOWLY TOWARD the battered body in the

center of the room.

188. CLOSE SHOT- ZOLL'S FEET

lying quietly on the floor. A ray of SUNLIGHT is coming through the window -- and we see the feet lying in a pool of flickering LIGHT.

189. INT. DARK ROOM

dimly LIT by one candle. At the window, his back to CAMERA stands a half-dressed man. Evidently, he has been roused from bed. O.S. we HEAR another man's VOICE.

MAN'S VOICE

--They'll be coming through at Hill 124 at 0400. Sergeant Steiner and what's left of his platoon. Their signal will be two flares in quick succession.

then a count of four and a third

flare. We are to hold our fire.

The man at the window turns and we SEE that it is Captain

Stransky. His lips are set tight. The CAMERA PULLS BACK

to reveal the scene as Stransky's bedroom. The man who

has been speaking is Lieutenant Triebig.

STRANSKY

(after a moment)

I see. Who received this message?

TRIEBIG

Corporal Stemple.

STRANSKY

was there anybody with Stemple?

TRIEBIG

No, sir.

Pause.

STRANSKY

How well do you know Stemple?

TRIEBIG

(a split second's

hesitation)

Very well, sir.

STRANSKY

He's a very good -- ah -- "friend"

of yours?

TRIEBIG

(not looking at

him)

Yes, sir.

Stransky looks at him closely.

TRIEBIG

He knows how I feel about Sergeant

Steiner.

A look passes between the two men.

STRANSKY

Then I take it that only you, I
and this Stemple know about this
message.

TRIEBIG

That's right, sir.

Pause. Stransky indicates two packed bags on the floor.

STRANSKY

You know, of course, that I'm
leaving for Paris?

TRIEBIG

Of course, sir.

STRANSKY

(evenly)

I could arrange to have you sent
for. Or would you have some
objection to continuing on as my
adjutant in Paris?

For a moment, Triebig merely gasps.

TRIEBIG

(stammering)

You don't know how grateful I
would be to you for that.

STRANSKY

(after a moment)

If I sent you out on a patrol --
just four men -- two machine-gunners --
If, in the dark, you saw half a
dozen men in Russian uniforms
advancing on you, could anyone

blame you if you opened fire?

Triebig blinks. Stransky's voice changes. It rings like steel.

STRANSKY

Get that creature Steiner off my neck and I guarantee that you will survive this war. He must not come back even if you have to kill him with your bare hands.

Triebig stands stunned, incapable of speech.

STRANSKY

I know from reliable sources that the men in this bridgehead have been written off. Everyone south of Perekop will suffer the same fate as the sixth Army at Stalingrad.

Do you want to be here then?

TRIEBIG

(a hoarse whisper)

No.

STRANSKY

within five days after I reach Paris,

you'll have your orders to join me.

You know my connections. What do

you say, Triebig?

TRIEBIG

(stares up at Stransky's

flushed face, swallows

hard)

I -- don't know.

STRANSKY

You have the choice. You can rot

here in a grave, or guzzle champagne

in France. Which do you prefer?

Pause.

TRIEBIG

May I know one thing?

STRANSKY

What is that?

Their eyes lock.

TRIEBIG

Why is it so important to you?

If you are leaving here in a few

hours, it shouldn't matter to you

what happens to Steiner.

Stransky steps over to the window to stare out into the

darkness. Finally:

STRANSKY

(in measured tones)

What happens to Steiner is more
important to me than whether we
win or lose the war.

(turns)

But you will not understand that.
It's my personal affair, Triebig.

(pause)

Are you going through with it or
not?

The CAMERA MOVES UP to a CLOSE SHOT of Triebig's face as
he stands, indecisive.

190. CLOSE SHOT-KRUGER'S FACE

The CAMERA PULLS BACK to SHOW that he is looking at the
outstretched figure of Kern who is covered by a blanket
up to his chin. The SCENE is an open field. It is quite

dark. Schnurrbart comes RUNNING IN.

KRUGER

Do you honestly think we can slip
through?

SCHNURRBART

Well, we'd have a better chance
if we didn't have to --

(MORE)

(looks at the sleep-
ing figure of Kern,
lowers his voice)
-- lug him along.

