

Band of Brothers Episode Guide

Episodes 001-010

Last episode aired Sunday November 4, 2001





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Season One

Currahee

Season 1

Episode Number: 1

Season Episode: 1

Originally aired: Sunday September 9, 2001
Writer: Erik Jendreson, Tom Hanks
Director: Phil Alden Robinson
Show Stars: Michael Cudlitz (Denver 'Bull' Randleman), Ron Livingston (Capt. Lewis Nixon), Tim Matthews (Alex Penkala), Scott Grimes (T/Sgt. Donald Malarkey), Donnie Wahlberg (2nd Lt. C. Carwood Lipton), Neal McDonough (1st Lt. Lynn "Buck" Compton), Ross McCall (Joseph D Liebgott), Frank John Hughes (S/Sgt. William "Wild Bill" Guarnere), Rick Gomez (George Luz), Kirk Acevedo (SSgt. Joseph Toye), James Madio (Frank J Perconte), Richard Speight Jr. (Warren 'Skip' Muck), Dale Dye (Colonel Robert Sink), Damian Lewis (Richard D. Winters), Dexter Fletcher (John), Shane Taylor (Eugene G 'doc' Roe), Phil McKee (Major Robert L Strayer), Tom Hardy (Pfc. John Janovec), Matthew Settle (Capt. Ronald Spiers), Philip Barantini (Wayne 'skinny' Sisk), James McAvoy (Pvt. James Miller), Rick Warden (II) (1st Lt. Harry Welsh), Matthew Leitch (Floyd 'Tab' Talbert), Nolan Hemmings (Charles 'Chuck' Grant), Nicholas Aaron (Robert E 'popeye' Wynn), Peter Youngblood Hills (Darrell C 'shifty' Powers), Robin Laing (Edward J 'babe' Heffron), Mark Huberman (Pvt. Lester 'Leo' Hashey), Peter McCabe (IV) (Cpl Donald Hoobler)

Guest Stars: Michael Fassbender (Sgt. Burton "Pat" Christenson), David Schwimmer (Lt. Herbert Sobel), Jamie Bamber (Jack E. Foley), Rocky Marshall (Earl J. McClung), Alex Sabga (Francis J. Mellet), Simon Schatzberger (Joseph A. Lesniewski), Joseph May (Edward J. Shames), David Crow (Corporal), Jordan Frieda (Replacement), Luke Griffin (Sgt Terence "Salty" Harris), Jason O'Mara (Lt. Thomas Meehan), Tom George (Pvt. White), Simon Pegg (William S. Evans), Marcos D'Cruze (Joseph P. Domingus)

Summary: Easy Company is introduced to Captain Sobel, who has the group undergo hard drills and exercises. As a result, Sobel comes into conflict with his men, including Richard Winters, his executive officer (X.O). The company is shipped to England to prepare for D-Day. Sobel is eventually reassigned to jump school for medics among others.



The hyped "Band of Brothers" series starts with interviews with World War II veterans – ostensibly, the real-life versions of the scrappy soldiers we'll come to know and love – introduce each episode with reminiscences about their experience. One man recalls the disbelief he felt when the U.S. went to war, and another claims this war inspired a different level of passion than did Korea or Vietnam (which hadn't happened yet, but whatever) because we were attacked, and it made people eager to volunteer and fight

back. Man Three recalls signups for every military branch they'd heard of, and then some oddity called the "airborne," and no one was quite able to dissect the word and fathom what the hell "airborne" was. Man Four remembers three men from his small town committing suicide – separately – because they weren't able to enlist; apparently, if one can't die for one's country, one will bloody well go and die in one's garage with a shotgun to one's throat. "We did things not for the medals, or the accolades; we did what had to be done," Man Four theorizes. Man Three is still laughing that no one wanted the airborne job until the man running signups revealed paratroopers would make fifty bucks more than everyone else, for a total salary of \$100, but we don't know whether it's per month or per week, and I don't know which makes more sense because my knowledge of the era's economics is roughly nil.

