

# Story of G. I. Joe

Over the title of the picture come the words of a song:

*"I've gone away for to stay a little while but I'm coming back --  
I'm coming back if it be one-thousand miles."*

[A]

The BIVOUAC in the desert fades in. Dawn is just beginning to break over the distant hills. The chill and half-dark of the night is still on the scene. But now there's a great sense of stir and activity. There is a grinding roar of motors as troop trucks, jeeps and armored cars maneuver about, taking on their loads of men and artillery and uncoiling to form a thin snake of a line that is just beginning to head off across the desert floor to the distant hills to the right. A Sergeant is supervising. Next the view weaving through the movement of the convoy, discloses some of its action: Trucks loaded with men and supplies grind past as they swing into line; a jeep jouncing down the line like a shepherd dog; men on the double-quick run toward trucks that are loading up while still waiting their turn in line. Then we see the TROOP TRUCK as several GI's pile into it and move to the fore. Foremost is Gawky, with a pup still cuddled in his arms. Behind him pile in several other GI's, among them Murphy, Lopez, Mew, Dondaro. As they do so, Lieutenant Walker, a raw-boned, business-like fellow of twenty-six, strides into the scene from the right. Gawky's pup, in its exuberance, lets out a yip. Without breaking his stride Walker scans the truck and heads toward Gawky, the view moving in.

WALKER

(with a sharp, between-the  
-teeth whistle at Gawky)

Hey you--! Hey you! Get that pooch out  
of there. Whataya want to do, get him  
killed?

(Gawky looks up, disturbed;  
he hesitates for a moment.)

Awright! Awright! Quit stalling!

He goes on, not waiting to see whether his order will be carried out; he knows it will.

WARNICKI

All right, all right, you heard the  
lieutenant.

We get a close moving view of the GI's and the PUP. Reluctantly, hungrily, Gawky passes the pup on to the next man, who now silently passes it on to Murphy, who hands it on to another GI, who then nudges Mew, whose back is turned. Mew, having missed Walker's order, delightedly receives the

dog and starts to pet it. The man beside him nudges him and gestures "out." Mew's face falls; he pulls the pup apart from a button the mutt's playfully begun to chew and reluctantly hands him on to the next man, who silently passes him down the line. As the hands of each man leave the dog, there's a lingering reluctance in their gesture, as if the very warmth and furry softness of the little animal body gave them a sense of something they knew they'd never find again in this arid desert -- something they'd want to cling to.

WARNICKI

Ah, you poor little fella, you're going to freeze out there.

Dondaro, receiving the pup at the end of the truck, hasn't got the heart to toss it away. For a moment he doesn't know what to do. Suddenly he drops it to someone off the truck. The view moving and stopping on Ernie, who had approached the truck a moment before, we see him lugging his bedroll and duffle bag. Somewhat startled, Ernie holds the pup and looks up just as the view widens to include Walker coming into the scene.

ERNIE

What do you want me to do with it?

We then see the BACK of the TRUCK, the view featuring WALKER and ERNIE -- with the GI's in the background. Walker is about to order Ernie to get rid of the mutt, but at the same instant he catches a glimpse of the GI's, their eyes all hungrily directed at the pup in Ernie's arms. His eyes shift away. A little smile plays about his lips. He seizes on Ernie's armband as an excuse to countermand his order without seeming to do so.

WALKER

(briskly)

Correspondent, huh? Well, you want to get up to the front, don't you?

(Over his shoulder)

Here, make room for this man.

Remembering Walker's former order, Ernie starts to set the pup down, but Walker intercepts him.

WALKER

Well, get in, get in! Make it snappy!

For an instant the two men's eyes meet. A flash of understanding passes between them. Walker briskly turns and walks away -- "the cop who wasn't there."

WALKER

(going off toward his seat in front)

All right, let's get moving.

Ernie quickly starts to scramble up the truck, pup in one arm, bedroll and duffle-bag dragged behind him with the other. He hands the pup on to Dondaro, who quickly passes it on and cheerfully gives Ernie a lift.

... [text missing]

For a brief instant Ernie looks resentfully at Dondaro. This is the second time this guy's called him "Pop." But he grins as he sees, in a close, moving view the pup being passed back from hand to hand on its way to Gawky. The rhythm of the camera movement has a quicker, more joyous tempo this time. The view stops on Gawky as he finally gets the pup. Gawky, in his delight, quickly reaches in his pocket for a can of C rations, and he holds it out to the pup. The pup sniffs it and growls at it. -- The boys' laughter is free, easy, exuberant now. The tension is broken. All's well with the world. They and Gawky have their pup back.

We get a close view of the TRUCK WHEEL. It spins in the sand as the motor is heard starting. Perhaps that yelp of delight that comes over the scene is from the pup -- or perhaps it's just the truck wheel biting into the sand and starting forward. Next, the view moves up slightly as the truck spins around, bringing the rear of the truck into focus and we see Ernie, still being hauled onto the truck by the seat of his pants. Then as the truck moves on and off into the desert the scene dissolves to a long moving view of the convoy rolling along a desert road. It's mid-day and the sun beats down on the GI's.

Inside the TROOP TRUCK: Ernie is seated next to Dondaro. Opposite and alongside are the rest of the gang. Although his presence is accepted he's still outside their tight little clique. He listens with amused interest to their jabber. The boys are keyed up, not tense -- but full of the fizz and vinegar of young healthy animals confined in a small space on their way to "the big game."

DONDARO

Got a cigarette?

Ernie reaches into his pocket and hands Dondaro a pack. Dondaro takes one and without thinking twice, passes the pack along to the rest of the boys. Ernie watches the progress of the pack around the truck.

MEW

Hey, Gawky, what're you going to call that purp? Betty Gordon?

Gawky grins as everyone laughs. Their spirits have risen again.

DONDARO

(calling down the line)

Lay off the Gawk. He's my territory.

ERNIE and DONDARO are seen closely.

ERNIE

Who's Betty Gordon?

DONDARO

(shaking his head;  
laughing amiably)

Ah, the kid's been waiting for a  
letter from her ever since we left  
the States.

Warnicki leans over and returns Ernie's pack. It's empty.  
He looks at it wryly. Dondaro notices it.

DONDARO

(with a nod toward  
the boys)

Chain smokers.

(Then)

Guess you're getting off at the first  
airbase, ain't you, Pop?

ERNIE

Why?

DONDARO

(ironically; with a  
touch of bitterness)

Correspondent, ain't you? The fliers  
are the guys you guys always write  
about. The Hollywood heroes. We're  
just the mugs along for the ride,  
that's all. Just for the ride.

(He looks across.)

Ask Wingless. He'll tell you.

The view widens to include the others.

MURPH

Yeah? Just one plane and you're all  
dead ducks. Just one plane and  
z-z-z-ang!

Almost simultaneously with his voice, a sharp screech of  
brakes is heard. The boys lurch forward. Several  
automatically look up as if expecting a plane.

WALKER

All right, men. This is a break --  
unload.

And we see the rear of the truck as the boys, Ernie among  
them, scramble off the truck. Walker comes toward Ernie.

WALKER

How far up you going, Mr. -- Mr. ...

ERNIE

Pyle. End of the line. If it's okay with you.

WALKER

(starting on)

Sure.

(Then, suddenly turning)

Pyle? You say Pyle?

(Ernie nods.)

Say, aren't you the guy that runs that column about week-end trips or somethin'?

ERNIE

(grinning)

Mostly -- or something --

(Nodding toward the boys)

Pretty good-looking outfit you got.

WALKER

We're not an outfit yet!

(Glancing at his watch)

Maybe by this time tomorrow we will be. Say, come to think of it, my old man reads your column. He thinks it's great.

Ernie looks up quickly at him. The sharp piping of whistles are heard all down the road.

ERNIE

Well, I'll be darned!

WALKER

All right, men -- let's get going--

The DESERT dissolves in at night: First we get a close view of the RADIOMAN on the JEEP. He is sitting hunched up, blanket around his shoulders, phones pressed to his ears, listening to the radio. A smile comes to his face as if he were hearing something delightful. Grinning, he removes the earphones, snaps on the loudspeaker so that the soft, rhythmic strains of a popular band orchestra can be heard.

RADIOMAN

Hey, fellas, get a load of this --  
Artie Shaw --

The view moves to the right, disclosing in a medium long shot a convoy bivouacked for the night. Scores of pup tents, interspersed with trucks, jeeps, armored cars, are spread irregularly across the bright moonlit desert. In the distance only mountains and sky are visible.

As the music softly floats across the night, the view moves in closer, weaving past tents, revealing the various activities of the men preparatory to "blanket drill." Many have their heads sticking out of the tents. Others are reclining in various stages of relaxation.

The camera comes to a halt on a pair of enormous feet, sticking out of a tent flap. Their owner evidently is too big for the normal sized tent. The view moves along the wall of the tent to the front flap, which is open. The GI's head extends beyond that too. He keeps staring at the star-studded sky.

AD LIBS

Out of this world. Solid Jack--

Looking into the tent we see Murphy in the foreground. Within, a thin, medium-sized youngster, his bunk mate, is huddling with the cold, for the tent flap is open. This is Charley Mew, an Ohio farm boy, a child of neglect, naive and wondering.

MEW

(not really complaining)

Gee whiz, Murph -- I wish you weren't so long -- it's sort of cold out here in the open.

MURPHY

(without turning)

I'll cut my legs off.

MEW

(almost apologetically)

No, geez, you don't need to do that ...

(Then; something  
on his mind)

I hear we're getting into the real business tomorrow.

MURPHY

Well, so far as I'm concerned, they can deal me out.

MEW

(concerned)

The infantry ain't so worse--

MURPHY

(cutting in; tersely)

Look, this is a modern war, ain't it? I'm a modern guy -- the modern age is up in the air. That's where I belong. Not down here.

MEW

They only washed you out because  
you're too big. It ain't your fault.

MURPHY

I'll cut my legs off.

MEW

Me, me, me.

Inside another TENT: In the tent are Lopez and Sgt. Warnicki. Lopez is obviously of Mexican extraction; Warnicki, a muscular ex-coal miner. He is stolidly polishing his tommy-gun. The music comes over.

LOPEZ

What do you think I ought to bring  
Maria and the little fellow when I  
go back?

Warnicki looks up abruptly from his gun polishing.

WARNICKI

When you go home!  
(Grimly, he sets about  
polishing his gun again.)  
If, and when, you mean.

The gun catches a glint of the moonlight; Lopez catches a glint of his meaning and nods solemnly.

From another angle, the view favoring GAWKY. We see the mutt licking Gawky's face. He grins down at it.

DONDARO

If you had to sneak something out of  
that village, why'n't you bring  
something in skirts--

Gawky is about to speak, but Dondaro shushes him as a long silvery trumpet note arrows softly into the night sky.

DONDARO

Sh--! Listen--don't interrupt the  
music--  
(In ecstasy)  
Murder-- !

The announcer's voice is now heard coming over the radio jeep. It is a husky, feminine, seductive voice. The radioman listens delightedly.

VOICE

This is Berlin playing the jive  
music of Artie Shaw--

RADIOMAN

That's our Sally--

VOICE

Nothing sweeter 'n hotter in the world, is there ... Remind you of Rosalind, Sylvia, Phyllis, Nancy, Mary, Ellen, Daisy .... yes, you bet it does ... summer nights ... the juke-box down the road ... cokes, double malts ... a girl's soft laughter in the moonlight.... Tomorrow, you boys of the 18th Infantry will meet our armies for the first time ... the armies that have beaten the world -- the French, the British, the Russians -- What chance do you stand--

SOLDIER

(reacting to her  
propaganda)

Sez you -- Bring 'em on --

The view moves past the faces of the soldiers as they listen.

VOICE

Why not be sensible -- be sensible and surrender!

SOLDIER

(ad lib)

Oh, yeah!

VOICE

Be my guests in Germany. Dance with our lovely girls -- They know how to entertain nice young men like you.

SOLDIER

(calling out)

Save one for me, sister, I'll be right there.

MEW

What a voice -- what a bedroom -- what a --

He clucks.

VOICE

I will now sing Germany's latest hit, with lyrics written especially for my nice handsome American friends.

(Now heard singing.)

Light for me a cigarette  
In that small café where we met.  
Let me feel your finger tips,

Linda, Linda, on my lips.  
Where two lovers used to be  
Are these echoes waiting for me,  
And do you still wait for me too,  
As Linda, my love, I wait for you.

The view focusses on DONDARO and others in scattered tents.

DONDARO

There's a piece of furniture I'd  
like to push around.

SERGEANT'S VOICE

(rasping)

Turn that radio off.

The radio is instantly clicked off. In the ensuing silence some of the GI's quickly pull back into their tents. And we see the group fairly closely, the view favoring Lopez as he picks up his guitar.

LOPEZ

(as he strums)

It was Nazi music. Now it's mine --  
our first German prisoner.

We get a long view of the mountains, sky and desert. And over it comes Lopez soft strumming of "Lili Marlene" as if the melody haunted the scene. The view moves slowly away from the landscape to the bivouac, passing a lone sentry pacing up and down, then resting for a moment on Dondaro, his feet out of the tent. He hums as he gazes dreamily at the sky. A little beyond him is Gawky, fast asleep, a smile on his grimy face as the mutt snuggles its muzzle under his chin.

DONDARO

(after humming some more)

Pst -- hey, Pop!

(Ernie turns instinctively,  
though resentfully at this  
designation; but Dondaro  
continues brashly:)

Why wasn't you born a beautiful dame?

(Then, as an afterthought)

Or even an ugly one.

Ernie, half grinning a little uncomfortably, a little nervously, doesn't quite know how to take it.

VOICES

(ad lib)

Hey, why don't you guys pipe down?

DONDARO

Awright! Awright!

(And we see him closely

as he turns over, gazing  
at the sky.)  
Tonight, boys -- tonight, I dream in  
technicolor.

We get a fairly close view of Ernie, still cold and uncomfortable, lying on the ground for the first time as the scene slowly dissolves to a CURVE of ROAD. The convoy of trucks is still moving forward. The vehicles go past the camera at short intervals. The truck carrying Ernie swings into view. Bill Walker and the driver can be seen in the cab. As the van of the truck bounces by, the view moves with it a little way. It is nearing sundown and the boys aren't quite as full of fizz and vinegar as they were at high noon and it's hot.

Inside the TROOP TRUCK: The view favors the Air Guard who is stolidly chewing gum as he keeps his eye on the sky. Warnicki looks up to him.

WARNICKI  
Hey, how much further we got to go?

AIR GUARD  
(stolidly)  
About twenty miles.

The view slowly pulls back to include the others.

LOPEZ  
How far?

AIR GUARD  
Twenty miles. Then you get out and walk another ten -- you know, to get the stiffness out of you.

