

# **THE GERMAN LIEUTENANT**

A

Screenplay

by

Stanley Kubrick

&

Richard Adams

NOTE: All German parts spoken with a German accent.

FADE IN:

DOCUMENTARY SEQUENCE - EXCERPTS FROM NAZI PROPAGANDA FILMS  
AND NEWSREELS

Music background of Nazi marches and songs. Narrator traces  
blameless and invincible history of the Third Reich.

- a. MASS RALLIES - THE FUEHRER GESTICULATES
- b. CHAMBERLAIN AND HITLER - MUNICH
- c. ANNEXATION OF AUSTRIA
- d. GERMAN TROOPS IN VIENNA
- e. INVASION OF POLAND
- f. INVASION OF FRANCE

As the film nears the end, the CAMERA PULLS BACK. A dozen  
German officers are scattered in groups around a large day  
room.

Their faces reflect a mixture of emotions. Some seem lost in  
a kind of dream-like reverie, as if to say, "Ah, yes, those  
were the days." Others appear mildly resentful. A few are  
plainly bored. One dozes.

CLOSE - LT. KRAUS

A faint smile of mocking cynicism.

CLOSE - LT. DIETRICH

Deeply concentrated on film, troubled.

A meticulous corporal nurses the flickering 16mm projector,  
as the film ends. The lights snap on.

FAVORING LT. DIETRICH AND LT. KRAUS

We see a mask of non-committal indifference cover the  
emotions seen in the dark. They stretch and light  
cigarettes. As the projectionist changes the reel, there is  
a low murmur of conversation around the room.

LT. KRAUS  
(turns around to  
projectionist)  
What are we going to see tonight,  
Willy?

PROJECTIONIST  
"Romance on the Danube," sir.

LT. KRAUS  
(mock seriousness)  
But we've seen that seven  
times. Why don't you get us a  
Betty Grable picture?

ANOTHER OFFICER

Don't be so impatient, Oskar.  
That's all you'll be seeing pretty  
soon.

CLOSE - LT. DIETRICH

He pays no attention to conversation and seems depressed.

SHOT - GROUP

Murmur of officers' laughter. A SERGEANT enters. He salutes  
in front of Lts. Dietrich and Kraus.

SERGEANT  
The car is ready, sir.

LT. KRAUS  
So soon?  
(rises with Lt. Dietrich)  
Well, gentlemen, I hope you have a  
splendid evening.

They exit as the romantic strains of the Blue Danube Waltz  
rattle out of the projector.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LONG SHOT OF BARRACKS - 10TH PARATROOPER REGIMENT - DAY

Before the war the buildings were a school. They are  
shuttered, two-story stone barracks in two rows along a brick  
street. In the playing fields behind the barracks are  
parachute training apparatus.

At the end of the street is the headquarters building. There  
is a large Swastika over the door and a staff car and courier  
bicycles parked outside.

SUPERIMPOSED TITLES:

"HEADQUARTERS 10TH AIRBORNE REGIMENT"

They fade out -- then:

"THE LAST WEEKS OF THE WAR"

Lts. Dietrich and Kraus enter a camouflaged Volkswagen jeep  
and are driven away.

DISSOLVE TO:

MAIN TITLES

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LONG SHOT DOWN ROAD - DAY

Two wrecked trucks burn with an oily, yellow-black flame.

Along each shoulder of the road a column of infantry trudges  
wearily toward the camera. They carry their weapons slung  
over their shoulders and their machine guns high across their  
backs.

As the left hand column reaches the burning trucks, they skirt out on the road to avoid the heat and then move back on the shoulder.

A dot far down the road moves toward the camera. As it nears, it is seen to be the camouflaged jeep.

SLOW PAN - JEEP, TROOPS, BURNING TRUCKS

The driver is in front and Lieutenants Dietrich and Kraus are in the back. The troops pay no attention and do not look either right or left. Their heads are hunched on their shoulders and steam rises in the cold air from their warm bodies. The driver eases the jeep past them. The passengers glance at the troops and the burning trucks and at two men hanging from a tree.

SHOT - TWO DESERTERS HANGING FROM TREE

There are cardboard signs hanging across their chests indicating their crime.

EXT. ROAD - SHOT FOLLOWING THE JEEP - DAY

The road is elevated above wet fields on both sides. The driver slows as he nears a crowd of mixed soldiers and civilians, many obviously refugees. The jeep creeps along until motioned to a halt by a black-uniformed SS SERGEANT with a swastika armband. The jeep stops right in front of him.

DRIVER AND SERGEANT

SS SERGEANT  
(giving an order)  
Identification check. Pull into  
line on the left.

The driver looks around to Lt. Dietrich.

LT. DIETRICH  
Sergeant...

SS SERGEANT  
Yes, Oberlieutenant!

LT. DIETRICH  
We are overdue in Karlstadt already  
with these muddy roads.

SS SERGEANT  
You can move to the front of the  
line, sir. The Captain can help  
you.

PAN SHOT - THE CHECKPOINT

An SS CAPTAIN is at the head of the column questioning each person in turn. Behind him two corporals with SMG'S lounge idly against the fenders of the truck.

Herded into the back of the truck are about a dozen men in

uniform or civilian clothes. They are dejected and scared.

On a signal from the captain, the corporals move in on a man, search him and shove him on the back of the truck.

The captain waves up the next man just as the jeep eases up to the front of the line.

The SS officer looks up with mild interest as Lt. Dietrich gets out, but goes back to his questioning of a private.

Dietrich and Kraus light cigarettes and watch.

SHOT OF CHECKPOINT - FAVORING SS CAPTAIN AND SIGNALMAN

SS CAPTAIN

Your papers.

SIGNALMAN

Here they are, sir. Private Erich Hovlund, 7746539, the 124th infantry.

SS CAPTAIN

Where is your unit and why aren't you with them?

SIGNALMAN

(without hesitation)

I believe they're at Wurtzburg. I'm trying to reach them.

SS CAPTAIN

You believe? Why haven't you reached them? I see no leave authorization.

SIGNALMAN

I lost the company last night near Gretsburg. I took the wrong turn coming from filling my canteen and couldn't catch up in the dark.

SS CAPTAIN

It must have been very dark. You seem to have strayed off your course for Wurtzburg. However...

(tapping the papers)

You seem right on course for your home in Koenigshofen.

SIGNALMAN

No, sir. I'm trying to get to Wurtzburg.

SS CAPTAIN

Undoubtedly, but we'll hold you for the moment until we can check with your unit.

(he turns toward the truck)

Corporal Hartl, put him in the truck.

VARIOUS SHOTS - ACTION SEQUENCE

As the corporal starts forward, the private suddenly jumps back into the crowd and dodges back down the road.

The crowd stands quietly as he pushes them aside and knocks one down in his hurry.

The two corporals race after him. They cannot fire because of the crowd.

The private jumps down the embankment to avoid the sergeant heading him off.

He starts across a muddy field towards a small woods.

The machine gunner on the truck snaps his bolt several times and the ejected rounds clatter on the truck roof in the silence.

Many of the crowd squat down. The gunner pauses what seems a long time as the private rushes desperately for the woods.

He has almost made it when the gunner squeezes off a long burst which follows the man slowly at first, then catches up, holds him a long moment and stops abruptly. The last rounds crash loudly in the woods as the man skids in the mud on his face and lies still.

VARIOUS SHOTS OF THE CROWD

The crowd watches the dead body in silence. They get back to their feet. Several shuffles back to the rear of the line.

SS CAPTAIN AND LIEUTENANTS DIETRICH AND KRAUS

SS CAPTAIN  
(gesturing to his men)  
Keep them in line back there. And  
get the body.

LT. KRAUS  
(unemotionally)  
Sad but stupid. He didn't weigh the  
chances. A man can't outrun a  
machine gun.

LT. DIETRICH  
(depressed indifference)  
He was obviously a deserter or else  
he wouldn't have run.

SS CAPTAIN  
(approaching)  
Yes, Oberlieutenant. You wish to  
pass through.

LONG SHOT - MUDDY FIELD

The two corporals are splashing across the muddy field for the body of the dead man.

THREE SHOT

Dietrich watches.

LT. KRAUS  
(with slight irony)  
You have an exciting job here,  
Captain.

The corporals have reached the body and are dragging it back.

SS CAPTAIN  
(following his gaze)  
Yes. That is regrettable. But they  
think the war is over.

LT. DIETRICH  
Yes, we wish clearance. These muddy  
roads are making us late in  
Karlstadt.

SS CAPTAIN  
What is the nature of your business  
in Karlstadt?

LT. DIETRICH  
Of a personal nature, sir.

SS CAPTAIN  
I'm sorry but I must have a more  
explicit answer.

LT. DIETRICH  
We are going to visit the wife of a  
comrade, sir.

SS CAPTAIN  
(dirty laugh)  
Nothing to be ashamed of,  
lieutenant! We all need a little  
relaxation now and then.

LT. DIETRICH  
(coldly)  
Do you wish to see our papers, sir?

Dietrich and Kraus exchange glances while the papers are  
scrutinized.

SS CAPTAIN  
These are in order. I am sorry to  
have detained you, lieutenant.

They exchange salutes and drive off in the jeep.

DISSOLVE TO:

STREET IN KARLSTADT - LONG SHOT - DAY

Complete ruin. Half shells of houses still standing. The  
street is plaster dust, broken glass and rubble.

Two boys are throwing stones at the house while a younger

girl sits on the curb watching and shouting comments at them.

The jeep noses around the corner and haltingly moves through the rubble in low gear.

SHOT - JEEP AND CHILDREN

The jeep pulls up and Kraus and Dietrich get out, slamming the doors. The children have been watching them in silence all this time.

LT. DIETRICH  
(to the children)  
Do any of you know where  
Elizabethstrasse 14 is?

1ST BOY  
(he points)  
That's it right in front of you.

Dietrich looks at the house which is a burned-out hulk with the top floor completely gone. He starts to climb over the rubble to go in.

2ND BOY  
Nobody is home. I wouldn't go in,  
sir.

LITTLE GIRL  
(importantly)  
I went in looking for Pauli and they  
bit me. The rats. Two big ones.

She sticks out her leg. The bites are wrapped in a dirty cloth.

LT. DIETRICH  
(gently)  
Do you know where Frau Koenig has  
gone? She used to live here.

The children shake their heads.

LT. DIETRICH  
She was tall and dark.

The children look dumbly at each other.

LT. DIETRICH  
She had a boy, Klaus -- about your  
age.

One of the boys throws quickly at a rat in the rubble.

2ND BOY  
Did you see him, Hans? I almost got  
him.

1ST BOY  
(suddenly remembering)  
Yes, sir, I remember her! She is  
safe but I don't know where she  
lives now. We're the only ones left

on this street after last week's  
raid.

His concern for Frau Koenig satisfied, he allows the  
depressing condition of the children to penetrate fully.

LT. DIETRICH  
Can I give you some money?

1ST BOY  
(politely)  
No thank you, sir. No one wants it  
around here.  
(notices package under  
Dietrich's arm)  
Have you got any vodka?

LT. KRAUS  
You can't be over ten. You don't  
drink it?

1ST BOY  
Sometimes, sir. But mostly we trade  
it for food. The soldiers like it.

LITTLE GIRL  
We used to get turnips at the  
hospital but the sisters went away.

Dietrich hands the boy the bottle wrapped in paper.

1ST BOY  
Thank you, sir.

LT. KRAUS  
That's the best Yugoslavian  
slivowitz. Make sure they give you  
a lot of food for it.  
(he musses the little  
boy's hair)  
Let's go.

1ST BOY  
Thank you, sir. Heil Hitler, sir!

Dietrich turns back, pauses, then nods vacantly to the boy.

LIEUTENANTS DIETRICH AND KRAUS - FOLLOW SHOT

as they walk slowly back to jeep parked some distance away.

LT. KRAUS  
(trying to cheer up  
friend)  
They'll be all right. Children  
always land on their feet and  
forget.

LT. DIETRICH  
Yes, I suppose so.

LT. KRAUS  
Come... come... Paul. We need a

drink. What do you say?  
(no reply)  
We'll go to the Cafe Wein and maybe  
we find out where Anna is.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LONG SHOT, STREET PARTIALLY DAMAGED BY BOMBS - DUSK

Dietrich and Kraus get out of the jeep. Dietrich pulls out his satchel. He points out where he wants the driver to wait.

MEDIUM SHOT - DIETRICH AND KRAUS

They start down the stairs into a basement cafe. A LUFTWAFFE LIEUTENANT stumbles up the stairs, drunk. He bumps into Dietrich, slips to one knee. Dietrich pulls him up roughly.

LT. DIETRICH  
(brusquely)  
You are drunk, Lieutenant. Your uniform is filthy. I suggest you go back inside and get yourself cleaned up.

LUFTWAFFE LT.  
(jerking away)  
Your pretty uniform may impress the girls but uniforms are going out of style quicker than German heroes.  
(staggers up the sidewalk)  
Drunkenness is in style, Herr Oberlieutenant. And your fine medals, will they get you a high position in the coming Fourth Reich?

LT. DIETRICH  
Lieutenant, you are making a fool out of yourself.

LUFTWAFFE LT.  
(salutes drunkenly)  
Go straight to hell, Herr Oberlieutenant!

During this exchange the driver has come up.

JEEP DRIVER  
(to Dietrich)  
Shall I have him placed under arrest, sir?

CLOSE - DIETRICH

He is greatly agitated and obviously upset.

LT. DIETRICH  
No, let him go.  
(emotionally indignant)  
Disgusting to see an officer make such a fool of himself.

LT. KRAUS  
You're right -- but he is drunk.

LT. DIETRICH  
That is no excuse.  
(spoken with child-like  
conviction)  
He should know that the uniform is  
nothing but what the man inside  
brings to it.

LT. KRAUS  
Of course, Paul. Let's go inside.

They enter the cafe.

INT. CAFE - VARIOUS SHOTS OF THE CAFE - EVENING

Smoke, noise, singing, music and laughter. Several men are  
already passed out on the floor, their heads resting on their  
arms.

PAGE MISSING

She kisses Kraus passionately and laughs. Kraus won't let  
her go. She makes a mock protest and kisses him again.

LT. KRAUS  
(as if incredulous at her  
passion)  
What have you been drinking?

They sit.

LISE  
(hysterically cheerful)  
Everything, and plenty of it. But  
that's not why I'm so happy. Four  
days without a bombing. And a  
Colonel told me the Americans are so  
close there won't be any more.

LT. KRAUS  
Aha! I knew there was a master plan  
behind our retreat.

Lise laughs, then screws her face into a thoughtful pose.  
She rests her chin in her hand.

LISE  
How close are they?

LT. KRAUS  
(very serious)  
I don't know exactly but I heard  
they captured an American officer  
outside the Cafe, yesterday. He was  
nailing up a sign saying, "Off  
Limits."

LISE  
How can you tease about such things,  
Oskar?

LT. KRAUS  
Who's teasing?

LISE  
You may joke all you like but I  
think we're in for a hard time.

LT. DIETRICH  
(sullenly)  
You have nothing to worry about.  
Your talents will never go  
unappreciated.

Stops angrily, her mood changes to icy dislike.

LISE  
Well, well... the high and mighty  
Oberlieutenant Dietrich is finally  
joining the party.

LT. DIETRICH  
One never likes to interrupt such  
witty and brilliant conversation.

LISE  
We will see just how high and mighty  
Herr Oberlieutenant is when the  
Americans get here.

LT. DIETRICH  
(flushing anger)  
Just what did you mean by that  
remark?

LISE  
Nothing, just wondering whether you  
plan to sell apples or sweep the  
streets?

LT. DIETRICH  
(rises to leave)  
Go to hell you ignorant little  
whore.

LT. KRAUS  
(grabs Dietrich's arm)  
Come, come, children. We are here  
to have a good time. Let's not  
spoil everything.

CLOSE - LT. DIETRICH

Eyes downcast, his anger changes into self-disgust.

CLOSE - LISE

Regains her composure and realizes how deeply she has hurt  
Dietrich's pride. Brushing back her hair with a careless  
gesture, she smiles.

LISE  
I apologize, Paul. It's just that

you made me angry with that remark  
about...

LT. KRAUS  
(interrupts)  
Certainly... all just a big  
misunderstanding. Everyone's  
friends again. Nobody's angry.  
Come on, Paul, sit down.

They all sit again.

LT. DIETRICH  
I'm sorry, Lise.

LISE  
Oh, forget it. Nothing lost.

LT. KRAUS  
I propose a toast. To the three of  
us, Paul Dietrich, Lise and Oskar  
Kraus, three who have survived  
twelve years of madness, each in  
their own way!!

LISE  
I'll drink to that!

All drink. They all appear to have a few moments of private  
thought. Then Lise leans forward to Kraus, confidentially.

LISE  
(nostalgically)  
It's really lost, isn't it?

LT. KRAUS  
(smiles)  
Of course! And you can thank heaven  
for that.

LISE  
How long until the end?

LT. KRAUS  
A week, maybe two at the most. If  
it isn't over by then, it will be  
the Americans against the Russians.

LISE  
(a bit drunkenly)  
It's hard to believe it's really  
over. I was just a kid when it  
started. We were all just kids.  
(sudden change of tone)  
You know what I look forward to most  
is soap. Soap and hot water.  
Scalding hot water and soap.

LT. KRAUS  
(pseudo-Valentino)  
You don't have to wait until then.  
I have some soap and some matches.  
Let's go to your place and I'll give

you a bath.

LISE

(laughs and kisses him)  
I'll think about that offer but  
right now how would you like to  
dance?

LT. KRAUS

At your service, madame.

LT. DIETRICH

Before you two love birds disappear,  
I want to ask Lise if she knows  
where Anna is.

LISE

Anna Koenig?

LT. DIETRICH

Yes.

LISE

She was in here just yesterday  
looking for a place. She was bombed  
out.

LT. DIETRICH

Yes, I know. Do you know where she  
is now?

LISE

(frowning to aid her  
memory)

Yes, I think I remember. She took a  
room from one of the girls.  
Kirchenstrasse... yes,  
Kirchenstrasse! Number... twenty-  
seven.

LT. DIETRICH

Kirchenstrasse, twenty-seven.

LISE

That's it.

LT. KRAUS

I'll come with you, Paul.

LT. DIETRICH

No, please... I'd rather go myself.  
(forces a grin)  
Besides, Lise could use a good bath.

LISE

(concerned)

Has something happened?

LT. DIETRICH

Her husband was reported killed  
yesterday. I have to break the news  
to her.

(a few seconds pass)

Well, perhaps I'll see you all  
later.

He exits. A man in civilian clothes (GESTAPO AGENT) stands  
up at the next table and follows him outside.

EXT. STAIRS TO CAFE AND STREET - NIGHT

There is a mist in the air. Dietrich stops at the head of  
the stairs and takes a deep breath. The man in civilian  
clothes appears behind him in the doorway.

GESTAPO AGENT  
One moment, please, Lieutenant.

LT. DIETRICH  
Yes, what can I do for you?

He notices a drawn Luger in the man's hand.

GESTAPO AGENT  
(flashing card)  
You are under arrest for being a  
party to treasonous propaganda and  
making defeatist and disloyal  
statements.

LT. DIETRICH  
You must be joking.

GESTAPO AGENT  
I assure you I'm not.

LT. DIETRICH  
But then this is completely  
ridiculous.

GESTAPO AGENT  
What is the name of your friend  
inside?

LT. DIETRICH  
What do you want that for?

GESTAPO AGENT  
Be kind enough to answer my  
question.

LT. DIETRICH  
I don't know who you mean.

GESTAPO AGENT  
The officer you were seated with.

LT. DIETRICH  
I'm afraid I don't know him. I was  
just sharing a table.

GESTAPO AGENT  
And the girl?

LT. DIETRICH  
She's with him.

GESTAPO AGENT

You have a rare wit, Herr  
Oberlieutenant. We shall see how it  
holds up at headquarters. Start  
walking to the corner, if you  
please.

VARIOUS QUICK CUTS

The agent has laid one hand on Dietrich's arm. Suddenly  
Dietrich stomps heavily backwards on the agent's foot and  
ankle hurting him painfully and throwing him backwards.

Turning swiftly, Dietrich pounds a vicious, closed-fist, judo  
chop into the side of the agent's neck. Stunned, he drops  
heavily to his hands and knees.

Dietrich gives him a brutal kick in the jaw with his boot,  
tumbling the agent over on his back in collapse.

CLOSE - DIETRICH

Dietrich gets up. His mouth is open and he pants loudly from  
the adrenalin, fear and exertion. His face is in a sweat.  
He looks quickly around. Dietrich pulls the agent to the  
curb and tumbles him under a truck with a push of his boot.

EXT. NIGHT - JEEP PARKED IN AN ALLEY

His jeep is parked in a deserted alley just off a main  
street. Opening the front door, Dietrich finds the driver  
lying on the front seat, wrapped in a blanket and asleep. He  
shakes him.

LT. DIETRICH

Wake up, Soderbaum. Come on, wake  
up.

Soderbaum gets up with a start. It takes his eyes a few  
seconds to focus. Seeing Dietrich, he slides over behind the  
wheel, the blanket still around his shoulders. Dietrich gets  
in. Soderbaum tries twice before getting the cold motor to  
turn over.

INT. FRONT OF JEEP - DRIVER AND DIETRICH

DRIVER

(as jeep rolls out of the  
alley)  
Back to the barracks, sir?

LT. DIETRICH

No, I still must visit Frau Koenig.  
She is living at Kirchenstrasse  
twenty-seven. That's off the  
Hitterstrasse.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NIGHT - STREET OF PARTLY-DAMAGED HOUSES

The jeep pulls to a stop in front of one of the houses.

Dietrich gets out.

LT. DIETRICH  
Wait for me. I'll only be a few  
minutes.

INT. HALLWAY AND STAIRS - NIGHT

The hallway is lit by one light bulb hanging on an extension cord from a chandelier. Trash, dirt and broken plaster are everywhere. Dietrich looks at the directory on the wall. It is obviously out of date, but written on the wall in lipstick with an arrow pointing to apartment 7 is the name "Koenig." He starts up the stairs. The rail is broken off.

INT. LANDING - NIGHT

Dietrich looks closely at one door in the dim light and then at the other. On the second he sees the impression of the number 7 in the chipped paint. He knocks on the door. He waits a moment and knocks again. From within a woman's voice.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Just a moment. Who is it?

LT. DIETRICH  
It's Paul... Paul Dietrich.

The door opens. ANNA is a strikingly attractive woman in her thirties. Her full but slender figure is revealed under a turtle-neck sweater and skirt.

LT. DIETRICH  
Good evening, Anna.

ANNA  
Paul, come in... come in!

INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT

The apartment is shabby with broken furniture, cracked plaster and a single lamp.

LT. DIETRICH  
It's so nice to see you again.

ANNA  
Would you like to keep on your coat.  
There hasn't been any heat.

LT. DIETRICH  
(taking coat off)  
That's perfectly all right. I am  
quite comfortable.

ANNA  
Please sit down.

There is only a couch. They both sit.

LT. DIETRICH  
You're looking very well, Anna.

ANNA  
I'm afraid that's not true. But I'm  
lucky to have a roof over my head.

Several moments of awkward silence.

ANNA  
How did you happen to find me here?

LT. DIETRICH  
One of the girls at the Cantina told  
me.

More awkward moments.

ANNA  
Which girl?

LT. DIETRICH  
Oh, little Lise.

ANNA  
Yes! I know her.

LT. DIETRICH  
You were bombed out.

ANNA  
Yes, fortunately it was a daylight  
raid and we weren't home. I was  
taking little Klaus to the doctor.

LT. DIETRICH  
How is little Klaus?

ANNA  
He is much better now but he had a  
terrible cough. It kept him awake  
at night for a week. You know how  
hard it is to get any medicine or  
find a doctor.

LT. DIETRICH  
Where is he now?

ANNA  
He is sleeping in the other room.  
Would you like to see him?

LT. DIETRICH  
If it won't wake him up.

FOLLOW SHOT - ANNA AND DIETRICH

ANNA  
Nothing wakes him! He sleeps  
through the bombings.

He follows her into the next room.