The credits are a prolonged sepia-toned sequence of shots from the series, set to typical Greatest Generation music. They run for two minutes and twenty-two seconds, which seems a tad overblown to me, but then again, so was all of A.I., so this vanity is to be expected. Don't get me wrong, they're lovely, but...snore.

June 4, 1944. Upottery, England. An airborne regiment is loading its planes, and men are marching somberly in packs, their faces darkened with black camouflage paint. A man cradles his dog tags and a cross in his palm while another soldier gets his hair trimmed into a very timely Mohawk. Breathing smoke from his mouth and nostrils, a squinty man stares into the camera and gives a little nod, as if to let us know that he's flirting with the fourth wall, but that he's not quite ready to take it out for dinner and a movie. Colors are muted; most of what we see are greens and grays and flesh-tones. "Easy Company!" bellows a male authority figure, standing atop a military Jeep. The group congregates. "The channel coast is socked in with rain and fire, and there's high winds in the drop zone," Authority Figure barks, adding that there is no jump tonight and that the planned invasion has been postponed. Dejected, the troops turn back toward camp, swearing softly and staring at the ground.

Even a Cary Grant movie, screened in one of the tents, can't boost Company spirits. One man is so distracted that he can't stay put, opting to leave the recreation tent and wander out into the dusk. It's Lt. Richard "Dick" Winters, played by British actor Damian Lewis, who impressively only betrays his heritage by sometimes sounding too American. Winters is a tall, fair-skinned redhead with a serious expression that never seems to lift. Now, we don't find out Winters's name right now, mind you; I'm just trying to save my pronouns for later. Anyway, Ron Livingston from Office Space is waiting outside, leaning against another tent. "Think it's clearing up?" he asks. Winters says no, and the two start casually walking together, both tense, obviously expecting to get The Call any second. "It's 5 PM in New York. 4 PM in Chicago," Ron notes. "Happy hour," muses Winters. That puts it at 10 PM in England, which doesn't jibe at all with how light the sky is. Ron grins that, in the States, it's time for drinks and a little dinner before the theater. War Is Hell Platitude, incoming: "A civilized place for civilized men," Ron says grimly, gulping from a silver pocket flask. The two sit quietly, staring off into the distance, Winters with the pensive squint of a man drinking in the gravity of it all. "Should've been born earlier, Nix," he says to Ron, who we'll now call Nixon, because the writers finally threw us a moniker bone. And...what? I guess Winters is lamenting that they're at a draft-eligible age. Nixon smirks, "What, and give all this up?" He takes a drag on his cigarette. "We'll go to Chicago. I'll take you there." Winters just squints with a faint smile, because he knows a Post-War Promise That Only Serves To Tempt Death when he hears one and he can't believe Nixon just totally jinxed himself. Nixon, apparently, doesn't understand the rules. Nixon realizes both men know someone from Chicago. "Oh, him," Winters says, disdainfully. "712 days with that son-of-a-bitch, and here we are," Nixon sighs.

Camp Toccoa, Georgia, two years earlier. That Son Of A Bitch, Herbert Sobel, barks that he wants his men at attention. Pacing madly like the Polly Prissy Pants he is, Sobel inspects his trainees and stops at a short lad called Pvt. Perconte. "Have you been blousing your trousers like a paratrooper?" Sobel wails, over-enunciating in his bid to act ferocious and missing badly. They really needed to cast someone who could bark. Hell, Lassie would've been better. Sobel revokes Perconte's weekend pass because of his sloppy uniform. Fussily, Sobel picks spare threads off the sleeve of Pvt. Lipton, or as we know him, Donnie Wahlberg. Donnie's pass gets revoked as well. Next, Sobel picks on another familiar face: Scott Grimes, or Bailey's pal Will on Party of Five. Will introduces himself as "Malarkey, Donald P." Sobel barks, "Malarkey. Isn't that slang for 'bullshit'?" Malarkey confirms it. Sobel yells at him for having rust on his weapon, and docks him the weekend pass. The shrapnel up Sobel's ass then reams Pvt. Liebgott for having a rusty bayonet.