SPENCER  
(indignantly)  
Where we going? China?

Several sudden dull thud-thuds from the distance interrupt him. They're repeated. Everyone grows still -- look at each other.

SPENCER  
(excitedly)  
Hey -- that's ours -- 105's --

AIR GUARD  
(laconically)  
Theirs -- 88's--

They all grow tense. The artillery fires again. They all look off toward the horizon, following which there is a distant view of the HORIZON; With the darkening hills illumined by flashes of artillery fire. Then we again see

the group, the view favoring the AIR GUARD.

WARNICKI

Thought you said twenty miles--

AIR GUARD

That's what I said -- twenty miles--

Suddenly without warning, he pounds the cab-roof with his rifle butt. There is a shriek of brakes and the men are half-thrown off their feet as the truck stops. Whistles and cries are heard. The men are half petrified.

Inside the CAB: There is a pounding on the roof. Walker has already jumped on the seat and is opening the cab skylight. The driver is hunched over the wheel, face down.

We get a fairly close view of the TRUCK as an explosion shakes it. The men scramble over its sides and we next see the HIGHWAY at a low angle, with the men jumping forward and out of sight, as other, closer explosions shake the earth.

A close view of the TRUCK discloses WALKER firing at the diving but still distant Stuka. He is alone, utterly exposed.

In a series of "flashes" we see the various GI's hitting the dirt: Dondaro and Newman; Warnicki and Spencer; Mew alone; Lopez and Murph; Ernie, near Gawky who is hugging his dog close. We just get a glimpse of Gawky as he picks up the dog and runs for the ditch. There is the splatter of the machine gun and the terrifying whine of the Stuka as it dives closer.

WALKER, seen closely, is firing away at the fast approaching Stuka. As the plane's engine swoops down, reaching its most unbearable pitch, Walker swings around, firing at the plane. His face is gutted, hard, perspiring. The sound of the Stuka recedes.

We see WARNICKI and SPENCER on their knees:

SPENCER

(looking, bewildered,  
up at the sky)

I -- I didn't even see him.

We see DONDARO getting to his feet. Then as he suddenly realizes he's alive, his face lights up with the exhilarated exultance of survival. He laughs a little hysterically and looks around. The view widens as several of the others gather. They look at each other for a moment, unable to speak with joy at having come through their baptism of fire alive.

MURPHY

(excitedly)

Hey -- what'd I tell you guys about  
the Air Corps.

WARNICKI

They stink!

MEW

Look at 'em scram!

DONDARO

The yella bellies!

Dondaro stands there giving the Italian elbow business. They all start toward the truck. Dondaro turns around looking for Gawky. They all look around and in the expressions on their faces we know what they see off scene. There is a moment's still tableau. Lt. Walker comes into the scene with the dog under his arm -- he hands the pooch to Warnicki.

WALKER

Okay, fellas -- in the truck -- in  
the truck.

(As they slowly start  
climbing in -- softly)

The medics will take care of him.

(Harsh again)

Come on, get movin', get movin'.

Ernie comes. He and Walker exchange looks.

WALKER

(quietly)

First dead's always the worst.

ERNIE

(without conviction)

I suppose so.

Walker walks away. Ernie looks after him with a deep understanding. We then see the TRUCK as Ernie climbs into it and it starts off. Ernie takes his place between Mew and Dondaro. The men are saddened, silent, gazing in the direction of Gawky, and we next see GAWKY lying in the distance against the background of a burning truck, and a lone medic making his way toward the figure on the ground. A little gust of wind is blowing sand toward the body.

The scene cuts back to the GROUP on the truck.

MEW

(quietly)

Guess he won't never get that letter  
from that Gordon dame now.

DONDARO

(spitting; harshly)

That makes 'em even. She won't get

no more from him neither.

Silence -- except for the spaced thud of shells in the distance. Ernie looks around at the men, and we see that they are subdued, quiet, tense. The dusk deepens. The burst of shells comes closer, louder. Then we get a close view of ERNIE and DONDARO.

ERNIE

(quietly)

What was Gawky's last name?

DONDARO

(simply)

Henderson.

The scene dissolves to a long view of a DETRUCKING POINT at gray dawn. A steady, bone-chilling rain comes down as the trucks disgorge their men. Jumping off from the rear of one of the trucks into the splashing mud, our boys form up into the lines off scene. Walker is standing by the truck. Continued thud of shells throughout -- much closer now. Shivering, he takes his place in line. He's followed by Mew, then Warnicki and the pup, then Ernie. Ernie looks like a wet cat. As he piles off, Walker turns to him.

WALKER

Well, Mr. Pyle -- this is the end of the line. We're liable to run into a little trouble from here on. We've got a couple of jeeps going back--

ERNIE

(hesitating for a moment,  
fully aware of the others  
waiting for his reply)

Do you mind if I go all the way?

WALKER

(after a brief pause)

Well, it's your funeral--

Ernie falls into line, as we hear shouts of "All right, fall in" and "Is this trip necessary?"

There is a close moving view of the men in files moving up, past the rain drenched trucks, as one soldier declares "Here we're getting amphibious." Dondaro and Warnicki exchange a glance of jocular respect in Ernie's direction. The thunder of the guns momentarily grows louder. The men's glances stray upward. Their expressions turn grim as they look -- toward the HILLS which flare up with a spasm of artillery fire.

This dissolves to a picture of GI BOOTS in the RAIN picking up wads of muck as they slog on through the mud. The view moves up to the bowed heads of Mew and Dondaro. The rain

falls with constant, steady penetration.

DONDARO  
(half-looking about)  
Hey, where's the little guy?

MEW  
Pop?

DONDARO  
What d'ya mean, Pop. Ernie.

MEW  
Ernie's a little way back--

They turn and look over their shoulders, and we next see -- plugging his way up the incline -- a small, drenched figure, falling slowly but steadily behind, despite his effort to keep up. The scene then cuts back to DONDARO and MEW shaking their heads as they plow on.

DONDARO  
He's over thirty-eight. He don't need to be here.

MEW  
Be here! He can even go home!

But there is a wry respect in their tone. The artillery fire comes closer as they slog on, and the scene dissolves to a long view of the TROOPS marching endlessly in the rain. They are more tired and their tempo is slower now. The company commander is seen in the background.

COMPANY COMMANDER  
(yelling)  
Okay, men. Fall out and take a break.

We see DONDARO, MURPHY, MEW and ERNIE slump to the ground exhausted.

This cuts to a close view of a GI's HEAD and SHOULDERS. Forked around his neck is heavy machine-gun tripod. As he staggers to the side of the road it is as if he were undergoing some medieval torture. Sweat pours down his deep-lined, unshaven face as he removes the tripod and wearily sinks in the mud with it.

This cuts to a long view of the BOYS. They are seated and lying in various postures of complete exhaustion. The same company commander rises in the foreground as a runner comes up to him.

COMPANY COMMANDER  
(in a matter-of-fact tone)  
Okay, men, let's get going.

As they all start to rise, JOE, the eternal soldier, meekly takes up the tripod, slings it over his neck, pulls himself up and slogs on.

The scene dissolves to a view of the MARCHING TROOPS: then to ERNIE as he drags himself up to a stone on the side of the road and sits down! He's pooped. Despite the cold rain, he takes his helmet off and wipes the perspiration from his brow. He looks over his shoulder and waves the gang on. The angle widens, keeping ERNIE in the fore. Quite a distance off now, Walker's company is heading up through a defile. A couple of the boys turn and wave back to Ernie before they disappear around a bend.

ERNIE, seen closely, reaches into his pocket for a cigarette. Wet-fingered, he finally gets a cigarette out and then vainly tries to light a match in the rain. After some effort, he gets the precious flame lit and is bringing it up to the bedraggled cigarette when the water pouring down from his helmet drenches everything. He dashes the limp cigarette to the ground. There is the sound of troops moving off. Ernie turns and, in a fairly long view, as seen from his angle we see: coming up the narrow road another line of troops approaching Ernie and going in a direction at right angles to that taken by Walker's company. They too are mud-caked, weary looking, but with a certain cockiness about them. They call out jauntily as they pass Ernie. -- One of the men falls slightly out of line.

GI

How about getting my name in the paper? Harry Fletcher, Ashtabula, Ohio.

ERNIE

(grinning)

Sure. What'll I say?

The angle widens to include the SOLDIER as he moves on.

GI

(yelling back)

... Anything, just so the folks back home see my name in the paper ...

And now another soldier calls out to him.

GI

Hey, Ernie. Tell Cleveland, Joe McCloskey is winning the war -- single-handed.

We get a close view of ERNIE as he watches the soldiers moving on.

ERNIE'S VOICE

Winning the war single-handed -- Joe

McCloskey who mixed sodas in the  
corner drugstore and Harry Fletcher  
who just hung out his law shingle --  
Danny Goodman who checked your oil  
in the summer and studied medicine  
in the fall, and here they are,  
facing a deadly enemy in a strange  
and far away land. This is their  
baptism of fire -- with chaos -- in  
defiance -- Going up the brink of  
death in the night time -- puzzled  
-- afraid -- each boy faced the  
worst moment of his life -- alone  
-- It was a battle without let-up  
-- and it was going against us.

He wipes his face thoughtfully and then gets up to join the  
line as the scene fades out.

[B]

The interior of a FARMHOUSE fades in. It is dusk. The old  
battered farmhouse has been converted into a command post.  
Lieutenant Strobels, his face strained to the point beyond  
exhaustion, is at the phone which has been set up on a box.  
On the wall behind him is a torn field map; Sergeant Fleers  
near it. Several men lie huddled in sleep in the shadows of  
the room. Lt. Wilson sits slumped on a box. Dusk is rapidly  
falling and there is a chill and spiritual darkness about  
the scene which is sensed more in the weariness of the men's  
faces, bodies, and dust and sweat-clotted uniforms, than in  
the failing light. It is that final weariness which men can  
endure while they still move, talk when they have to, or  
even fight again when they must. Continuous sound of gun  
fire is heard throughout.

STROBEL

(half-asleep at the phone)

Two days ago we were doing fine ...  
going to kick the ... 'n' parade  
into ... parade into ....

Dozes off without finishing. Suddenly he jerks awake and  
grabs the phone.

STROBEL

(into the phone;  
automatically)

First Battalion ... First Battalion.

He looks a bit bewildered as he hears no reply -- and hangs up.

STROBEL

(smiling wanly)

Keep hearing it all the time....

(Then)

Try to reach Walker again ... See

how he's ... Strobel to Walker. Over.

A burst of shell fire blots out his words.

From another angle, which includes the DOOR, we see Ernie as he enters, battered and worn. He limps over to Sgt. Fleers, who is marking his map with the aid of a flashlight.

STROBEL

Shut that door!

ERNIE

(wearily)

Sorry. How we doin'?

FLEERS

(after a pause; morosely)

It's not so good.... Got us "zeroed"  
in with artillery on two sides. They  
can fan a fly's tail in mid-flight  
if it's dumb enough to show....

A terrific explosion bursts directly overhead. The two men instinctively dive to the floor. -- We see the two men on the FLOOR as they are about to rise, but before they can do so, a second explosion shakes the house. Fleers looks over at Ernie.

FLEERS

(a little angrily)

You're a correspondent. What in hell  
d'ya want to get up so close for?

Ernie is a little apologetic at his lack of good sense.

ERNIE

You got me!

They start to rise shakily, the angle widening.

FLEERS

(spitting)

If I was out there and I wasn't  
scared -- I'd get scared now ...

Suddenly there's a burst of gun fire, flatter and nearer than the shell fire.

FLEERS

(laconically)

Sending in their heavies.

LT. WILSON

(limping over)

Lousy Krauts. Sneak out, fire a few  
rounds at our lighter stuff and then  
chase back to cover....

Fleers glances at the map, the view moving in.

FLEERS

Only thing between us and them is  
Walker's gang.

STROBEL

Not many men.

FLEERS

(pointing to the  
spot on the road)  
Yeah -- it's a lucky thing them Huns  
don't know it -- yet.

STROBEL

(into the phone)  
First battalion ... Right. ...  
Withdraw Somers position to Hill  
362....

Fleers does so. His new pencil mark makes a definite dent in  
the right flank.

STROBEL

Strobel to Walker. Strobel to Walker.  
Over ... Can't seem to reach Walker ...

The three men exchange silent glances. They turn away. The  
phone rings.

STROBEL

(answering it)  
First Battalion ... D company. Yes,  
sir. ... I see ... No, sir, Colonel  
Hunt hasn't got back yet from his  
reconnaissance ... He ...

COL. HUNT'S VOICE

(cutting in)  
Who is it, Ralph?

The angle widens revealing Colonel Hunt standing in the  
doorway. A PFC closes the door behind him. Hunt's tired  
old-young face, lean as shell splinters, is rowelled with  
exhaustion.

STROBEL

Captain Horton, sir. Reporting four  
of his mortars knocked out. He's  
pretty badly shot up.

All stare at Hunt. After a moment he makes his decision.

HUNT

Tell him to pull back to Hill 148

and dig in.

STROBEL

Right, sir.

(Over the radio)

D Company. Hello. ... D Company.

Hello ...

(His voice frantic)

They don't answer, Colonel ...

COL. HUNT

Keep trying.

STROBEL

Right, sir.

Silence -- the significance of Horton's sudden silence sinks in. Hunt stares singly at the men in the room. They stare back at him through the half-light. When he comes to Ernie, he pauses.

FLEERS

(quietly explaining)

Correspondent ... Hello ...

ERNIE

Hi!

STROBEL

(still trying to  
make contact)

Hello -- hello.

Hunt just looks at Ernie and then goes over to the map, swaying slightly from exhaustion as he goes.

We see the men grouped around the map, the view favoring HUNT. The men have gathered around Hunt. He closes his eyes for a moment and then opens them.

HUNT

Both flanks are gone. Our center's weak. We're just spread too thin ... They threw us in to try to bluff and hold them. The lousy Krauts are beginning to find out ...

The men listen; the shadows in their exhausted faces are deepened by the flashlight held under them.

HUNT

They're pouring more and more strength through the pass. Yeah, and despite all the fairy stories, a good green man can't beat a seasoned, crafty veteran -- especially when the veterans get thrown together.

STROBEL

(quietly)

Benson's through, sir -- they knocked him out when they came through the pass.

HUNT

(his lips pressing together; shrugging)

Well, there it is. All we got in front of us is Robert's and Walker's outfits. A little more than a company. They're not enough to hold the Jerries back.... But if the infantry sticks it out --

(decisively)

-- we will too.

He looks around for any contrary opinions. There are none. The men move silently away. Lang comes in from the next room.

LANG

There's some hot coffee and beans on the fire, sir ...

HUNT

No, thanks.

FLEERS

I could use some.