CLOSE - SICKLY BOY OF EIGHT

He is sleeping in the middle of a large, bare mattress placed on the floor. No other furniture is in the room. A wooden crate and some sheets of newspaper complete the decor.

FOLLOW SHOT

They watch him sleep, then exit.

LT. DIETRICH  
He's a wonderful boy.

ANNA  
Yes, and so much like his father.

Some awkward beats. Dietrich sits down again. Silence. Anna folds her hands in her lap and smiles.

ANNA  
Why have you been such a stranger lately?

LT. DIETRICH  
My duties at the base have kept me very busy.

ANNA  
You and Klaus are such good friends. We talk of you often.

CLOSE - DIETRICH

He tries to find an approach to the subject.

CLOSE - ANNA

She adjusts herself with great composure. Starts to speak, then stops. Thinks a moment and folds her hands.

ANNA  
(matter of factly)  
You are here because of Klaus, aren't you? Something has happened.

LT. DIETRICH  
(haltingly)  
Yes, he is dead. I'm sorry, Anna. I should have been more direct.

ANNA  
It was not difficult to guess the purpose of a visit at this hour.

LT. DIETRICH  
I am terribly sorry, Anna. You have my greatest sympathy.

ANNA  
Yes, it's tragic. But I've been expecting the news ever since he left five days ago.

LT. DIETRICH  
Then you were prepared?

ANNA

Yes, one must. In these times one must be prepared for anything.

As she speaks the last lines she accidentally knocks some change off a table. As she bends to pick up the scattered pfennigs, she begins to cry. Gently at first, then in great wracking sobs.

LT. DIETRICH

I know what Klaus must have meant to you.

ANNA

(crying)

Klaus dead... I almost can't believe it.

LT. DIETRICH

You must remember, he was a brave man he died defending the Fatherland.

ANNA

The Fatherland! What does it matter now? Klaus is dead.

LT. DIETRICH

In these times such men don't live to an old age.

ANNA

But what will I do now? What will I do without him?

LT. DIETRICH

Anna... you must listen to me. I am proud of Klaus and you should be too. Death is not such a tragedy. We will all be dead. A few years more or less should not be that important. What is important is that he died honorably.

ANNA

That's easy for you to say.

LT. DIETRICH

I don't expect you to understand now but someday you will.

Anna gets a handkerchief and blows her nose.

ANNA

(sniffling)

Someday. That's the day we all wait for. Let's have a drink.

LT. DIETRICH

I'd like to, but I'm afraid I must be leaving. If there's anything I can do --

CLOSE - ANNA

She smiles ruefully.

ANNA  
I wish you wouldn't leave just yet.

CLOSE - LT. DIETRICH

Thinks for a moment.

LT. DIETRICH  
Well, I guess I can stay for a  
while.

TWO SHOT

He sits down and watches her walk across the room to get the  
bottle.

ANNA  
I have some Steinhager left. Is  
that all right?

LT. DIETRICH  
Excellent.

ANNA  
Water?

LT. DIETRICH  
Nothing, thanks.

ANNA  
That's the way I like it too.

She returns with two water glasses and the bottle and sits  
down beside him. She pours the Steinhager carefully. They  
both touch glasses.

LT. DIETRICH  
To the memory of Klaus.

They both toss the drinks down. Anna utters a little  
contented sigh as the drink warms her.

ANNA  
At least you are one of the lucky  
ones.

LT. DIETRICH  
(gloomily)  
Yes, I am one of the lucky ones.

A few seconds pass.

ANNA  
(after a pause)  
Another drink!

LT. DIETRICH  
(kindly)

Thank you, but I think I really ought to be going.

ANNA  
Oh, please. Just one more.

LT. DIETRICH  
(smiling)  
All right.

She pours two more. She holds out her glass.

ANNA  
(ironically)  
To the future.

LT. DIETRICH  
(dismally)  
To the future.

They both toss the rather large drinks down in a single motion. She utters another warm sigh.

ANNA  
Talk to me about something.

LT. DIETRICH  
What would you like to talk about.

ANNA  
Oh, I don't know. Tell me a funny story.

He thinks, frowns and gives up.

LT. DIETRICH  
I'm afraid I have a very poor memory for jokes.

ANNA  
It doesn't matter! Let's have another drink.

She starts to pour and he puts his hand over the glass.

ANNA  
Oh, don't be so stiff! Take your hand away.

LT. DIETRICH  
(gently)  
This must be the last one. My driver is sitting outside in the cold.

ANNA  
Well, send him away.

LT. DIETRICH  
Then how will I get back to the base?

ANNA

You can take the bus.

LT. DIETRICH  
It doesn't run at night.

ANNA  
Then you can take it in the morning.

LT. DIETRICH  
(laughs)  
Oh, that's impossible. I have no  
place to spend the night in town.

ANNA  
(as if it were perfectly  
obvious)  
But you can spend it here if you  
like.

LT. DIETRICH  
(quizzical smile)  
I couldn't very well do that.

ANNA  
(matter of fact)  
I don't know why.

LT. DIETRICH  
(awkwardly)  
No, it wouldn't be right.

ANNA  
Of course you could.

LT. DIETRICH  
(smiles)  
No, that's impossible.

ANNA  
(snaps on a battered  
phonograph)  
Before you go then, one dance. And  
no excuses!

LT. DIETRICH  
(listens to the  
sentimental tune)  
All right.

He takes her in his arms and they begin to dance. He holds her lightly and at a respectful distance. The music plays. The smell of her perfume seems to disturb him. He holds holds her further apart.

ANNA  
(smiles)  
You don't have to be afraid. I  
won't break.

Lt. Dietrich holds her closer. She comes closer still.

ANNA  
That song brings back a lot of

memories.

LT. DIETRICH

Yes, funny how music can do that to you.

They dance, each absorbed in their own thoughts.

ANNA

You must think I'm a terrible person.

LT. DIETRICH

Don't be silly.

ANNA

(the drinks make her speak with extra care)

You do. I know that. But then there's so much about Klaus and myself you don't know anything about.

She stops dancing and gives him a significant look.

LT. DIETRICH

(surprised)

Well... yes... I suppose there is.

ANNA

(laughs ironically)

You'd really be surprised if you knew.

LT. DIETRICH

I suppose every marriage has its secrets.

They start dancing again. Then Anna suddenly embraces Paul, her face up to his.

ANNA

Paul, I want you to make love to me.

LT. DIETRICH

What?

ANNA

I want you to make love to me. I want to feel a man in my arms.

LT. DIETRICH

You must be drunk.

ANNA

Oh, do you think a couple of drinks has loosened me up? Paul, take me in your arms and do anything you want.

LT. DIETRICH

If you're not drunk, you must be insane.

ANNA

What's the matter. You like women  
don't you?

LT. DIETRICH

That has nothing to do with it.

ANNA

I think it has everything to do with  
it. I like men and you like women.  
The rest is rather simple, don't you  
think?

LT. DIETRICH

Don't be disgusting. You know what  
I mean.

ANNA

You mean we must respect the dead?

LT. DIETRICH

If you enjoy putting it that way.

ANNA

I'd much rather have you take pity  
on a poor widow.

LT. DIETRICH

Anna!

ANNA

Shall I tell you a secret?

LT. DIETRICH

I've had fifty men better than you  
this year.

LT. DIETRICH

Are you proud of that?

ANNA

I'm not ashamed of it.

LT. DIETRICH

Did Klaus know?

ANNA

I was unfaithful, but I wasn't  
cruel.

LT. DIETRICH

He never suspected?

ANNA

I made him completely happy.

LT. DIETRICH

You're disgusting.

ANNA

(shouts)

You don't have the right to be so

smug. I have brought much more happiness to the world than all you little tin soldier boys playing at being heroes.

Dietrich slaps her heavily in the face and she loses her balance, tripping backward over a lamp.

ANNA  
(holding her face)  
Ha, ha, ha, ha... you've proven your manhood. Bravo, you men are all the same.

Dietrich stands stunned and amazed. He walks slowly back to Anna and helps her to her feet. She brushes her hair back and laughs.

ANNA  
Now, come to bed!

CLOSE - DIETRICH

He stands perfectly still and has a strange look of helplessness.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. LONG SHOT OF 10TH PARATROOPER REGIMENT BARRACKS - DAWN

INT. COL. VON SPERLING'S OFFICE - DAWN

The office is very severe. On one wall is a blackboard. On a second is a map rack.

Behind the colonel's plain desk are two framed pictures; one of Gen. Kurt von Student, the other of Gen. Gerd von Rundstedt.

In the room are the colonel's adjutant, MAJOR GOSSWALD; his executive, LIEUTENANT COLONEL PRAEGER; his operations officer, MAJOR VON BREDOW; CAPTAIN ABTMEYER, Lt. Kraus and Lt. Dietrich. They are seated or standing around a table.

There is a knock on the door and a guard hands a pitcher of steaming coffee to Major Gosswald.

SHOT - FAVORING DIETRICH

Dietrich crosses over to Captain Abtmeyer, a haggard, puffy-looking, giant of a man. They exchange friendly, ironic glances.

LT. DIETRICH  
(under his breath)  
What do you think this is all about?

CAPT. ABTMEYER  
(as if it is common knowledge)  
They are going to pull us back.

They say the front is getting too close.

Dietrich looks down, disgruntled. Captain Abtmeyer offers him a cigarette.

SHOT - COLONEL VON SPERLING

The door is opened by a guard and COLONEL VON SPERLING briskly strides into the room. He is a wiry, tall man in his fifties. Closed-cropped hair and the usual dueling scar. Everyone snaps to attention.

COLONEL VON SPERLING  
Please remain as you were,  
gentlemen.

There is a momentary reshuffling of positions.

COL. VON SPERLING  
I don't think it is necessary to go into detail about the present situation on the West Front. The Fuehrer has promised us victory and we all have, I'm certain, the fullest confidence in the wisdom of his efforts.

CLOSE - LT. DIETRICH

His attention wanders as Col. von Sperling begins. He has heard these morale speeches many times before.

COL. VON SPERLING  
Three days ago, in the retreat from Obernburg, an important railway bridge spanning the Main River was ordered destroyed. Our engineers did not have sufficient time and the bridge was captured by the Americans. They are pouring supplies and motorized units across the bridge 24 hours a day.  
(pauses for emphasis)  
We have received the order to destroy that bridge.

VARIOUS QUICK SHOTS AROUND THE ROOM

Everyone seems mildly stunned. The downcast eyes and skeptical expressions tell the rest.

CLOSE - KRAUS

He looks as if the death sentence had just been pronounced. He looks at Dietrich, incredulously.

CLOSE - DIETRICH

He is the exception. As the details of the mission are expounded, he appears to come to life for the first time. Until now he has appeared mildly depressed with everything and everybody. His face takes on a new vigor and intensity.

He listens closely.

SHOT - INCLUDING ALL

COL. VON SPERLING

We got the order in about midnight.  
I had you aroused as soon as von  
Bredow had worked out the details.  
(he pauses and drinks)  
We drop a special force of 50 men  
tonight by parachute. Captain  
Abtmeyer, you will lead the mission.

There is another pause. Everyone is expecting Capt.  
Abtmeyer to ask some pertinent questions on the raid.

CAPT. ABTMEYER

(explosively)  
Sir, if I can speak my mind?

COL. VON SPERLING

Certainly, Captain.

CAPT. ABTMEYER

This mission is suicidal and futile.  
Not only will it drop the group  
almost in the middle of the American  
Third Army but for absolutely no  
purpose.

COL. VON SPERLING

Yes, go on, Captain.

CAPT. ABTMEYER

It surely can't have escaped you,  
sir, that the war is no more than  
weeks from ending. I can only  
consider this mission a tragic joke  
that will kill off my entire group.

There is a significant silence. The members of the colonel's  
staff pay strict attention to their coffee cups.

COL. VON SPERLING

(slowly)  
Captain, I do not doubt your  
courage. You have proven it many  
times before. However, I want you  
to consider carefully what I say.  
(pauses briefly)  
This mission was ordered by our  
superior headquarters; I make no  
value judgments on orders I receive.  
I see that they are carried out to  
the best of my ability and the full  
resources of my command.  
(softly)  
I expect you to make no judgments  
and do the same. This mission is  
assigned to your group and I order  
you to carry it out.

CAPT. ABTMEYER

(without hesitation)  
And, sir, I must again...

COL. VON SPERLING  
(explosively interrupting)  
Pause a moment and consider all the possibilities, Abtmeyer. Don't let a late night of drinking and a ready mouth get you in trouble. This is no joke.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING ABTMEYER'S FACE

CAPT. ABTMEYER  
(pausing a moment to satisfy von Sperling)  
I realize the full seriousness, Colonel. And I again refuse this order. This is a unique situation in special times.

COL. VON SPERLING  
(after a long pause; to Major Gosswald)  
Call in the guards.

Gosswald crosses, opens the door and calls in the guards. They shuffle into the room, ill-at-ease in the presence of all the brass. They are armed with sub-machine guns.

COL. VON SPERLING  
(to the guards)  
Men, you are witnesses; give your names to Major Gosswald afterwards.  
(to Capt. Abtmeyer)  
Captain Abtmeyer, you have refused a direct order. I consider this a special situation... the refusal of an order under combat conditions.

VARIOUS QUICK CUTS OF THE FACES IN THE ROOM

SHOT OF COL. VON SPERLING FROM BEHIND ABTMEYER

COL. VON SPERLING  
I sentence you to be shot immediately.  
(to Major Gosswald)  
Major Gosswald, I order you to carry out this sentence as soon as possible by the most humane means.

CLOSE - ABTMEYER - HE IS STUNNED

A very short pause while the significance of this sinks in. Apparently he did not expect such a severe punishment.

MAJOR GOSSWALD  
(to the guards)  
Fall back outside.  
(to Abtmeyer)  
Will you please come with me, Captain?

Abtmeyer has himself fully under control. He refuses to speak, however, not knowing what he would say. His glance crosses with that of Dietrich for a long moment as he turns to leave. He strides rapidly from the room; Gosswald follows him out and closes the door.

SHOT - FAVORING DIETRICH

Several moments of silence. Colonel von Sperling walks to the window, his hands clasped behind his back. He turns and begins abruptly.

COL. VON SPERLING

That is an unfortunate beginning. Oberlieutenant Dietrich, I'm putting you in charge of the mission. You are the only man left who is capable of commanding such a daring and dangerous assignment.

LT. DIETRICH

(cannot conceal a note of pride)

Yes, sir. May I ask a favor of the Colonel?

COL. VON SPERLING

Certainly, Dietrich.

LT. DIETRICH

May I ask the Colonel to reconsider his execution order for Colonel Abtmeyer? He has been a brave officer for three years in our outfit. It is not difficult to understand a man's courage breaking under such a strain.

PAGE MISSING

REVERSE SHOT - THE GUARDS AND GOSSWALD FROM BEHIND ABTMEYER

Gosswald slowly walks back to the guards. He places Abtmeyer's gear carefully on the ground. The guards position themselves about two yards apart with Gosswald behind them. He instructs them.

MAJOR GOSSWALD

Fire on my command. Aim for the chest and fire a short burst of about five rounds. Ready...

The guards brace the sub-machine guns against their hips.

MAJOR GOSSWALD

Aim...

They adjust their weapons.

MAJOR GOSSWALD

Fire.

The rounds burst out jolting Abtmeyer's body.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERTED TRAINING AREA - LTS. DIETRICH AND KRAUS - DAY

They are walking in thoughtful silence.

LT. KRAUS  
(after a long silence)  
Tragic... unnecessary... to go  
through the whole war and come to an  
end like that.

LT. DIETRICH  
And such a brave officer.

LT. KRAUS  
At least he might have been a little  
more clever about it.

LT. DIETRICH  
He obviously didn't expect to be  
shot.

They walk in silence.

LT. KRAUS  
He knew it was suicide to go. I  
guess he just decided to gamble on  
von Sperling's kindness.

LT. DIETRICH  
Yes, well -- I guess there's nothing  
anyone can do about it now. And I  
think we'd better get going. We've  
got lots to do.

LT. KRAUS  
(with absolute conviction)  
Paul, I'm not going along on this  
and neither are you!

They stop walking.

LT. DIETRICH  
What? You must be crazy.

LT. KRAUS  
On the contrary.

LT. DIETRICH  
Do you want to be shot like  
Abtmeyer?

LT. KRAUS  
I don't intend to be.

LT. DIETRICH  
What are you going to do? Hand in  
your resignation to von Sperling?

LT. KRAUS

It would not be difficult to disappear.

LT. DIETRICH  
You'd get as far as the first checkpoint and they'd hang you from a tree.

LT. KRAUS  
Remember the time we hid for a month dodging Russian patrols. We could strike out cross country and just stay in the woods a few weeks until the Americans come.

Dietrich reflects for a moment and shakes his head.

LT. DIETRICH  
I couldn't do something like that.

LT. KRAUS  
Why in hell not?

LT. DIETRICH  
It would be running away and leaving someone else to do my lousy job.

LT. KRAUS  
Paul, don't talk like a child.

LT. DIETRICH  
I would never be able to face myself again.

LT. KRAUS  
This is not the time for Wagnerian poses.

Dietrich speaks to his friend as though explaining something to an uncomprehending child.

LT. DIETRICH  
Whatever my personal sentiments may be, I am an officer. I swore an oath of allegiance. It is my duty to obey this order.

LT. KRAUS  
Duty... duty to whom? To the madmen who have brought nothing but shame and ruin to our country?

LT. DIETRICH  
Oskar, we are friends. There is no one closer to my heart than you. I would give my life for you. But there is no point in trying to prove you are right to me. I will do whatever I can to help you but I cannot go with you.

Silence. They resume walking.

LT. KRAUS  
You agree it's suicide to go?

LT. DIETRICH  
I would feel the same way if I did,  
but I don't think that's necessarily  
the case.

Lieutenant Kraus nods his head ironically.

LT. DIETRICH  
You know, it wouldn't be the same  
this time without you along.

LT. KRAUS  
That's true, then only one of us  
would be killed.

LT. DIETRICH  
At least you haven't lost your sense  
of humor. Look, if you've really  
made up your mind not to go --

LT. KRAUS  
Don't be silly. You know I couldn't  
let you win all the glory alone.  
Besides it will look better being  
shot by the Americans than by the  
SS.

The two men embrace each other, manfully.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MEN IN TWO LINES OUTSIDE THE SUPPLY HOUSE - DAY

The supply house is an ugly, one story, wooden warehouse.  
Two lines of battle-clad paratroopers minus helmets and  
weapons pass into the building through a wide, sliding door.

FIRST SOLDIER  
(bitter sarcasm)  
They're going to drop us on  
Washington and we're going to hold  
the American government for ransom.

SECOND SOLDIER  
Let's drop on Paris instead. There  
are a couple of other things I'd  
like to hold for ransom while we're  
at it.

THIRD SOLDIER  
That's only fair. They held you up  
for a pretty high price the last  
time.

FIRST SOLDIER  
(disgustedly)  
I wish it was Berlin. We could end  
this damn war in a hurry with a  
couple of grenades introduced in the  
right government circles.

The line shuffles slowly to the door of the warehouse.

INT. THE SUPPLY HOUSE - BRUGGEMANN AND KRAUS - DAY

The supply house is run like a store. It has a large counter where the men wait for their equipment to be brought to them by the supply clerks from the racks, chests, bins and boxes in which the various items are stored.

As each man reaches the counter, his officer, either BRUGGEMANN or Kraus, finds his name on the team list and reads off to the supply clerk the equipment for this man item by item.

As the supply clerk gets each item, the lieutenant checks it off his list. The team sergeants flank the lieutenants keeping the lines quiet and closed up.

The men are stunned by the quantities of ammo and demolitions they are getting; they realize the mission must be a tough one. Much of the dialogue is carried on simultaneously as the two teams draw equipment at the same time.

SECURITY TEAM SERGEANT  
Close the line up and keep it quiet.

LT. KRAUS  
(from his clipboard)  
Blecke, Corporal, machine gunner...  
Light Machine Gun and pistol.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
Do you have the sub-machine gun  
there?

SUPPLY CLERK  
Right, sir.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
Ten magazines SMG ammo; two  
magazines pistol ammo.

LT. KRAUS  
Give him two magazines of ammo for  
the pistol and 250 rounds for the  
MG.

SUPPLY CLERK  
Check, sir.

DEMOLITION TEAM SERGEANT  
(shouting)  
Keep the noise down out there. The  
lieutenants can't read from the  
lists.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
Two 150 foot lengths of climbing  
rope, fifteen snap links, fifteen  
pitons, piton hammer...

CLIMBER

I've got my own hammer, sir.

LT. KRAUS  
Schreiber, Corporal, assistant  
gunner... pistol and two magazines  
of ammo.

SUPPLY CLERK  
Check, sir.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
Mohring, Corporal, demolitions  
man... twenty pounds plastic  
explosive, Torbite A-2...

SUPPLY CLERK  
Explosive... check, sir.

LT. KRAUS  
Three boxes, LMG ammo... 750 rounds.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
Cap box with ten percussion caps,  
crimper.

ASSISTANT LMG GUNNER  
750 rounds?

SECURITY TEAM SERGEANT  
What's the matter, Schreiber? Too  
heavy for you?

ASSISTANT LMG GUNNER  
(sarcastically)  
This must be the big winter  
offensive we've been waiting for,  
sergeant.

LT. KRAUS  
Keep the noise down, Sergeant  
Kohler.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
Ten feet time fuse and two fuse  
lighters.

Lt. Dietrich pushes past the men standing in the door and  
comes into the supply house. One of the sergeants sees him  
and starts to call attention but Dietrich quiets him.

LT. DIETRICH  
Carry on... carry on with the work.

He walks around the counter and up to his lieutenants. They  
pause for a minute.

LT. DIETRICH  
(inquiringly)  
It's 1220. How close are you to  
being finished?

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
I think we're both about three-

quarters through.

LT. DIETRICH  
Leave your sergeants in charge and  
tell them to finish up here in a  
hurry.

LT. KRAUS  
What is it?

LT. DIETRICH  
I don't know. Colonel von Sperling  
wants to see us.

He quickly pushes out of the supply room again. The men  
stand back respectfully and let him pass.

THE SUPPLY HOUSE DOORWAY

SECOND SOLDIER  
Did you see that demo equipment and  
climbing gear. Maybe we're finally  
going to invade Switzerland.

SECURITY TEAM SERGEANT  
Next man, move up.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ENTRANCE TO HEADQUARTERS - DAY

As the three Lieutenants enter they notice a Gestapo staff  
car parked in front.

SHOT OF GESTAPO STAFF CAR WITH DRIVER

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COL. VON SPERLING'S OFFICE - DAY

The door opens and Major Gosswald ushers in the three  
officers and goes out shutting the door. The three line up  
in front of the colonel's desk and Dietrich reports.

LT. DIETRICH  
(in official tone)  
D Group officers reporting as  
ordered, sir.

COL. VON SPERLING  
(mildly)  
Stand at ease, gentlemen.

Col. von Sperling pauses as the lieutenants relax.

COL. VON SPERLING  
There is a Gestapo agent outside  
checking on a murder of another  
agent last night in Karlstadt. This  
agent was last seen following an  
officer of this command from the  
Cafe Wein. He was found outside in  
the morning with his chest crushed

in and otherwise badly beaten.  
(there is silence as he  
pauses a moment)  
D Group officers were the only ones  
authorized leave last night. I  
wonder if any of you, gentlemen,  
have information on this matter.

CLOSE - DIETRICH

He exchanges a brief glance with Kraus, who from all  
appearances has been told of the fight outside the cafe last  
night.

CLOSE - COLONEL VON SPERLING

He notices the significant exchange of looks. He frowns.

GROUP SHOT - EVERYONE

LT. DIETRICH  
(in a loud, mechanical  
voice)  
I believe I may be responsible, sir.

COL. VON SPERLING  
Please be responsible in a softer  
voice, Lieutenant.

LT. DIETRICH  
Yes, sir. An agent from the Gestapo  
tried to arrest me last night as I  
was leaving the Cafe Wein. In the  
resulting fight I may have been  
responsible for his death.

COL. VON SPERLING  
(gazing out window)  
Why did he want to arrest you?

LT. DIETRICH  
He accused me of making politically  
disloyal statements.