KRUGER

What else can we do?

(pause)

Too bad about Kern. That's all

we needed.

Suddenly the SCENE DARKENS. The men look up.

191. MOON - THEIR POV

It is covered by thick clouds.

192. MED. SHOT - SCHNURRBART AND KRUGER

SCHNURRBART

That's the end of the moon for

tonight. That's lucky anyhow.

Suddenly Kern turns on his side and lets out a terrible cry.

Kruger and Schnurrbart start. The scream continues to

issue out of Kern like an endless coil of sound unwinding

and unwinding from his throat.

SCHNURRBART

Kern! -- Kern! -- for God's sake -- !

But the screaming continues.

193. FULL SHOT

Steiner, Anselm come RUNNING IN. Steiner kneels at Kern's side.

SCHNURRBART

(anxiously)

He'll have the Russians on our necks --

The screaming continues.

ANSELM

(hysterically)

Shoot him! Shoot him! Or it's the end of us!

Steiner turns such a look of scorn upon Anselm that he subsides immediately, shame-faced.

STEINER

(holding flashlight

close to Kern's

face)

Be quiet now -- You don't have to be

afraid -- we're all with You.

The screaming, which has been dwindling, stops. Steiner

bends to listen to his heart.

KRUGER

If we only had a medic with us.

He ought to have a shot or morphine.

STEINER

(dully)

He's dead.

silence a moment.

ANSELM

Why be hypocrites about it? It's

better for Kern and it's better

for us. We couldn't get through

the lines carrying him.

STEINER

(enigmatically)

Yes, he was good enough to die in

time.

ANSELM

What do we do now, bury him?

STEINER

We haven't got the time. Let the

Russians do it.

SCHNURRBART

At least we're going to have some

sort of service, aren't we?

STEINER

I see. You believe in God?

SCHNURRBART

At any rate, I believe we are
dependent on Someone who decides
our fate.

STEINER

I believe in God, too, but I think
He's a sadist.

Pause. The men are silent.

STEINER

All right. For the sake of
Schnurrbart who believes in God,
and so that it shouldn't be brought
up against us at the Peace Table,
we'll have a service.

(grimly)

Gather around.

They do. Steiner looks down at Kern.

STEINER

If Kern had died at home, a few
dozen, maybe even a hundred people
would be standing around his grave
in their best dark clothes. And
they would say, "So young, it is
always the best who go first" --
A few weeks later they would have
forgotten him. Let us not forget
him. And let's not feel too sorry
for him. At least now, he's rid
of his guilt.

(pause)

Cover him up -- and let's go.

Steiner STRIDES OFF. The men stand a moment, then follow
him OFF.

DISSOLVE TO:

194. EXT. SLOPING FIELD - NIGHT - FULL SHOT

AS SEEN FROM a trench. The CAMERA MOVES UP to a MED. SHOT of Triebig and four MEN in the trench.

Two machine guns have been set up. We SEE Triebig stealing a furtive look at his watch. Then he looks out over the field, his eyes trying to pierce the darkness. The CAMERA FOLLOWS his gaze, MOVES SLOWLY DOWN the field. In the b.g. we begin to perceive a huddled mass. The CAMERA MOVES CLOSER and we SEE Steiner and his men, lying flat on the ground. Steiner is looking at his watch. Then he looks toward Schnurrbart who raises a flare gun, FIRES TWO quick FLARES.

195. MED. SHOT - TRIEBIG AND THE FOUR MEN

their FACES VISIBLE in the LIGHT of the FLARES. Triebig's expression is tense. He turns to the men who are manning

the machine guns.

TRIEBIG

Look sharp -- we may be getting

visitors.

The LIGHT from the FLARES dies away. A brief interval

and the THIRD FLARE goes up. In its light, we SEE

Steiner and his men running for the trench.

TRIEBIG

Russians! Fire!

The two MACHINE GUNS OPEN FIRE. The SCREAMS of men mix

with the RATTLE of guns. We SEE three men drop. Then

the LIGHT is gone. All is darkness again.

TRIEBIG

(peering into the

darkness)

Steady now -- they may be coming

on again.