He looks inquiringly at Hunt. Hunt sinks to a box without replying. There is a shell burst close by. The men hunch within themselves. The building trembles and subsides.

ERNIE

Me, too.

STROBEL

(trying the phone)

D Company -- hello, hello. -- They don't answer, Colonel.

HUNT

Okay.

They follow Lang toward a side doorway, following which we see them flashlight their way down a narrow passageway toward the kitchen. Two more shells burst just overhead. The passageway is too narrow for them to do anything but huddle against the wall until the trembling building subsides.

FLEERS

He's beginning to split the plate.

The view moves with them down a stairway leading to the kitchen on the ground level. Next we see them in the KITCHEN moving across to the stove and being forced to step across a young girl's legs as they go ... Then we see the GIRL from Ernie's angle. Only a slight trembling of her body and a tighter gripping of her chair reveal any reaction. Her eyes still remain fixed into space. There is the sound of the door opening.

The scene cuts back to the main room of the farmhouse, the officers' dugout, where COLONEL HUNT is seated in the foreground. The door opens. Hunt looks up. Walker enters the room and comes toward him. Walker's unshaven face is gaunt with weariness; his uniform gray with caked mud.

HUNT  
(tensely)  
How's it going, Walker?

WALKER  
(his voice deadly tired)  
Oh -- we're holding out okay, sir  
... Our phone went dead ... Captain  
Roberts sent me up to see if there  
was any -- any change in plans -- or  
-- or what ... well, if there was--

Hunt glances over to Strobel, who is listening intently at the phone. Strobel shakes his head.

HUNT  
(to Walker)  
No. No change -- yet -- Better  
stick around for a while.

Walker turns away, the scene moving with him as he goes wearily toward a box. Ernie, preceded by Lang, comes out of the passageway. Ernie and Walker stare at each other for a moment, their eyes expressive of all their thoughts. Behind them, in the shadows, Fleers and Wilson return to the room. Suddenly, as Walker sinks to a box, all sound of gun fire ceases outside.

A deadly and ominous silence falls over the room. The men lift their heads, straining their eyes, their bodies tense. The silence is sharply cut by the jangle of the phone.

VOICE OVER RADIO  
Day to Hunt ... Day to Hunt ...  
Over ...

STROBEL  
(who has lifted  
the phone)  
Hunt to Day. Over.

VOICE OVER RADIO

Withdraw tank positions -- Zebra 87.  
Zebra 87. Over and out.

Hunt's lips tighten. There's a brief pause. Then he speaks:

HUNT  
Fleers -- put all these papers in  
the fireplace. --

FLEERS  
Burn 'em, sir?

A wider angle shows everyone tensely watching Hunt, waiting for his decision. Hunt's face mirrors his brief hope that he can still hold.

HUNT  
Not yet.

Fleers quickly goes about the business of gathering up the company documents lying on boxes near Strobel, taking them to a small fireplace at the right. Suddenly the sound of shell fire starts again in the distance. And as suddenly the door bursts open and a worn and bloody soldier staggers into the room. Several flashlights turn on him as the view swiftly moves in to him. It is Warnicki, bleeding profusely from a cheek wound, his eyes glazed, his tongue thick with shock.

WARNICKI  
(panting; thickly)  
Lieutenant Walker -- Lieutenant  
Walker--

WALKER  
(who is at his side)  
What is it, Sergeant?

In his shocked state Warnicki doesn't recognize him. He starts moving on.

WARNICKI  
Lieutenant Walker ... Got to see  
Lieutenant Walker ...

Walker holds him, turns him around. The others gather around.

WALKER  
Here I am, Warnicki!

WARNICKI  
Never saw anything like it. Never  
saw anything like it in my life.

A faint look of recognition flickers in Warnicki's dazed eyes. He tries to talk, but his tongue is too thick with shock.

WALKER

(soothingly; his voice  
surprisingly soft)

Take it easy. Easy -- boy --  
easy. ....

Someone -- Lang -- comes up with a drink. Warnicki gulps  
it; seems to revive -- recognizes Walker's friendly face for  
the first time. He begins to talk, his lips still  
stammering.

WARNICKI

Th-their heavy t-tanks overran our  
position -- p-point blank! Point  
blank, sir ... had to get out ...  
had to get out. Got some of the men  
behind the hill. Did the best I  
could, sir ... did the best I could.

The men are seen closely, the view favoring HUNT, as he  
watches Warnicki's agonized face and hears his words.

HUNT

(decisively)

Fleers, burn the papers ...

An officer at his side starts to protest.

HUNT

(a little sharply)

This'll be the first time I ever  
ordered any outfit out of anywhere.  
I wonder when we're going to start  
winning this war.

He turns to the others, the angle widening. The flames of  
the company papers cast an eerie dancing light over the  
scene.

HUNT

Strobel, notify the company  
commanders we're pulling out.

(Grimly)

We'll save what we can for another  
day. All right, men, on your feet.

STROBEL

Strobel to Day. ... Come in. Over.

VOICE OVER RADIO

Day to Strobel. Over.

STROBEL

Scram ... Scram. ... Over and out.

Hunt starts toward the door, followed by the various

officers and men, the view moving with them to the door.

FLEERS

(to Ernie, nodding  
toward a "sleeping" man)  
Come on ... he's dead.

The view "holds" on the door, as the men hurry, limping grimly into the night. The dancing flame of the burning papers is reflected on the door as the scene fades out.

[C]

A rocky landscape fades in. There is a long view of the countryside as soldiers are winding over a hill and coming forward. Then we see ERNIE seated at a typewriter in the foreground. As he types, he is seen drinking coffee from a flask and soaking his feet in a helmet filled with water.

ERNIE

(as he types)  
American boys -- beaten -- beaten badly. One of the few times in our history. It was a bitter and humiliating experience, and Joe McCloskey was wondering what the folks back home in Cleveland were thinking of him now; -- As we look back on that first defeat and the bloody victories that followed we realize that only battle experience can make a combat soldier. Killing is a rough business -- men live rough and talk tough. -- Jimmie O'Brien -- 1918 -- State ...

We see a GI standing near Ernie, looking over his shoulder.

JIMMIE

Hi, Ernie, thanks for putting my name in the paper -- I believe I'll get a commission--

ERNIE

Selling what?

JIMMIE

Me and my buddy -- E-l-b-r-i-g-h-t ...

ERNIE

That was cute the way he told the joke.

JIMMIE

Best outfit in the whole army.

ERNIE

(continuing to type)

On a dull day you can always get a fight in the Army by arguing which is the best outfit. In a year I've been to a lot of places and learned to love a lot of men. One special place in my heart was with the boys I'd started with. Everybody else had a company and I felt I had one too -- Company C -- 18th Infantry. And I was wondering about Wingless Murphy, Sergeant Warnicki and Lt. Bill Walker and a funny little mutt named Ayrab.

The scene dissolves, showing the BOOTS OF GIS ON A DUSTY ROAD. The boots, hard and encrusted, look as though they've been slogging over three of the five continents and are well on their way over the next two. Tagging along with them, like a lean, gray-dusted veteran, is Ayrab, the company pup. As the swirls of dust rise, the view moves up and reveals Dondaro and Murphy. They look tough, whiskery, hard-shelled -- and weary as they march on.

MURPH

Hey, Dondaro ... What town do we take today?

DONDARO

San Raviolo.

MURPH

Didn't we take that one yesterday?

DONDARO

Naw, that was San Something Elsio.

They walk on for a few moments.

ERNIE'S VOICE

(coming over the scene)

Hadn't seen 'em in a long time -- now I set out to find 'em. They'd been through a lot by now -- Conquest of Sicily -- murderous landings in Salerno -- hammering down the long hard road to Rome....

We now see a STEEP HILL as our men slog up a few steps, reaching a level spot. Walker climbs into view.

WALKER

All right, men. Fall out. Chow up.

The men flop wearily to the ground.

MURPH

(as he stretches out)  
You know after this war is over I'm  
gonna get me a map and find out  
where I've been.

Mew, nearby, glances off and grins. He nods across the road, whereupon the view moves slightly to include a windmill standing in a field. It bears the manufacturer's sign: "Meline Company, Illinois."

The GI's on the GROUND are startled by a loud, but distant reverberation which shatters the otherwise peaceful scene. Spencer, who has been dozing, wakes up, alarmed. As the boys sink back and relax again, we hear the noise of trucks grinding up the hill, immediately followed by a cry of "Mail Call." Spencer and the others instantly come awake and run off in the direction of the cry, and we next see them gathered around the jeep waiting for their mail. The jeep is one of several other supply trucks that are still coming up and parking. As the lucky ones get their letters, they go off by themselves to read them. -- As the view moves past them it stops at the various boys. One kisses his letter surreptitiously; another frowns; a third, Dondaro, laughs aloud. As he continues to read, the camera moves on past Lopez whose smile-wreathed face nods, "Si, si, si," as he reads, then pauses on Mew who seems puzzled as he turns an official looking paper over.

MEW  
Hey, what's this?

SPENCER  
(looking over)  
Your insurance form. What's the matter with you -- You forgot to put in the beneficiary's name.

MEW  
What's that?

SPENCER  
Anybody whose name you put in there gets the 10,000 semoleos.

MEW  
(a little taken aback)  
Anybody whose name I put there gets ...

SPENCER  
(laconically)  
Yeah. And you'd better put it in before the next shindig, bub, or there won't be no dough. Stick your old lady's name down and you're okay.

MEW

I ain't got no--

SPENCER

(Shortly)

Your old man, then.

(As Mew shakes his head)

Ain't you got no relatives?

Mew grins and again shakes his head.

SPENCER

(a little impatiently)

Well, stick anybody's name down. You don't wanna let all that dough go to waste.

He goes, leaving Mew grinning like a potential millionaire. But suddenly a worried look appears on Mew's face. Whom shall he put down? Here he has all this bounty to dispense but-- Suddenly his face lights up. He starts to put a name down -- then changes his mind. He's in a quandary. He looks around and suddenly spots Warnicki. His face lights up as he hurries over to him.

MEW

(elatedly)

Hey, Sarge -- what do you know! Yesterday I ain't worth a plugged nickel, today I can throw ten thousand bucks away just like that.

But Warnicki has his own little problems. He's holding a large flat cardboard package and he doesn't know what to make of it. He keeps turning it over. Ayrab keeps leaping around him, thinking the package is something for him.

MEW

(suddenly caught by Warnicki's package; inquisitively)

What've you got there? Somethin' to eat?

WARNICKI

I dunno.

MEW

Well, open it. How're you gonna find out unless you open it?

WARNICKI

That's an idea.

His dirty, claw-like hands rip the wrapping off and it's wrapped better than an onion. Warnicki finally reaches the bottom layer, revealing -- a phonograph disc. He quickly reads its label and his grizzled pug's face lights up.

WARNICKI

It's from the old lady! Look what she done. She had the kid's voice put on a record. Junior's voice. He couldn't even say ma-ma when I left.

MEW

(delighted for him)  
Geez. Let's listen to it.

WARNICKI

Who's got a phonograph around here?

MEW

Maybe they got one in the next town.

WARNICKI

Yeah! What are we waiting for! Let's get going!

As he whirls off with no other thought than getting to the next Italian town as quickly as possible, there is a sudden shriek of brakes near him. He almost drops the record. -- A jeep has nearly run Warnicki down. Warnicki turns in sudden murderous anger. His expression has swiftly changed. There's really a killer in his expression.

WARNICKI

(starting toward  
the jeep; humorlessly)  
Why don't you look where you're going you--

We now get a close view of the jeep and its occupants: the driver and Ernie. Ernie looking haggard, worn, combat-strained, starts to smile, but suddenly he becomes anxious as this murderous looking animal in khaki bears down on him.

WARNICKI

(glowering)  
Get outa that jeep'n I'll beat your brains out--  
(Suddenly he stops.)  
Hey, it's Ernie! It's the little guy!

Ernie relaxes. It was a bad moment. But he doesn't have a chance to savor his relief, for others have come crowding up.

DONDARO

It's Pyle.

Ernie beaming, shakes hands on all sides.

GI'S

(ad libbing)

Seen any dames?  
What's been keeping ya?  
Good to see you, Ernie.  
Been saving sugar for you, Ernie.  
At last I met Ernie Pyle, now I can  
write the old man and he can relax.

BENEDICT

Here we go again. Every time you  
show up there's a big battle. That's  
the way it was in Tunisia. You  
better check your dog tags, boys.  
You know something -- my old man  
says I look like you!

ERNIE

Yeah, that's me. I go around  
starting wars. A guy's gotta make a  
living. Gotta have something to  
write about. Good to see you boys  
again.

At this point, Walker appears, bringing the expected news.

WALKER

On your feet men, we're pulling  
out....

ERNIE

(seeing Walker, who  
is a Captain now)  
Hi, Bill.

WALKER

(warmly)  
Hi, Ernie.

The sergeant's voice rings out -- and is echoed down the  
line. The GI's slouch off, obeying the whistle. Ernie gets  
out of the car, and we see him with Walker.

ERNIE

(grinning; with a glance  
at Walker's bars)  
Well, I see you've been going up in  
the world -- congratulations.

WALKER

(glancing at  
his shoulders)  
Oh, these. Thanks.  
(with a grim smile)  
You know that's because I survived  
longer than the other Looey's, I  
guess. Okay, Sergeant. Move 'em out!

Ernie and Walker start moving down the line as the sergeant's

whistle blows again.

ERNIE

How are you, Wingless. How's the Air  
Corps?

MURPHY

'Fraid the Buddy system's got me.

ERNIE

Me too.

(Ernie glances off toward  
the men; grinning, to  
Walker:)

Well, you got an outfit now?

WALKER

(grimly)

You bet your life we're an outfit.

Ernie again looks off toward the men, and we see, from his and Walker's angle, the GI's slogging down the road. There is something about their slouching stride, their cold, intent, impersonal movements, the way they carry their rifles, the slant of their shoulders that characterizes them, sets them apart.

ERNIE

They look tough.

WALKER

They are tough ...

(quietly; grimly)

They're killers.

Something in Walker's tone makes Ernie look up. He looks directly ahead. The reverberation of heavy shelling comes from the not too distant right. Walker looks off, his lips compressed.

WALKER

(grimly)

And they'd better be.

Ernie glances up at Walker. His face too is grave, as the two slog on and disappear. The scene dissolves to a BATTERED SIGNPOST, with GI's marching in the foreground. The Signpost reads:

Roma	188 Km.
Cassino	19 Km.
San Vittorio	3 Km.