Colonel von Sperling inscrutably taps a pencil on his desk,  
wrapped in thought.

COL. VON SPERLING  
(loudly)  
Gosswald... Major Gosswald.

His adjutant opens the door.

COL. VON SPERLING  
Please show in Herr Grauschmidt.

Kraus gives Dietrich a look, as if to say, "Why in hell did  
you have to admit that?"

MAJOR GOSSWALD  
Yes, sir.  
(speaking to someone  
offscreen)

The Colonel would like to see you again, sir.

Gosswald holds the door for the Gestapo agent. He is a fat, cherubic looking German in a suit and heavy belted coat.

HERR GRAUSCHMIDT  
(he has little love for von Sperling)  
I see you waste little time, Colonel von Sperling.

Colonel von Sperling forces an insincere smile, bows his head slightly in ironic deference.

HERR GRAUSCHMIDT  
(he bows and smiles to the lieutenants)  
The colonel explained to me that you are preparing for a mission and that your time is tightly scheduled.

COL. VON SPERLING  
Your time is valuable also, I suspect, Herr Grauschmidt. I'll get right to the matter. It is as I suspected...

Lt. Dietrich stiffens. After von Sperling's harshness with Abtmeyer, he fully expects to be turned over to the Gestapo.

COL. VON SPERLING  
Yes. It is as Capt. Abtmeyer admitted prior to his execution this morning. These officers left him in the canteen or immediately outside it. Lt. Dietrich tells me that Abtmeyer was not himself and was showing him a propaganda leaflet. The fact that he refused a direct order this morning indicates that he was under a severe mental strain.

The Gestapo agent does not appear to believe him, but is powerless to press anything further.

HERR GRAUSCHMIDT  
(bowing his head)  
Thank you, Colonel. I am extremely sorry but I shall have to file a full report on this.  
(a veiled threat)

COL. VON SPERLING  
As you wish, Herr Grauschmidt.

The Gestapo man exits.

COL. VON SPERLING  
(to Dietrich)  
Do not mistake my lie just now for sentimentality. As an Army man I have no love for the Gestapo, and I

have no interest in political matters or opinions. The only thing that concerns me is my duty and your ability to carry out your orders. You are one of the best officers in the unit and you are too important at the moment to be handed over to those pigs.

LT. DIETRICH

Yes, sir.

COL. VON SPERLING

You may go.

They salute and exit. The camera holds on the Colonel. He walks to the picture of General Kurt Student. He stands before it as if expecting an expression of sympathy from a friend.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AFTERNOON - AIRFIELD

The field has been bombed recently. There are several burned and damaged aircraft pushed off to the edge of the concrete strip and the strip itself is damaged.

The hangers and the maintenance and operations buildings are well-camouflaged with nets. Several pairs of anti-aircraft machine guns and one flak gun are dug-in in the vicinity.

LONG SHOT DOWN AIRSTRIP

Five lorries roll down the airstrip and pull up under a camouflage net outside an empty hanger.

With shouts of the sergeants and slamming of truck gates the men jump off the rear and file into the hanger. They are heavily laden with weapons and equipment and in full battle gear. Their boots make a pounding sound on the concrete.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AFTERNOON - INSIDE THE HANGER

The men are seated on the hanger floor. They have taken off their gear and are leaning against it and cradling their weapons between their legs.

In the front Dietrich is conferring with Bruggemann and Kraus. Behind him is a reversible blackboard on a stand.

A staff car pulls up outside the hanger and Colonel von Sperling and his staff get out; they enter the hanger.

LT. DIETRICH

(in loud, command voice)

D Group, attention.

The men spring to their feet and stand rigidly at attention. Col. von Sperling and his staff walk to the rear of the men. Their steps echo hollowly in the hanger. When and only when

he has reached the rear, does von Sperling put the unit at ease.

COL. VON SPERLING  
At ease, men.

The men sit back down with an undertone of talking and shuffling as they settle themselves.

COL. VON SPERLING  
You may begin the briefing,  
Lieutenant.

LT. DIETRICH  
We were just starting, sir.

Dietrich moves to the blackboard and looks briefly at notes on his clipboard; he is without nervousness, obviously in his element.

LT. DIETRICH  
All right, give me your attention.  
(the hushed conversations  
cease)  
D Group has been selected for a  
night parachute drop and a bridge  
demolition in the Obernburg-Main  
River area.  
(he pauses)  
Take-off will be at 1900 hours and  
the drop at 2100. There will be  
three planes with twenty men in  
each.

SHOT - THE MEN LISTENING

Bruggemann, Kraus and the sergeants are taking occasional notes.

One man is oiling the bolt of his SMG by rubbing it across the bridge of his nose.

Another gently hones his killing knife on the sole of his boot.

In the rear the colonel and his staff listen intently.

NOTE: The briefing will be visually interesting. Ample drawings, photographs and models will be employed. The goal of this scene is to make the audience understand the details of the mission, so when it later unfolds, they feel a sense of participation.

ANOTHER - LT. DIETRICH AT THE BLACKBOARD

LT. DIETRICH  
Pay attention to this. Especially  
you, Masserman. The last jump you  
had to ask directions from the  
Russians.

There is an undercurrent of guffaws.

LT. DIETRICH

This is what the drop zone looks like.

(he draws an arrow)

The planes will fly from East to West. The assembly area is in the south-east corner on the high ground here. The sergeants will show you all the aerals afterwards.

(he points to the board)

I want a rapid, silent assembly. It will be night and the darkness will give us a big edge in surprise.

Dietrich glances at his clipboard.

LT. DIETRICH

The drop zone is about eight kilometers from the target bridge so that if we lose security, it won't disclose the objective.

(he flips the blackboard)

Here's the way it looks. The sergeants have maps and will show it to you afterwards.

(he draws rapidly)

The Main River runs here. Sort of North-South. The bridge is here. Near Obernburg. The drop zone is north of the bridge and on the east of the river, here. It should take us not more than three hours to get from the drop zone to the bridge.

(he looks at his clipboard)

Here are the enemy dispositions in the bridge area.

SHOT - THE MEN LISTENING

As Dietrich reads from his list, the men glance at each other in surprise and dismay as the list grows formidably long. Bruggemann has a grin on his face but Kraus looks a little sick. The officers in the rear are non-committal.

ANOTHER ANGLE - DIETRICH

Dietrich finishes the list and pauses.

LT. DIETRICH

That's part of the American Third Army rear echelon and mobile reserve. But they've got bigger things on their minds than us. We've got a small enough group to slip through and a big enough one to handle anything coming our way.

Dietrich flips the blackboard back over. It still has the drawing of the drop zone on it. He tears off a sheet of paper from his clipboard and scrubs most of the drawing off.

LT. DIETRICH

Here's what the bridge area looks like.

(he draws rapidly)

This is the road to Obernburg. Now the immediate area of the bridge is defended by a company of combat engineers who also maintain the span. They have about two hundred men on top of the cliffs at road bed level.

SHOT - THE MEN

One man has fallen asleep. A sergeant reaches over and gives him a thump on the head. He wakes up with a start and looks a little guilty.

ANOTHER ANGLE - LT. DIETRICH

LT. DIETRICH  
(pointing as he goes  
along)

The bridge spans a deep ravine and the lower abutments are sunken into the face of the rock walls about two hundred feet above the bottom of the ravine.

(using pointer to  
illustrate each feature)

This is in our favor since we believe the bridge is only guarded from the top. By day the area below can be well protected from the high vantage point and by night it is assumed the rock walls are impossible to climb. Our job is going to be to show the Americans what we learned in our Alpine weekends.

CUTS TO THE MEN

They look skeptical about the sheer climb.

FAVORING DIETRICH

He smiles confidently.

LT. DIETRICH  
When the mission has been completed we will infiltrate our way back through the lines in small groups. Do you have anything to add, Colonel?

COL. VON SPERLING  
(said simply and with  
sincerity)  
No, Lieutenant. You did an excellent job. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the best of luck.

He nods to Dietrich.

LT. DIETRICH

Following this briefing, each squad will be briefed in detail by their squad leaders. Then there will be hot rations. I guarantee no ersatz ersatz. We will chute up in one hour and fifteen minutes.

As Lt. Dietrich leaves, there is an organized chaos of men getting up, finding their gear and shuffling out of the hanger.

EXT. LATE EVENING - MEN SITTING IN GROUP

The men are sitting against the wall of the hanger. They are idly eating from several cans of food. One is not eating at all but is leaning back smoking.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EVENING - LUFTWAFFE OPERATIONS ROOM

Crowded into the room and sitting or standing around are Dietrich, von Sperling, Major Gosswald, Major von Bredow, three pilots and their navigators, several enlisted clerks and radio operators and a lieutenant colonel in the Luftwaffe who is in charge of the airfield. They are all sitting idly waiting for something.

In the corner the radio is crackling. One of the clerks is posting the flight information on the operations board. The navigators are copying it down. One of the radio operators gets up and takes off his head set. He brings the message over to the lieutenant colonel.

LT. COLONEL

(in low tone)

Is this the latest?

RADIO OPERATOR

Yes, sir. That's the special report you requested.

LT. COLONEL

I want a report every thirty minutes and a special report if there is any sudden change.

COL. VON SPERLING

(having caught something)

What is it, Colonel Bleuler? Has the weather changed?

The men in the room stop and look around. The navigators stop copying but the clerk keeps posting the compass plots on the blackboard. Dietrich gets up and comes over. He has been conversing quietly with Major von Bredow.

LT. COLONEL

I'm afraid so, colonel. The weather on the drop zone will be affected by

rain and high winds moving in from the north-west in another thirty minutes. They expect it to clear in several hours.

A hush falls over the room.

COL. VON SPERLING  
Let me know immediately if the weather changes.

LT. COLONEL  
Yes, sir. We'll continue the briefing and put the planes on standby.

EXT. A GROUP OF ENLISTED MEN - EVENING

The men are falling into plane loads in front of the hanger on the concrete strip. A sergeant is reading the makeup of the planes from a list.

SERGEANT  
(loudly)  
First Plane: Assault Team One, Demolition One. Move into the hanger.

FIRST SOLDIER  
(dead pan; standing in a group nearby)  
The German Army is the only army that holds formations for organized sleeping in ranks.

SECOND SOLDIER  
(stonily)  
Your outlook has cheered up with this postponement. Your jokes are almost funny.

THIRD SOLDIER  
(bitterly)  
Postponement. He thought the lieutenant said cancellation and this was a formation to sleep out the rest of the war.

SERGEANT  
(turning to them)  
A little quiet so they can hear the instructions.  
(loudly)  
Second Plane: Assault Team Two, Security Team One.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HANGER - MEDIUM LONG SHOT - NIGHT

The men are sleeping, leaning against the hanger walls or against their gear. Many have their helmets pulled over their faces. Here and there men are awake and are smoking in

silence. There is an occasional murmured conversation.

INT. LUFTWAFFE OPERATIONS ROOM

Many of the personnel have left. Colonel von Sperling is wrapped in a blanket, in a chair with his feet propped on a desk.

The lieutenant colonel is sitting at a desk playing cards with Major von Bredow.

One of the radio operators is wrapped in a blanket, sleeping on the floor. The other is at his set. On the board are the completed flight instructions. The pilots and navigators have long since returned to the more comfortable quarters of their planes. The clock on the wall shows 2330 hours.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LUFTWAFFE OPERATIONS ROOM

The clock now shows 0230. The only people awake now are the radio operator and Major von Bredow who is reading a book. The Luftwaffe officer has slumped over and is sleeping with his head on the desk. Dietrich enters and von Bredow looks up.

MAJ. VON BREDOW

Back again. You must have some interest in the weather.

LT. DIETRICH

I just have a natural curiosity.

MAJ VON BREDOW

Still weathered in with change expected "momentarily."

COL. VON SPERLING

Damn their momentary change.  
(he throws off the blanket  
and sits up)  
If they delay the thing any more,  
we'll be fighting the Americans for  
the airstrip.  
(to von Bredow)  
What exactly did the report say?

MAJ. VON BREDOW

It said exactly, sir, "No change.  
Weather front moving east. Change  
expected momentarily."

INT. HANGER - DIETRICH, KRAUS, BRUGGEMANN - NIGHT

Dietrich approaches the other two in the dark.

LT. DIETRICH

(whispering)  
Are you awake?

LT. BRUGGEMANN

I'm awake.

LT. KRAUS  
(sitting up suddenly from  
near by)  
What is it? Are they ready?

LT. DIETRICH  
(gloomily)  
No change.

LT. KRAUS  
(eagerly)  
Hell, it's almost 0300. If it gets  
much later, it'll be canceled. They  
won't drop us in daylight. They're  
not completely insane.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LONG SHOT OF THE HANGER AREA FAVORING GRAY SKY - DAWN

MEDIUM SHOT - DIETRICH

He stands stamping his feet to get them warm. He looks up at  
the sky. It's grey and clouded, getting light around the  
edge in the east. Kraus comes up behind him and pounds him  
on the back.

LT. KRAUS  
(smiling)  
Pure Austrian weather. Rain off the  
mountains.

Dietrich stares gloomily at the sky.

The men are up and are stamping the cold and the aches out of  
their bones. They are cheerful, knowing the mission has  
undoubtedly been canceled. They call across the hanger at  
one another.

An orderly approaches.

ORDERLY  
Colonel von Sperling would like to  
see you, sir.

LT. DIETRICH  
(to the orderly)  
I'm coming right away.

He walks rapidly towards the operations building followed by  
the orderly.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE OPERATIONS ROOM - DAWN

The pilots are sitting around drinking coffee with the  
Luftwaffe lieutenant colonel; they are laughing and joking.  
Obviously the tension is off. The colonel is reading a radio  
dispatch. As Dietrich comes up, von Sperling motions Major  
von Bredow over.

LT. DIETRICH  
(saluting)  
You sent for me, sir.

COL. VON SPERLING  
You can get your men ready, Lt.  
Dietrich. The weather has cleared  
in the drop zone.  
(glancing at his watch and  
the clock)  
It's 0624 now. Station time will be  
0650 and take-off at 0700.

QUICK CUTS - THE PERSONNEL

In stunned astonishment.

ANOTHER ANGLE - THE OPERATIONS ROOM

LT. DIETRICH  
(seems almost relieved)  
Yes, sir.

COL. VON SPERLING  
There are undoubtedly many  
disadvantages. But at least they  
won't be expecting any attack and  
especially in daylight.

LT. COLONEL  
(coming over hurriedly)  
I can't believe, Colonel von  
Sperling, that you plan to go  
through with this mission in the  
daylight.

COL. VON SPERLING  
Colonel, my instructions were to  
destroy this bridge; nothing was  
said as to the proper time of day!  
(he pauses)  
Instruct your pilots to re-plot for  
a one-leg pass at the drop zone with  
a low level approach at 250 meters.  
If they hedge-hop, they shouldn't be  
much bothered by ground fire or  
fighters. Station time is 0650 and  
take-off at 0700 hours.

The Luftwaffe officer turns away without a word and begins  
conferring with his pilots.

COL. VON SPERLING  
(to Dietrich)  
You will probably lose security  
before you reach the bridge.  
Reroute so that the Americans won't  
discover the objective by plotting  
your route.

LT. DIETRICH  
Yes, sir.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AIRSTRIP IN FRONT OF THE HANGER - DAY

The men are formed up in teams under the camouflage net in front of the hanger. They are talking quietly and joking. The tension is off.

Dietrich comes out of the operations building and walks to the front of the formation rapidly. He looks around.

LT. DIETRICH  
(in command voice)  
Sergeants, reform the men into their  
plane loads. And move them over to  
the trucks to draw chutes.

There is a moment of silence as the men and NCO's grasp the situation. Then the sergeants begin to shout out orders and the men scramble back into plane load formation.

The trucks with the chutes pull around in front and the sergeants begin to move the men by to draw the bag containing a back pack and reserve.

Bruggemann and Kraus come rushing up.

LT. KRAUS  
They can't be meaning to drop us  
now.

The group of pilots and navigators with Col. Bleuler leave the operations room.

LT. DIETRICH  
(ignoring them)  
They are flying a straight route to  
the drop zone. Drop altitude 250  
meters. You won't need reserves.  
Have the men leave them by the  
planes.  
(he checks his watch)  
Have them in the planes at 0650.  
Take-off ten minutes after.  
(he looks at them)  
Make sure you tell your plane loads  
the new route azimuths.

He slaps Kraus on the back and shakes his hand. Then Bruggemann's.

LT. DIETRICH  
Good luck. See you on the drop  
zone.

They salute and all run to their plane loads. The men have almost finished drawing chutes.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANOTHER ANGLE

The planes have started up and taxi in front of the hangers

in line. They stop. The men file over to their planes, staggering under the double loads of chutes and battle gear. They plop down their chutes.

CLOSE SHOT - SEVERAL MEN IN THE STICK

FIRST SOLDIER  
(pulling out the chute)  
I wish von Sperling was on this trip. I'd like to stick this knife in his ear.

SERGEANT  
(pointing)  
Throw the reserves over there. We won't be needing them at 250 meters.

SECOND SOLDIER  
(spitting)  
250 meters. We don't need a chute... Just a long ladder.

THIRD SOLDIER  
Just before you hit, jump up.

SERGEANT  
(shouting)  
Put them on.

SHOT - PLANE

The planes are tri-motor, Junkers 502's with that peculiar corrugated metal fuselage.

Dietrich jumps in the rear door.

INT. PLANE - DIETRICH AND FLIGHT CHIEF

Dietrich runs his hands along the edge of the door, feeling for sharp edges.

FLIGHT CHIEF  
(shouting over engines)  
Do you want the bell and the light, sir.

LT. DIETRICH  
(getting up)  
Right, Chief. Have the pilot check them out.

The chief goes forward to pilot's compartment.

FLIGHT CHIEF  
(to pilot)  
The jumpmaster wants a bell and light check, sir.

PILOT  
(from the compartment)  
Right, Chief.

Dietrich is pulling on the anchor line cable, testing it for

tension and secureness. The emergency bell rings loudly in the troop compartment.

LT. DIETRICH  
Bell, checked out.

In a box by the door a red light flashes on.

LT. DIETRICH  
Red light, all right.

It changes to a green light.

LT. DIETRICH  
Green all right. Everything is in good shape, Chief. We'll be loading in a couple of minutes.

Dietrich jumps back out the rear door.

SHOT - PLANE, DIETRICH, MEN IN HIS STICK

The prop blast staggers Dietrich a little as he moves toward the men in his plane load. His sergeant, all chuted up, is waiting for him. The men are standing, squatting or sitting.

SGT. STANGE  
All chuted up, Lieutenant. I've got your chute right here.  
(he points to a chute bag)

LT. DIETRICH  
Thank you, Sergeant Stange.

He unzips the bag and pulls out the reserve, then the back pack. He untwists and straightens the harness, carefully spreading out the straps and checking the chute automatically. He picks it up and Sgt. Stange takes it from him. Dietrich turns and shrugs into it like an overcoat. As he buckles it in front, Sgt. Stange tucks in a few stray edges of canopy.

ANOTHER ANGLE - DIETRICH, STANGE AND THE MEN

SGT. STANGE  
How is the fit, sir.

LT. DIETRICH  
Too small as usual.  
(he raises his hands,  
resting them on his  
helmet)  
Buckle that belly band, will you?  
Get it good and tight. I almost  
fell out of the last one.

Stange buckles the belly band and then snaps it tight. Dietrich brings down his hands to look at his watch.

LT. DIETRICH  
That's got it. Let's check out the men and then load. We've got six minutes to station time. You start

at the rear.

SGT. STANGE  
Right, Lieutenant.

ANOTHER ANGLE - DIETRICH AND THE MEN

Dietrich moves down the stick checking chutes. As he comes to each man, the man raises his hands to his helmet. Dietrich checks his buckles, straps, belly band, then spins him and checks his back pack for loose silk. When he finishes he slaps the man on the rear and moves on.

LT. DIETRICH  
(pulling on the belly  
band)  
You've got that pretty loose, Fromm.

FIRST SOLDIER  
I like it loose, sir. Then when it  
opens, I know it's there.

LT. DIETRICH  
(spinning him to check the  
back pack)  
Don't fall out; you'll scare the  
spectators.  
(he slaps him on the rear)  
All set.

Dietrich moves to the next man.

SECOND SOLDIER  
Any word on the wind, Lieutenant?

THIRD SOLDIER  
(bitterly)  
The wind... Hell, worry about how  
you're going to open a tank with a  
pair of wire clippers.

LT. DIETRICH  
(spinning the man and then  
running his hands over  
the chute)  
All set, Hassebrauk.  
(he moves to the third  
soldier)  
Don't worry, Corporal Vollmecke, you  
take a tank in each hand and crack  
them like nuts.  
(he spins Vollmecke)  
We'll get the wind reading from the  
pilot in the plane.

SGT. STANGE  
(finishing the next man)  
All set, up to here, Lieutenant.

LT. DIETRICH  
(tapping Vollmecke)  
Lead them on, Sergeant Stange.

SHOT - MEN FILING ONTO PLANE BY REAR DOOR

Stange leads off and the stick files to the rear of the plane. One by one they struggle up the steps helped by the man in the rear who holds their weapon and pushes.

The engines are idling with a throaty rumble. The pilot leans out the window and shouts something to Dietrich smiling all the while.

Dietrich smiles and waves. He looks at his watch once before loading on. Stange pulls him up.

The crew chief leans out and unhooks the ladder, pulling it in. He shuts the door.

INT. PLANE

In the dim light the men are jamming themselves into the narrow canvas seats and struggling to find their seat belts. The quarters are cramped and hot.

Stange moves down the aisle checking the seat belts on one side; then back up checking the other side. He takes his seat and fastens his belt.

The plane stops with a lurch. The pilot begins to run up his engines.

EXT. LONG SHOT OF AIRSTRIP AND THE THREE PLANES - DAY

The three planes are canted to the runway running up their engines. The first plane eases off and taxis onto the end of the strip pointing down the runway. Setting his brakes he revs up.

SHOT - THE PLANES

Releasing his brakes, the pilot starts it down the runway. The next plane taxis up. The first roars towards the end of the strip and slowly climbs into the air.

SHOT - THE PLANES

The second plane and the third follow. The three reach for altitude and then level off. Turning back across the field they move into a V formation.

INT. PLANE

Lt. Dietrich unbuckles his seat belt and make an unbuckling movement with his hands. He lurches across the aisle to the flight chief sitting opposite. Cupping his hand he shouts above the roar of the engines.

LT. DIETRICH

Chief, let me have a verbal at twenty minutes and another at ten. The red light at four minutes. A one minute and the green and the bell together. Got that.

FLIGHT CHIEF

(nodding)

Right, sir. Twenty, ten; red at four; a one and then the green and the bell.

LT. DIETRICH

Get the wind reading from the pilot for me as soon as he gets it.

FLIGHT CHIEF

(getting up)

Yes, sir. Maybe he's got something now.

The chief moves forward toward the pilot's compartment. Dietrich reaches up and attaches his static line to the anchor line cable.

INT. PLANE - ANOTHER ANGLE

Dietrich grabs the handle of the door. Bracing one foot against the wall of the plane, he cracks the suction and pulls open the door. The wind rushes in. Pushing the door as far to the rear as it will go, Dietrich reaches behind it and latches it firmly open. Grabbing tightly to both sides of the door, he leans out to look. The wind ripples his face weirdly and whips fiercely at his clothes.

SHOT - THE WING AND LEFT ENGINE

SHOT - THE GROUND FROM 300 FEET

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PLANE

The engines drone away. Several men have gotten out of their seats and are lying on the floor.

Most have their eyes closed trying to rest.

Some near the door, look out at the ground. One man is sharpening his killing knife even now. But most have their eyes closed. The engines drone on.

Sgt. Stange gets to his feet and lurches down the aisle. He stops by Lt. Dietrich who is studying the map. Leaning one hand on the wall of the plane for balance, he bends down and shouts to Dietrich.

SGT. STANGE

How much longer, Lieutenant?

LT. DIETRICH

It's hard to tell, Sergeant Stange. Probably another thirty minutes.

SGT. STANGE

It's hot as hell back there. I'm going to try a little air.

He hooks up and leans out the door. The wind beats in against him making a roaring sound in the door.