"I wouldn't take this rusty piece of shit to war, and I will not take you to war in your condition," screams Sobel, charging around in a complete tizzy. David Schwimmer is completely miscast, coming across less like a tyrant than Ross playing dress-up and then running around screaming "we were ON a BREAK!!" Thus, this character is hereby rechristened Ross. Overcaffeinated and prancing around with a stiff-kneed waddle, Ross voids everybody's passes and orders them to change into their workout gear. Ross pauses and turns his head. "We're running Currahee," he says melodramatically. And in case we don't understand exactly what co-author Tom Hanks is getting at here, we see Winters stare coolly after Ross for a second before dismissing his platoon.

"I ain't goin' up that hill," Perconte says stupidly. He's in the officers' barracks, which look like summer-camp cabins. Pvt. Martin, who resembles a washed-up Harry Connick, Jr., brushes past and ribs Perconte for blousing his pants. "He giggered everyone," counters Perconte, deflecting blame for the Currahee run. As the two look ready for a fistfight, Donnie strides in wearing short-shorts and calls them outside. Pvt. White remains seated and unchanged. Donnie presses him – why is he not changed? Does he not understand that it's a direct order? Did the lads booby-trap his PT gear? Frustrated, Donnie's hairline recedes by one precious centimeter. White sits silently, looking meekly into Donnie's eyes. Donnie gives up. I can only assume this means Ross's tyrannical rule is driving young White to the brink of insanity. Trouble is, we never see White again, so we just don't know.

Easy trots outside and charges through officers from another company, who are mocking Easy for taking another run. Cut to a winding dirt road through what looks like forest. This is Currahee, a large and steep hill Ross uses as part of his brutal training regimen. Ross is leading them in a motivational chant, although I'm not sure how shouting while panting, and enduring the subsequent piercing lung pain, is supposed to keep one's spirits high. "How far down?" Ross yells. "Three miles up, three miles down!" the company answers. "Who are we?" Ross barks. "Easy Company!" they reply. "And what do we do?" Ross asks. "Stand alone!" they scream. One man stumbles; his knee buckles, and he drops to the ground. His mates pick him up. "Do NOT help that man!" spits Ross. He screams that they have fifteen minutes to reach the top of Currahee and finishes his rant with, "Hi-Ho Silver!" Okay, Ross. Away. And with that battle cry, Ross charges a little too zealously up the hill and his shorts hike up well beyond all decency. Let's just say it's the kind of white meat that could turn me into a vegetarian.

Suddenly, Ross is at the top of the hill, watching as the men stagger to the top and touch a monument, then head back down. He makes fun of a Pvt. Wynn, saying they're at the twenty-three-minute mark, and that it's totally sub-par. Basically, they're running an eight-minute mile and Ross is asking for a five-minute mile. Do you suppose he's some kind of hard-ass?

Cut to Ross in the same spot, but in uniform. He's watching Easy Company trudge up Currahee in full garb, and he's frowning fiercely, reveling in how he's infused Easy Company's name with cruel irony. Because his ass is hard. I must say, it's a cushy position indeed to be the one waiting at the top of the hill while everyone else sweats buckets.

More marching, this time in the dead of night and without Ross, who is away having a second rod surgically inserted up his rear end. Pvt. Randleman asks Winters if he may speak. "Sir, we've got nine companies, sir. How come we're the only one marching every night, twelve miles, with a full pack in pitch dark?" Randleman asks, guessing aloud that it's because Ross hates them. No, it's because Ross is a puny little asshole. "Sobel doesn't hate Easy Company," Winters replies calmly. "He just hates you." Randleman grins and the crew laughs, because that Winters is a ray of sunshine in all this sepia-and-gray-toned misery. We flip through several other faces we're supposed to care about, but they don't belong to anyone whose names we know, so I'm ignoring them.