We see a long view of SAN VITTORIO under heavy artillery bombardment, then a SAN VITTORIO STREET. Slam-banging furiously through the battle-clouded piazza, an Anti-Tank 37 swings into action against a shell-spitting pillbox

blocking its way. With workmanlike precision the five-man team blasts shell after shell at the pill-box ... in the background a pack of wild dogs run howling through the street ... (Throughout the following sequence of street fighting, there is the continuous rat-tat of machine-gun fire, ping of sniper bullets and the blast and boom of shells.)

BEFORE A THEATER: A Bazooka team dives through enemy fire to the protection of some rubble. They wham away at a shell-torn, sniper-infested theater. As they inch forward the rear man is hit by machine-gun fire. Glancing back only momentarily, the front man carries on alone amid the machine-gun fire from the theater....

A NARROW STREET: A tank plows through a narrow street blasting at the houses on either side. Its sides seem to swell with each shell burst. Half-exposed, the Tank Guide blazes away in a circular fire. Now coming into the clear, guns ablaze, the tank sprints across an avenue, nimbly crunches up the steps of a public building and smashes through its walls -- and continues on ...

A SHELL-TORN STREET: A squad of GI's whirl around the corner in the background only to be pinned down by a rain of machine-gun fire from a rooftop in the foreground. They swiftly dive behind some rubble on the ground. One of the GI's (Murph) in the rear, slinks off to the right.

A CORNER BUILDING: Pressed against the walls, Murph comes around the corner of the building in an almost careless slouch.

We get a close view of MURPH unpinning a grenade. He hurls it with an over-hand motion to the roof-top above him. And waits -- with an almost comically meditative patience. There is a blast above him. Smoke and powder billows out of the smashed window. Murph kicks open the door and peers in. He pops out again, his mud-caked face split in a grin as he holds up three fingers.

We see ERNIE peering out cautiously from behind some rubble in the direction of the street fighting. He's evidently making up his mind to dash across the street. Bullets spatter all about. Suddenly there's a lull -- and he chances it. -- As he darts across, doubled over, several rifle shots ping at him. He reaches a wall, from behind which Walker is covering him, firing with cold precision at the sniper.

We get a close view of ERNIE and WALKER: Ernie is panting and sweating.

ERNIE

When you're in the Infantry --  
there's no way to reach a ripe old  
age.

Several bullets splinter the brick above them. Walker swiftly fires back. The enemy is silenced.

WALKER

(his eyes glinting)  
I'm gonna build me a highway to  
Berlin over them ...

The rattle of machine-gun fire cuts his words. This is immediately followed by a cry of "Medic! Medic!"

From another angle we see Mew and Spencer hiding behind some rubble. With them is a Medic who has just finished bandaging a wounded GI. The cry of "Medic!" comes over. The Medic exchanges a short swift glance with Mew and grimly crawls off in the direction of the cry. Suddenly Spencer raises his rifle upward.

Next we see Dondaro, sweating and breathing hard, breaking into a small cafe where there is a sudden scream. He is about to shoot when he sees a young, disheveled, frightened, but obviously handsome, woman backing away in a corner.

DONDARO

(almost to himself)  
The Promised Land.  
(Grinning softly)  
Hiya, babe--

As he approaches, she backs away slightly. Her look of fright has disappeared; her lips part in a soft, sultry smile. They are both breathing hard, their eyes fastened to each other. The war outside has vanished, has been forgotten completely -- if anything, enhancing and adding excitement to their meeting.

DONDARO

(in Italian, softly)  
My bones told me all the time you  
were waiting right here for me,  
babe--

AMELIA

(her eyes suddenly  
widening with a new  
delight; in Italian)  
You -- Americano--! You speak  
beautiful Italian--!

DONDARO

(as he moves closer  
to her; in Italian)  
Yes, from Brooklyn ... gift to  
Italian womanhood. The liaison  
officer. Your long lost cousin.

AMELIA

(delighted with  
his Italian)  
Bello! Bello! You speak my language!

His hand strays to her hip.

DONDARO  
(half Italian,  
half English)  
Listen, Rainbow, even if I was dumb,  
I'd still speak your language. Si?

Her eyes glance sidelong down at his hand and then back at him.

AMELIA  
(softly)  
Si.

With a throaty little laugh, she slips excitingly away from him to behind the counter. He swiftly follows her. Suddenly they look at each other and words are superfluous. He grabs and kisses her fiercely -- pouring all his hunger, loneliness, anguish, dreams in that kiss. She yields, returning his kiss with the same intense hunger. As he bends her back, their figures are hidden by the counter. The view holds on the hall -- shattered shelves with broken wine bottles. The beat and throb of the battle outside comes over.

Machine gun fire suddenly rakes the wall, sending down a shower of glass. But still they don't come up for air. Suddenly there's a burst of nearby shellfire, shaking the house. Dondaro lifts his head, dazed. He slowly seems to remember where he is, what's going on outside. He shivers as if pulling himself together.

DONDARO  
(disgusted)  
There's that ...  
(another shell burst)  
... war again. Sounds like they're  
paging me--

He releases her and hurries toward the spot where he dropped his rifle. Amelia, trembling, clings to him.

AMELIA  
(in Italian)  
Oh -- no! Don't go!

DONDARO  
(in English;  
half tempted)  
Honest, Rainbow, this hurts me more  
than it does you--

He kisses her again; quickly this time -- and picks up his rifle.

DONDARO  
(in English)  
I'll be back, don't worry--

He starts toward the door.

AMELIA  
(shaking her  
head; in Italian)  
I don't understand what you mean--

DONDARO  
(Stopping; with a  
grin; in Italian)  
When I get back -- you'll understand --  
(in English)  
-- okay, okay --  
(He gestures;  
in Italian.)  
You wait here. Si?

She nods with a little laugh.

AMELIA  
(in broken English)  
Okay -- Okay.

As Dondaro hurries toward the door, he turns. Amelia smiles, and nods eagerly. Dondaro opens the door. The sound of battle grows louder. Grinning, he pauses only long enough to note the number "29" on the door, and ducks into the battle-riddled street.

The TOWN SQUARE: In the foreground, Warnicki, Walker and Rogers, grimly move down the rubble-strewn square seeking out snipers. Suddenly Rogers, bringing up the rear, steps on a hidden mine. There's a terrific explosion. Warnicki and Walker flatten out.

As the shower of rocks and smoke subsides, they look back. Rogers has completely disappeared from the face of the earth. Their lips frame soundless curses. Grimly they start forward again, only to be suddenly pinned down by a sharp hail of bullets from the right. Swiftly they dive behind some rubble and peer in the direction of a half-ruined church diagonally across the street.

WALKER  
Where's our platoon?

WARNICKI  
Up the street.

WALKER

Looks like this one's on us.

WARNICKI

Okay. I'll cover you.

The CHURCH BELFRY comes into view and we see a pair of German snipers firing down at Warnicki and Walker from the windows, following which WARNICKI and WALKER are seen firing back futilely.

WALKER

Let's go to church, Warnicki.

WARNICKI

Okay. Wait a minute.

Walker nods and keeps firing as Warnicki quickly unloosens a smoke-grenade from his belt. The two men act in accord, as a team, without words. Warnicki removes his carefully blanketed record and lays it in a little cache amidst the rubble.

WARNICKI

(patting it as he  
might a child)

You stay there, Junior. Papa'll be  
right back.

He hurls the grenade into the street. -- We see the STREET as it is instantly filled with obscuring smoke. Warnicki and Walker dive into it. A frantic spray of bullets from the church seeks them out. -- Through the thinning smoke, Warnicki and Walker, uninjured, are revealed tensely flattened against the wall. Walker is about to dash into the church. But Warnicki checks him. He loosens another grenade and hurls it through the door. Again smoke blots out the scene; again the excited searching spray of tommy-gun fire.

Inside the CHURCH: Smoke still fills the scene. But the sound of the gunfire is strangely different. It echoes and re-echoes eerily through the cavernous building. Suddenly it ceases. The scene is filled with a deathly stillness as the last echo dies away. As the smoke thins we see Warnicki and Walker hidden behind a pile of rubble. They listen tensely. They scarcely dare breathe as they peer about cautiously.

There is not a sound, not a movement in the half-demolished church. A single fading ray of sunlight shoots down through the torn roof. The rest is in massive shadows. The statue of an angel stands like a ghost in the half-light. Before the altar lies a heap of rubble. The stillness is filled with an awesome terror; death may spit instantly from any shadowed niche or crevice.

WALKER

(barely audible)

Pst!

(Suddenly he shouts  
out a taunting insult.)  
Lousy Kraut schwein!

As the shout echoes and re-echoes against the walls, from  
somewhere an other shout comes over.

SNIPER'S VOICE  
Americanische Schiese!

The shouts and the echoes intermingle in weird and  
bewildering reverberations. Walker, ready to shoot, doesn't.  
The echoes are too bewildering. Warnicki grimly realizes  
something must be done to get the snipers to disclose their  
position. Silently he gestures his intent to draw the  
German's fire by dashing across to a pillar toward the  
alter. As he does so, Walker is to cover him. Walker nods.  
Warnicki tensely sets himself.

We get a wider angle of the CHURCH, with Warnicki and Walker  
in the foreground. As Warnicki with a cry of "Lousy Kraut  
Swine!" exposes himself by swiftly diving across from the  
rubble heap to the pillar, a shot rings out. Shot and cry  
reverberate.

We see WALKER swiftly firing toward the gallery, and then  
the GALLERY as a sniper tumbles forward, following which  
the view widens to disclose Warnicki, hidden behind the  
pillar, indicating he's all right. They grin at each other.  
They are breathing hard with the tension. Walker lifts his  
fingers indicating "That was one, but there are two." He  
gestures it's his turn now to try Warnicki's trick. Warnicki  
grins and bows his acquiescence.

We get a close moving view of WALKER as he dives with a cry  
toward another rubble heap near the altar -- But there is no  
revealing shot. Warnicki tensed to fire, looks puzzled. He  
looks across at Walker. They look troubled, let down. Where  
is that other German? Warnicki shouts again. But only his  
own voice echoes through the church. Stillness again. A more  
ominous stillness.

Slowly a rifle barrel appears between the wings of the  
STATUE OF THE ANGEL, aiming downward. -- WARNICKI swiftly  
fires at the angel, and we see it, then, toppling with the  
sniper. Warnicki and Walker rise from their places with  
audible sighs of relief.

WARNICKI  
It's a funny place to be killing men  
in, isn't it?

And on these words Walker goes toward the sniper near the  
angel, while Warnicki, in his simple gratitude, picks his  
way over the rubble to the altar.

Through a narrow break in the debris -- a perfect sightline

for a sniper -- Warnicki can be seen kneeling to cross himself in devotion. A shot rings out. -- Simultaneous with the shot, Warnicki bows his head. The bullet pierces through the top of the helmet, missing his skull by the fraction of an inch, caused by his bowing.

Thereupon the scene tilts upward past Warnicki to the belfry. Warnicki swiftly swings around. He fires at a sniper exposed in the belfry. He hits him. The sniper staggers and grabs at the bell-rope to steady himself. The bell begins to toll -- slowly, with a death-like knell. Warnicki and Walker drill steel at the swaying body, until the German's grasp loosens and his body plunges downward. As he falls, his plunge gives momentum to the swinging bell, and its rhythm accelerates into a joyous, triumphant ring, echoing and re-echoing through the church as the scene fades out.

[D]

A WINDOW fades in; the sound of the church bell still ringing over the scene. An old, wrinkled woman timidly peers out from behind the battle-scarred, shattered window. She looks uncertainly up and down the street. Evidently reassured, she sticks a small American flag in a corner of the window, a broad smile wrinkling her face. -- Fresh American troops pour across the PIAZZA. Several ambulances of the Surgical Unit drive by. Old Italian villagers with children and bundles trudge back wearily but happily, to their homes. In the foreground -- the engineers have begun to repair the shattered bridge. -- Outside the CITY HALL, a vociferous crowd is angrily milling around the shattered doorway. They drag out a rat-faced civilian from his hiding place. They shower him with blows, cursing: "Fascista Manure Traittore!" as he coweringly runs their outraged gauntlet. Several MP's enter the scene and take the Fascist in tow.

MP SERGEANT

Okay, guys! We'll handle him from here on!

As the MP's drag him off, the villagers still spit and hurl their curses in the traitor's face.

We next see a STREET CORNER where GI's are distributing hot soup and bread from a food truck to a long line of women, children and old men. The children gulp their food down without chewing, as if they had never eaten before. Grins gradually suffuse their faces as the hot food begins to take effect. One little girl looks up at the ladling GI. Cries of "Viva Americano, Viva Americano" are heard.

A STREET INTERSECTION comes into view. A double file of German prisoners, guarded by GI's, come down a side street. Some are still a surly, arrogant-looking lot. Others are beaten to a point of cretinism. A couple of Signal Corps cameramen run up and take pictures of them. -- The view swings sharply toward a side street where several returned

villagers are poring over the rubble in the middle of the street. -- A MIDDLE-AGED COUPLE stands forlornly looking at the wreckage of a shop. The man holds a child in his arms; beside the woman stands a little ragged girl -- obviously their children. There is a black armband around the man's sleeve. -- Tears fill their eyes as they view the wreckage of their life's work. He looks up at the ruined building. They all follow his gaze, and we see American flags appearing in many windows -- Smiling through their tears, the little group enters their wrecked shop and starts to straighten it up. -- Then we see ANOTHER STREET as the fresh GI's march down, a bunch of children tagging after them, brashly importuning.

CHILDREN

Americano cigarette! Gimme!

One, a ragged boy in a GI barracks bag with name, serial number, etc., imprinted across the seat, is particularly persistent.

BOY

Gimme Americano cigarette! Gimme.

GI

Cigarettes are no good for children  
-- go away -- go away.

BOY

(pleading)

Gimme! Gimme! Me Americano!

GI

Sure. Your name's GI Joe, ain't it.

BOY

Si, Si! Me. GI Joe!

(As the GI laughs)

Cigarette! Cigarette!

GI

(reaching into  
his pocket)

Cigarettes no bono for kids.

He throws the child a small package, and the boy expertly catches it. It's a bar of chocolate. The boy bites into it and grins. Then he runs after the GI; and in the distance we see him take the GI's hand and go off skipping as the scene dissolves to the OUTSKIRTS of the TOWN. Lying around in various stages of exhaustion, on both sides of a tree-lined road, are our GI's. Dondaro has taken off a mud-caked shoe and is examining his arch. Nearby Ernie is washing an extra pair of socks in his tin helmet. Warnicki is lying back on his equipment staring at the sky, a wisp of grass between his teeth, Ayrab at his feet. Mew keeps polishing his rifle; Murph is yawning. -- Dondaro lets out a groan.

DONDARO

If this war don't kill me first, my feet will.

WARNICKI

(with a jaw-cracking yawn)  
Me, I feel like forty-five.

Ernie wrings out his hose.