The flight chief opens the door from the pilot's compartment and comes out. He steps over the men on the floor and comes down to Dietrich. He flashes ten fingers twice. Then he sits down on his seat.

INT. PLANE

The flight chief gets up and moves to the rear of the opened door. He picks up a pair of ear phones and puts them on. He plugs the set into a socket on a box on the wall of the plane.

FLIGHT CHIEF

Plugged in back here, Captain.  
Minus twelve.

INT. PLANE

The flight chief holds up ten fingers to Lt. Dietrich. Dietrich pulls on the pants leg of Sgt. Stange. The sergeant comes in out of the door. Dietrich holds up ten fingers. The sergeant nods and moves back to his seat. He kicks the men on the floor as he goes, signaling them back into their seats. The men who have been trying to sleep sit up, wide awake now.

INT. PLANE

The flight chief holds up four fingers and points to the light. The red light is on. Dietrich gets up and deliberately folds up his seat. He rehooks his static line to the cable and pushes it back out of the way.

LT. DIETRICH

(gesturing)  
Stand up and hook up.

The men struggle to their feet and shuffle around until they have some room. They hook their static lines to the cable running down the center of the plane's ceiling. The men on the right hold the hook in their left hands. The men on the left hold it in their right.

LT. DIETRICH

Check your equipment.  
(he pats his chest)

The men check their straps, weapons and the back pack of the man in front.

LT. DIETRICH

Sound off on check.

SGT. STANGE

(shouts)  
Number 20, check.  
(slaps the rear of the man  
in front)

FIRST SOLDIER

(shouts)  
19, check.

And does the same. The count comes forward.

LAST SOLDIER  
(shouts)  
All check.

Dietrich turns to look at the flight engineer. The chief holds up two fingers. Dietrich releases his static line and pivots to stand in the door.

SHOT - THE GROUND

INT. PLANE

The man behind Dietrich in line tugs at his jacket. Dietrich looks around and sees the flight chief holding up one finger. He steps back into the plane for a moment and raises a clenched fist in an encouraging salute to the men and steps back into the door.

SHOT - DIETRICH

Dietrich coils himself in the door. His hands are flush against the outside, his head up, his knees flexed, his body straight. Suddenly the light flashes green and the bell rings in a continuous chilling clamor. Dietrich springs and is carried away. The next man pivots blindly into the door and is gone.

VARIOUS SHOTS - THE MEN FALLING FROM THE PLANE

The men are coiled in a bent position against the opening shock. The prop blast sweeps them back as they fall. Their static line pulls out the chute. It stretches out until it breaks away from the static line. Then the blast whips it back and it cracks open, jerking the man. He swings down under the canopy. The three planes are laying men behind them like a fish lays roe.

INT. PLANE

The left stick has started to move. Sgt. Stange is bringing up the rear. The men are practically running out the door now. Stange comes to the door. Pausing a moment, he gets set and then uncoils, springing up and out.

AERIAL SHOT - THE THREE STRINGS OF MEN IN THE AIR

AERIAL SHOT - THE GROUND BETWEEN THE FEET OF A JUMPER

SHOT - FROM THE GROUND - THE THREE STICKS APPROACHING

SHOTS - DIETRICH FROM THE GROUND AND AIR

There is a great stillness except for an occasional rustle or crack of a canopy. Dietrich approaches the ground. His feet are apart, legs flexed. He saws back and forth on opposite risers to keep his chute from oscillating dangerously.

He hits the ground with a thump, sinking to his knees and bouncing back to his feet. He grabs his settling canopy in great armfuls. He drops to the ground on one knee on top of

it.

Tearing at his buckles he gets out of his chute. Several more jumpers crumple around him.

He works the bolt on his SMG several times to make sure it's working and then trots towards the edge of the field.

VARIOUS SHOTS - MEN LANDING IN THE FIELD

In the stillness the men land with a loud crump. Some make upright landings.

Others, coming in on a backwards drift or oscillation, land head over heels.

One man injures himself landing with a partially-opened canopy; he is being dragged across the drop zone with a wind-filled canopy when another jumper runs across the path and grabs the chute even before he gets out of his own harness.

LONG SHOT - ANOTHER ANGLE

The men are beginning to move off the drop zone at a crouched trot, their weapons at the ready. The sergeants are motioning them to move faster. All is ominously silent except for the panting of the men.

SHOT - MEN IN TREES

Two men have drifted into tall trees at the edge of the drop zone. Their chutes are tangled in the tops. They dangle about twenty-five feet from the ground. Two soldiers on the ground try to help them.

SOLDIER ON GROUND

Cut loose the MG, Willy.

SOLDIER IN TREE

All right, here it comes.

He cuts the bindings tying the machine gun to his waist and thigh. It comes crashing down into the underbrush.

SHOT - UP THE TREE - THE MAN AND THE CHUTE

The chute slips a little. The man twists and untwists in the harness. He takes out a jump rope and ties it to the harness. Wrapping one leg around the rope, he cuts loose the harness from his body. He starts to slide down the rope. The chute pulls loose from the tree and he falls heavily to the ground from about fifteen feet in the air.

SHOT - THE OTHER MAN

The second man dangles lifelessly. A suspension line is twisted around his neck. He has strangled.

MEDIUM LONG SHOT - MEN MOVING ALONG EDGE OF DROP ZONE

REVERSE - FROM THE ASSEMBLY AREA

Lt. Dietrich is dispersing the men in position as they come

in. Sgt. Stange is checking the men off a list.

LT. DIETRICH  
Demo team move straight back in.  
Lt. Bruggemann will put you in  
position.  
(to men walking)  
Move out... Move out. How many are  
we missing, Sergeant Stange?

SGT. STANGE  
About fifteen, sir. Most from the  
security team.

LT. DIETRICH  
Damn.  
(to men moving in)  
Security team?

FIRST SOLDIER  
(one of three men)  
Yes, sir.

LT. DIETRICH  
Where's Lt. Kraus and those two  
machine guns?

FIRST SOLDIER  
I don't know, Lieutenant.

LT. DIETRICH  
Move out along the edge about fifty  
meters. Corporal Muench is down  
there.

A group of five men of the assault team run up. Dietrich  
grins at them.

LT. DIETRICH  
(jokingly)  
No tanks yet, Corporal Vollmecke?

PAGE MISSING

LT. DIETRICH  
I'll send this gun down. Go back  
and pick up the other one. Hurry  
along anybody you find.  
(he punches Kraus lightly  
in the arm)

LT. KRAUS  
(surprised and a little  
irritated by Dietrich's  
tone)  
All right.

He trots back up the drop zone.

LT. DIETRICH  
(to the gunner)  
Move your gun on about twenty meters  
to the head of that gully.

The gun team trots off in the other direction along the edge of the woods.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. IN THE WOODS - THE LIEUTENANTS - DAY

The woods slope sharply up hill to a ridge two hundred yards away. They are pine with occasional scrub oak and lightly scattered bushes. The ground is damp and matted with leaves.

In the background, hidden or partly hidden, the patrol stretches in a long line ready to go. Some are standing, others squat. The men are alternately faced right and left for security.

The lieutenants are squatting on their heels around a map. Sgt. Stange comes up.

LT. DIETRICH  
(looking up)  
What's the final count?

SGT. STANGE  
(standing)  
All here, Lieutenant. Except  
Kraeling. Had to leave him hanging.

LT. DIETRICH  
How about the wounded?

SGT. STANGE  
Fromm won't make it with both legs  
broken. The man who fell from the  
tree broke his elbow. Kraus has set  
the bones.

LT. DIETRICH  
(getting up)  
Leave Fromm with some food, but get  
his SMG.  
(to Kraus as they walk)  
Send me up two point men.

LT. KRAUS  
Right.

They split and move through the brush to the patrol. The men stand up as the lieutenants approach. They are ready to go.

DISSOLVE TO:

SHOT - DIETRICH AND THE TWO POINT MEN

They are checking compasses. The sun is cutting through the trees and a slight mist is rising from the damp ground. It is caught by the bushes and clings to the ground.

LT. DIETRICH  
Keep it at 115 degrees until I  
change it. And check each other.  
And don't shoot unless you have to.

He motions them forward. They take one more look at the compasses and move out about twenty yards before Dietrich starts after them.

He glances behind him at the MG team.

They follow him. The gunner shifts the gun which is across his shoulders like a yoke; the belt of ammo hangs down across his chest.

SHOTS - THE PATROL MOVING OUT THROUGH THE MIST AND BUSHES

The men follow Dietrich. They push aside the bushes with their hands. Behind the MG team is Sgt. Stange and the assault team. They each have their SMG's ready, hanging loosely from one shoulder.

Following the last of the assault team is Lt. Bruggemann. He is leading the heavily laden demolition team. They strain forward under the weight of the explosives.

Next are the four climbers. One has his rope coiled around his waist. Then the men of the security team follow with the second MG team next to last. Kraus and two riflemen bring up the rear.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE POINT MEN - DAY

The point men move cautiously through the bush. Now and then they disappear. The front man checks his compass occasionally. Suddenly he stops.

SHOT - DIETRICH

Dietrich signals the patrol to stop. He moves forward to the point men and squats down beside them.

CLOSE - INSERT

Two fairly new looking C-ration tins.

CLOSE - DIETRICH

He exchanges a worried glance with the point men. Then he motions for absolute stillness and listens to the forest noises, while at the same time scanning the trees before him.

CLOSE - THE POINT MEN

They split their attention between Dietrich and the forest.

LONG SHOT

Dietrich satisfies himself and motions the point men on. They rise and move ahead. Dietrich and the patrol follow.

SHOT - DIETRICH NEAR - POINT MEN FAR

Point men stop and point to the ground. Then they move on again. Dietrich and the patrol come up to the area.

Glancing down, Dietrich sees a Superman comic book.

SLOW PAN FOLLOWING POINT MEN

They move down a wooded slope on a diagonal. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS THEM FROM FULL LEFT TO FULL RIGHT. They reach the bottom of the gentle slope, push through the thick band of bushes at the bottom and start up the far slope. THE CAMERA SWINGS FULL RIGHT AND HOLDS FOLLOWING THE POINT MEN. Dietrich comes into view in the foreground.

QUICK CUT:

SHOT - POINT MEN NEAR

They see a movement in the brush ahead about 150 yards up the slope.

SHOT - POINT MEN CROUCHING, SMG'S READY

Dietrich moves up to them at the crouch, very quietly. He squats beside them. They point up ahead and Dietrich scans the area.

FIRST POINT MAN

(softly)

I saw movement, sir. About 150 meters up that slope.

LT. DIETRICH

Flank left for one hundred meters.  
Keep the area covered but don't fire.

They nod and Dietrich scrambles back.

DIETRICH AND PATROL

Dietrich half stands. He raises his arm and pumps it once. Then he motions off to the left. The patrol flanks left moving at a crouch as silently as possible.

SHOT - THE PATROL

Suddenly several rifle shots crack out followed by a short burst of BAR fire. The patrol squats immediately, disappearing below the level of the bushes. The shots crash in the trees behind them and the noise rolls in echoes across the small valley.

SHOT - FEATURING DIETRICH AND MG SERGEANT

Dietrich turns to the MG Sergeant.

LT. DIETRICH

(with hushed fierceness)

Tell them not to return fire and to keep moving. Pass it along.

He moves forward and the patrol, following his lead, continues to flank. The fire starts again with a M-1 emptying an eight round clip as quickly as possible. The ping of the ejected clip is followed by the crashing sound of

the rounds in the trees.

SHOT - THE PATROL

The Germans continue to move. They change direction at Dietrich's signal and move again on the original azimuth. A light sun breaks through the trees and cuts the mist away. The patrol reaches the crest of the ridge.

SHOT - THE PATROL

The Germans clear the ridge line and disappear.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE POINT MEN AND DIETRICH - ABOVE ROAD - DAY

Dietrich and the point men stand, looking down the slope of the hill at a road curving along the valley. The heavy growth of pine trees partially conceals it. They are about 200 yards from the road.

FIRST POINT MAN

It's not on the map, Lieutenant.

LT. DIETRICH

Go down and take a look. Get me an azimuth.

The point men move off down the slope.

Dietrich motion up the patrol.

They come up and halt.

Dietrich sends back for Bruggemann and Kraus.

They come up on the double.

SHOT - THE THREE LIEUTENANTS SITTING ON THE GROUND

Behind them the patrol is spaced out and well deployed in a defensive perimeter. The effort of climbing hill after hill at a rapid pace is beginning to tell. Their shirts are soaked in sweat even in the chilled air. The slope is steep and many men brace their feet against trees to keep from sliding. Even while resting, their weapons are ready and they cover alternately right and left. The three officers are checking their maps.

LT. DIETRICH

(almost to himself)

One thing's certain. We don't cross any roads on the planned course.

LT. BRUGGEMANN

According to the map we should reach the gully very soon.

LT. DIETRICH

(grimly)

Yes.

The point men struggle back up the slope.

FIRST POINT MAN  
(breathlessly)  
Nothing on the road, Lieutenant.  
The azimuth is south 168 degrees.

They flop down on the ground like hunting dogs. Dietrich carefully studies his map.

LT. KRAUS  
Those damned Luftwaffe pilots dumped  
us on the wrong drop zone. We're  
lost.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
Those navigators couldn't find their  
way up a rope.

LT. KRAUS  
I thought that drop zone looked  
different. As if it wasn't bad  
enough before -- now we don't even  
know where we're going.

Dietrich looks up sharply and breaks into the conversation abruptly.

LT. DIETRICH  
(to Bruggemann)  
Take Stange and form two groups for  
road crossing with one MG in each.  
Take them down by the road.

The three officers get up. Bruggemann moves off up the slope to find Stange. Dietrich pulls Kraus off to one side.

TWO SHOTS - DIETRICH AND KRAUS

In the background the patrol moves down the slope and is broken down into two lines paralleling the road.

LT. DIETRICH  
What are you thinking about, talking  
like that in front of those men.

LT. KRAUS  
(shrugs)  
They know we are lost without me  
telling them.

LT. DIETRICH  
It's your job to set an example for  
them. You're not going to let me  
down, are you?

LT. KRAUS  
I don't think it's necessary for you  
to ask me that question.

LT. DIETRICH  
(after a long, accusative  
look)

Perhaps you're right. I apologize.

LONG SHOT - THE SLOPE AND ROAD FROM ABOVE

The back firing and roar of a truck engine as it gears down sounds loudly in the valley. Dietrich and Kraus crouch down and move down slope to the patrol. They slip and scramble in the stones and bushes. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS THEM TO Bruggemann and Stange.

SHOT - THE ROAD - MOTOR CONVOY

Around the northern curve of the road 400 yards away rolls a jeep followed by a truck.

In the back of the truck are about fifteen American foot-soldiers. Mounted on the cab roof is a .50 cal MG manned and ready against planes.

Following the first truck at regular intervals is an entire convoy. They keep coming around the curve. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK UP THE SLOPE UNTIL IT CONTAINS THE PATROL.

SHOT - THE OFFICERS AND STANGE (RAIN)

The trucks keep coming. It starts to rain gently. The patter of rain on the leaves combines with the swish of tires on the now wet road and the engine noise. The trucks now tow artillery.

SGT. STANGE

(awed and shaking his  
head)

That must be an entire mechanized  
division and its artillery.

LT. BRUGGEMANN

(grinning)

Think you could handle it, Sergeant  
Stange?

SGT. STANGE

(awed and shaking his  
head)

That's the way we were in Russia.

LT. DIETRICH

Move along the lines Sgt. Stange.  
Tell the men to stay put and keep  
still. Have the second group face  
up-hill.

Stange slips off along the two lines of men. The officers sit silent and the trucks keep coming. The rain now falls more heavily.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SAME SCENE

It is now raining steadily. The road is clear. The lines of men are standing silently in the rain. Dietrich is placing the second MG in position to cover the road during the

crossing. He points and the MG team goes in place.

SHOTS

The first line moves down the hill and up to the edge of the embankment, crouching and ready. Behind them the second wave waits to go into position.

SHOTS

There is a long, tense silence as everyone listens for approaching trucks. Everything is silent. No trucks. Dietrich waves his hand forward and the first wave led by Kraus and Stange drops over the embankment. Immediately the second wave falls into position behind them.

SHOTS - THE FIRST WAVE ON THE ROAD

They slide down the muddy embankment into the near drainage ditch. Slipping and falling in the greasy, red mud they scramble out onto the road and pound across leaving red mud tracked on the black asphalt road. The rain begins to melt it into a red stain.

They scramble up the far embankment. The rain has made it very slippery and many fall back.

Some leap clear across the far ditch and stick right in the bank, kicking toe holds and clawing up.

SHOTS

From around the curve comes the back fire of an approaching truck. Several men are still floundering in the ditch. Men reach down and give them hands up. Stange reaches down and grabs up the last man by the scruff of his uniform and hauls him bodily up into the bushes just as the truck clears the corner.

CLOSE SHOT - THE EMBANKMENT

The section of the embankment where the men scrambled up is torn up and conspicuous. The CAMERA SLOWLY DRAWS BACK. The rain has smeared the mud into a wide, red stain. DRAWING BACK FARTHER THE CAMERA PICKS UP THE TRUCK ON THE LEFT. The truck skids slightly on the mud and rolls on. The driver is concentrating on the road. It disappears around the south curve.

SHOT - THE ROAD

The rain starts a sudden, fierce, noisy downpour. It splatters heavy drops on the asphalt. Suddenly, the second wave bursts out of the bushes and leaps down the embankment. They stumble across the ditch and out on the road.

QUICK CUT - THE NORTHERN CURVE

A jeep rounds the curve followed quickly by another. They are a motorized patrol. The noise of the rain has concealed their approach. Both are open and mounting a .50 cal MG on a pedestal mount. Each carries a driver, scout, gunner and assistant gunner.

QUICK CUT - THE SECOND WAVE

The Germans see the jeeps and dive across the road into the far ditch.

QUICK CUT - THE JEEPS

The first jeep sees the men crossing. It tries to stop but skids in the mud and spins off the road to the left. The second jeep stops. The gunner opens fire.

SHOT - THE SECOND JEEP - 100 YARDS AWAY

Fire from the second jeep plows the embankment behind the men in the ditch, preventing them from moving.

SHOT - BRUGGEMANN AND THE MG TEAM

Bruggemann jerks the MG gunner up and helps him jam his gun into firing position, shouting to get the jeep on the road. The gun opens up. Its fire is high but it draws the .50 cal fire.

SHOT - THE FIRST JEEP IN THE DITCH

The first jeep is stuck in the mud. The driver races the engine and tries to jockey it out but it sinks deeper. The gunner opens fire and the others roll off into the ditch. The rounds ricochet off the asphalt and scream off into the woods across the road.

SHOT - DIETRICH IN THE DITCH

Dietrich scramble crab-like up the ditch towards the second jeep. He cradles his SMG in his left hand and plucks out a grenade with his other. He gets part way to the jeep before the scout in the front seat spots him.

SHOT - THE JEEP

The scout fires at Dietrich with his carbine. The jeep's wheels scream as the driver gives it the gas, but the traction is bad on the rain-slick pavement and the jeep slews sideways before it can build up speed.

SHOT - DIETRICH

Dietrich skids up against the lip of the ditch on his belly and underhands a grenade beneath the rear of the jeep.

SHOT - THE JEEP

The explosion turns the jeep on its side. The wheels spin wildly in the air. It topples over. The wheels continue to spin.

SHOT - THE MG OF THE FIRST WAVE ON THE EMBANKMENT

Stange has finally gotten the first MG into action. It opens fire. From the rear of the gun THE CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSE UNTIL IT IS LOOKING ALONG THE AXIS OF SIGHT. The first burst is off to the right. The gunner shifts the burst onto the

jeep and holds the fire on it. THE CAMERA MOVES FORWARD TOWARD THE JEEP. The rounds chew up the jeep and splatter in the mud embankment behind it. The gunner is killed instantly. THE CAMERA MOVES CLOSER. Suddenly the jeep explodes, a tracer igniting the gasoline from the ruptured gas tank.

REVERSE - TOWARD THE GERMANS WITH JEEP IN FOREGROUND

The American scout runs screaming up on the road. His clothes are on fire. All the others are dead.

SHOT - THE GERMANS IN THE DITCH

The American jumps into the ditch and rolls in the mud. Several Germans nearby beat out the flames with their hands.

SHOTS - DIETRICH

Dietrich runs down the ditch, yelling for them to get up the embankment.

Bruggemann is pushing the MG team up the bank. They hand up the wounded.

The prisoner is shoved up the bank by Bruggemann. Two men lie dead in the ditch. Another of the wounded dies as he is being passed up the embankment. They lay him down gently in the mud.

Dietrich is shouting for them to clear the road; he urges them with vigor. He and Bruggemann are the last to leave. Several men pull them up.

SHOT - THE ROAD

The road is quiet except for the burning roar of the gasoline. The area is a mess of broken equipment, tracked mud and smoke. The dead lie quietly in the ditch or on the road.

EXT. THE PATROL MOVING IN THE WOODS UP THE SLOPE - DAY

The patrol is moving at a fast pace. Dietrich drops back along the column to urge the men forward faster. They are moving at almost a trot. He races back towards the front. He is carrying one of the MG's plus his own weapon. They are moving up a long, wide wash that is clogged with brush.

There are rocks of a dried-up water course underfoot. In many places they are concealed with a matting of leaves. The rain is no longer falling but the sky is threatening.

SHOT - THE MEN

Their mouths are open gasping for breath. Their uniforms are steaming from their body heat. They pay attention to nothing but the ground underfoot and the steps of the man in front. Their only thought is to keep up the pace.

SHOT - BRUGGEMANN AND PRISONER

In the middle of the column, Bruggemann is pushing the

prisoner ahead of him. The American is hurt from his wounds and in a daze at being captured so unexpectedly. He slips on a rock and Bruggemann quickly pulls him up by his belt.

SHOT - DIETRICH AND WOUNDED MEN

Dietrich is helping one of the wounded German up the wash by the seat of his pants. The man bleeds to death from a wound in his neck and in the rush and falls face down. The men behind them pass around as Dietrich bends down and turns him over. The man is staring straight ahead; his face is very white under the grime. He is a demo man. Dietrich unbuckles his demo pack, shifts the MG to one shoulder and swings the pack over the other. He closes the man's eyes with a sweep of his hand. Standing up, he turns to the stragglers in the rear.

LT. DIETRICH  
(shouting)  
Hurry up.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PATROL ON A HILLTOP - DAY

The members of the patrol are widely deployed in various attitudes of alert exhaustion. Some men are still straggling up. Stange is in the rear of them, encouraging them on and half-carrying a wounded man. He reaches the top and gently lowers him to the ground. The wounded man begins to gingerly unlace his boot. Dietrich calls Stange over.

LT. DIETRICH  
We're not going to be here long,  
sergeant. First, get security out.  
Then I want a complete status report  
on dead, wounded and missing. Also  
on any significant ammo shortages.

Bruggemann comes up.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
I've got that prisoner over here,  
Lieutenant Dietrich.

Dietrich turns his attention to the prisoner.

SHOT - THE PRISONER

The prisoner is sitting on the ground by a fallen tree. He is hunched over, supporting his left arm by cradling the elbow in his right hand. His clothes are scorched and his hair and eyebrows are singed.

SHOT - FAVORING DIETRICH, KRAUS AND BRUGGEMANN - MEDIC AND PRISONER IN B.G.

In b.g. the medic opens his kit bag. He whips out his knife and cuts open the man's shirt. The medic begins to spread salve from a tube on the burns. The prisoner looks over anxiously as the officers inspect his things.

LT. BRUGGEMANN

(squatting on the ground)  
Here are his personal effects.

LT. DIETRICH  
(going through them)  
Nothing here. He's Corporal Robert  
John Scott, 323rd Reconnaissance  
Company. It's on these orders here.  
(looks at the dog tags)  
Serial 17147358. Protestant.  
(he looks through the  
billfold)  
Money. Photo of girl friend. Photo  
of a dog. Looks like a Weimaraner.  
I used to have one.  
(he throws the inspected  
things in a little pile  
in the ground)  
Letters from home.  
(he discards these and  
shakes the odds and ends  
in his hands)

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
He can tell us where we are.