Back at the base, Easy Company stands at attention while Ross paces in front of it, basically playing telephone without whispering – he's shouting orders at Winters, who translates for the soldiers who don't speak fluent Fuckwad. Ross wants the men to stand at attention and empty their canteens, purple monkey dishwater. They do, except for one Pvt. Christenson, upon whom Ross instantly pounces. It seems Christenson drank water during the march, despite being ordered to go thirsty for the duration. Ross bleats that Christenson must refill it and repeat the entire march immediately, returning with a full canteen this time. Wow, someone is totally gonna short-sheet Ross's bed tonight.

Ross gestures for Winters to join him in a hushed conference. "What in the name of God are you doing with my company?" he whines. "You're late, and you allow troopers to disobey direct

orders." Winters calmly assumes blame and won't dispense excuses. "This is not Dog Company. This is not Fox Company. This is Easy Company," Ross expositors for the sake of viewers who felt certain the jogging had a certain Fox-Company look to it. "This will be the first and finest company in this regiment," Ross insists, almost nose-to-nose with a stone-faced Winters. Ross demands that Winters make a list of the infractions six men have committed and some suggested disciplinary measures. "What infractions, sir?" Winters queries, puzzled. "Find some," Ross spits, then turns on his heel and stalks away to Central Perk for an espresso.

Winters and Nixon are in the mess tent eating some fresh slop. Apparently, Winters wiggled out of Ross's ultimatum by picking McDonnell, Toye, Perconte, Donnie (the only name we know so far), Guarnere, and Muck – "it was their turn," he sighs, helplessly. Nixon thinks Ross is a total genius. Winters is dubious. "Do you know another guy in this company who wouldn't double-time Currahee just to piss in that guy's morning coffee?" Nixon says. Someone should get on that, then. Pronto.

Ross supervises morning training, wherein the men jump out the open hatch of a grounded plane to practice their landing technique. "You just broke both your legs, Private Gordon," Ross chides one jumper. Cut to shots of men tripping as they try to high-step in and out of the openings in a net that's stretched and pinned inches above the ground. Then there's an obstacle course, and finally, the men crawl on their stomachs under a maze of barbed wire. Animal entrails, and a charming severed pig's head, decorate the trenches to simulate the horrors they might see in the battlefield. The show makes it look like Ross's tiny, evil mind is concocting awful new ways of torturing innocent men and pretending it's training. But it's hard to fathom that he'd have the wherewithal to build an obstacle course – much less the stones to sprinkle mammal innards under barbed-wire – just as another way to be mean. I'm sure they're all standard parts of training, but if so, the show shouldn't use it in a Ross-is-harsh montage, unless of course they are implying that Ross did set up the whole exercise himself. It's just strange. Ross singles out Gordon one more time, mocking him and sending him on a run up Currahee. Cut to a shot of the dirt trail, with Gordon jogging alone under the weight of his uniform. Suddenly the music changes from "lonely" to "poignant," as we see the boots of three Easy Company members who are joining Gordon on the trail. Because they've bonded. Like brothers. A whole band of 'em. Buoyed, Gordon speeds up. Needless to say, we have no idea who the three benevolent brothers are.

Ross gets promoted to captain by Colonel Sink, his superior, who commends him on Easy Company's status as the best of the nine companies in the 506 regiment's second battalion. Sink then peers through his window and spots Winters leading the men in P.T. –physical training. Sink's vocal appraisal of Winters as a strong up-and-comer clearly panics Ross, who reluctantly agrees to promote Winters. It's pretty obvious he feels threatened, and silently vows to put itching powder in Winters' britches.