ERNIE

I feel like I was too. And I damn near am.

MEW

How old are you?

ERNIE

Forty-three.

DONDARO

I'm twenty-six. If I knew I'd live to be forty-three I wouldn't have a worry in the world.

ERNIE

Oh, yes you would.  
(He empties his helmet.)  
You'd be just like me. Worrying whether you'd ever get to be forty-four.

Spencer comes into the scene.

SPENCER

Hey, guys -- we got twelve hours rest until they rebuild that bridge--

DONDARO

(leaping up as a bright idea suddenly strikes him)  
Stop pooch!

ROSS

Where's that whizz bang going?

ERNIE

I know I'm going to get some sleep.

Dondaro hops around on one foot, trying to get his shoe on and laced in a hurry. Warnicki has a bright idea of his own. He reaches under his equipment for Junior's blanketed record. Murph just relaxes.

SPENCER

(swinging into the scene)  
Hey, Murph -- hey, Murphy. That red-headed nurse of yours is in town -- you know, your fiancée!

MURPH

Is she?

ROSS

What a lucky guy you are -- meeting a girl you're engaged to in the States way over here.

MURPH

(sitting up,  
leaden-eyed)

Hey, did you hear that? My ever lovin' is coming to town.

But it still takes a moment before this news penetrates his sleep-befogged mind.

The scene then dissolves to a full view of a PORTABLE DELOUSING UNIT. The delousing mechanisms are at both ends of four showers. The men feed their combat clothes in at one end, stand in line for their showers, and emerge cleansed at the other end to receive their deloused clothing. A QM Sergeant -- snappily uniformed, clean shaven, wearing horn-rimmed glasses -- directs the operations.

SERGEANT

(Officiously)

Okay men, your three minutes are up now -- move out of there -- come on, get out of there.

(He is greeted  
with ad libs.)

Snap it up, men! Two minutes to lather -- one to rinse! We haven't got all day!

(Barking at a bather)

What do you think this is -- a bubble-bath?

Mew and another GI, both bearded, dirty, exhausted, stop before the Sergeant and stare at his "fruit salad," his ribbons.

MEW

(innocently)

Hey, Sarge, what's all that?

SERGEANT

This?

MEW

Yeah, yeah.

SERGEANT

(Proudly; pedantically)  
Well, the yellow one is for National  
Defense; the red and white is for  
very good conduct; and the real  
pretty one with all the colors, is  
for being in this theatre of  
operations.

MEW

(in amazement)  
No kidding!

GI

(innocently)  
Yeah. Know any good war stories,  
Sarge?

SERGEANT

Yeah, as a matter of fact--  
(Laughing)  
Oh, come on, your three minutes are  
up.

SPENCER and LOPEZ, naked, are waiting in line to shower.

SPENCER

(looking toward  
the showers)  
Hey, look at Murph. -- He's falling  
to sleep on his feet.

He pushes toward Murph, whom we then see under the shower.  
Bearded, hollow-eyed, he desperately tries to keep his eyes  
open as he lathers. Spencer comes up to him and pokes him.

SPENCER

(troubled)  
Hey, Murph, come on! This is your  
big day!

MURPH

(heroically; between  
globes of water)  
Okay. If Red wants to go through  
with it, I'm game.

He almost falls asleep there and then; Spencer shakes him as  
the scene dissolves out.

AMELIA'S STREET dissolves in as Dondaro comes tearing down  
to DOOR No. 29, and as he disappears through the door it  
slams closed. -- This dissolves to ANOTHER STREET where  
Warnicki, holding his blanketed record, comes up to a group  
of Italians. Ayrab is with him.

WARNICKI

Hey! Know where I can find a  
phonograph?

(The group doesn't  
seem to understand.)

A phonograph -- a victrola -- a  
music box, see? What's the matter?  
You can't understand plain English?

Heart-broken in their eagerness to be helpful, the Italians  
volubly canvass each other. Warnicki watches hopefully.

We get a close view of AYRAB looking up, a little ashamed of  
his master for even deigning to listen to this jabber. Then  
we see the CROWD again. No luck; none understood. Warnicki's  
face "neons."

WARNICKI

Look -- A phonograph, a victrola, a  
music box.

He motions as if winding a machine. A light dawns on one of  
the women.

WOMAN

(in a rising scale)

Oh! Oh!! OH!!

She also makes a winding motion. Warnicki nods. The woman  
hurries into her ruined house.

WARNICKI

(elated)

She's got one, Ayrab! We're gonna  
get to hear Junior yet!

The Italians are delighted. Jabbering, they assure Warnicki  
she's a smart woman, a fine woman, a brilliant woman. She'll  
find it. And there she comes with an old-fashioned coffee-  
grinder. The Italians look eagerly at Warnicki -- and are  
crestfallen at his look of disgust.

WARNICKI

No! No! NO!!

(Another idea hits him.)

Look--

(He starts singing.)

"Oh, Marie! Oh, Marie! Did-da-da-tum  
ti-da-dum -ti-da-dum--"

Again the Italians brighten. Eager to oblige their liberator  
they sing too.

ITALIANS

"Oh, Marie -- Oh, Marie--"

WARNICKI

(with abysmal disgust)  
Aw, nuts!

He continues down the street, Ayrab after him. The Italians helplessly twirl their fingers at their temples as the scene dissolves out.

A half blown out BUILDING dissolves in, the view moving up along the shattered building past one demolished floor, then another, and then a third, holding on Warnicki in the bomb-shattered flat, where he has finally unearthed a battered old portable victrola.

WARNICKI, with an intense, happy gleam, examines the battered phonograph, trying to make it go. He presses the lever. Nothing happens. He spins the plate with his finger. But all he can get is a grinding noise. Warnicki listens:

WARNICKI

Little rusty--  
(The scene widens to include Ayrab cocking his ear.)  
Ayrab, you're gonna hear Junior, or else ...

Hastily he searches through his pockets for a knife, as the scene dissolves.

The scene dissolves to a close view of MURPH soaping up his two-week beard before a mirror propped against his helmet. His eyelids still weigh a ton. As he starts a jaw-breaking yawn, the view expands, disclosing a half-ruined cottage. Mew, Spencer and Lopez are with Murph. Lopez is practicing a wedding march. Murph yawns again.

SPENCER

Hey, cut that out! You can't let Red down now.

MEW

If you do, the best man'll take over.

MURPH

(shaking his head)  
I'm afraid I'll fall asleep and cut my fool head off with this Eytalian razor.

SPENCER

So what? If we can't marry you, we'll bury you.

He signals Lopez to go on with the music.

LOPEZ, also yawning, starts to play the wedding march again, when suddenly there's a metallic crash.

LOPEZ

Ay dime! Look at that!

And we see that Murph has collapsed over the table.

SPENCER

He's folded! Gimme that razor. I  
done a little barbering in my time.  
The whole town must have shaved with  
this thing.

Mew hands Murph's razor to Spencer. Spencer pulls back  
Murph's head with a professional flourish and starts to  
shave him. A soldier, Jacob, comes running in while this  
goes on.

JACOB

Everything's fixed to the Queen's  
taste.

SPENCER

(as he shaves)

Get Ernie. He's gonna give the bride  
away.

MEW

Yeah! We'll get this wedding in the  
papers.

Mew starts toward the door.

LOPEZ' VOICE

Get the Captain, too. He's an okay  
Joe.

As Mew and Trenton hurry out the scene dissolves to a view  
of the BATTERED PHONOGRAPH. The plate whirls about merrily.

WARNICKI'S VOICE

(elated)

It works! What did I tell you! It  
works!

The scene expands and we see that Warnicki's sweaty face is  
lit with joy. Ayrab's head follows the revolving plate  
suspiciously. Treasuringly, Warnicki unwraps the record,  
places it carefully on the plate and cranks up the motor.  
But as he's about to lower the arm, he discovers that it  
lacks a needle.

WARNICKI

(dismayed)

No needle.

Frantically, he searches around the box. No needle. He looks  
around the apartment, sees a broken-down dresser. He rushes

to it in almost a frenzy of excitement, and searches through the drawers for a needle.

The scene dissolves to a BARN. Sleeping comfortably on a pile of hay, is Ernie. His snores come regular and sweet. Mew hurries in and tries to awaken him.

MEW

Ernie--

ERNIE

(rousing himself)

Ugh.

MEW

Wake up. We need you. Red wants you to give her away.

ERNIE

(too sleepy to know what he's talking about)

What I wanna give her away for? I like Red.

He turns over and goes back to sleep.

MEW

(shaking him)

Hey, don't go back to sleep.

ERNIE

(slurring)

Oh, leave me alone. The only way you'll get me out of here is to carry me out.

MEW

We figured on that too.

He looks off and gives a sharp whistle. The angle widens as Jacob and another GI, carrying a stretcher, come up to Ernie. They roll our very sleepy and very astonished correspondent on to it, and haul him away.

This dissolves to a SHATTERED APARTMENT, where, in the fading daylight, Warnicki is breaking off the tip of a safety pin which he has found. As he bends it forward and backward, his bearded face gleams with sweat and excitement. Suddenly the pin snaps off, needle size. Feverishly, he puts the needle in place, almost fumbling it in his anxiety. He picks up the record, kisses it and breathlessly replaces it.

WARNICKI

(in a whisper of excitement)

Here goes, Ay-rab-- Junior's goin' to talk to his papa.

He presses the lever. The record whirls around. Gently, perspiration tipping his nose, he places the needle on the record -- and the "sweetest voice in the world" goes backward--!

VICTROLA  
(screeching)  
A-gul-ub! A-gul-ub! A-gul-ub!

Ayrab jumps back, barking indignantly. Warnicki's face is a study in dismay and disappointment. Hastily, he shuts the phonograph off.

WARNICKI  
(almost apologetically,  
to Ayrab)  
Backwards! I'm a son-of-a-

Suddenly, there's a sharp whistle from down below.

SPENCER'S VOICE  
Hey, Warnicki--!

Warnicki looks down, and from his angle we look down below, across the street: The wedding procession is nearing the ruined church. Twilight is fast falling.

SPENCER  
(calling up)  
Come on, Warnicki! Murph's getting married.

WARNICKI  
(hastily gathering up  
the phonograph and record)  
I'll fix it later. Come on--

He hurries over to the stairs and starts down, Ayrab with him, the scene cutting to the CHURCH. Led by Lopez and Spencer, playing the Wedding March, the procession moves slowly toward the altar and the Army Chaplain. Red is on Ernie's arm. Murph, best-manned by Mew, waits for them beside a rubble heap at the altar. Walker is in the procession. Various GI's bring up the rear. As they reach the altar, the music stops and they form before the Chaplain, who is now seen close; he is wearing a stole over his uniform.

CHAPLAIN  
Dearly beloved, we are gathered here ...

MURPH and RED are seen close. Murph has court plaster patches over his face. He valiantly tries to keep his eyes open. Red's eyes are shining.

CHAPLAIN'S VOICE  
... in the sight of God and this  
company ...

Now Warnicki appears at the church door. He almost stumbles  
over the threshold.

WARNICKI  
(cautioning Ayrab)  
Sh! Sh!

As he clumsily tiptoes to the outer fringe of the wedding  
party, we hear the Chaplain's voice continuing:

CHAPLAIN'S VOICE  
... to join together this man and  
this woman in holy matrimony.

Twilight is now turning to night, as the scene cuts to the  
Chaplain and to some GI's with Ernie among them.

CHAPLAIN  
Who giveth this woman to be married  
to this man?

No one moves. Several eyes turn on Ernie, who is then seen  
close. Ernie's eyes and thought are far away. After a pause,  
the Chaplain repeats:

CHAPLAIN'S VOICE  
Who giveth this woman to be married  
to this man?

Ernie comes to himself and steps forward as the angle widens.  
A little sheepishly he takes Red's hand.

ERNIE  
I do.

Red presses his hand and smiles at him as, embarrassed, he  
returns to his place.

CHAPLAIN  
(to Murph)  
Repeat after me -- I, Robert Murphy  
take thee, Elizabeth ... to be my  
wedded wife ... to have and to hold  
from this day forward ...

Murph repeats each phrase after the Chaplain.

We get a close shot of Mew. He is beaming. Suddenly he gets  
an idea. He looks secretively about him, withdraws his  
insurance blank and with a stubby pencil writes some figures  
on it as the Chaplain's voice comes over, Murph repeating.

CHAPLAIN'S VOICE

... for better, for worse ... for  
richer, for poorer ... In sickness  
and in health ...

We see the INSURANCE BLANK. It is marked: Beneficiary --  
Warnicki -- \$2,000 Junior -- \$2,000. And now Mew's stubby  
pencil adds -- Mrs. Murphy -- \$2,000.

RED and MURPH are seen close as the Chaplain continues:

CHAPLAIN'S VOICE  
... to love and to cherish, till  
death us do part....

It is night now outside, and German DIVE BOMBERS appear in  
the sky.

We see the CHAPLAIN in the foreground, in the church, as he  
continues with the wedding ceremony.

CHAPLAIN  
Those whom God hath joined together --  
(Rushing the ceremony as  
the sound of the dive  
bombers increases and the  
bombers go into action)  
... let no man put asunder ... HIT  
THE DIRT!

He throws himself flat. The whole party follows suit. The  
shell explodes with a bang beyond the ruined walls. Warnicki,  
in the background, covers the phonograph and record with his  
body.

We see RED and MURPH on the ground.

MURPH  
(half-covering Red's body)  
Take a better man than that to put  
us asunder.

They kiss, and the scene dissolves to a moving view of the  
newlyweds as, accompanied by the musicians and their  
escorts, they reach the edge of a road.

MEW  
(suddenly yelling out)  
Procession -- halt! Okay, kids ...  
It's yours.

Grinning he points off to the right, and the view moves past  
a ruined wall and "holds" on a wrecked ambulance with a sign  
planted beside it: "Bridal Suite." Where once the doors were,  
blankets have been tacked and looped back with GI neckties.  
A horseshoe is suspended over the entrance; a battered field  
telephone at one side is marked: "Room Service." Red and  
Murph enter the scene, laughing and breathless.

RED  
(looking back)  
Boys -- honestly, thanks.

And Murph sweeps up Red and carries her over the threshold.  
-- This cuts to the WEDDING PARTY, the faces displaying varied emotions as they stare across at the married pair.

Next, in the AMBULANCE, Murph removes the neckties, and the blankets drop over the entrance. The blankets are chalked with huge letters: DO NOT DISTURB.

This cuts to the WEDDING PARTY outside. The men haven't moved; they stand and stare.

WARNICKI  
(finally; gruffly)  
Awright ... What are you guys  
looking at? ... Let's get going.

They start to leave. Lopez, however, sits down with his guitar, deliberately turning his back to the ambulance.