LT. DIETRICH  
I am aware of that, Bruggemann.

He tosses Bruggemann a stick of the prisoner's gum and  
gathers up all the things in his hands. The medic is  
finishing the bandaging. Dietrich stands up and walks over.

LOW ANGLE - DIETRICH ABOVE MEDIC AND PRISONER

MEDIC  
All done, sir. He'll be all right.  
(exits)

LT. DIETRICH  
Good morning, Corporal Scott.  
Feeling pretty under the weather, I  
suppose.

CORPORAL  
I'm not complaining.

Dietrich places the man's personal belongings on the ground.  
The prisoner tries to resist the temptation to grab them  
eagerly. With a studied casual air he stuffs them back into  
his pockets.

LT. DIETRICH  
You'll find everything untouched.

CORPORAL  
Thanks.

LT. DIETRICH  
I must pay you a compliment,  
corporal.

CORPORAL

Oh?

LT. DIETRICH

Very few men would have been able to experience what you have just gone through with as few ill effects as you have.

CORPORAL

I wish my lieutenant could hear that.

LT. DIETRICH

(laughs cordially)

Like a cigarette?

CORPORAL

Thanks.

They both light up. Dietrich exhales as if he has nothing to do but sit and chat.

LT. DIETRICH

(charmingly)

Don't say it. I admit your American cigarettes are much better but they are rather difficult to buy just now.

CORPORAL

(grudgingly laughs)

Say, I know you're supposed to be asking the questions but do you mind if I ask you one?

LT. DIETRICH

Certainly not. Besides, please don't regard this as an interrogation.

CORPORAL

Well then, what in the hell is going on -- another invasion?

LT. DIETRICH

(laughs amiably)

I should say happily not. We were cut off from our outfit in the retreat Wednesday and we're trying to make our way back.

CORPORAL

(weighting the truth of Dietrich's statement)

Why don't you guys just call it a day?

LT. DIETRICH

We have our orders just like you. We're just trying to stay alive until the war ends.

CORPORAL

If you'd like to surrender, I'll be happy to take you in.

LT. DIETRICH  
(laughs)  
Well, not just yet, corporal.  
Though I thank you for your offer.

CORPORAL  
What are you going to do with me?

LT. DIETRICH  
Oh, you're free to go any time you want to. We obviously can't take you with us.

CORPORAL  
Do you mean that?

LT. DIETRICH  
You have my word, corporal. But there's just one favor I'd like to ask.

CORPORAL  
(suspiciously)  
What is it?

LT. DIETRICH  
This won't be anything to compromise the American war effort, I assure you. We are leaving behind our seriously wounded and we'd like to get them medical attention as soon as possible. They will be your prisoners, of course.

CORPORAL  
Well, that's a new twist.

LT. DIETRICH  
How's that?

CORPORAL  
I mean okay, Lieutenant. Okay.

LT. DIETRICH  
Some of them are badly hurt. How long do you think it will take you to bring help back?

CORPORAL  
The battalion aid station is about four miles up the road. I guess I can walk there in an hour and come back with some transport pretty quick.

Dietrich had hoped to hear the name of a town.

LT. DIETRICH  
(smiling)  
That sounds wonderful, corporal. I

hope it's set up near a town where these men can get some first-class treatment.

CORPORAL

Don't worry about that. They'll get the best.

A momentary pause, then Dietrich forces a smile.

LT. DIETRICH

Fine... fine. You know, it's amazing there's anything left of our towns. You Yanks really did a thorough job on them.

CORPORAL

Yeah, that's true.

LT. DIETRICH

Say, I just happened to remember. I hope that town isn't Obernburg. The last I heard from our regimental headquarters is that artillery had that scheduled for a heavy concentration.

CORPORAL

No, Obernburg is north of here. The hospital's safe enough. It's in a little dinky village called Mungersdorf.

LT. DIETRICH

(smiles pleasantly)

Thank you very much, Corporal Scott. I'll have my sergeant help you get ready for your journey.

CORPORAL

Okay, Lieutenant. I've got to say you've been a good Joe. When the war's over, if you ever come to Detroit, look me up. I'm in the phone book.

LT. DIETRICH

I'll certainly do that.  
(exits)

SHOT - SGT. STANGE AND LT. BRUGGEMANN

Bruggemann is cleaning his weapon. Stange stands as Dietrich comes over grinning. He speaks softly so that the prisoner cannot hear.

LT. DIETRICH

Let's see a map. I should have been in an intelligence interrogation section. I'd be a major by now.  
(he spreads out the map eagerly)  
Mungersdorf. I thought so. It's

close by the bridge. The road we crossed runs south from it and parallels the Main. We crossed about fourteen kilometers south on the road which is about there.

They edge over to see where he is pointing.

LT. DIETRICH  
And here's our present position on this hill two kilometers west of the road.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
(glancing at his watch)  
It's 1300 now. We should make the river by not later than 1700.

SHOT - LT. KRAUS APPROACHING GROUP

LT. KRAUS  
(loudly)  
Well, has our American told us how to get to the Obernburg bridge yet?

SHOT - THE PRISONER

The prisoner looks up quickly and then looks down again.

REVERSE - THE LIEUTENANTS

They all rise. Bruggemann has a disgusted look on his face. Dietrich is restraining his anger and Kraus looks white.

LT. DIETRICH  
(under his breath)  
In one day you seem to have lost all the experience you have gained in four years of war.

LT. KRAUS  
I'm sorry, Paul. I wasn't thinking. I was careless.

LT. DIETRICH  
That's fine! What are we supposed to do with the prisoner now?

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
We certainly can't release him.

LT. KRAUS  
Well, I guess we'll have to take him along with us.

LT. DIETRICH  
(softly)  
Don't add stupidity to your carelessness. That would be impossible. We will have to shoot him.

LT. KRAUS

You can't do that!

LT. DIETRICH

I suggest you lower your voice. You have made enough trouble already.

LT. KRAUS

(in a lower tone)

There must be another way.

LT. DIETRICH

I am only doing what is necessary to protect the lives of our own men.

LT. KRAUS

Paul, in the name of God, don't do it.

LT. DIETRICH

Your carelessness is the cause of the prisoner's death just as well as the bullet that kills him.

Kraus glares at Dietrich, unable to express his anger.

LT. DIETRICH

(softly but with great menace)

Oskar, try to regain control of your nerves. Try to remember you are an officer. Try to remember I am in command.

CLOSE - KRAUS

He stares in bewilderment at his friend for several seconds, then turns and walks away.

TWO SHOT - DIETRICH AND BRUGGEMANN

Sgt. Stange approaches.

SGT. STANGE

The men are in a perimeter, Lieutenant. I've got an outpost down the slope towards the road. We've got fifty men not counting yourselves. Six wounded.

LT. DIETRICH

(to Stange)

Re-form the men to move out.

SGT. STANGE

Yes, sir.

(he exits)

LT. DIETRICH

(to Bruggemann)

Form a detail of two men and stay with the prisoner until we move out. When the last man gets out of sight, shoot him. When you return say that

he tried to attack you.

LT. BRUGGEMANN

Yes, sir.

(confidentially)

If I may, sir, I suggest you keep an eye on Lieutenant Kraus. I don't feel very safe with him any more.

LT. DIETRICH

When I need your advice, Lieutenant, I'll ask for it. Carry out your orders.

LT. BRUGGEMANN

Yes, sir.

(he exits)

The patrol moves out.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FAVORING KRAUS - THE PATROL DISPERSED THROUGH THE FOREST - DAY

Just the forest sounds. Each man intently studying the foliage in front of him. A single shot suddenly echoes and reverberates through the forest. Everyone freezes. After some seconds, Lieutenant Bruggemann and two men come puffing into view from the rear.

LT. BRUGGEMANN

(as he passes through)

The prisoner tried to attack us and we had to shoot him.

Orders are given to move out. They move.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LONG SHOT - SLOW PAN - MID-AFTERNOON

THE CAMERA SLOWLY MOVES FROM FAR LEFT TO FAR RIGHT AND BACK AGAIN as if the area were being scanned by a scout. The wooded hills have stopped as the terrain slopes down toward the Main River.

In front is an open valley.

Both hillsides are completely cleared and plowed for spring planting.

They slope down to a small dry stream bed edged on both sides by a narrow band of trees and bushes.

This stream is the beginning of the gully leading to the Main. It offers the only covered route across the bare fields.

SHOT - DIETRICH, BRUGGEMANN AND KRAUS

They are standing on the edge of the woods. The patrol stretches behind them, squatting or kneeling.

LT. DIETRICH

(curtly)

Kraus, take three more of your men and move forward with the point as an advanced guard. We will move down the gully to the river. It should be about eight kilometers.

Lt. Krause nods and moves out.

LT. DIETRICH

One moment. I have too much respect for you as a soldier to believe you will allow your personal feelings to interfere with your duty to your men.

LT. KRAUS

I hope I don't disappoint you.

The lieutenants split and the patrol gets to its feet, anticipating the move.

Kraus brings up three more men and the six-man advanced guard trots out of the woods into the narrow stream bed.

The patrol follows.

DISSOLVE TO:

LONG SHOT - THE VALLEY

The gully has deepened slightly and the trees and bushes are slightly thicker.

The hills on both sides have risen higher as the valley drops towards the Main.

Ahead on a slight spur leading out from the hill of the left is a two story stone farmhouse.

SHOT - LOW ANGLE - THE HOUSE FROM THE GULLY - 400 YARDS AWAY

The house is a dull grey but has sheds built against it of white-painted wood. It is partially destroyed by artillery fire. It seems completely deserted; the windows are shuttered and the doors closed. No smoke comes from the chimney. The yard is muddy with the recent rains. On the spur it completely commands the valley.

SHOT - THE GULLY

Kraus' group moves cautiously along the gully. They are split, three on each side. Kraus in the lead. The stream bed is of white, limestone rocks. There are standing pools of water. Both banks are fringed with bushes and occasional poplars and oaks. The men are concentrating their attention on the house up ahead. It dominates the gully.

LONG SHOT - ADVANCED PARTY AND HOUSE IN B.G.

The six men move forward at a crouch. They seem to be

wanting to sit down and are barely restraining themselves. The tension is evident in the hunch of their shoulders and the flex of their backs. They are about 300 yards from the house and 300 yards from the main group.

SHOT - THE ADVANCED PARTY AND HOUSE IN B.G.

Suddenly the stillness of the house is broken by the barking of a dog in one of the sheds. He quits barking with a yelp as if struck. Suddenly two unseen MG's in the yard open fire on the advanced party.

SHOT - THE ADVANCED PARTY

Two men on the far side of the gully away from the house are struck immediately and dropped.

The other dives across to the bank sheltering the three on that side.

The gully is filled with the whine of ricochets off the rocks of the stream bed.

The rounds also slash the bushes on the bank and chew up the dirt.

The elevation of the American MG's gives them a good angle on the gully and they pin the men tightly against the bank.

SHOT - KRAUS AND THE THREE MEN

Kraus crouches against the bank, pressing tightly to the slight overhang as if his life depended on it.

The three men glance at him and decide to do the same.

The MG's criss-cross their fire and the ricochets and rock chips whir.

SHOT - DIETRICH AND THE MAIN BODY

Dietrich and the main body have squatted at the sound of the firing up ahead.

They are split into two columns on each side of the stream bed. They stretch back up the gully, squatting and ready, looking like dark birds against the white limestone gravel and boulders.

Dietrich turns and waves up Bruggemann. Stange appears at his elbow.

LT. DIETRICH  
(to Stange)  
Get those three MG teams up here  
quickly.

Stange pivots without a word and runs off just as Bruggemann arrives. He couches beside Dietrich who has turned and is looking towards the fighting.

LT. DIETRICH  
(out loud to himself)

Where is that damn connecting file.  
He must have gotten pinned.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
Why doesn't Kraus open up?

LT. DIETRICH  
(grimly)  
We will see whether you can do it  
better. Take that number one MG and  
move up to Kraus. I want to hear  
the heaviest volume of fire since  
Stalingrad.

(he looks around)  
I'm taking Stange and the other two.  
We'll move up on the left. When you  
see a smoke grenade lift fire and  
move on down the gully.

SHOT - THE MACHINE GUN TEAMS

The MG teams dash up the gully. Stange, in the lead, motions  
them to squat down.

SHOT - BRUGGEMANN AND FIRST TEAM

Bruggemann motions the first team to follow him. In the lead  
with his SMG at the ready, he leads them around the bend in  
the wash.

They are moving forward at a crouch. They hug the left bank,  
sometimes balancing themselves against it with their free  
hand.

Bruggemann leads with the gunner right behind. He has a belt  
hanging from the gun. He is stout and has trouble keeping  
up.

Behind them are the assistant gunner and the two ammo  
bearers. Each has his weapon slung and two containers of  
ammo in his hands.

The volume of American MG fire grows louder as they  
disappear.

SHOT - HIGH ANGLE - FROM THE MAIN BODY TO THE HOUSE

The house has a layer of smoke hanging around it close to the  
ground. THE CAMERA LOOKS FROM THE TROOPS IN THE GULLY UP  
ALONG A FENCE RUNNING ACROSS A ROAD AND TO THE LEFT OF THE  
HOUSE.

The house seems to loom above the gully dominating it. The  
fence running up to it attracts the eye as a logical  
approach.

SHOT - DIETRICH AND STANGE LOOKING AT THE HOUSE IN B.G.

SHOT - DIETRICH AND STANGE - ANOTHER ANGLE

LT. DIETRICH  
(still looking)  
That damn thing sweeps the whole

valley and there's no defilade when  
that road fords the wash.

Sgt. Stange nods. Dietrich pulls a map from his tunic. He smooths it across his knee and studies it for several moments.

LT. DIETRICH  
There isn't any other approach to  
the bridge.

Stange frowns and nods dismally.

LT. DIETRICH  
(gravely)  
We'll have to take that house.

SHOT - BRUGGEMANN AND THE FIRST MG TEAM

On hands and knees Bruggemann leads the team forward. They are scrambling awkwardly along trying not to expose themselves. They look like crabs. They stoop, shuffle, crouch, fall, scramble, stumble and waddle forward. The bank is too low to make for a graceful advance.

The fire is loud and violent. The whine of ricochets is a steady buzz.

SHOT - THE ADVANCED PARTY PINNED DOWN

The men are still pinned against the bank and have not returned fire.

Kraus seems to have almost nudged his way into a small excavation in the bank. He has his legs drawn up tightly, protecting his stomach against the ricochets.

The Americans are alternating fire in a regular pattern of bursts to save their barrels.

Suddenly an MG from the main party opens with a long burst searching the house.

The Germans turn their heads and look back up the stream bed hopefully.

SHOT - UPSTREAM WITH ADVANCED PARTY PINNED IN FOREGROUND

Around the bend scramble the MG team led by Bruggemann. They scramble up to the advanced party.

Bruggemann slams the gunner down where he wants the gun and helps him hoist it up on the bank. The assistant gunner pants up and throws himself down by the gun banging the ammo can on the rocks.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
(shouting)  
Get it firing.  
(turning to the advanced  
party)  
Get up and fire your weapons.

He pounds the closest man on the rear with his hand. Slipping his SMG from his shoulder he eases it across the edge of the bank just as the MG begins to fire. Bruggemann's fire chops the bushes.

He scramble along the bank pounding the men on the legs and backs, shoving them up to fire.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
(shouting)  
Fire, damn you, fire. Don't worry  
about those damn Americans. Fire.  
Fire.

SHOTS - THE ADVANCED PARTY

The German fire is building up. The men are firing short bursts from their SMG's ducking down and popping back up to fire off another.

The MG assistant gunner is calmly shouting off range adjustments as the gunner rips off short bursts and hunches around to hit another area.

Bruggemann has ducked down to reload. He tears off his magazine and slams another in its place. Getting up he squeezes off a short burst.

He flops down beside Kraus.

TWO SHOT - BRUGGEMANN AND KRAUS

Kraus doesn't even look up but sticks his shoulder deeper into the embankment.

Bruggemann sticks his face close and shouts above the din.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
(each word a curse)  
Why the hell didn't you open fire?

LT. KRAUS  
(trembling and  
demoralized)  
What does it matter? They've got us  
pinned down and blocked from the  
river. We have no other way.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
(slaps him across the  
mouth)  
Shut up, damn you. I would kill you  
here if you weren't the chosen  
friend of Lt. Dietrich.  
(he rises to crouch; in  
disgust)  
Stay there and sweat.

SHOT - THE GULLY, THE MEN FIRING TOWARDS THE HOUSE IN B.G.

The fire crackles in rising and falling waves with the steady burst of the MG providing a base.

One of the advanced party gets hit and sinks forward. No one notices. CAMERA MOVES CLOSER.

SHOT - THE MACHINE GUN TEAM

The assistant gunner flicks the empty can away and gropes to his rear for another one. He looks around for it and is hit instantly and killed.

An ammo bearer reaches up as if to shake his hand and pulls him into the wash. He scrambles up beside the gun with a new belt.

The gunner loads it without noticing the new man.

SHOT - ALONG THE AXIS OF THE MG - HOUSE IN B.G.

The gunner fires in bursts of five or six rounds.

The house is about two hundred fifty yards away. It shakes and shudders as the gun vibrates. The rounds whip a cloud of dust into the yard.

The American guns flash little spurts of yellow-white flame and the smoke from their guns hangs in a layer in the yard.

Spotting one MG in a shed, the German gunner shifts his fire. The rounds spray the yard in front and splatter in the shed. The wood splinters and the gun chews at the door.

The American gun answers with a series of flashes. The tracers from the guns seem to cross.

SHOT - THE HOUSE IN B.G., FENCE AND BUSHES IN F.G.

SUDDENLY THE CAMERA CATCHES TWO FIGURES SLIDE OUT ACROSS THE EDGE OF THE GULLY. Dietrich is starting to move out his men.

In the far right on the other side of the fence, Stange is directing the second gun.

Another group of three men clear the edge and crouch-run in the cover of the fence.

An American MG fires and the rounds clip the bushes along the fence and whine off the stones.

One man is hit in the face and is blinded. He stumbles and is screaming for help as he gropes forward. One of the three stops back for him. Grabbing him by the shirt he half lifts half pulls him forward, scrambling himself in a half-crouch.

A volley of American rifle shots catch them. There is a desperate effort by the rescuer as the blinded German claws forward. They fall under a vortex of shots.

SHOT - DIETRICH ALONG THE FENCE ON HIS STOMACH

Dietrich looks back. The dead men look like crumpled mounds of dirty clothes.

SHOT - DIETRICH CROUCHING

He fires a long burst across the fence at the yard of the farmhouse.

LT. DIETRICH  
(shouting toward the  
gully)  
Get that damn MG up. Get it up.

The MG team clears the bank at a dead crouch-run.

SHOT - ALONG THE FENCE FROM SUNKEN ROAD

In the foreground about four men are firing rifles at the farmhouse.

Along the fence the MG team pounds in a furious sprint.

Dietrich is in their rear firing the SMG.

SHOT - THE HOUSE IN B.G., THE FENCE WITH RUNNING MG TEAM IN F.G.

THE CAMERA PANS A LONG SHOT.

The MG team is desperately tearing for the shelter of the road.

The Americans open fire with the MG. It cuts at the bushes.

Dietrich is running now and stopping to fire short bursts.

The MG team reaches the edge of the road. They dive across the road and hit the ditch. Dietrich follows.

SHOT - ALONG THE ROAD

The road is cut into the hill and is slightly below the house. It is cut on the side facing the house.

The fence is gated across the road and runs on the other side, past the side and rear of the house and on into an orchard.

The Germans are huddled together, still on the opposite side of the fence from the house.

Dietrich crawls along the ditch to the fence. The men are behind him. The gunner cradling his weapon in one arm as he crawls on the other.

SHOT - THE DITCH

Dietrich tears off the wire below the regular fence line blocking the ditch.

He crawls through and the men follow him. He points to the position for the MG. The team slams the gun into position.

The men begin firing their rifles. The gunner slams the bolt closed and the gun erupts into fire.

SHOT - THE HOUSE

The yard and the house are sheathed in smoke. One gun had been silenced. Now all three German guns are spraying the yard and chewing up the fence and sheds.

The German riflemen are within one hundred fifty yards of the house and have the windows and doors under constant fire.

REVERSE - ACROSS THE ROAD TOWARDS THE GULLY

The gully is hung with smoke. Occasionally small muzzle flashes can be seen in the darkening smoke.

Suddenly from the gully, the MG team of Stange breaks clear from the smoke and dashes across the field, hugging the fence line. They disappear into the ditch.

SHOT - THE DITCH

Stange's gun is going into action. He drops beside Dietrich in the ditch. Dietrich is reloading.

LT. DIETRICH

I'm moving out now. Keep up the fire until you see the smoke grenade. Make sure we leave the rear of the house clear for them to retreat. Give me your grenades.

Stange silently hands him four grenades from his tunic pocket.

SGT. STANGE

(meaningly)  
Good luck, Sir.

Dietrich moves down the ditch and hands a grenade to each of his four men. He pulls the two ammo bearers off each of the guns as he moves down the line.

The gunners are firing in regular alternating bursts.

The assault unit is bunched around Dietrich. There are eight men and Dietrich.

SHOT - LOW ANGLE - THE DITCH

Dietrich holds his SMG in his left hand a grenade lightly in his right. He vaults out of the ditch.

Two men follow close behind him and clear.

The next man is hit squarely in the chest with a burst of carbine fire and is blasted back into the road.

Three men clear. Another burst of carbine fire gets one in the leg. He limps back and hops down calmly in the ditch.

The final two men look a moment and clear.

SHOT - THE FIELD IN FRONT OF THE FENCE

The men are lying like conspicuous blobs on the ground. The house looms ahead of them fifty yards up a slight grade. It

is raked with MG fire.

Dietrich is looking back at his final man moving up to flop down. They are spread in an irregular line about ten yards apart.

Dietrich motions ahead the right flank. He fires over their heads at the upper story of the house as they rush up the grade about twenty yards and flop.

The right flank begins to fire and Dietrich gets up and moves forward. The three men with him move up at a crouch. One is hit and rolls in a ball of pain on the ground.

Dietrich doesn't even see him hit. He and his men make a dash for the wall of the house. They fire at the lower windows as they run. They slam into the side of the house.

SHOT - THE WALL OF THE HOUSE

Dietrich and his men press against the wall of the house.

The windows on the ground floor are higher than the men's heads. Those on the second floor are considerably higher.

CROSS SHOT - THE SLOPE AND THE WALL

The right flank makes its dash for the wall. Several shots ring out from the upper windows.

One man is hit in the foot; he hops madly for the wall.

Sergeant Stange's MG chatters out in several short bursts; the rounds crash and splinter into the upper story.

The second wave makes the wall panting heavily. The wounded man makes the last few yards leaping in long bounds on one foot.

He stumbles up the wall towards Dietrich using the wall for support. Dietrich grabs him under the arm as he pants to regain his breath.

WOUNDED SOLDIER

(gasping)

Lieutenant, they are leaving the house by the rear. I saw first three and then five more run out into the orchard.

LT. DIETRICH

(leaning out to look up at the upper windows)

Let them go.

(he lowers the man to the ground)

You sit here.

LONG SHOT - THE ASSAULT UNIT ALONG THE WALL

The German MG's are still sporadically raking the front of the house. The American guns are silent. Only rifle and carbine fire are heard from the house broken by occasional

explosive burst of BAR fire.

Dietrich and his men move along the wall towards the front.

Dietrich pulls the pin on his grenade and tosses it underhand around the corner of the house. It splutters on the ground for a moment and then begins to pour out a thick, white smoke.

Dietrich holds out his arm to keep back his eager men. With his other he deftly pulls another grenade out of his tunic, pulls the pin with his teeth and tosses it after the first.

It is also a smoke grenade. Dietrich and his men pour around the corner of the house into the envelope of smoke.

SHOT - THE MEN IN THE YARD

The German guns are still. But the front of the house is battered with the results of their heavy fire.

On the right lie the dead bodies of two Americans with their LMG amidst discarded boxes of ammo. The ground is littered with cartridge cases.

The smoke is heavy. On the left of the house a splintered shed burns, ignited by tracers. It adds to the smoke.