A moment's silence, then:

STEINER'S VOICE

(shouting)

Sergeant Steiner here, don't shoot!

Triebig's face goes white. Now, figures are SEEN running again, for the trench out of the darkness, their arms upraised.

STEINER

It's US -- Sergeant Steiner! Don't shoot!

For a moment Triebig stands paralyzed, his face contorted.

Then, when Steiner is almost upon him, Triebig raises his tommy gun, points it at Steiner's chest.

ONE OF TRIEBIG'S MEN

(frantically)

Don't Lieutenant -- it's one of our

men!

Triebig, unheeding, is about to press the trigger when the man hits his arm. Triebig's GUN FIRES harmlessly into the sky. Steiner and another figure jump into the trench.

196. MED. SHOT - TRIEBIG

slumped against the rear wall of the trench. He is staring wildly at Steiner who is bent over double, trying to catch his breath. His companion is also breathing heavily. We SEE it is Kruger. The man who had deflected Triebig's aim addresses him.

MAN

You see, Lieutenant, I was right.

It's our men.

Triebig, still staring at Steiner, can't answer. Now

Steiner is standing erect. He fixes a steely glance on
Triebig.

STEINER

Why did you fire?

(savagely)

You got our message!

Triebig finally finds his voice.

TRIEBIG

Uh--uh--what message?

KRUGER

(with nervous anger)

We said we were coming through
in Russian uniforms -- and where
and when --

TRIEBIG

(not looking at

anyone)

I don't know anything about any --

(his voice trails

off)

KRUGER

Schnurrbart sent it. He --

(looks around)

Where's Schnurrbart?

A silence falls as the men turn to look through the darkness

at the field. Finally --

STEINER

(voice low but

tight)

Is Anselm there too?

KRUGER

(barely audible)

He must be.

(pause, puzzled)

I don't get it. How could they

help seeing it was us?

Steiner turns to look at Triebig. Then he turns back to

his men.

STEINER

(voice still low)

Bring them in.

KRUGER

(stupidly)

Who?

STEINER

Who do you think? Schnurrbart

and Anselm.

KRUGER

But they must be dead.

STEINER

I know they're dead. Bring them

in.

(to Triebig's

men)

Give them a hand.

Triebig's men look to him for approval. Triebig barely nods his head, so they scramble up the trench with Kruger and DISAPPEAR INTO the darkness.

197. MED. SHOT - TRIEBIG AND STEINER

as Steiner turns to face the terrified Lieutenant. Triebig waits for Steiner to speak but the Sergeant doesn't say a word. He just looks at Triebig's ashen face. For a few brief moments, Triebig tries to stand up under Steiner's unrelenting stare but he cannot -- and breaks.

TRIEBIG

(hysterically)

It wasn't me -- I begged him -- !

But he insisted --

Steiner's face shows no surprise.

TRIEBIG

He could have me shot, Captain

Stransky!

(his hysteria grows)

I said to him -- what does it matter

to you what happens to Steiner --

I begged him -- I --

He is practically shouting now. The men can be HEARD

RUNNING back from the field. Steiner s laps Triebig hard,

across the cheek, silencing him. His head is down as the

men APPEAR carrying two bodies. with the help of the

other men they lower the bodies into the trench. Not a word is said. Finally the silence is broken by Kruger.

KRUGER

They're finished ail right, both
of them.

STEINER

(after a moment)

Take them back to Battalion. The
least we can do is bury them
decently.

(as the men are

slow to comply)

Hurry up, it'll be light soon.

198. CLOSE SHOT - TRIEBIG

as the men set about picking up the bodies, he looks
anxiously at Steiner.

199. CLOSE SHOT - STEINER

His eyes are fastened upon the two bodies. He doesn't
look at Triebig.

200. FULL SHOT - THE GROUP

as they start down the trench with the two bodies. Triebig
and Steiner are in the rear. As Triebig starts to follow,
Steiner steps quickly to his side.

201. CLOSE SHOT-STEINER AND TRIEBIG

STEINER

(a fierce whisper)

Stay here!