LOPEZ  
(singing as he strums)  
Tu eres, Lupita, divina  
Como los rayos del sol--

As Lopez' singing comes over, the GI's move away, one by one, their thoughts far away. They are joined by superimposed images of their beloved ones: Warnicki holding Junior in his arms with Mollie by his side, Ernie with "That Girl," Spencer, with his mother, etc. Then, as they recede down the night-shadowed road, the superimposed figures have vanished. The men are alone, forlorn.

LOPEZ' VOICE  
Tu es la flor nicaragua  
En la morada de amore.

We see AYRAB near the AMBULANCE. He has remained behind. He cocks his head curiously, up toward the ambulance. Lopez' singing continues.

Inside the AMBULANCE Murph has collapsed, and is fast asleep. Tenderly, Red bends down and kisses him as she tucks the blanket over him. Lopez' song can be heard from outside.

The view looks toward snow-capped CASSINO. Flashes of artillery burst on the horizon.

LOPEZ' VOICE  
Recibe se esta cancion  
Tu eres, Lupita, divina  
Como los rayos del sol ...

His voice fades away. And now only the low rumble of distant gunfire is heard as the scene fades out.

[E]

The ROAD LEADING from the city fades in at dawn. The GI's, led by Walker and Ernie, are slogging on again in the gray dawn. The view moves past several GI's to Warnicki and Mew, then to Murph, gloomily thinking of the brilliant figure he cut on his honeymoon; then to Dondaro tearing up the road, double quick. Beyond him lies the town of San Vittorio. Reaching the line he sneaks in furtively between Spencer and Murph. -- He looks wonderfully relaxed, in sharp contrast to the others. Suddenly he is attracted to something on Murph's back, which we see from DONDARO'S VIEWPOINT: Some company wag has chalked on it, "JUST MARRIED." -- DONDARO grins. Spencer leans over.

SPENCER

Hey!

(Seeing Dondaro's  
beaming face)

Oh, oh!

(Then ironically)

Tell me, Dondaro, what's your power  
over women?

DONDARO

(glibly giving  
his recipe)

Klk! Klk!

(Looking around,  
grinning)

Whatsamatter with you guys, you all  
look tired?

Murph's doleful face looks over at Dondaro. Their faces are a perfect study in contrast. Dondaro grins.

DONDARO

(cheerily)

Good morning, dear.

As Murph starts to curse, the scene dissolves to a moving view of a ROAD favoring WALKER and ERNIE. The GI's spirits have risen with the sun. Walker, however, has a troubled look on his face as he looks ahead.

WALKER

I don't like it -- too quiet.

ERNIE

Maybe they've pulled back all the  
way to Rome--

WALKER

(shaking his

head doubtfully)  
Uh uh--

From another ANGLE we see several GI's; having met no opposition, they are feeling pretty chipper.

                  SPENCER  
A walk-away -- a walk-away--

                  LOPEZ  
At this rate we'll be in Rome in three days.

                  SPENCER  
                  (with a sly dig)  
Maybe Dondaro will give us a knock-down to some of his cousins -- Klk! Klk!

As they turn a bend in the road, Dondaro suddenly spots someone up ahead. This dissolves to a ROCKY HILLSIDE at dusk. Tense, cautious, wary of attack, our company spreads out to occupy the hill slope. The men watchfully work their way toward the crest on which stands an old stone farmhouse. It is a rocky defile. Somewhere beyond that gap is the enemy.

We see the crest of the HILL, the STONE HOUSE in the background. Crawling up to the crest are Walker and Ernie. Walker looks through his binoculars.

                  WALKER  
Look at that old monastery. So peaceful --  
                  (Handing the glasses to Ernie)  
You'd never think ...

The scene cuts to the MONASTERY and MOUNTAINS: Atop Mt. Cassino, the Monastery dominates the entire countryside -- aloof, brooding, eternal.

                  WALKER  
... there was a war within a thousand miles of it.

                  ERNIE'S VOICE  
Or a thousand years.

Ernie hands the glasses back.

                  WALKER  
Well, maybe you're right about the Krauts pulling back to Rome. I don't get it, though--  
                  (Shaking his head)  
If they want to slug it out here,

they can make it plenty tough ...

At this, the scream of several shells splits the air. Ernie and Walker "hit the dirt" and start scrambling down the slope.

As the GI's scramble behind rocks for cover, shell after shell bursts on the hillside. The stonehouse is struck.

We get a view of a SHELL CRATER as Ernie tumbles into it and cowers from repeated explosions.

We next see a shallow FOXHOLE with FIELD PHONE and ROCKS. Walker's runner ducks behind the rocks as Walker scrambles into the foxhole and grabs the phone.

WALKER

(into the phone)

Get me Artillery Fire Control.

(He ducks as  
debris falls.)

Pete? Walker. Y'know that building  
on top of the mountain?

In a close view of an AMERICAN OBSERVATION POST we see LT. PETERSON at the phone.

PETE

(looking off)

The monastery?

WALKER

(at the phone)

Call it that if you want to, but I  
call it, in military terms, an  
observation post. If you don't want  
to get us all killed you had better  
give it the works.

We get a close view of WALKER at the phone.

PETE'S VOICE

Can't. Got an order about it.  
Religious shrine.

WALKER

(angrily, as a  
shell screams over)

Does that sound like religion to  
you?

He reaches up and places the telephone on the parapet of the foxhole. -- This cuts to a close view of PETERSON as the explosions nearly wreck his phone. He grimaces.

We again see the HILLSIDE, with the MONASTERY and MOUNTAINS in the background. A piercing cry of "Medic! Medic!" rises

as more shells scream over. In the distance the monastery stands like a symbol of eternal tranquillity -- ostensibly beyond reach of violence. The scene dissolves to a HILLSIDE at twilight in the rain. The men are wearily digging their foxholes deeper, making use of the terrain for added protection. In the foreground Ernie is watching a patrol, led by Warnicki, slog past the shattered stonehouse with its little shrine as the scene dissolves to a full view, shooting toward a DEFILE at NIGHT in the RAIN. Lit by flashes of distant artillery, the remnants of the patrol straggle back. They are drunk with exhaustion and foul beyond recognition. As they pass, the view moves to Ernie, watching ...

WARNICKI

All right, men -- let's go!  
(to Ernie)  
Lost three.

The scene dissolves to an outcrop of SHELF ROCK in a fog. Ernie and Mew are widening the entrance to a dugout under the slanting shelf of rock. Ernie straightens wearily -- and bangs his head against the rocky ceiling.

ERNIE

Guess it could be deeper.

MEW

Yeah, kind of looks like we'll need  
a permanent home here.

ERNIE

Yeah ...

He looks off, and from Ernie's angle we see the MONASTERY and MOUNTAINS still standing aloof and imperturbable.

Into the scene, heading toward the defile, comes a sizeable patrol, again led by Warnicki.

SPENCER

(shaking his head)  
Patrol, patrol, patrol ... one more  
patrol and I'll go nuts!

DONDARO

Personally, I'd feel a lot healthier  
if that monastery wasn't lookin'  
down my throat.

They head into the defile, and the scene dissolves to a view of the DEFILE as Ayrab comes romping gaily out of the defile, his tail up like a flag -- his friends are back! In direct contrast to Ayrab, come the men, great leaden hunks of exhaustion. Several heads stick out of the dugouts and silently watch them returning. The men separate and head for their foxholes. Warnicki heads for Walker's dugout.

WALKER'S DUGOUT: Lit by a candle, the dugout is dank, wet, dreary, just big enough for three people. Gas cans serve as furniture. With Walker is Lieutenant Henry. Walker, haggard and grimy, looks up as Warnicki enters.

WARNICKI

(with flat weariness)

Just got back, Captain ... Drew lot of small arms fire on Hill 457 ... Mortar fire 793 ... Terrific artillery fire, but couldn't locate it.

(After a slight pause)

They got Lt. Josephs, Spencer and Trenton ... Michaelson got it in the arm, but I got him back okay.

There's a moment's pause; then Walker speaks quietly:

WALKER

Okay, Steve ... Better get some chow.

Warnicki turns and wearily goes out. Walker turns to his papers.

WALKER

You take over Josephs' platoon ...

HENRY

(starting to leave)

Right, sir ...

WALKER

And, oh--

Henry half turns; Walker speaks without looking at him.

WALKER

... If Lieutenant Josephs had any personal stuff, send 'em over ... will you?

Henry nods and goes. For a moment Walker stares before him; then shakes himself and concentrates on his maps. A shell whines over. Walker stiffens.

Inside WARNICKI'S DUGOUT as Warnicki enters and slumps down to a flat rock: This dugout is under a slanting rock which seems to crush down oppressively on the men's heads. They sit around huddled in their great coats, mud-caked, begrimed, exhausted. The only decoration is a picture of Murph's wife, Red. Mew is heating coffee over a fitful fire. Murph, his big knees under his chin, is huddled in a corner sipping coffee. Dondaro is lying on his back, staring up at the rock. There's the constant sound of enemy shells slugging over.

Slow drops of water keep dripping on Dondaro's face.

DONDARO

Somebody ought to phone the plumber.

But he doesn't move.

MURPH

You know, it sounds pretty silly  
when you say it, but sometimes  
resting like this, I get a kick out  
of just breathing.

MEW

(offering Warnicki a cup)  
Hot java, Steve--

WARNICKI

No.

Warnicki shakes his head, picks up his battered victrola and spins the platter. It emits some outlandish sounds. Suddenly there's a swift succession of shell bursts nearby. The entire hillside trembles. Fragments of rock fall. No one stirs.

MURPH

(exasperated)  
Between the monastery and Steve's  
phonograph ...

WARNICKI

(grimly)  
I'll fix 'em both before I'm  
through!

Two more shells slug the hillside.

MURPH

(bitterly)  
There goes that monastery again.  
Everybody knows it's an Observation  
Post. Why don't they bomb it!

There's an unspoken answer. The men look away, and in a view favoring LOPEZ we see him looking from one to the other.

LOPEZ

(quietly)  
I'm a Catholic, and I say bomb it  
to hell!

DONDARO

Check, brother.

LOPEZ

I got a wife and a kid. Think I want

to die for a piece of stone?

DONDARO

(sighing)

Why wasn't I born a 4-F instead of  
good-looking?

Which reminds him: Secretively he pulls a small phial from his pocket and passes it under his nose. His eyes melt with memories and longing. Offscene Warnicki's record emits some outlandish sound.

The scene dissolves to a HILLSIDE. Led by a Lieutenant, a squad of replacements trudge up the mule trail, coming to a halt before Walker's dugout. The Lieutenant heads toward it. -- He enters and salutes.

LIEUTENANT

Lieutenant Hawkins reporting, sir  
-- replacements.

WALKER

(after a pause)

Yeah, I'll be right with you.

Hawkins goes. Walker takes another sip of coffee, obviously stalling against a job he hates. Finally he buttons his coat and goes; Ernie follows.

ERNIE

Maid'll clean it up later.

This cuts to the HILLSIDE: Approaching the squad, Walker looks over the new men. They are all young. Some look eager, some look scared, but all look young. Warnicki comes up.

WALKER

Okay, Sarge, you line the men up.

SERGEANT

All right men, fall in.

WALKER

(his voice unnecessarily  
harsh)

You first four -- First Platoon --  
Sergeant Warnicki'll show you to  
your hotel suites ...

(As the four men fall  
out and go with Warnicki)

Next six -- Second Platoon -- The  
corporal will take care of you. The  
rest of you go with Lt. Hawkins--

(Turning to Hawkins)

You'll replace Lt. Henry -- Third  
Platoon. Turn right past the  
mansion, and down the hill and turn

to the left. All right, take over.

The men start off.

This cuts to WARNICKI and his REPLACEMENTS trudging through the mud.

WARNICKI

Any of you dogfaces know anything  
about a phonograph?

As the men merely exchange puzzled glances, he is disgusted.

WARNICKI

The cream of the crop, I always get.

There's the scream of shells. Everyone dives as geysers of mud and rock cascade, and we get a close view of one of the soldiers looking out bewildered from a boulder.

GI

Gee -- a guy could get killed here --

The scene dissolves to the GROUP on the hillside: Tensely, three Lieutenants wait with Walker for some signal.

WALKER

All right ... Let's synchronize our  
watches.

(to Hawkins)

You stick with Sergeant Warnicki,  
Lieutenant. He knows the terrain.  
Okay, move out.

We see a flash of an AMERICAN BATTERY abruptly firing a terrific barrage of shells, then the HILLSIDE. Led by their Lieutenants, Warnicki and the GI's start through the defile. Ernie holding Ayrab in his arms, grimly watches them.

MURPHY

So long, Ayrab.

ERNIE

(murmuring)

Good luck ...

His face is blue with cold as the raw wind rips across. The thunder and scream of shells mount. It's begun to rain. Ayrab whines softly and snuggles against Ernie. He pats the pup and continues to stare out bleakly. The rain falls as the scene fades out.

[F]

WARNICKI'S DUGOUT fades in. Ernie is sitting alone. Ayrab lies disconsolately at his feet. There's a fire going, coffee bubbling. Suddenly Ayrab leaps up and dashes madly

out. Ernie looks up hopefully. And now he sees the returning soldiers. As the men return and flop down in their corners -- one by one -- sodden masses of mud and exhaustion, Ernie silently counts them. There's Lopez! And then Mew! Pause. And that new kid, Whitey! A longer pause which seems like eternity. And Dondaro! Again a long pause. Ernie's gaze falters, and then there's Ayrab and Warnicki! And that's all. Ernie watches for Murphy. But that's all.

WARNICKI

My poor aching back.

ERNIE looks at the corner where Murphy always sat. Then at Red's picture. Then at Mew, who slowly takes out his tattered insurance paper and a pencil, and starts to rub something out, following which we see the INSURANCE PAPER: Crossing out Murph's name, Mew changes the sum opposite Mrs. Murphy's name to \$4,000. The list now reads: Warnicki \$2000; Junior \$2000; Mrs. Murphy \$4000.

Deeply moved, Ernie, who has watched this, rises, takes Murph's wife's picture off the wall, and goes out of the dugout. We then see Ernie coming out and Walker, standing at the the entrance of the dugout, watching him disappear over the hill. ERNIE is then seen trudging along, looking down at the ground, still stunned by the news, with hunched shoulders and a frozen face.

This cuts to the CORRESPONDENTS HEADQUARTERS as Ernie nears the shack. Prominent over the entrance is a sign that reads: NEWSPAPER ROW. Directly below these words is the legend:

DON'T LOOK NOW -- BUT THROUGH  
THESE PORTALS PASS THE WORLD'S  
MOST BEAUTIFUL  
WAR CORRESPONDENTS.

Ernie, still walking slowly, enters the scene and goes into the building.