The Germans fan out in the smoke and carefully sweep the yard.

SHOT - THE YARD - ANOTHER ANGLE

From the burning shed comes a high-pitched burst of carbine fire. It wildly sprays the area. Then it stops abruptly.

The Germans squat to the ground. One man cuts loose a barrage of shots from his rifle into the shed.

SHOT - TOWARDS THE HOUSE - THE SHED FROM BOTH SIDES

The German fires and moves towards the shed at a crouch.

From the rear of the shed, hidden by the shed and the smoke, races an American corporal covering the withdrawal of his MG team.

They are cutting up an avenue of apple trees in the orchard in the background. The smoke is starting to drift into the trees.

The American corporal turns and fires another burst into the shed. Neither the American nor the Germans can see each other.

From the smoke comes a series of flashes from a German SMG.

The American ducks and runs into concealment up a row of trees.

SHOT - THE SHED, HOUSE AND ORCHARD

The shed runs along the wall of the house. It looks at the

orchard across a broken fence that runs down the other side of the spur into the wash.

The Germans have cleared the yard and are checking along the other side of the house and the shed.

From the orchard where it runs higher up on the side of the ridge and the spur comes a burst of American MG fire.

The smoke is thin on this side of the house and has only begun to drift up into the orchard.

The shots are wild, high up on the house. The Germans scatter. Dietrich drops behind a well casing of stone. He fires a long burst up the slope into the orchard.

LT. DIETRICH  
(bellowing)  
Fall back into the gully. Get  
moving. Fall back.

SHOT - ANOTHER ANGLE

The American gun fires another burst of well aimed fire. It catches one of the Germans racing back along the side of the shed. The velocity of the fire knocks him into the flimsy wooden wall. He crashes through and the rounds splinter the wood and rack his body.

Dietrich fires another burst and dashes back into the smoke.

LT. DIETRICH  
(bellowing)  
Sgt. Stange, get those MG's back.  
Displace to the gully.

SGT. STANGE (O.S.)  
(from about fifty yards to  
the right)  
Take those guns and let's go. Come  
on.

The scene is one of smoke and confusion. There is another burst of American MG fire raking the building. A German turns and lets loose a volley of rifle shots fired from the hip up into the orchard. He cannot see the gun but fires into the trees.

The rounds crash and cut into the branches. There is another answering burst of American fire. Then stillness.

LONG SHOT - THE VALLEY

The house has a shattered look. The shed beside it burns. There are bodies of Germans and Americans crumpled here and there. In the yard there is a bright, brassy litter of cartridge cases.

Smoke hangs in a layer thickly around the house. A slight breeze drifts the smoke up the slope into the orchard. It clings like a white syrup to the ground and drifts slowly up the avenues of trees.

DISSOLVE TO:

SHOT - GERMANS IN THE GULLY

Dietrich's remaining men and Stange's MG teams are the worse for wear. About half the original group remain and of these half again are wounded. One man wounded in the leg has been carried bodily down. Another limps painfully from a wound in the foot.

LT. DIETRICH

(to Stange)

We will have to clear that ford before they get organized and that smoke blows off.

(he looks around)

I want you to use the four assault men and form a rear guard.

SGT. STANGE

(unlimbers his SMG)

I'll make it hot for them if they follow us in the gully.

LT. DIETRICH

(checks the chamber)

We must have fifteen minutes for reorganization.

SGT. STANGE

(checks his chamber)

I'll guarantee you that, Lieutenant.

A volley of shots rings out from the orchard and they all duck.

SGT. STANGE

They're firing from up in that damn orchard.

LT. DIETRICH

(getting up)

They haven't spotted us yet. They are still covering the house. Let's get moving. Allow us a hundred yard start.

(loudly)

MG teams, move out. The riflemen are with Sgt. Stange.

SHOT - THE GULLY - THE GERMANS BEGIN TO MOVE

The MG teams need no urging. They trot off down the gully.

One team is reduced to a gunner and an assistant. They have only three boxes of ammo left.

The other team has three men but only the belt in the gun. The assistant gunner trots up beside the first team and gets a box of ammo.

Behind them the rifle men spread out at Stange's signal. Stange pulls the wounded man off into shelter by the bank of

the gully. He takes his rifle and all ammo.

The MG teams with Dietrich have disappeared at a trot down the gully and around the bend. Stange waves back his rear guard. They start after the MG teams at a slower pace.

HIGH ANGLE LONG SHOT - THE ENTIRE SCENE

Far off to the left the house is still shrouded in smoke. But the smoke has spread and thinned. It hangs over the house, yard and orchard like a haze.

The rear guard of Stange's has disappeared around the bend. They reappear again in the next stretch and then are gone again.

In the orchard there is movement. The Americans have reorganized. Half a squad are flanking down the orchard approaching the house cautiously.

They are shadowy and obscure in the haze. They move past the well and along the sheds. One man idly turns over the body of a German.

More men follow them out of the haze from the orchard. One is an officer. He gestures this group around the rear of the house.

DISSOLVE TO:

LONG SHOT - PATROL IN GULLY

The sound of sporadic firing of small arms is heard offscreen. The patrol hurries along the gully. The men are divided into two lines, one on each side of the stream which runs down the gully towards the Main.

The gully has deepened and the growth along the edges has thickened into a small tangled forest of small trees, bushes and vines.

MEDIUM LONG SHOT - UP THE GULLY

The men come towards the camera. As Dietrich nears the camera he steps out of line and urges the troops to close it up as they move by.

SHOT - THE COLUMN OF TROOPS PASSES

The faces of the men show that they are near the breaking point. They are haggard, grimy with dirt and powder burns, streaked with sweat, some wounded from rock chips in the previous fire fight. They stumble clumsily along on the slippery rocks.

SHOT - A WOUNDED MAN

A young soldier, badly wounded in the shoulder, stumbles along, gasping with pain. Tears are streaming down his face.

TWO SHOT - KRAUS AND WOUNDED SOLDIER

The young soldier stumbles and lies in the water. Behind him

is revealed Lt. Kraus. He pulls the wounded man to his feet and supporting him with one hand, pushes him ahead.

SHOT - GERMAN RUNNER

Comes splashing into view from around the river bend. He stops, panting in front of Lt. Dietrich.

GERMAN RUNNER

Sir, Sergeant Stange says the rear guard is being pressed hard by about two squads from the farmhouse.

Dietrich listens to the small arms fire growing louder.

LT. DIETRICH

Tell Sergeant Stange to keep falling back. We'll be waiting for him.

GERMAN RUNNER

Yes, sir.

He dashes back around the bend.

DISSOLVE TO:

LONG SHOT - THE GULLY - LATE AFTERNOON

The gully has deepened further and the stream widened. The water rushes swiftly over the stones making a splashing sound. It is late afternoon and the shadows cut deeply across the gully leaving half in deep shadow, half in pale sunset. The early evening wind rustles the trees that flank the gully. Suddenly there is a splashing sound.

SHOT - MEN ROUND THE CURVE

Two men of the rear guard splash into view around the bend in the gully and race along the edge of the stream. There is a burst of SMG fire and several rifle shots around the bend. The men duck into the woods on the edge of the stream and take cover. There is another burst of rifle fire and a final chatter of the SMG. The sound echoes in the gully.

SHOT - SGT. STANGE

The sergeant races around the curve and tears after his men. His feet splash wildly in the shallow water.

LONG SHOT - SERGEANT STANGE IN THE GULLY

He is dashing back in a crouch when an M1 magazine is emptied in rapid sequence. He half turns to return fire when he is hit by another burst of fire which drops him in his tracks. His body lies half submerged in the stream.

SHOTS - THE MAIN PART OF GERMANS

Dispersed behind cover along both sides of the slopes of the gully. They hold their fire waiting for the Americans.

SHOT - DIETRICH

He snaps the bolt of his SMG.

LONG SHOT - THE GULLY

The two Germans fire again and pull back through the bushes. They are hidden but the rustling of the bushes gives away their position. FROM A POSITION TO THE REAR AND TO ONE SIDE OF ONE OF THE MG'S IN AMBUSH THE CAMERA WATCHES THE ACTION AS IF IT WERE ONE OF THE PATROL.

SHOTS - THE AMERICAN ADVANCE GUARD

From around the curve, skirting the bushes on the sunny side of the stream, edge two American riflemen.

Then on the shady side comes the man with the carbine.

One of the riflemen, an NCO, waves forward the rifleman.

He runs up the sunny side and takes cover in a position dominating the next bend of the stream.

The NCO then waves forward the carbine man.

LONG SHOTS - ANOTHER ANGLE FROM THE AMBUSH

The carbine man runs up the shady side, one boot crunching the gravel, the other splashing in the stream. He dives behind a fallen tree where he can see down the next stretch of the stream.

LONG SHOT - ANOTHER ANGLE FROM THE AMBUSH

The NCO looks behind him and waves up the rest of the American patrol. THE CAMERA WATCHES THE ACTION BELOW. FRAMING THE SHOT ARE TREES AND BRUGGEMANN KNEELING WITH HIS SMG IN A SHADOW.

LONG SHOT - ANOTHER ANGLE FROM THE AMBUSH

The NCO looks ahead and waves the rifleman forward moving up as he does so. The rifleman trots forward as the carbine man covers. As the NCO comes up he waves the carbine man forward and, as he trots up the shady side, the NCO drops to cover both his point men.

LONG SHOT - ANOTHER ANGLE FROM THE AMBUSH

The NCO pauses for a minute and then moves around the bend after his men. THE CAMERA WATCHES THE ACTION BELOW. IN THE FOREGROUND KRAUS IS WATCHING WITH AN EYESTRAINING INTENSITY. His hands grip his SMG until the knuckles whiten.

LONG SHOT - ANOTHER ANGLE FROM THE AMBUSH

Suddenly around the upper bend, the first elements of the well dispersed American patrol move cautiously. They are one of three squads of the platoon attacked in the farmhouse. They peer everywhere, their weapons at the ready as they walk slowly along in two columns, one on each side of the stream. A lieutenant heads up the column on the sunny side.

LONG SHOT - SLOW PAN

THE CAMERA MOVES ALONG BEHIND THE MEN IN AMBUSH CATCHING SIGHT OF THE AMERICAN PATROL THROUGH THE TREES. The Germans silently pull pins on their grenades and hold them ready in their fists.

Still the patrol moves on until the three squads are contained in the bend of the river. The lead man idly kicks over the body of Sgt. Stange as he passes.

THE PANNING CAMERA REACHES DIETRICH IN THE LINE OF GERMANS IN AMBUSH. Dietrich drops his hand and the German MG begins to fire.

QUICK CUTS - GERMANS IN AMBUSH

The Germans unleash a shower of grenades that arch down on the Americans as the MG's start to sweep the line.

LONG SHOTS - THE GULLY AND SHADY RIDGE

The shady woods erupt with fire just as the grenades explode. The American patrol is caught entirely by surprise. As the grenades explode everything is chaos and smoke with the German MG's cutting through the confusion with a hail of fire that stitches back and forth across the water.

QUICK CUTS

The American lieutenant tries to rally his men to fire but is cut down by a burst of SMG fire. The shady side containing the ambush is sheathed in smoke.

LONG SHOT - THE GULLY AND SHADY RIDGE

Every American has been killed or wounded. The German riflemen have stopped firing, seeing no targets. The MG's continue for several seconds and then halt. There is a terrible stillness.

SHOTS - THE GULLY AND SHADY RIDGE

The stillness and the smoke seem to hang in the air together. Slowly the slight wind coming down the gully begins to carry off the smoke. As it rises the lumps of bodies can be seen in the stream or half in the bushes at the edge. The water is muddy from the blood and the silt kicked up as the men raced futilely for safety. The gurgling stream washes in and around the bodies.

SHOT - THE GERMANS SLOWLY COME DOWN THE HILLSIDE

The Germans come down from ambush with their weapons ready. The American wounded are beginning to cry for medics. The Germans are ready for a trap or for someone to shoot at them as they come out. Their body attitude and readiness of their SMG's denotes caution.

SHOT - THE GERMANS MOVE OUT IN THE STREAM

When the Germans get out in the stream they see that all fight has left the Americans. Immediately they begin pulling the wounded out of the water. They sling their weapons over

their shoulders and work in pairs gently carrying the Americans up onto the edge of the stream where the medic can treat them.

SHOT - DIETRICH

Dietrich ignores all this activity. He rushes down the hill and splashes through the stream to Stange. The sergeant is lying on his back in the stream, his head under water in a pool where the American soldier has turned him over.

Dietrich drops to his knees and pulls up the head of the sergeant. The water runs down his face and from his hair. Dietrich looks at him sadly thinking sentimentally of all their missions together. He idly buttons a pocket on the sergeant's tunic.

SHOT - DIETRICH

Dietrich reaches down and struggles up with the dripping body of the sergeant in his arms. He staggers over to the sunny side of the stream with his burden and places it down by the wounded Americans. Reaching down he runs his hands quickly over the face, closing the eyes. He wipes the water from his hands on his pants. Bruggemann comes up and points.

POV - KRAUS KNEELING NEXT TO WOUNDED AMERICAN LIEUTENANT

TWO SHOT - DIETRICH AND BRUGGEMANN

Dietrich gestures towards the wounded officer.

LT. DIETRICH  
Let's see what they know about us.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
Shall I come with you?

LT. DIETRICH  
No, better get everyone ready to move out. And redistribute the ammo.

Lt. Bruggemann exits shot. CAMERA follows Dietrich to Kraus and American lieutenant.

THREE SHOT - DIETRICH, KRAUS AND WOUNDED LIEUTENANT

Dietrich nods Kraus back a bit. Kraus moves away a few feet. Dietrich kneels. As he kneels his friendly interrogator smile appears.

LT. DIETRICH  
(the professional charm)  
Is there anything I can do to make you more comfortable, Lieutenant --  
(looks at dog tag)  
Foote?

LT. FOOTE  
(sarcastic)  
Well, a perfect gentleman.

Dietrich pauses a moment, studying the American. Then he smiles pleasantly.

LT. DIETRICH  
I can understand your bitterness at being wounded, Lieutenant Foote.

LT. FOOTE  
(wincing in pain)  
Say, that's mighty decent of you.

LT. DIETRICH  
If I may, I would suggest you do not waste your strength in anger.

LT. FOOTE  
(coughs in pain)  
Why don't you go to hell?

LT. DIETRICH  
(after a sympathetic shrug)  
It might be an improvement. Would you like a cigarette?

LT. FOOTE  
Okay.

While he talks, Dietrich lights one and puts in it the American's mouth.

LT. DIETRICH  
Are you in great pain?

LT. FOOTE  
(bitterly)  
Only when I laugh.

LT. DIETRICH  
(an obvious con)  
Very witty. I hope I can make jokes when my time comes.

LT. FOOTE  
You're not the type. A heroic pose would be more your stuff.

LT. DIETRICH  
I'm sorry it had to happen this way, Lieutenant Foote.

LT. FOOTE  
C'est La Guerre, Herr Oberlieutenant.

LT. DIETRICH  
(craftily)  
You chaps almost had us back there at the farmhouse.

LT. FOOTE  
(bored)  
C'est La Guerre... C'est La Guerre.

LT. DIETRICH  
I guess you were tipped off about  
us.

LT. FOOTE  
Is that a question?

LT. DIETRICH  
(caught)  
No, of course not. We're just  
having a conversation.

LT. FOOTE  
Okay, Lieutenant Andrew Foote,  
serial number 6787345, United States  
Army. I'm a very poor  
conversationalist.

LT. DIETRICH  
Come, come Lieutenant. We've  
treated you decently, haven't we?

LT. FOOTE  
You mean before or after you shot  
me?

LT. DIETRICH  
Look, your wound may be serious.  
You probably haven't much time. Why  
not be decent about it?

LT. FOOTE  
(smothers a painful laugh)  
Okay, here's come decent advice.  
Find the nearest American soldier  
and surrender. Every rear echelon  
unit has been alerted to your  
presence. I don't know what you  
fellows think you're trying to do  
but in case you haven't heard.  
(coughs)  
The war is lost. And in case you  
don't know which side lost it --  
yours did. Now why don't you put  
your toys away like good little boys  
and... go... home.  
(lapses into  
unconsciousness)

Dietrich stands and frowns.

TWO SHOT - DIETRICH AND KRAUS

They stand a little apart from the others and talk quietly.

LT. KRAUS  
He's right, Paul.

LT. DIETRICH  
How do you know?

LT. KRAUS

They were waiting for us at the farmhouse.

LT. DIETRICH  
Maybe you were philosophizing too loud.

LT. KRAUS  
(gently)  
Paul, what's happening to you?

LT. DIETRICH  
(sharply)  
You ask me that question.

LT. KRAUS  
Perhaps my nerves are gone but I'm not blind.

LT. DIETRICH  
But I suppose I am blind.

LT. KRAUS  
(said simply)  
This is the end, Paul. It's not suicide to go on. It's murder. Germany is finished. These men have families that will need them after the war. The only thing that matters now is rebuilding what is left so that our children may have a chance for peace and happiness that we never had. The bridge doesn't matter. It never did.

Dietrich has been listening somewhat contemptuously while also keeping an eye on Bruggemann's progress reforming the patrol and making the wounded comfortable. When Kraus finishes, Dietrich waits several seconds before replying, as if to ask, "Are you quite through?"

LT. DIETRICH  
Oskar, my friendship has permitted you to indulge in this orgy of self-pity and self-righteousness. My patience is at an end. You will either conduct yourself properly from this moment on, or you will have to face the consequences.

For a moment Kraus blinks in surprise at his friend.

LT. KRAUS  
(derisively)  
Would you have me shot, Paul?

LT. DIETRICH  
I threatened nothing specific.

Dietrich stands with arms crossed looking, unfortunately, too much like a recruiting poster.

LT. KRAUS

(laughs)  
Marvelous.  
(making fun of Dietrich's  
stance)  
Just tilt the chin a little to the  
right... ah, a masterpiece.

LT. DIETRICH  
(getting angry)  
Form up your section. Your behavior  
is jeopardizing the security of the  
mission.

The patrol tries to appear nonchalant but each man has his  
attention riveted on the scene between the two officers.

LT. KRAUS  
The security of the mission! You  
don't give a damn about getting  
everyone killed. The only thing you  
care about is that the great, the  
noble, the heroic Lieutenant  
Dietrich always completes his  
mission. It's not courage. It's  
just that you're more afraid of  
failing than you are of getting  
killed.

Dietrich, trembling with anger, takes out his pistol, holding  
it at his side. No one stirs.

LT. DIETRICH  
Lieutenant Oskar Kraus, by the  
authority vested in me by the Third  
Reich, I order you to form up your  
section, at once.

LT. KRAUS  
(mockingly)  
But the pistol, Paul. What is the  
pistol for?

LT. DIETRICH  
Don't drive me too far!

LT. KRAUS  
You mean you wouldn't want to shoot  
me?

LT. DIETRICH  
(changes his tone,  
suddenly personal again)  
Oskar, I beg of you. Come to your  
senses.

LT. KRAUS  
And I beg of you -- come to your  
senses.

Dietrich fumes, silently, then gathers his full resolve.

LT. DIETRICH  
For the last time, are you going to

obey my order?

LT. KRAUS  
(certain that he won't)  
I am afraid you will have to shoot  
me.

CLOSE - DIETRICH

Trembling with emotion, he notices the blank stares of his  
men. Thinks for a moment how foolish he must appear to them.  
Tries to work up enough anger at his friend to pull the  
trigger, but can't.

LT. DIETRICH  
Very well, if you wish to surrender  
you may stay here with the wounded.

CLOSE - KRAUS

LT. KRAUS  
No! If you leave me here, I will  
tell everything I know about the  
mission. It cannot be long until  
more Americans arrive.

LT. DIETRICH  
(exploding)  
What in heaven's name do you want?

LT. KRAUS  
You must either shoot me or give up  
the mission.

LT. DIETRICH  
Oskar, I warn you not to overplay  
your hand.

LT. KRAUS  
You think I'm bluffing?

LT. DIETRICH  
This has gone on long enough. Sit  
down over there and be quiet.

LT. KRAUS  
I'm not bluffing. I swear to tell  
everything if you leave me here.

LT. DIETRICH  
You're leaving me absolutely no  
choice.

LT. KRAUS  
Fine. Let's see then whether you  
have the courage to shoot me  
yourself.

LT. DIETRICH  
(to Bruggemann)  
Form up the patrol and move out.

LT. BRUGGEMANN

(not wanting to miss  
anything)  
Yes, sir.

SHOT - THE PATROL

Begins to form up into a widely spread column.

LT. KRAUS  
If you can't do it yourself, just  
order it done.

SHOT - BRUGGEMANN

Turns back with a look of hate and disgust at Kraus.

SHOT - DIETRICH

He notices the cynical exchange of glances among the men, and realizes what an utter fool he must appear to be. He walks to Kraus in a very business-like manner. Kraus reads his face like the small letters in an eye chart.

LT. KRAUS  
Bruggemann will do it, won't you  
Bruggemann?

Without any warning, Dietrich knocks him down with a sweeping punch to the jaw. He pins Kraus with his knees and smashes him in the face several times with his open hand.

CLOSE DIETRICH - BENDING CLOSE

LT. DIETRICH  
(softly)  
I'm sorry, Oskar. You know I won't  
harm you. Please, I beg of you,  
come to your senses.

CLOSE KRAUS - SQUINTING IN PAIN

His lips twitching from the blows, he manages a smile. He is visibly touched by his friend's apparently brutal but nevertheless convincing demonstration of affection. Dietrich had every right to have him shot. Kraus had tastefully overplayed the belief that Dietrich would not shoot him. Now he smiles at Dietrich with wet eyes and a lump in his throat.

LT. KRAUS  
You were perfectly right. It is I  
who should apologize.

CLOSE DIETRICH - EQUALLY CHOKED WITH EMOTION

He helps him to his feet.

CLOSE KRAUS - BRUSHING BACK HIS HAIR

LT. KRAUS  
Don't worry about me anymore. I  
still think you're crazy but I won't  
cause you anymore trouble.

LT. DIETRICH

I knew you wouldn't let me down.

DISSOLVE TO:

SHOT - THE PATROL - DUSK

The sun shafts at a deep angle through the trees, casting dark shadows.

The patrol is traversing the sloping sides of the gully. It has deepened considerably as it nears the main gorge.

Below the shadows blend into darkness.

The sides of the gully are loose shale and the men find it tricky footing. Some stumble and slide down several yards until they stop against a tree and can clamber back up again. The pace and their weariness are affecting their quickness.

SHOT - DIETRICH

The pace is beginning to affect him also. His step has lost most of that aggressive bounce but he continues to grind out the distance step by step.

He looks alertly around, glancing up slope.

SHOT - UP SLOPE - THE FLANK GUARDS

About fifty feet up slope are two flank guards moving parallel and slightly ahead of the patrol column. They are just below the top of the ridge.

REVERSE - PAST THE FLANK GUARDS DOWN SLOPE TO PATROL

Kraus is pulling one of the wounded men along by letting the man hold onto his belt. They stumble forward together.

SHOT - THE REAR OF THE PATROL

One of the demo men falls. He rolls over and sits up but is too tired to move.

Bruggemann comes up. Without a word he hauls the man roughly to his feet and shoves him forward.

The man begins again to stumble forward. The whole scene is a nightmare of exhaustion.

DISSOLVE TO:

LONG SHOT - MAIN GORGE AND RIVER BY BRIGHT MOONLIGHT - NIGHT

The main gorge is wide and deep. The river is swift and narrow at this point; it is very shallow, racing over stones and boulders, and is about thirty yards across.

The gorge widens beyond the river about fifteen yards on each side. The cliffs, broken here and there by faults and gullies, rise steeply two hundred feet on both sides.

Between the base of the cliffs and the river edge, on both

sides is a thick growth of small trees and underbrush. Spring floods have deposited debris in the brush.

In some areas this band of brush overhangs the river edge. But in other stretches there is a narrow border of white gravel.

The sky holds all the yellow light. The cliffs and river absorb all the shadows. The bushes are black.

SHOT - THE PATROL DESCENDING INTO GORGE - MOONLIGHT

The patrol cuts in a steep traverse down the shale slope of the gully.