TRIEBIG

But --

STEINER

(his gun in Triebig's
ribs)

Stay here!

Triebig freezes.

202. LONG SHOT - THE GROUP

From Steiner's and Triebig's ANGLE, the group DISAPPEARS
into the darkness.

203. MED. SHOT - STEINER AND TRIEBIG

Triebig turns terrified eyes on Steiner who is looking in
the direction of the departing men. Then he turns to
Triebig.

STEINER

(pointing to
top trench)

Climb up.

TRIEBIG

Why?

STEINER

Climb up!

TRIEBIG

(quavering)

You're not going to shoot me--?

STEINER

(grimly)

I promise you I am not going to

shoot you. Unless, of course,

you don't get up there at once.

Triebig casts an anxious, appealing look at Steiner who

waves to the top of the trench with his gun. Triebig

raises himself to the top, sits on the edge.

STEINER

Stand up!

Triebig stands up slowly, then turns around.

TRIEBIG

Steiner, I --

STEINER

Turn around!

(as Triebig

hesitates)

Turn around, or I shoot!

Triebig turns. He is now a figure in the darkness. Steiner reaches into his belt, takes something out -- SHOTS OFF a FLARE. The figure of Triebig is BRIGHTLY ILLUMINATED.

TRIEBIG

(screaming)

Steiner -- !

But his scream is lost in the RAT - TAT - TAT of bullets from the Russian side. Triebig's both hands reach into the air. He reels, falls heavily back into the trench. For a moment, Steiner looks down at the dark shape, the LIGHT

of the FLARE gone. Then he turns, walks quickly in the direction the men have taken.

DISSOLVE TO :

204. EXT. KRIMSKAYA STREET HOUSE - DAY - LONG SHOT

A SENTRY stands guard outside. Steiner, dressed now in a rather makeshift German uniform, walks INTO the SCENE, exchanges a few words with the Sentry, ENTERS the house.

205. INT. ROOM OF HOUSE - BRANDT AND KIESEL

are facing the door expectantly. It opens and Steiner COMES IN. Brandt greets him with an outstretched arm.

BRANDT

Well, well, Steiner--you're a wonder!

(pumps his hand

vigorously)

How you ever got through with your
platoon--!

STEINER

(Wryly)

Another man and me, Colonel.

That's my platoon.

KIESEL

I imagine you have a long report
to make, Sergeant. You'd better
have a cigarette first.

He reaches for his cigarette case.

BRANDT

I don't have to hear the report
to know there's an Iron Cross in
it for you, Steiner.

(quickly)

Now, don't tell me what I can

do with it.

The PHONE RINGS. Brandt picks up the receiver as Kiesel

lights Steiner's cigarette.

206. MED. SHOT - KIESEL AND STEINER

BRANDT'S VOICE

Yes, yes, Captain Stransky.

Steiner stiffens. This is not lost on Kiesel, who snaps

his lighter shut.

207. MED. SHOT - BRANDT ON PHONE

Steiner and Kiesel in b.g.

BRANDT

(coldly)

I'm sorry, Captain Kiesel and I

will be needing my staff car almost

immediately. It's only a mile and

a half to the air strip. You can
walk it in twenty minutes -- Good-
bye, Captain.

(dryly)

I hope things aren't too rough in
Paris.

(hangs up)

I could let the bastard have the
car, but to hell with him. Let
him walk.

(to Steiner)

Well, I'm anxious to hear your
story. It must be astounding.

STEINER

May I make a request, Colonel?

BRANDT

Of course.

STEINER

Could I have a few hours sleep

before I make the report?

BRANDT

Why certainly -- even though I'm

consumed with curiosity.

KIESEL

There's an empty room in the next

house. Why don't you nap there --

and report when you're rested.

STEINER

Thank you very much. I'll

do that.

He GOES. The two officers are silent for a moment.

BRANDT

Stransky in Paris...! What

I cannot understand is why this

creature is the one to escape.

Stransky of all people.

(walks to window

and looks out)

Do you know what I'm looking at?

Steiner running down the road

like a madman.

KIESEL

Which road?

BRANDT

The road to the air strip.

Kiesel runs toward the door.

BRANDT

(sharply)

Where are you going?