Inside the CORRESPONDENTS HEADQUARTERS, there are three correspondents -- Roberts, Landry and Ruben. Ruben is hunched over his typewriter. As Ernie enters the room, the correspondents look up -- then quickly stand up and make a deep salaam to Ernie.

CORRESPONDENTS

(in unison)

Our hero! Our hero! Our hero!

ERNIE

What's the gag?

ROBERTS

(subserviently)

Your mail, Mr. Pyle--

He throws Ernie a crumpled cablegram.

ERNIE

Thanks. See you already opened it.

LANDRY

Why not? It was marked "Personal."

ERNIE

(smoothing out  
the cablegram)

What's in it?

RUBEN

Oh, nothing much. You've just won  
the Pulitzer Prize, that's all.

ERNIE

Well, I'll be darned.

Reading the cablegram with a blank expression. He is still  
stunned by Murphy's death.

ROBERTS

I regret to inform you, Mr. Pyle --  
you are no longer a newspaperman ...  
you are now a distinguished  
journalist--

Landry, Ruben and Roberts turn their backs on Ernie. The  
view moves with Ernie as he walks toward his desk. Over the  
scene we hear Ruben's voice.

RUBEN'S VOICE

Poor devil will probably be famous  
now ...

LANDRY

(sympathetically)

Tsk-tsk-tsk ...

Ernie makes his way toward his desk, slowly, still numb. He  
sits down at his typewriter. Slowly he puts the telegram  
down and mechanically rolls a sheet of paper into the  
typewriter. He stares at it for a moment, then begins to  
type.

Looking past ERNIE'S SHOULDER we see slowly emerging on the  
sheet of paper the words: "I had long ago come to think of  
Private Wingless Murphy as an old, old friend. He was just a  
plain Hoosier boy." The typewriter moves back and forth:  
"Now you couldn't imagine him ever killing anybody."

Ernie's eyes fill with emotion, his fingers are poised for  
typing, but nothing comes out. He shakes his head, reaches  
for a bottle of liquor in his desk, takes a swallow, blinks  
and then begins typing furiously as the scene fades out.

[G]

The HILLSIDE, the MONASTERY in the background, fades in. The stone house is now only a rubble, the shrine cracked. It is raining. In the distance the monastery is dimly seen through the mist. This cuts to WARNICKI'S DUGOUT. The first thing noted is the sound of a radio in this dank, dreary hole. It's a portable and the boys, huddled in everything they own, are gathered around it. The men are listening to the radio.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

... it will be a comfort to you to know that your sons, wherever they are ... at sea, or in the sky or in their foxholes ... Yes, sir, your boys are celebrating too ... with the finest turkey ... cranberry sauce ... and all the fixin's ...

And then the radio starts playing "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas."

DONDARO

(tapping his ration can,  
out of which he is eating)  
Tough skin on this bird.

WAYNE

(digging at some beans)  
I always like to eat the stuffing first.

GROSS

(to an imaginary waiter)  
Cranberry sauce ... Mm, mm!

DONDARO

Poor folks back home. Sure got it rugged.

WARNICKI

(at his "vic," trying  
to play it; morosely)  
Shoulda got a phonograph.

This dissolves to a battle-scarred street at dusk as Ernie, walking hunched through the snow-filled muddy street, sees something that attracts his attention. Then we see the QUARTERMASTER'S BUILDING from Ernie's viewpoint. Through the office window, Walker can be seen furiously pounding the desk of a startled QMC Lieutenant.

WALKER

You had turkey ... The other outfits had turkey ... The general had turkey

... My men are going to have turkey.

LIEUTENANT  
(spluttering)  
But we did try to ...

WALKER  
Trying ain't good enough!  
(Suddenly, very quietly)  
You either get those turkeys or the  
Supply Corp is going to have to get  
themselves a new Lieutenant!

His hand slowly moves toward his holster -- And by God, he means it! He is holding his gun in a menacing attitude. Ernie, unnoticed by either, has entered the scene.

LIEUTENANT  
(nervously)  
I'll scrounge around and see what I  
can do, s-sir ...

He starts.

ERNIE  
(innocently)  
How about cranberries and stuff?

LIEUTENANT  
(turning back;  
exasperated)  
Oh, now -- wait a minute--

WALKER  
(after a swift glance  
at Ernie; coldly)  
Cranberries!

LIEUTENANT  
Cranberries!

The Lieutenant nods and goes. Walker turns heartily to Ernie.

We next see the men on the HILLSIDE as jouncing along, laden with provisions, Ernie and Walker's jeep pulls to a stop before Walker's dugout. As the two men hop out and start to unload, Warnicki approaches.

WARNICKI  
Phone for you, sir. Battalion  
Headquarters.

Walker and Ernie exchange a glance.

WALKER  
(ironically)  
Probably the Rules and Regulations

Committee on Uplift and Morale ...

He starts off. Ernie continues to unload with the aid of a couple of GI's who drift up.

Inside WALKER'S DUGOUT:

WALKER

(into the phone)

Yes, sir ... Captain Walker ... I see ...

(Then; mildly ironic)

Just one prisoner or two ...  
Naturally, sir, as many as we can get ...

(His face shadows.)

Replacements ... No, they haven't gotten here yet ... yes, sir ...

As he hangs up, the angle widens to include Warnicki entering.

WALKER

Another patrol ...

WARNICKI

(quietly)

I'll go.

WALKER

Like hell you will! You've been on enough.

WARNICKI

(stolidly)

Every step forward is a step closer ... to home.

WALKER

(looking up at Warnicki; then)

Okay. Get me ten men ...

Warnicki starts out of the dugout. Walker starts getting ready.

The scene cuts to WARNICKI'S DUGOUT. Suddenly, through the opening, a box appears, followed by Ernie, followed by a GI (Simmons). Instantly the boys come to life.

ERNIE

Believe it or not, it's turkey, on the level!

In less than a second flat, they're at work on that turkey.

DONDARO

Wine? You bring wine?

ERNIE

(holding a bottle up)

What's Christmas without wine? After  
that little repast one cigar apiece.

Next we get closeups of WARNICKI and WALKER, who realize it's time to go on patrol; we see them going out of the dugout, Walker looking at his watch, and the patrol disappearing in the rainy night, the scene fading out. When the DUGOUT fades in again, the boys are in a relaxed mood. Lopez tinkles softly on his by now one-stringed guitar. Wayne puffs a corn-cob. Gross chews a wad, Dondaro, near Ernie, is luxuriously smoking a cigar. Mew is half-asleep. Although the air is cold, there's a feeling of old-shoe warmth among them.

DONDARO

(stretching)

Hey, Ernie, you been to Hollywood.  
... Ever know Carol ...

The sound of bombardment bursts into the merriment.

ERNIE

(a little startled)

Well ... I've met her ...

DONDARO

(intrigued)

Is it true she's got those great  
big ...

Two shells slam over, drowning out his words.

DONDARO

Is it?

ERNIE

(half-embarrassed)

That's the rumor.

DONDARO

(doubly intrigued)

Well, tell me something. Are they  
really on the level?

Two more shells slam over.

ERNIE

I forgot to ask. Probably.

DONDARO

Klk! Klk!

(Then very seriously)

You been around a lot -- Washington,

New York, Hollywood, everywhere,  
haven't you, Ernie? Y'know, when  
this shindig's over, I'm gonna look  
you up ... I might ask you to get  
me a job.

ERNIE

Yep.

The scene cuts to the HILLSIDE then: Returning wearily down  
the road come Walker, Warnicki and two GI's with a sullen  
Nazi prisoner in tow. Nearing Walker's dugout, they are met  
by a lieutenant.

WALKER

(wearily indicating  
the Nazi)

Take him down to Headquarters ...

LIEUTENANT

(putting the Nazi  
under guard)

Replacements came up, Sir ...

He hands Walker a list. Walker takes it; his face shadows.

WALKER

Fine ... I'll assign them ... But  
we'll need five more.

(The lieutenant  
tows off the Nazi.)

Get him down to headquarters, and  
even if it hurts take good care of  
him.

GI

But good!

The scene cuts to WALKER'S DUGOUT as, lighting a candle,  
Walker sinks wearily to a seat. He almost dozes off, but  
the list of names catches his eye. He tries to avoid them,  
but can't. He lifts a bottle from under his box, pours  
himself a drink and starts checking off the names ... The  
scene then cuts to WARNICKI'S DUGOUT where entering  
leadenly, Warnicki is greeted by the others.

AD LIBS

Hi, Steve -- Saved you some turkey,  
Sarge.

Warnicki silently slumps to his corner and concentrates on  
his victrola.

WARNICKI

(with a sudden growl)

Don't want any ...

The boys, taken aback by this moroseness, exchange glances. Ernie looks at Warnicki steadily.

WAYNE

(muttering)

Sure wish he'd get to hear Junior.

Dondaro, meanwhile, has stolen across to his duffle-bag and withdrawn a small bottle of "Aphrodisiac." He sniffs the "ambrosia" ecstatically and secretively dabs some behind his ears. -- Thereupon, in a fairly close view, favoring WAYNE and GROSS, we see the latter taking off his socks as the pungent "fragrance" penetrates to their corner. Gross sniffs and looks over at Wayne. Wayne also sniffing, looks over at Gross. They eye each other suspiciously, then down at the sock -- but shake their heads. That's a "Chanel #5" from another bottle. Sniffing, they look around at the others. -- The others have also begun sniffing and eyeing each other suspiciously. Their eyes focus toward innocent Ernie.

ERNIE

(grinning wanly)

It's not me ...

WAYNE

Klk! Klk!

But as Dondaro swiftly slithers out, their faces light up. The candle splutters and begins to die. Ernie rises and yawns.

ERNIE

Well, I guess I better turn in.  
Good night, fellows.

GI'S

Thanks for the merry Christmas,  
Ernie.

He goes amid mumbled "Good nights" and "Merry Christmases." The scene then cuts to the HILLSIDE. As Ernie comes out, hunched against the cold, Dondaro can be seen disappearing down the road. Ernie heads toward Walker's dugout ... The distant roll of artillery is heard. -- Dondaro slithers down the village street and slips into the wine shop.

Inside WALKER'S DUGOUT: Hollow-eyed with fatigue, Walker sits huddled over his papers. The candle flickers fitfully, casting strange shadows on the dank walls. There's a great loneliness about this man as he sits there in this little hollow tomb carved in this foreign hillside. Ernie is caught by it as he enters. Walker glances up. Ernie goes to him with a second joint of turkey he has saved for him.

ERNIE

(handing it to him)

Merry Christmas, Bill.

WALKER  
(taking it)  
Merry Christmas, Ernie.

His eyes shadow; he looks away; then, as if remembering,  
holds up the bottle.

WALKER  
Night cap?

ERNIE  
Don't mind ...

Ernie sinks to a seat. There's only the soft gurgling of the  
bottle in the silence. They lift their cups and drink. It's  
murderous stuff.

ERNIE  
(coughing)  
What's this -- a secret weapon?

WALKER  
(smiling)  
Grappa. Italian moonshine. A Purple  
Heart with every third drink.

ERNIE  
(smiling)  
I'd rather have some good  
Albuquerque sunshine ...

WALKER  
(wistfully)  
It must be pretty nice in New  
Mexico this time of the year ...

ERNIE  
Sure is ...

WALKER  
Always wanted to get out West --  
Someday -- maybe--

ERNIE  
If you do, look us up. That girl and  
I will show you how it's done ...  
You married?

WALKER  
(filling his cup)  
Well, yes and no ... She wanted one  
thing; I wanted another ... She  
walked out ... Chapter closed ...

He drinks, shudders as the drink goes down. Ernie fingers  
his cup. Again the silence; only the wail of the wind and

the distant rumble of artillery.

WALKER

... Names ... I've been crossing out  
old names ... putting new names in ...  
(he looks up and laughs)  
You're not the only writer in this  
bunch ... I've been writing too ...

He checks himself, Ernie glances up, understanding the  
burden on Walker's heart.

WALKER

Jones -- Peterson -- McCarthy --  
Spidofsky -- Smith ... Dear Mrs.  
Smith, your son died bravely today  
on the ...

He fills his cup again. But doesn't drink. There is a short  
laugh from him -- but there's no laughter in his eyes.

WALKER

And the new kids coming up. ...  
That's what gets you ... Some of  
them have just got fuzz on their  
faces ...

We get a close view of ERNIE listening to him.

WALKER'S VOICE

... They don't know what it's all  
about ... And they're scared to  
death ...

We see them together.

WALKER

... I know it's not my fault they  
get killed but I get so I feel like  
a murderer ...  
(Bitterly)  
I hate to look at 'em -- the new  
ones ...  
(Then, almost mockingly)  
Drink up, Ernie ... Here's to Faid  
Pass ... Salerno ... Anzio  
beachhead ...  
(He drinks)  
Geez, I'm tired ...

ERNIE

You better try and get some sleep.

WALKER

(laughing)  
That reminds me of W. C. Fields'  
sure cure for insomnia. Get lots of

sleep.

Silence ... The candle flickers. Ernie sips at his cup.

WALKER

(fighting sleep)

.... Names and addresses ... and  
hills to be taken ... You'd be  
simply amazed at the number of hills  
still to be taken ...

(suddenly looking  
up at Ernie)

Tell me, Ernie, why the devil don't  
you go home?

ERNIE

(looking into his cup)

I've often asked myself.

WALKER

If only we could create something  
good out of all this energy and all  
these men ...

(His voice trails off)

They're the best, Ernie ... the  
best ...

The view draws closer to Ernie as he stares into his cup.

ERNIE

(quietly)

Yip! They live in a world the other  
world'll never know ... Even the Air  
Force ... Up there they approach  
death differently. When they die  
they're well-fed and clean-shaven ...

(Wryly)

If that's any comfort ...

(He stares ahead  
deeply moved.)

But the GI ... he lives so miserable  
and dies so miserable, you just ...

He turns toward Walker, stops and smiles gently. Walker is  
asleep in deep exhaustion, head on the table. Ernie rises  
and puts a blanket around Walker's shoulders. He looks down  
at the sleeping man -- then snuffs out the candle ...  
There's the distant roar of artillery as the scene fades  
out.

[H]

The HILLSIDE fades in as Dondaro is returning in the pitch  
before dawn, a happy relaxed expression on his face. He  
furtively steals past Walker's dugout. Walker, shivering,  
comes out in the bone-chilling morning.

WALKER

Dondaro!

As Dondaro shakily approaches, Walker looks him over keenly, but his tone is amiability itself. The sky's begun to gray.

WALKER

(smiling)

Have a nice time?

Expecting a lacing, Dondaro is taken aback by Walker's friendly tone. He nods, puzzled.

WALKER

(still friendly)

Always like to see one of my men get some relaxation ...