In the background is the main gorge. There is a thick tangle of brush and a white gravel bar where the gully joins the gorge.

The patrol disappears into the gathering blend of shadows and bushes as they head down into the gorge and into the thicket.

CLOSE DIETRICH

He stops and smiles excitedly.

SLOW UPWARD PAN FROM RIVER BED - THE BRIDGE

The river is in darkness; the sky, framed by the darkness of the cliffs, seems lighter.

In the distance, suddenly cutting across the sky, is the arch of the bridge, flaring out from one dark cliff and leaping across to the other.

It is a steel girder, single span bridge. The flat road bed rests on the single girdered arch beneath.

The interlace of girders, cross beams, spanners and braces makes an intricacy that interacts dramatically with the single, powerful bulk of the arch.

SHOT - THE BRIDGE, RIVER AND GORGE

There is a steady stream of trucks across the bridge. They are visible only by the occasional flash of their lights.

But their traffic noise echoes in the gorge, competing with the rush of the river.

Once and a while a tank column makes a rumble on the bridge like distant thunder.

SHOT - HIGH ANGLE - UP THE GORGE

Far up the river, the tiny figures of an American patrol round a bend in the river.

Platoon-sized, the men are spread out and moving deliberately forward, a column on each side of the river.

SHOT - THE GERMANS

The point and Dietrich spot a splashing American at the same time. He is about fifty yards in front of them.

Dietrich makes a desperate signal for the Germans to get down. They ease down quickly in their tracks. It is as if the patrol has disappeared. The camouflaged faces, the dirty uniforms, the combat experience blend them into shadows of the bushes and the ground.

The only sounds are the splashes and gurgles from the river as it races over the rocks.

SHOT - THE AMERICAN PATROL

They round another bend and start along the section of river approaching the thick growth and gravel bar at the mouth of the gully.

The lieutenant in charge steps out of line and looks back at his men. He makes some signal to his sergeant in the rear.

The water, mainly dark, catches occasional flashes of light from the sky as the current roils the surface.

The Americans make a pattern of movements in the shadows overhanging the banks.

In the center of the stream, one American makes a ripple of light in the dark water as he splashes across to the other side and is then gone again in the shadows.

SHOT - THE FACES OF THE GERMANS

The German faces reflect the tension. The situation is dangerous. They are out-numbered two-to-one and pinned against the wall of the cliff.

They are too close to the bridge to fight and then carry out the demolition.

They feel as if the Americans can hear their breathing.

SHOT - THE AMERICAN PATROL - FROM THE RIVER BED

Beneath the Germans and about fifty yards away, the American patrol methodically picks its way past upstream.

The main body passes the next bend.

The rear guard splashes along behind and then follows around the curve.

The river is empty and the emptiness is filled by the sounds of the current.

THE CAMERA HOLDS ON THE EMPTY RIVER FOR SEVERAL BEATS

Then the Germans slowly move out of the bushes and into the river.

The noise of the river drowns out their noise and it is as if they were moving in perfect silence.

They hug the shadows on the edge of the river. They move downstream towards the bridge. The blackness of their faces, their bulging loads of demolition and the tension in their movements contrast ominously with the attitude of the American patrol.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE - DIETRICH, BRUGGEMANN AND KRAUS BEHIND COVER PEERING UP

POV - LOOKING UP AT THE ARCH OF THE BRIDGE HIGH ABOVE FROM ALMOST UNDERNEATH

The interlace of girders, cross beams, spanners and braces loom black against the moonlit sky. The traffic noises echo weirdly against the cliff walls.

FULLER SHOT - DIETRICH, BRUGGEMANN AND KRAUS

Behind them the remainder of the patrol, about 20 men are deployed behind cover.

LT. DIETRICH  
I think this side is the easier one.  
A four cut should drop that end  
neatly in the gorge.

Bruggemann nods in agreement.

LT. DIETRICH  
How many climbers are left?

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
Mandel is the only one still with us  
but his hand is badly smashed.

LT. DIETRICH  
Well, it looks like you and I will  
have to manage alone, eh, Peter?

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
We can do it.

LT. DIETRICH  
(pointing)  
Good. Get the rope and explosives  
collected.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
At once.  
(he exits)

Dietrich turns to Kraus. The two friends clasp hands.

LT. DIETRICH  
Set up the perimeter. Keep an eye  
out for that patrol. If they come  
back while we're still up in the  
bridge open fire on them. Give us  
as much time as possible.

LT. KRAUS

Don't worry about that.  
(grabbing him by the arm)  
Be careful, will you?

LT. DIETRICH  
(clasps back of Kraus'  
neck)  
You too.

SHOT - FOLLOWING DIETRICH

He slips away from Kraus and moves toward the base of the cliff where Bruggemann has collected their gear.

SHOT - KRAUS

He silently gestures the men into a defensive perimeter, moving flank outposts up the downstream.

SHOT - DIETRICH AND BRUGGEMANN

Falling rubble from the cliff has cut away the brush from the base of the fault.

Dietrich and Bruggemann prepare for the climb.

To one side two demo men lay out the explosives and the auxiliary equipment like doctors laying out surgical tools.

In the background several men of the security detail move into position.

Dietrich and Bruggemann lay down their SMG's. They have only knives and pistols. They toss their helmets down. Each has a coil of rope slung from his shoulder.

Bruggemann slaps Dietrich on the shoulder to indicate he is ready. Dietrich stamps his boots and adjusts his belt. He is ready.

The demo men pay no attention. They are checking the satchels.

SHOTS - DIETRICH AND BRUGGEMANN

The cliff has a fault that runs at an angle from the right down under the arch. Rubble and debris have washed down it and clog the fault at the bottom.

Dietrich and Bruggemann start up. They slip a little in the loose shale.

SHOTS - UP THE FAULT

Dietrich leads. The fault has narrowed into a chimney.

Bracing his back against one wall of the chimney and his feet against the other, he edges himself up by pushing with his hands.

Bruggemann follows.

SHOT - DIETRICH

The tension and effort show on his face.

SHOTS - THE MEN IN THE CHIMNEY BELOW THE BRIDGE

They seem to be inching themselves along. The chimney carries them out from under the bridge to the right of the abutment.

The fault slopes less and less sharply and finally runs off into a narrow ledge.

DISSOLVE TO:

CROSS SHOT - CLIMBERS ON THE LEDGE

They are now on a level slightly above the level of the abutment. The camera looks along the ledge and across towards the frame of the bridge. The climbers are in the foreground.

The bridge looks near and enormous.

SHOTS - THE ARCH OF THE BRIDGE

From this close the mass of the bridge fragments into intricate and delicate balances of steel members and tensions.

The traffic noise has dissolved into the individual noises of each vehicle as it rumbles and roars across the bridge.

SHOTS - THE CLIMBERS

Dietrich and Bruggemann rope themselves together on the ledge.

They are very deliberate about their task, checking each knot twice. Dietrich ties a double bowline and shrugs into it like a tight vest after pulling on it hard to set the knots.

He adjusts it around his chest. The rope runs from the center of his back over to Bruggemann.

Bruggemann knots a bowline around his waist with the other free end. The men are now tied in at opposite ends of the rope.

The line running between them, Bruggemann coils carefully. He places the coil behind him, letting the section of the rope running from the coil to Dietrich pass across his body in a running belay or brake.

Dietrich watches this accomplished. He then makes a sign to Bruggemann and starts feeling his way along the ledge towards the bridge.

He strips off rope from the coil. Bruggemann lets the rope run from the coil to his right hand, then across his back to his left hand and on to Dietrich. Should Dietrich fall he will snap his right hand into his chest, using his body as a snubbing post to stop the fall.

He is on one knee braced with his right leg stiff in front of him along the narrow ledge.

SHOT - DIETRICH

Dietrich continues to edge along feeling for hand and foot holds on the face of the cliff.

The distance to the bridge abutment looks about twenty feet.

He edges forward. He is flat against the cliff in a spread-eagled position. His fingers are dug into a small crevice.

He edges out with his left foot on a narrow crack until there is room for his right. Shifting his weight as much as possible, he pushes his body into a balanced position by a desperate effort of his arms. He is about eight feet or so from the abutment.

Reaching above him as high as he can, he finds a strong hand hold. Lifting himself by this, he steps up onto another small foot hold.

This can only accommodate his left foot.

The abutment is below him and about eight or nine feet away.

He is flattened against the cliff but manages to carefully turn his head back towards the belay man.

SHOT - ACROSS DIETRICH TO BRUGGEMANN

Dietrich hisses for more rope.

Bruggemann slowly pays out five, six, then seven feet. He shakes his head. The slack would give Dietrich's falling body the momentum to jerk them off the ridge.

Dietrich hisses violently and Bruggemann eases off another yard.

SHOT - DIETRICH

Turning his head back carefully, Dietrich looks across at the abutment, judging the distance. He is breathing heavily.

SHOTS FROM ABOVE - DIETRICH

THE CAMERA LOOKS DOWN ON DIETRICH AND ON INTO THE GORGE

The sensation is one of dizzying height. The blackness of the cliffs make the gorge look like a giant maw. The torrent crashes through the cut beneath the bridge.

Suddenly Dietrich leaps.

SHOT FROM ABOVE - DIETRICH

He hits the edge of the abutment waist high and clings to it with all his strength.

Below the darkness and the roar of the river blend into a frightening background.

THE CAMERA CATCHES THE DESPERATION ON HIS FACE

He gets a knee over and inches himself onto the abutment. He finally stands up.

SHOT - DIETRICH ON THE ABUTMENT

Dietrich unties the rope from his body with difficulty.

He tosses the rope over the arched girder tied into the abutment.

He grabs the dangling free end and pulls it down.

SHOT - DOWN PAST BRUGGEMANN

The slack is pulled across. The rope is taut to the bowline around Bruggemann's waist.

He edges forward as far as possible on the ledge and Dietrich takes up this slack.

Dietrich wraps the free end hanging down the cliff in a belay running under his arm, across his back, around his waist and down the cliff. He signals Bruggemann that he is ready.

SHOT FROM ABOVE - BRUGGEMANN AND DIETRICH

THE CAMERA LOOKS DOWN AGAIN INTO THE DIZZYING ABYSS OF THE GORGE

Bruggemann hesitates for several moments and then jumps off, pushing out with his hand from the cliff.

He drops for a moment until he takes up the slack. Then he stops with a jolt that lifts Dietrich off his feet for a split second as the rope slams taut.

Bruggemann swings around to the face of the abutment. He turns there helplessly until he finally gets a foot on the face of the abutment. His weight is balanced across the girder with Dietrich's.

In position now, he grabs the free end of the rope and hauls himself up as Dietrich also pulls on the free end to help the lift.

SHOT - THE ABUTMENT

Dietrich reaches down and pulls Bruggemann up. Bruggemann sits and rests for a moment. The rumbling of traffic overhead is quite loud.

He unties the rope. Dietrich helps him with the knots, jammed tight by the drop.

They free the rope and let it fall free down the cliff after tying one end around the girder. Dietrich shakes the rope three times.

SHOT - DEMOLITIONS TEAM BELOW BRIDGE TIES EXPLOSIVE PACKS TO ROPE

In only a few seconds the rope slaps three times against the abutment. The demolitions are tied on.

SHOT - DIETRICH & BRUGGEMANN ON THE ABUTMENT

Dietrich stands carefully out of the way as Bruggemann, straining, hauls up the load, hand-over-hand. When it reaches the abutment Dietrich pulls it up onto the shelf. They untie the load and drop the rope back down.

Dietrich reaches up and slaps one satchel into the angle the arching beam makes with the abutment wall.

LT. DIETRICH  
(whispering)

Place the two upper charges. I'll wire the opposite lower one and then tie in the two upper ones on the way back here.

Bruggemann nods. They place the straps of the satchels over their heads. Dietrich has one satchel and a reel of wire; Bruggemann has two satchels.

SHOT - DIETRICH

Dietrich lifts himself up onto a sitting position on the arching beam. Getting to his feet he starts up the arch in an apelike climb, bent at the waist and balancing with his hands on the girder.

SHOT - DIETRICH FROM ABOVE

He reaches the first main cross section. He lifts up and grabs the upright brace.

Below the river races in a giddy torrent one hundred feet below.

SHOT - TO THE FAR ARCHES BEAM - BELOW RIVER YAWS SICKENINGLY

There is a cross brace connecting to the far arched beam. It is about two feet wide.

Dietrich starts out on it on hands and knees, crawling with great care. He deliberately puts one hand in front, then advances the opposite knee. Then he pushes the other hand forward.

SHOT - DIETRICH ON THE CROSS BEAM FROM FAR ARCH

He slowly approaches the far arch. He slowly rises up grabbing the upright brace.

He pauses for a moment. Then he seats himself carefully on the arched beam and edges down it toward its abutment. He eases his way by planting his rubber-soled shoes flat against the metal of the beam and braking himself down.

SHOT - DIETRICH FROM BELOW

He reaches the extreme angle where the arched beam abuts

against the concrete wall. He eases the satchel off one shoulder and places it in his lap.

CLOSE SHOTS - DIETRICH

Taking out his cap crimpers and using the pointed end, he jams a hole through the top of the canvas satchel and deep into the yielding explosive.

Leaving the crimpers in the hole, he takes out the cap box, flips open the top and gently removes a cap. He puts it in his mouth and returns the box to his pocket.

He strips off a half a dozen turns of wire from the reel and lets the loose end rest in his lap on the satchel.

Looking around he finds an extruding bolt and knots the wire around it leaving several feet of free end.

Taking the cap from his mouth he enters the bared end of the wire in the open end of the aluminum cylinder of the cap. Holding this arrangement between thumb and forefinger, he grabs the cap crimpers and crimps the edges of the cylinder hard against the wire.

He shoves the cap with the wire running from it, into the hole in the satchel charge, pressing the yielding plastic explosive down around it to hold it in.

SHOT - DIETRICH - DIZZYING DOWN ANGLE

Leaning over, he lowers the satchel into the angle of the beam and abutment. Reaching down with his foot, he delicately pushes it tightly into the crevice.

He runs his hand back from the satchel along the wire to the anchor knot around the bolt and then to the reel.

Turning around carefully, he slips the reel back over his neck and shoulder. He monkey walks back towards the first cross section with the wire stripping from the reel behind him. He slips and almost falls.

SHOT - DIETRICH IN GIRDERS OF UPPER BRIDGE

Dietrich swings around the upright brace and gets a foot in the angle of the diagonal. He begins to climb up. The punched holes in the diagonal brace make good footholds.

He reaches the joint in the center with the crossing diagonal brace. He carefully swings around and up onto diagonal going back the opposite way. He climbs up into the gloom.

SHOT - DIETRICH REACHES THE MAIN UPPER BEAM

Dietrich swings the reel around in front of him. The wire stretches back to the first charge. He lifts off several turns and makes a loop, threading it through a rivet hole, and then knots it back on itself to form an anchor knot. He slings the reel back over his shoulder out of the way.

Out of his pocket he takes the cap box and extracts another cap, placing it in his mouth and returning the box to his

pocket.

From his other pocket he removes a connector wire, bare on one end and with an alligator clip on the other.

He inserts the stripped end of the wire in the open end of the cap. Taking out his crimpers, he crimps it firmly but gently.

Reaching up above him, he drives the pointed end of the crimpers deep into the explosive, piercing the canvas cover of the satchel. He inserts the cap and kneads the explosive down around it firmly. He returns the crimpers to his pocket.

Running his fingers along the connector, he picks up the clip. He bites the clip into the main wire before it reaches the anchor knot. Pressing it in hard with his fingers to make certain of the connection.

SHOT - DIETRICH FROM BELOW

Without turning around he starts back down the diagonal member. The wire strips off the reel after him.

SHOT - DIETRICH & BRUGGEMANN ON THE ABUTMENT

Bruggemann stands below on the shelf of the abutment. Dietrich lowers himself onto the shelf.

LT. DIETRICH  
(whispered)  
Give me the timer.

Bruggemann reaches in his tunic and carefully hands Dietrich the timing detonator.

SHOT - DIETRICH

Dietrich gently places the timer inside his tunic.

SHOT - SHARP DOWN ANGLE

Dietrich gestures Bruggemann to go down.

Bruggemann wraps the rope around his body in a rappel belay.

The rope runs from the fixed end between his legs, across the buttocks, around the waist, across the shoulder and down along the back. Holding the free end in his right hand for a brake, he binds it by clenching his fist on the rope and slamming his fist across his chest.

Dietrich watches as he edges over the abutment letting the rope slip slowly until he is over the side, feet against the abutment wall.

SHOT FROM ABOVE - BRUGGEMANN

Bouncing slightly he releases the rope and slides in short checked hops down the cliff face into the darkness of the gorge.

He disappears into the gloom. Suddenly the rope is slack. It shakes three times.

SHOT - DIETRICH

Dietrich sits on the reel of wire. He takes out the timing detonator.

With his crimpers he cuts the wire close to the reel leaving plenty of slack. He strips the end of the wire with deliberation.

Taking the stripped end, he fastens it into the spring loaded terminals by pushing them in, hooking the wire in the notch and releasing them. The springs slam the terminals tightly against the wires.

INSERT - WATCH

Dietrich looks at his watch for a moment and then back at the timer.

CLOSE UP - THE TIMER

There is a key in the back. Dietrich winds the key tight.

The dial shows setting up to five hours. Dietrich pushes in the pointer knob and turns it to one hour. When it is on the hour he releases it.

The timer makes a loud click and the pointer moves slightly.

The timer is loaded. It is spring-driven magneto triggered by the timer. When the pointer is released and meddling with the mechanism will activate the magneto exploding the charges.

Dietrich gingerly sets the timer around behind the girder out of the way. It makes a second click as he gently sets it down.

SHOT - DIETRICH

Dietrich unties the rope from the girder and reties it in a slip knot.

He takes the free end of the wire from the reel and ties it firmly to the slip knot.

He wraps the free end of the rope around him in a rappel belay.

He edges onto the edge, leaning back against the rope. He moves to the left to check the timer. It lets out another satisfying click.

He edges back to the left and swings the reel of wire up over his shoulder with his left hand, all the while keeping tension on the rope and his right hand binding the free end into his chest.

He eases off on the brake hand and slips over the edge.

SHOT - FROM ABOVE - DIETRICH

In short leaps he disappears down into the gorge and the darkness. The wire unwinds from the reel as he goes.

SHOT - THE DETONATOR

The timer is clicking intermittently.

The rope is taut and then suddenly slack. Dietrich has reaches the bottom.

The timer clicks again.

Then the wire tightens. It begins to pull the loop of the slip know down the rope into the gorge, releasing it.

SHOT - DIETRICH - UNDER BRIDGE

Dietrich pulls in the wire and grabs the knot. The rope falls free in a tangle of coils at his feet. He unties the wire.

He quickly coils the rope around his arm in rhythmic turns.

He slings it over his shoulder. Picking up the reel, he hangs the strap over his neck and deliberately winds up the loose wire.

He glances around the area in a final check. Kicking at a track in the shale, he is finally satisfied. He and Bruggemann look once more up the cliff at the bridge with satisfaction.

SHOT - UP THE CLIFF TO THE BRIDGE

The bridge hangs overhead like an axe. The cliff walls seem impossibly straight and foreboding.

SHOT - THE PATROL

Kraus has formed up the patrol. They are waiting anxiously for Dietrich and Bruggemann in the shadows along the edge of the river.

Bruggemann and Dietrich scurry down from the base of the cliff carrying the rope and the reel of wire.

Kraus springs up to meet him. Everything is haste and excitement now that success and escape are promised.

LT. KRAUS  
Everything go all right?

LT. DIETRICH  
Like a weekend in the Alps.

SHOT - A DEMO MAN RUNS UP

He stops before the tree officers.

DEMO MAN  
(desperate)

Excuse me, Lieutenant, but we just found these two satchel charges. They must have been mislaid in the dark.

CLOSE - DIETRICH

He frowns in despair.

LT. DIETRICH  
(in anger)  
Who as responsible for that?

DEMO MAN  
I don't know, sir.

Concentrates as if doing mathematical sums.

LT. DIETRICH  
Very well, we'll check into this later. You may go.

DEMO MAN  
(salutes)  
Yes, sir.

He exits shot. The three men stand silently.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
What do you think?

LT. DIETRICH  
(after a moment's pause)  
I think we put enough up there to do the job.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
I'm sure we did.

LT. KRAUS  
Shall I move the men out?

LT. DIETRICH  
(disgusted with himself)  
We'd better.

Kraus makes an arm signal to an NCO.

SHOT - THE REAR GUARD

Several men splash up the edge of the river. They join the main body.

SHOT - THE MAIN PARTY

The patrol starts to move down stream. They hug the shadows along the edge of the river.

SHOT - FROM ABOVE

The Germans have cleared the bridge site and have picked up their other flank guards.

SHOT - THE PATROL

Dietrich and Bruggemann are close to the front. Kraus is in the rear driving the men to keep up.

SHOTS - PATROL

Suddenly an M-1 magazine is emptied at them, shattering the silence. The rounds smash into the trees and bushes around them.

SHOTS - THE GERMANS DIVE FOR COVER

SHOT - THE DEMO MAN

He is hit and falls screaming and floundering in the stream.

SHOT - DIETRICH

He looks at his scattered patrol with desperation.

SHOT - POV - THE RIVER

In the direction of the shots is a jumble of moonlit shadows.

AMERICAN VOICE (O.S.)

Halt! Who goes there? Dammit.

There are sounds of more men behind him splashing upstream.

SHOT - THE ADVANCE GERMAN POINT

He tries to run back to the main body and is caught with a BAR burst.

SHOTS - THE GERMANS

They have not returned fire yet, not to give away their positions.

SHOT - KRAUS

Separated from Dietrich and Bruggemann by some forty yards, at the rear of the column, he stands and throws down his SMG. He wades into the river, hands high.

LT. KRAUS

(shouting)

Kamerad.

SHOT - SEVERAL MEN NEARBY FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE

SHOT - BRUGGEMANN

He is enraged at this sight. He pivots to fire at Kraus and the others surrendering, but Dietrich twists up the gun by pushing down the stock with a blow. The shots go harmlessly into the air. Dietrich rises and gestures to the men to pull back.

SHOTS - THE PATROL

In the confusion, the Americans suddenly open fire again.

Full, rapid fire from almost a full platoon. The volume of fire is terrific.

SHOT - DIETRICH

He is hit and crumples in the stream.

SHOT - BRUGGEMANN

He turns and fires a burst at the Americans from his SMG.

SHOTS - THE GERMANS

Seeing Dietrich fall, the remainder of the Germans lose their morale. As a lull appears in the firing, many shouts of surrender come from the pinned-down patrol. Then the firing stops completely. An ominous silence.

LONG SHOT

Three Americans of the advance party move cautiously into view.

AMERICAN SOLDIERS

Keep them up, Krauts. Everybody stand and throw down your guns.

(various ad libs of same as they advance)

SHOTS - THE GERMANS

They slowly stand with their hands raised.

LONG SHOT - GERMAN POV

Behind the advance party of Americans, two more squads advance forward.

SOLDIER

(shouting, threatening)

Keep them up, Kraut. Uppen ze. Hey, Lieutenant... Look what I got here. Uppen ze, Kraut.

LONG SHOT - SURRENDER

The entire patrol is surrounded by Americans pushing up both sides of the river. The Americans are swarming around them excited by the capture. Various NCO's are giving orders. A sergeant and four men are working down the line searching the Germans.

DISSOLVE TO:

TWO SHOT - WOUNDED AMERICAN CAPTAIN & HIS LIEUTENANT

The Captain is painfully but not seriously wounded in the arm.

LIEUTENANT

How are those wounds, sir.

CAPTAIN JONES

(irritated)  
How the hell do you think they are.  
They hurt like hell. Did you check  
the base of the cliffs and the span?

LIEUTENANT  
We looked it all up and down,  
Captain. Not a damn thing.

CAPTAIN JONES  
(grunting)  
Yeah. How's Anderson.

LIEUTENANT  
(grimly)  
Dead.

CAPTAIN JONES  
(angrily)  
Well the makes two, Anderson and  
Shrewsberry, that got it on this  
damn hacked up patrol.  
(he spits in grim disgust)  
Let's go question that Kraut  
lieutenant.