KIESEL

I've got to stop Steiner... he'll
kill Stransky.

BRANDT

You will stay here.

Kiesel continues to stand, indecisive, at the door.

Brandt's tone becomes harder.

BRANDT

I have given you an order.

KIESEL

Colonel -- you are making me guilty
as an accomplice.

BRANDT

(straightening up)

I am on the point of leading my

regiment into a cul-de-sac from
which it has not the slightest
chance of escaping.

(ironically)

If the whole fuhrer business
were to start tomorrow, what
would I most likely do? I'd
close my eyes again - I'd click
my heels, I'd' march, I'd heel!
Germany will lose this war but
Germany will survive.

(puts bottle on

the table)

-- My last bottle of wine. Captain,
will you join me in drinking to the
success of Steiner's mission --

whatever it is?

He starts to pour.

208. EXT. AIR STRIP - LONG SHOT

There are several small planes on the field. Several MEN are lounging about. One small plane stands on the edge of a runway. Its MOTORS are WARMING UP. The CAMERA SWINGS AWAY from the strip towards the road leading to the air strip. A tiny FIGURE is DISCERNIBLE in the distance.

209. MED. SHOT - STRANSKY

A bag in each hand, is walking toward the strip. The SOUND OF RUNNING FOOTSTEPS behind him causes him to turn. A figure is running towards him. His jaw drops as he sees it is Steiner. Steiner is now close to him. We has a Luger in his hand. The bags fall from Stransky's hands as he sees the Luger.

STRANSKY

Steiner--!

STEINER

Clasp your hands behind the back

of your head.

As Stransky hesitates, Steiner makes a menacing move with

the Luger. Stransky puts his hands behind his head.

STRANSKY

Are you aware of what you are

doing? You're dealing with an

officer --

STEINER

I think that for the time being,

we can forget about the differences

in our rank -- and class.

STRANSKY

Steiner -- you'll hang for this --

STEINER

I doubt it.

STRANSKY

I don't know what you're planning,

but you'll never get away with it.

This is a heavily traveled road.

STEINER

In that case, I'll be quick. For

a long time, Captain Stransky, I

haven't had anything to live for --

for a long time -- but

the Russians couldn't do it,

disease couldn't kill me? poor

Lieutenant Triebig couldn't do

it. Not even you could manage

it

(moves closer to

Stransky)

And not wanting to live, yet not

willing to die, do you know what

that kind of a conflict does to

a man?

(laughs in

Stransky's face)

Now, in a crazy sort of way I am

grateful to you, Captain Stransky.

Thanks to you, I am willing to die.

I could shoot you and then the Army

would hang me. But, no, that isn't

good enough.

STRANSKY

(his dignity going,

his voice rising)

Are you out of your mind? Steiner,

if you'll just think for a moment --

STEINER

I did think, Captain Stransky.

I thought and thought -- and did

nothing!

STRANSKY

(whimpering now)

Steiner -- Steiner -- you're mad --

you're absolutely mad!

Steiner steps close to Stransky. With his free hand, he

pulls a grenade from his belt.

STEINER

Stand close to me, Captain.

STRANSKY

(backing away)

No -- No -- You can't --

STEINER

(pulls Stransky

to him)

This will do for the both of us

-- the final fraternization --

STRANSKY

(a whimper so low

it can scarcely

be heard)

Steiner -- please -- Steiner --

Steiner pulls the pin from the grenade, holds it between

himself and Stransky.

STEINER

What's the count before it goes

off?

STRANSKY

(his lips move, but

no sound comes out)

-- Steiner --

STEINER

Count with me, Captain -- One --

Two --

The CAMERA STARTS to MOVE UP and AWAY from Steiner and

Stransky.

STEINER'S VOICE

-- Three -- Four -- Five -- Six --

The CAMERA is at TREE TOP LEVEL now -- Suddenly there is

a SHATTERING REPORT. The branches of the tree tremble.

The CAMERA STAYS on the tree for a moment. The leaves

stop trembling. There is a vast silence now. The CAMERA

starts to PULL AWAY AGAIN. As it DOES:

FADE OUT:

THE END