(Almost intimately)

Y'know, Dondaro, it would give me a great deal of personal pleasure ...

Dondaro begins to beam. After all, the Cap's human. Maybe he'd like a "telephone number" too ... Walker's sudden cold tones knife him out of his daydreams.

WALKER

(incisively)

...to break every bone in your body!

Goin' off down there was one thing!

Up here it's another!

(Dondaro gulps;

Walker blazes.)

Now get out! Before I kick the--

Dondaro hastily starts to scoot. Heads have begun to stick out of the dugouts to listen to this lashing.

WALKER

Wait!

(Dondaro halts.)

Report to Sergeant Warnicki. Tell him you're going to dig latrines for every man in this company from here to Rome! Nice deep ones.

Dondaro scoots. The GI's' faces light with delightful anticipation. A sudden shell-burst slams over as the scene dissolves to a view of the HILLSIDE, where, wielding a pickaxe, Dondaro has dug about two feet of trench. He's tired, disgusted, grimy.

GROSS' VOICE

You're lucky, Dondaro. You're learning a trade.

The angle widens to include several GI's ribbing him.

DONDARO

When this war's over, I'm gonna  
write a book exposin' this Army.

WAYNE

(leaning over  
to Dondaro)

Hey, Dondaro, tell me confidentially,  
was it worth it?

DONDARO

(his eyes melting)

Klk! Klk!

He digs with renewed vigor. Suddenly there's a deep all-encompassing drone in the sky -- a far-away surge of doom-like sound. They all look up, crying out:

GI'S

Hey, look! Look!

In a rising crescendo, a vast armada of planes approaches, wave on wave, blacking out the sky. Hurrying out of his DUGOUT, Walker swiftly looks at his watch, looks at the sky, and starts shouting to Warnicki--

WALKER

(crisp; businesslike)

Okay, Steve! Let's go!

WARNICKI

(shouting to the men)

Okay, men. This is what you've been  
waiting for! Okay, men -- let's go!  
On the double!

The GI's start running up excitedly, falling into their formations ready to start out.

ERNIE'S VOICE

(heard over the scenes)

General Eisenhower had made his  
decision. Bomb the monastery. If we  
have to choose ... between  
destroying a famous building and  
sacrificing our men's lives ... then  
our men's lives count infinitely  
more. And -- here was one of the  
grim ironies of war -- the very  
rubble of the monastery became a  
fortress for the Nazis and they  
stopped us cold. We were right back  
where we started from.

We see the MONASTERY. A bomb explodes on the abbey. Then three -- then six -- Then all hell. -- The hillside seems to lift. -- We see that the entire company is elated at the

pastng the Monastery is getting.

AD LIBS

On the button!  
Paste 'em one for me!  
That's the old haymaker!  
Hit 'em on the kisser!

Tons of bombs pulverize the monastery! The bombardment is volcanic. Then in a long view directed toward the STONE HOUSE and DEFILE we see the men excitedly moving out into the defile in a general attack. A GI salutes the statue in the niche as he passes.

GI

So long, St. Chris. We won't be  
seein' you no more.

Next we get a series of views showing the withdrawal of the troops from the attack on Cassino. Limping back, our tanks slowly grind past several overturned, still burning, tanks. -- This cuts to WARNICKI'S DUGOUT as, beaten, scarcely able to breathe, our GI's stumble in and flop down in exhaustion.

Several are missing; Wayne and Gross are gone ... Dondaro lifts his head and looks around.

DONDARO

Warnicki -- ain't he back?

This cuts to the HILLSIDE, near the DEFILE. Walker moves tensely about, hunched in his rain coat. His nerve-strained face keeps looking toward the mist-filled defile. But there is no one. Only the swirling mist. His lips tighten ... He keeps pacing ...

Outside the GI's DUGOUT, three GI's look up very much concerned, toward Walker.

FIRST GI

Better take him some coffee ... and  
keep your eye on him, too.

One of them, Babyface Pete, starts toward Walker with a pot of steaming coffee.

SECOND GI

(to another GI)  
When are we hittin' 'em again?

GI

(glancing at his watch)  
Eighteen hundred.

WALKER stops as Babyface Pete approaches, silently offering him coffee.

WALKER  
(gratefully)  
No, thanks. ...

PETE  
It's hot.

WALKER  
No thanks, Pete.

He continues pacing, keeping his eye on the defile. Babyface moves off behind a boulder and watches Walker. Still pacing, Walker anxiously glances at his watch and then toward the defile. Still only the swirling mist ... -- Hopelessly now, Walker slowly starts back toward the dugout. But suddenly he hears something in the defile. He looks up, his eyes lighting.... And in a distant view of the DEFILE, slowly emerging out of the mist, we see a great leaden, mud-caked figure -- a mass of fatigue and weariness -- Warnicki!

Walker starts to him with a cry of joy ... But the cry fades as he sees the abysmal weariness in Warnicki's face.

WARNICKI  
(tonelessly)  
Tough time gettin' back, sir.

Walker nods, and Warnicki slogs leadenly toward the dugouts.

We get a close shot of WALKER staring after Warnicki. His eyes are filled with pain. Then the scene cuts to WARNICKI'S DUGOUT. Entering, Warnicki slumps down to his corner. He does nothing but sit there for a moment, just breathing. Ayrab sidles up and licks his torn, mud-caked hands. Then, automatically, without thought, Warnicki reaches down for the one comfort that has sustained him so long. His horny blood-torn hands bring the PHONOGRAPH to his knees and habitually, as he has done so often before, his thick fingers fumble at the lever -- the disc revolves -- but now, instead of the usual grating sound, there emerges from it the sweetest, softest, most innocent voice in the world. Junior's childish treble ... and ...

WOMAN'S VOICE  
Come on Junior, say hello to your  
Daddy.

JUNIOR'S VOICE  
(on the phonograph)  
Hello, daddy ... Hello, daddy ...  
Hello, daddy ... Hello, daddy ...  
Hello, daddy ...

The calloused mud-caked hand near the phonograph trembles. The view slowly moves up to WARNICKI'S FACE. And it's a horrible, terrifying thing to see. For this face of rock,

this granite face, this face that has endured every torture and abomination of war, is cracking. Cracking as a child's voice innocently sings on and on--

VOICE

Hello, daddy ... Hello, daddy ...  
Hello, daddy ...

The giant frame of the man seethes with a volcanic emotion; the tears burn out of his eyes. His breath comes in short tortured gasps. And suddenly he can endure no more. He rises and breaks. And it's like a great heart breaking. Not weakly, but like a storm suddenly gone berserk.

WARNICKI

(terrifyingly;  
between gasps)

If it wasn't for them, I'd be home  
with Junior ... I'd be home with  
little Junior. I'll ... I'll kill  
every mother's son of them ... I'll  
kill them!

He lunges fiercely toward the opening.

DONDARO

Grab him!

The phonograph goes on and on ... Springing at him, Waters and Moss try to stop him. But he tosses them aside like chips. -- Tearing out of the dugout, Warnicki bulls wildly toward the defile, tearing past Walker.

WARNICKI

If it wasn't for them ... I'd be  
home with little Junior! If it  
wasn't for them! ... I'll kill 'em!

WALKER

(sharply)

Warnicki! Warnicki!

But Warnicki doesn't hear. He has only one thought. To get at those Nazis who have destroyed so much of his and everyone's happiness. To rip them apart with his own bare hands! Dondaro, coming down from the road, leaps at Warnicki. But Warnicki throws him aside ... -- Walker hurls himself in a football tackle at the frenzied man -- The two men go down in a heap near the ruins of the stone house. But Warnicki lashes himself free. Dondaro now pounces on. And Waters and Moss! But all four can't hold Warnicki in his berserk strength ... From the dugout phonograph continues on ...

WARNICKI

(frothing fiercely)

Little Junior ... Little Junior! Let  
me go! What's the matter with you?

You son of a--

His wildness seizes all of them like a contagion. They battle with him frenziedly, until ... Walker suddenly shoots over four sharp vicious jabs to the button, and Warnicki sags ... They let him down gently ... The phonograph winds down ... stops ... -- Waters and Moss bend over Warnicki ... Walker and Dondaro stand there panting ... Finally they help Warnicki up, but as they do they hear--

WARNICKI'S VOICE

(muttering like a  
gibbering idiot)

... hello, daddy ... hello, daddy  
... hello, daddy ... hello ... Go  
on, Junior ... say hello to daddy  
... hello, daddy, hello, daddy,  
hello, daddy ...

Deeply shaken, Walker fights to keep from turning away. The men look to him for help.

WALKER

(his voice treacherously  
uneven)

Take him to the medics....

But now, as they lead the still gibbering Warnicki off with Ayrab dancing playfully at his shambling feet, a lieutenant swiftly runs up to Walker. (In the background the company is forming for the attack.)

WALKER

(grimly)

All right, men, let's do something  
about that.

ERNIE'S VOICE

The machines had done their best but  
it wasn't enough. Now came the time,  
as it does in every war, for the  
greatest fighting machine of them  
all -- the infantry soldier -- to  
go in and slug it out.

The scene dissolves and is followed by a series of scenes representing the victorious attack of the infantry, concluding with a close view of a SIGNPOST at night. It reads "ROMA" with an arrow pointing up ahead. Then we see the ROAD TO ROME as a long surge of troops is heading upward toward the capital. There is a spirited victorious swing to their movement. The moonlight reflects on their helmets, their rifles, their armor. The sound of battle is faint, intermittent, far to the north ...

In the midst of these fresh buoyant troops is Ernie. He slogs along with them, an older man, reflectively noting

their swing, their excited gum chewing. Snatches of conversation drift around him.

ERNIE

Where you from, Joe?

GI

Louisiana.

ERNIE

Louisiana? Good.

GI

(looking back,  
smiling)

Cassino looks a lot better from  
this side.

AD LIBS

All away to Rome!

I got a good telephone number there!

As Ernie tiredly smiles, he sees someone off the road. And on the ROADSIDE, with the moonlight on the HILLS in the background we see a GI who looks as though he's been thru battle. Ernie approaches him.

ERNIE

Hey fellows, do you know where the  
18th Infantry is?

GI

This is it.

ERNIE

C Company--?

GI

What's left of it.

He nods over his shoulder. Ernie starts up along a narrow trail in the direction of his nod. We then see him coming to a GLEN where lying about, mud-begrimed and weary, are several GI's of our company, among them Babyface and Moss. They are exhausted, but there is a certain sense of elation over their victory. One of the men is wearily playing a harmonica to himself. As Ernie comes up, he is greeted by one or two--

AD LIBS

Hiya, Ernie--

Welcome to this side of Cassino--

Where you been, Ernie?

ERNIE

Hiya, boys -- Finally made it.

Covertly he counts heads as he looks around to see which of the GI's of his company are still there; which are gone.

GI

(smiling)

Guys moving up the road look kind of chipper, don't they, Ernie?

ERNIE

Sure do!

They look toward the troops on the main road, and next, in the background, a long line of GI's can be seen marching up the road to Rome, their helmets glinting in the moonlight. -- Ernie continues down the line.

GI

Hi, Ernie.

ERNIE

Hi, boys.

FIRST GI

(not bitterly)

Yeah -- we kick the door open and them guys make the grand entrance.

SECOND GI

Let 'em have their fun -- they're still young.

ERNIE

Got an extra chair here? Haven't you eaten that dog yet?

He suddenly stops as across their vision up the hills on the opposite side of the road, comes a slow line of mules winding their way down. The mules bear a burden slung across their pack saddles, the nature of which is indistinct.

The MULE TRAIL is now seen, and so is the burden the mules are carrying.

They are dead bodies lashed, belly down, across the saddles. The stiffened legs stick out awkwardly. The mules are slowly led toward a cowshed just off the road.

The boys silently watch the mules being led toward a cowshed in the background. The line of troops marching toward Rome has passed on. GI's unlash the bodies and lift them from the pack saddles and lay them, one after another, in the shadow of the cowshed's stone wall.

GI

(looking toward the mule trail; suddenly, quietly)

It's Dondaro....

They all look up, and we see the MULE TRAIL, from their viewpoint. Slowly, carefully, a GI is leading a mule with its dead burden down the trail. As he leads the mule toward the cowshed, we see that it's Dondaro. He looks half-dead himself. Gently, he unlashes the body and slides it down the mule. For a moment the dead man is stood on his feet. In the half light he looks merely like a sick man standing there leaning against Dondaro. -- Then we see the GROUP.

BABYFACE

(in a half whisper)

It's the Cap'n ...

They watch Dondaro lay Walker's body on the ground in the shadows and sit down near him. -- Then we see, from another angle, Dondaro sitting there staring at Walker. Slowly some of the men across the road in the background stir and go toward Walker's body, one by one, Ernie with them. Several remain behind.

The men trail slowly up, pausing a little distance away from Walker's body. Then one goes slowly forward and looks down at Walker's body. Ernie watches them.

GI

God damn it!

That's all he says and walks away. And then another GI comes up.

SECOND GI

God damn it to hell, anyways!

He looks down for a moment and then he too turns and goes. And now a third comes up -- an officer and looks down into Walker's face and speaks to him directly, as though he were alive.

OFFICER

I'm sorry, old man.

And he turns away. Finally, Babyface files up, and we see WALKER'S BODY, the view including DONDARO and ERNIE. Dondaro remains immobile. The Babyface runner comes up and speaks, not in a whisper, but awfully tenderly.

BABYFACE

I sure am sorry, sir.

And he too goes. Ernie watches, deeply moved. And now Dondaro slowly reaches out and takes Walker's dead hand into his own and stares intently into his captain's dead face, for what seems to be a long time. And he never utters a word ...

Finally Dondaro puts the hand down and reaches over, gently

straightening the points of the captain's shirt collar. Then, tenderly, he sort of rearranges the tattered edges of the uniform around Walker's wound. -- And this is the gesture that breaks Ernie completely, as we see him closely. He turns away sharply to hide his emotion, and fighting for control, he walks away from the scene, toward the moonlit trail leading to the main road .... leaving Dondaro and Walker in the shadowed background.... The scene then cuts to an OFFICER.

OFFICER

(quietly)

All right, men -- let's go.

And finally against the background of white wooden crosses gleaming in the moonlight, we see the troops marching onward to Rome. Ernie turns, walks after them. They go off into the distance, becoming silhouettes in the background, and the film fades out as Ernie concludes:

ERNIE

That is our war and we will carry it with us as we go from one battleground to another until it is all over. We will win. I hope we can rejoice with victory -- but humbly -- and that all together we will try, try out of the memory of our anguish, to reassemble our broken world into a pattern so firm and so fair that another great war can never again be possible.

(After a pause)

For those beneath the wooden crosses there is nothing we can do except perhaps to pause and murmur "Thanks, Pal."