They turn and walk off.

SHOT - DIETRICH & THE MEDIC

He is wounded in the arm and shoulder.

Kraus is standing nearby.

The two American officers come up. The medic has finished  
his bandaging and gets up. He shrugs his shoulders at  
inquiring looks from the officers. The captain squats down  
by Dietrich.

LT. DIETRICH  
(engagingly)  
I'm sorry to see you are wounded,  
Captain.

CAPTAIN JONES  
(coldly)  
Sorry I can't say the same thing,  
Lieutenant.

LT. DIETRICH  
That is your privilege, Captain.

CAPTAIN JONES  
Okay, Krauthead, let's skip the  
bull.

LT. DIETRICH  
Pardon me?

CAPTAIN JONES  
Let's get to the facts!

LT. DIETRICH

Of course, Lieutenant Paul Dietrich,  
serial number 542 --

CAPTAIN JONES  
(interrupting)  
Skip that -- what were you doing  
down here?

Dietrich thinks for a moment.

LT. DIETRICH  
(as if telling as  
important secret)  
We were trying to kidnap General  
Eisenhower.

CAPTAIN JONES  
(steaming)  
Was it just a coincidence we found  
two explosive packs near the bridge?

LT. DIETRICH  
We were going to blow him up.

CAPTAIN JONES  
(grabs Dietrich's shirt)  
Don't get fancy with me, Krauthead!  
(simmers down)  
You were after the bridge, weren't  
you?

Dietrich feigns shock and surprise, lets the idea knock  
around for a couple of beats, then smiles submissively.

DIETRICH  
What does it matter now?  
(sighs)  
We were after the bridge.

CAPTAIN JONES  
(triumphantly)  
I thought so!  
(he exchanges a  
significant glance with  
his lieutenant)  
Listen, did you actually think you  
could do it with those two charges?

LT. DIETRICH  
I beg your pardon, sir. But those  
explosive packs are a new plastic  
type equal to ten times their size  
in normal explosives.

CAPTAIN JONES  
(sarcastic)  
Funny I hadn't heard of that.  
(shrugs noncommittally)  
Tell me, thought, did you actually  
think you could scale those cliff  
walls in the dark?

LT. DIETRICH

Our intelligence was misinformed.  
We didn't realize until we got here  
that it was impossible.

Captain Jones frowns for a couple of beats then stands  
wearily.

CAPTAIN JONES  
Okay, lieutenant, you've been very  
cooperative.

LT. DIETRICH  
Why not sir. My silence will not  
win the war for us. What does it  
matter now? You do not understand  
us. We are a reasonable people.

The captain and the lieutenant walk a few steps away.

CAPTAIN JONES  
It's going to take me a little time  
until I get used to the new model  
talkative Kraut type.

LIEUTENANT  
You can have 'em all, sir.

CAPTAIN JONES  
(laughs)  
Okay, let's move 'em out and get  
these supermen topside.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STEEP PATH ZIG-ZAGGING UP CLIFF, BRIDGE IN B.G. - NIGHT

Guarded by the American patrol, the captured Germans are  
herded up the path, about 100 yards away from the bridge.  
Many of the prisoners stumble due to the awkward way they  
have to climb -- hands clasped over heads.

DISSOLVE TO:

ESTABLISHING SHOTS - TOP OF BRIDGE - NIGHT

The bridge is intermittently jammed with convoys inching  
across the span with supplies, troops, motorized artillery  
and tanks.

Many vehicles of all types are parked on the side of the  
road, as far as the eye can see, waiting for higher priority  
cargoes to cross.

Several harried MP's direct the traffic. They are  
constantly abused by the drivers and the men in the trucks  
held up along the road. They curse back.

On one side of the road is a small complex of tents. Several  
close to the bridge are MP billets and headquarters.

Several more farther back on the edge of a small field are  
the headquarters company of the engineer battalion  
maintaining the bridge and the roads.

The road is cut into a quagmire. The passage of tanks have torn off the asphalt surface. The trucks have rutted the under surface.

The field near the tents is cut and recut with a criss-cross of truck tracks. All vegetation has been smashed flat.

Several trucks and jeeps are parked haphazardly near the tents.

Off farther camouflaged by nets. Three flak wagons are dispersed to protect the bridge from non-existent German aircraft. There are no gunners in sight.

SHOT - THE PRISONERS

The detail of prisoners and guards, clear the top of the cliff across the field about two hundred yards from the tents; they slowly slog across the muddy field.

The Germans are a bedraggled bunch. Their uniforms are filthy from the patrol and they are unshaven. The camouflage paint streaks their face and rims their eyes like weird makeup.

Their pants flop out of their boots and here and there a few pieces of the tape still flap around adding to the effect.

Their tunics have been ripped open and their pistol belts have been removed.

SHOT - THE GUARDS & THE PRISONERS

They near the tents. A gesture from a guard halts them.

GUARD  
(shouts)  
Sitten ze here.

The Germans look dumbly at him and then at the mud.

He gestures threateningly with his carbine and they get the idea. They flop in the mud.

SHOT - DIETRICH, BRUGGEMANN & KRAUS

They drift together, unobtrusively and talk in whispers.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
(whisper)  
How much time to go?

LT. DIETRICH  
(whisper)  
About ten minutes.

LT. KRAUS  
At least we ought to warn them to clear the bridge.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
If we do that they can send someone

down to disconnect the charges.

Dietrich does not even appear to be listening.

LT. KRAUS  
I still think we should warn them.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COMPLEX OF TENTS - DOLLY IN ON "HEADQUARTERS TENT" -  
NIGHT

Captain Jones enters.

INT. TENT - CAPTAIN JONES & MAJOR SULLIVAN - NIGHT

The major is a typical rear echelon officer. Probably a  
business executive in peacetime. He is out of his element in  
a situation like this.

Captain Jones salutes and takes his helmet off wearily with  
his unbandaged arm.

MAJOR SULLIVAN  
(pointing to his wound)  
Say, what happened there, Bill?

CAPTAIN JONES  
Nothing much. I'll go back to the  
battalion aid station later.

MAJOR SULLIVAN  
You should watch out for that.  
Could get infected.

CAPTAIN JONES  
Sure, sure, I'll take care of it.

Jones takes a couple of good swallows from a whiskey bottle.

MAJOR SULLIVAN  
Lieutenant Powers just briefed me.  
You'll probably get the bronze star  
for this one. Nineteen prisoners.  
Imagine, they tried to blow up this  
bridge!

CAPTAIN JONES  
That's what the big cheese  
lieutenant said. But, you know,  
there was something fishy about that  
guy.

MAJOR SULLIVAN  
There's something fishy about all  
those guys.

CAPTAIN JONES  
(shrugs)  
Yeah, but this one was special.

MAJOR SULLIVAN  
(doesn't take it

seriously)  
You mean you think they might have  
already wired the bridge?

CAPTAIN JONES  
I don't think it's possible -- and  
yet --

MAJOR SULLIVAN  
Lieutenant Powers said you found the  
explosive.

CAPTAIN JONES  
We found two packs which they claim  
was some new powerful stuff big  
enough to do the job --

MAJOR SULLIVAN  
(completing the thought)  
But maybe it was just left over from  
what they wired into the bridge.

Captain Jones shrugs. There is a pause as both men consider  
the possibilities.

CAPTAIN JONES  
Our engineers claim a fly couldn't  
crawl up those cliffs at night --  
and yet you can't be sure.

MAJOR SULLIVAN  
(unconvinced)  
Do you realize what you're saying?

CAPTAIN JONES  
It's just a hunch.

MAJOR SULLIVAN  
Well, why not interrogate again?

CAPTAIN JONES  
(nodding)  
I think I'll do that... but first I  
think we ought to stop the traffic  
over the bridge.

MAJOR SULLIVAN  
What?! I can't do that on a hunch!  
Why, do you realize the schedule  
I've got to keep up. We're ten  
hours behind already. The colonel  
will be on my tail for a month if I  
ever closed the bridge on some wild  
scare.

CAPTAIN JONES  
After what's happened, just think  
where you'll be if that damn bridge  
blows up lined with trucks wheel to  
wheel.

Major Sullivan rocks on his heels, thoughtfully.

MAJOR SULLIVAN

You're right. You're absolutely right! The lives of those men are much more important than any schedule.

(pause)

But I'll only stop it for a few minutes. Long enough to talk to those prisoners again.

DISSOLVE TO:

SHOT - GERMAN PRISONERS & GUARDS - FAVORING DIETRICH, KRAUS & BRUGGEMANN

LT. BRUGGEMANN

(whispered)

How much time now?

LT. DIETRICH

(glances at his watch  
indifferently)

Any second now -- less than a minute.

Kraus watches with a horrible fascination.

SHOT - THE BRIDGE

Three MP's come running out on the surfaced road blowing whistles and flagging the drivers down. The trucks already on the bridge are speeded forward. The other are stopped and backed away from the span.

SHOT - DIETRICH & CO.

LT. KRAUS

(relieved)

They're stopping the trucks! They must have found out.

LT. DIETRICH

Impossible! How could they know?

LT. BRUGGEMANN

What's the difference? How much time?

LT. DIETRICH

Any second.

SHOT - THE BRIDGE

The trucks have been backed away from the bridge surface and the last vehicles are inching clear on the other side. There is considerable confusion and yelling going on. MP's are blowing whistles and shouting.

LT. BRUGGEMANN

(hoarse whisper)

It's late! Dammit, it's late!

LT. KRAUS

(whisper)  
Maybe the firing mechanism is defective.

LT. DIETRICH  
(whisper)  
Impossible. It's foolproof. I know these timers, they can be late but they always fire.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
Maybe we didn't wire it properly.

LT. DIETRICH  
Don't worry. I checked everything. It will go off. It's only late.

LT. KRAUS  
Look, two officers coming over.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
Keep your mouth shut!

SHOT - CAPTAIN JONES & MAJOR SULLIVAN

Accept the salute of the guards and walk in among the prisoners, stopping at Dietrich. The Germans remain seated on the ground.

GUARD  
Okay, you guys, everyone on their feet. Uppen ze on ze feets.

Slowly the men stand, nudging those who are uncompliant.

CAPTAIN JONES  
(to Dietrich)  
Lieutenant, we know the bridge is wired and ready to go. I want one of your men to volunteer to climb down with some of our engineers to show them where you placed the detonator.

LT. DIETRICH  
(hesitates then smiles)  
I'm sorry, sir. But I must claim my privilege to refuse that order under the prisoners rights section of the Articles of War.

CAPTAIN JONES  
Then you admit the bridge is unsafe?

LT. DIETRICH  
Captain, the bridge is perfectly safe. I simply cannot allow my men to risk falling off the superstructure in the dark.

CAPTAIN JONES  
(to Kraus)  
What have you got to say?

LT. KRAUS  
(quickly)  
I agree with Lieutenant Dietrich,  
sir.

CAPTAIN JONES  
(to Bruggemann)  
And I suppose you do too.

LT. BRUGGEMANN  
Naturally, sir.

Major Sullivan takes Captain Jones' arm, and they walk out of the prisoners' earshot. Captain Jones is fuming in anger.

MAJOR SULLIVAN  
Listen, we're not going to get  
anywhere with you blowing your top.  
He is within his rights to refuse  
your order.

CAPTAIN JONES  
Rights? Why he's lucky to be alive.

MAJOR SULLIVAN  
Sure, Bill. But blowing your top is  
not going to solve our problem. Why  
don't we just send some of our  
engineers down for a look? I don't  
know how long I can keep this bridge  
closed.

CAPTAIN JONES  
That's kind of a tough thing to ask  
in the dark. And my guess is if  
they have wired the bridge they  
wouldn't time it to go off much  
later than one hour. That would put  
it right about now.

Major Sullivan nods his head slowly and sighs.

CAPTAIN JONES  
Listen, I've got one more idea that  
should prove this thing either way.

SHOT - FROM THE PRISONER'S POV

Captain Jones walks to guard and says something unheard.

SHOT - THE PRISONERS TRY TO APPEAR AS NONCHALANT AS POSSIBLE

SHOT - THE GUARD NODS TO CAPTAIN JONES AND WALKS TO THE  
PRISONERS

GUARD  
Okay, Lieutenant. Have your men  
follow me.

The other guards form around the prisoners, keeping them covered with carbines.

SHOT - CAPTAIN JONES & MAJOR SULLIVAN WATCH CLOSELY

SHOT - DIETRICH, HESITATES THEN GIVES APPROPRIATE ORDERS

SHOTS - THE PRISONERS ARE MARCHED PAST THE PARKED VEHICLES TO THE BRIDGE

SHOTS - CURIOUS G.I.'S MAKE WISECRACKS AS THEY PASS BY

SHOT - MAJOR SULLIVAN & CAPTAIN JONES FOLLOW

SHOT - THE PRISONERS ARE HALTED 10 YARDS FROM THE BRIDGE

SHOT - CAPTAIN JONES, BRIDGE IN B.G.

He steps up to Dietrich and cocks his head.

CAPTAIN JONES

Okay, lieutenant, now I have an order for you that is not within your privilege under the Articles of War to refuse.

LT. DIETRICH

I am at your service, sir.

CAPTAIN JONES

You understand we are going to send you back to prisoner of war camps?

LT. DIETRICH

Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN JONES

You understand that prisoners are often driven back in trucks?

LT. DIETRICH

That's really service, sir. We expected to walk.

CAPTAIN JONES

No, you'll be driven in nice, new, comfortable trucks. But we have a system here for doing things. You have systems too in the German army, don't you?

LT. DIETRICH

Certainly, sir.

CAPTAIN JONES

Well, our system is that the prisoners assemble in the middle of the bridge to wait for pick up by truck.

Captain Jones looks closely but sees nothing he can put his finger on.

CAPTAIN JONES

We even trust you enough to let you march your men out there without a

guard.

LT. DIETRICH  
(stalling for time)  
I'm not sure I understand what you  
want me to do.

CAPTAIN JONES  
It's very simple. Just march your  
men out to the middle of the bridge.  
Stop them there. And wait for the  
truck to come by and load you in.

LT. DIETRICH  
Come, come, sir. This is all really  
rather childish, isn't it?

CAPTAIN JONES  
(explodes)  
A prisoner of war refusing an order  
may be shot on the spot. I order  
you to march your men out to the  
center of the bridge to await  
transportation.

LT. DIETRICH  
Certainly, sir. I have no intention  
of refusing your order.

SHOT - DIETRICH

He turns to face his men. His features have grown iron hard.  
His voice is sharp and merciless.

LT. DIETRICH  
Men, we are going to be loaded into  
trucks. Form up in a column of twos  
and on the command follow me!

SHOTS - THE MEN STARE VACANTLY AT DIETRICH

SHOT - DIETRICH GIVES THE COMMAND TO MARCH

CLOSE - KRAUS

He appears to be almost in an hypnotic trance as he obeys.

LONG SHOT - THE BRIDGE

Nineteen Germans march onto the span.

The scene almost has the appearance of a sporting event.  
Spectators drawn up at either end. The roadway of the bridge  
deserted.

FOLLOW SHOT - THE GERMANS

Dietrich is calling out the equivalent of our cadence count.  
The men appear nervous but under control. Bruggemann has  
assumed a grim but determined expression.

FOLLOW SHOT - FAVORING DIETRICH

As they draw away from earshot of the Americans, he begins talking softly to the men. His eyes are bright, and his face assumes an eerie kind of intensity.

LT. DIETRICH

(hypnotic and powerful)

You are all probably thinking the bridge may go up any second. It could but I don't think it will. When those timing detonators are late they are usually much later than this one is now. If we refuse to stand on this bridge for a few minutes they will know what we did and immediately send some engineers down to find the detonator. They may find it in time and all our work will have been in vain.

SHOTS - THE MEN'S FACES

Dietrich's words are not without effect.

SHOT - KRAUS SWEATING

FOLLOW SHOT - FAVORING DIETRICH

They are almost to the middle. The tension shows everywhere.

LT. DIETRICH

We have a nice crowd of spectators. We'll show them what a German soldier is made of. Don't worry, the Americans won't keep us here very long. They're not really sure the bridge is wired, and this will prove it to them.

They reach the center of the bridge.

LT. DIETRICH

Now I want all of you to find a place to sit comfortably. I want you to find positions that look like you're out for a Sunday picnic. Some one of you lean over the rail.  
(gesturing)  
Four of you sit down and play cards.  
(pointing)  
The rest stand in groups of two or three chatting.

SHOT - SEVERAL MEN LEAN CASUALLY OVER THE RAIL, THEIR FACES PALE

SHOT - FOUR MEN TAKE OUT A PACK OF CARDS AND BEGIN PLAYING, GROTESQUE FEAR ON THEIR FACES

SHOT - THREE MORE LEAN BACK AGAINST A GIRDER, ARMS FOLDED

SHOT - DIETRICH SITS ON THE RAIL AND CROSSES HIS LEGS. HE ALONE SEEMS CALM AND COLLECTED

SHOT - KRAUS TREMBLES

SHOT - SEVERAL OF THE OTHER MEN CAN BARELY KEEP FROM RUNNING OFF THE BRIDGE

SHOT - CAPTAIN JONES & MAJOR SULLIVAN

They watch what from their distance appears to be a super casual lounging about. The Germans look as indifferent as they could be -- at that distance.

SHOT- DIETRICH, HIS LEGS CROSSED

He notices the men beginning to crack. Despite the casual poses they have assumed, their faces betray the ever increasing panic and unbearable tension.

LT. DIETRICH

Boys, we've been through a lot of tight spots together. This will be the last one, either way. The war is over and what the hell are we going to do with ourselves anyway? This moment will last you all your lives. You will tell your grandchildren about it, and they will tell theirs. At this moment we are living like a few men have ever lived. A man can almost thank God he has a moment like this.

SHOTS - THE MEN'S FACES WHILE DIETRICH HAS BEEN SPEAKING

As he speaks, their faces began to glow with a weird kind of enthusiasm and deeply stirred emotion, seldom seen.

CAPTAIN JONES & MAJOR SULLIVAN BACK FROM THE BRIDGE

Major Sullivan is visibly relaxed and has a kind of relieved smile.

MAJOR SULLIVAN

Well, Bill, I guess this wraps it up. Let's get things moving again. The trucks are really piling up.

CAPTAIN JONES

One last thing. I want to see how they come back.

He walks up to the entrance of the bridge and waves Dietrich back. He cups his hand to his mouth.

CAPTAIN JONES

(to Dietrich)

All right, Lieutenant, bring your men back.

SHOT - DIETRICH WAVES RECOGNITION OF THE COMMAND

SHOTS - THE MEN SEEM TO SUDDENLY PANIC AT THE THOUGHT OF SAFETY

SHOT - FAVORING DIETRICH

LT. DIETRICH

Keep quiet. Don't move. I want no hurrying. We will form up just as we came out. You will follow my tempo. When we get off the bridge make no comments, no sighs of relief. Nothing to indicate anything out of the ordinary.

The men form a column. Dietrich orders them forward.

FOLLOW SHOT - FAVORING DIETRICH - WALKING AT EVEN TEMPO

The men seem almost unable to contain themselves. The impulse to run to safety is almost irresistible. Seeing this Dietrich plays his last gambit.

LT. DIETRICH

We're going to sing a song.

CLOSE - DIETRICH BEGINS TO SING A STIRRING GERMAN MARCHING SONG

CLOSE - KRAUS TRIES TO GET SOME SOUND OUT BUT BARELY MOVES HIS LIPS

CLOSE - BRUGGEMANN JOINS IN A LOUD VOICE

SHOTS - DIFFERENT MEN AS THEY JOIN IN AND SING

LONG SHOT - OVER CAPTAIN JONES & MAJOR SULLIVAN

They watch the column of Germans marching towards them, still about 150 feet from the edge of the bridge. They appear very normal at that distance.

SHOT - DIETRICH SINGING LOUDLY

SHOT - KRAUS MANAGES TO GET SOME SOUND OUT AND LOOKS PROUD

SHOTS - THE OTHERS BEGIN TO SING WITH SOME HEART AS THEY NEAR THE EDGE OF THE BRIDGE

SUBJECTIVE SHOT - FROM THE GERMANS' POV

The remaining 75 feet of the bridge rolls past and we see the shapes of the G.I.'s and the two officers grow larger. They watch with curiosity.

LONG SHOT - THE GERMANS REACH THE END OF THE BRIDGE AND KEEP GOING FOR ABOUT FIFTEEN YARDS. DIETRICH STOPS THEM. THEY DO NOT REVEAL THEIR RELIEF. THEY ARE CLEAR OF THE BRIDGE

SHOT - CAPTAIN JONES & MAJOR SULLIVAN WALK TO THE GERMAN PRISONERS

SHOT - DIETRICH SMILES INDIFFERENTLY

CLOSE - CAPTAIN JONES - AS HE STARTS TO SPEAK HIS FACE IS SUDDENLY BATHED IN A BRILLIANT GLARE

QUICK CUT - THE BRIDGE AS THE CHARGES EXPLODE UNDER THE ABUTMENT

QUICK CUT - DIETRICH HAS A WIDE EYED TRIUMPHANT STARE

QUICK CUT - FROM BELOW THE BRIDGE, ONE SIDE OF THE SUPPORT CRUMBLES AS IF IN SLOW MOTION

QUICK CUT - THE SURFACE OF THE BRIDGE LAZILY CURLS AWAY FROM THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF

QUICK CUT - FROM BELOW, ONE END OF THE SPAN HURTLES DOWN INTO THE GORGE, TEARING HUGE HUNKS OUT OF THE CLIFF SIDE

SHOT - FROM BEHIND THE PRISONERS AND CAPTAIN JONES, THERE IS SUDDENLY A YAWNING GAP WHERE THE ROAD SURFACE STOOD. SMOKE AND DUST RISE FROM THE RAVINE

VARIOUS SHOTS - NOBODY SEEMS TO MOVE. ALL STAND PERFECTLY STILL AS THOUGH WITNESSING SOME AWESOME SPECTACLE OF NATURE

CLOSE - DIETRICH AS HE LOOKS INTO THE SMOKING ABYSS

The flame of excitement flickers out and is slowly replaced by an expression that can only be described as one of infinite sadness and nostalgia. The camera holds a long time on his face. It is almost like witnessing the death of a friend.

SLOW FADE OUT.

SLOW FADE IN:

LONG SHOT - A BUSY STREET IN A LARGE GERMAN CITY

TITLE: "10 YEARS LATER"

DISSOLVE TO:

EXTREME CLOSE SHOT - A MAN'S HAND IS RUBBER-STAMPING A LARGE STACK OF MAIL. HIS OTHER HAND DEFTLY FLICKS OFF THE TOP ENVELOPE EXPOSING THE NEXT. THE STAMP AS A "THUMP" "THUMP" RHYTHM.

CAMERA PULLS BACK - AND WE SEE THE BACK OF THE MAN SEATED AT A LARGE MAIL TABLE. IN THE BACKGROUND WE SEE THE HUSTLE AND CLATTER OF A POST OFFICE. THE MAN'S RHYTHM SLOWS DOWN SO THAT THE "THUMP" SOUNDS GRADUALLY CEASE ALTOGETHER.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hurry up with those letters. The four o'clock truck is here soon.

The man at the table turns around and we see it is Dietrich. He looks less healthy and puffier. He is neatly but shabbily dressed.

LT. DIETRICH

(smiles respectfully)  
Excuse me, Herr Bauer.

He turns wearily back and resumes his work, "Thump", "Thump".

CLOSE - DIETRICH

He looks down at the pile of work and sighs. He resumes the monotonous pattern of his work. We hold on him doing this for a long time. The sounds of the post office swirl around him.

He tries to concentrate on the work, pushing away a finished stack of envelopes and reaching for another. As he begins the next stack his mind begins to wander again. The stamping rhythm slows down.

Gradually, the stamping stops completely. His thoughts are far away. His face assumes the same expression of nostalgia and melancholy we saw at the last moments of the bridge scene. He is thinking about that bridge again.

The sounds of the post office fade down until they are barely a murmur. THE SOUND TRACK slowly begins to fill with the sound of his men's voices singing the marching song they sang walking off the bridge. The sound slowly fills the screen. We hold on his face for a long, long time.

SLOW FADE OUT.