Assorted junk drops onto an officer's bed. Ross grabs a porno magazine and waves it around in a frenzy. "Contraband," his forehead throbs, as do a few of his more private veins. Emptying someone else's locker, Ross finds a red paisley necktie and correctly proclaims it contraband as well, but alas, not for the pattern alone – it seems non-regulation clothing, in general, is taboo on base. Next, he grabs a cardboard box and notes someone had two-hundred "prophylactic kits" in his locker. "How in the name of God is he going to find the strength to fight a war?" Ross yelps. More importantly, where in the name of God is he planning to use them? I didn't spot any nubile townfolk. They must not be union. Ross then opens Pvt. Tipper's mail stash and wonders where he finds the time for private correspondence. Winters is shocked that letters don't count as private property. Throwing the letter up against his nostrils and inhaling, Ross snaps, "These men aren't paratroopers yet, Lieutenant. They have no personal property." Ross concludes by referring to Nixon by name – at five pages into the recap, it's the first time we've heard the whole thing (though Winters had called him "Nix" above) – and orders Winters to "get rid of" Pvt. Parks, in whose locker a tin of peaches was discovered. Ross revokes everyone's passes again and then dismisses the crew, but detains Winters.

"Colonel Sink has seen fit to promote you," Cap'n Ross tells Winters, curtly pinning the gold bar onto Winters's lapel, making him the First Lieutenant. "As a test of your organizational skills and command potential, I am designating you Mess Officer for fourteen days. Report to the mess kitchen at 0515 hours," Ross says. "Breakfast is at 0600." Okay, he's a jerk. Got it. The Heavy Hand of Hanks evidently isn't sure we realize who is the good guy in this power struggle. I'm

surprised he didn't CGI a halo over Winters's noggin and make Ross carry around a trident. Twisting the knife, Ross adds that he wants Winters to spend the next day preparing a special lunch. "I like spaghetti," Ross says, puffed up and pleased with himself, darting a sly look at Winters before pompously strutting off. Ross, I've had it. Either get your adenoids removed or blow your nose. My ears are threatening to bleed.

A chef slops pasta and red sauce onto the officers' plates. "These guys are packing it away," the chef says, shaking his head in wonder at Winters, who is supervising. Someone gripes that the spaghetti is orange. "Spaghetti? It's army noodles with ketchup," corrects Perconte with a grin. Guarnere chips in, "You don't have to eat it," to which Perconte replies, "Come on, Gonorrhea. As an Italian..." and it really doesn't matter what else he says – all this is meant to show is that Bill Guarnere has a nickname, and it ain't pretty, but folks, neither is war. Hanks, at home, giggles fiendishly at the thought that for the first time ever (except at some businesses, like say, brothels), gonorrhea will be a fixture during Monday morning water-cooler conversations. And he helped.

Suddenly, a commotion. "Easy Company is running up Currahee," screams Ross, barging into the mess. "Move, move, move! Three miles up, three miles down." Winters does what he does best: He stares at Ross, whose gaze lingers for a moment before he swivels around and marches out, bellowing, "Hi-ho Silver! Let's go, let's go!" A gleam of recognition flickers in Winters's eyes, as though it's just occurred to him that Ross isn't a particularly nice guy. And if there's one thing this episode lacks, it's Ross Is Evil undertones. Yes indeedy.

As anticipated, Easy Company's men start puking during the Currahee run. "You're a washout! You don't deserve to get your wings!" Ross's eye pulses. He runs around between the struggling men – using the term "run" rather loosely. It's more like a slightly fluid, convulsion-on-the-fly. Defiantly, the men start singing a rallying cry they've devised on their own as a sign of solidarity; stunned, Ross slows down and stands agape as Winters jogs past him, singing along. Somewhere in Orlando, Lou Pearlman hears pangs of excitement in his boy-band radar – which is to say, in his pants.

A military plane flies over green countryside. Easy Company is making its first jumps, clad in football helmets with crude leather chin-straps. To become certified, they must complete five jumps – so you might say the recipe for a paratrooper is to take any given Road Rules cast and mash it together in a blender (and haven't we all longed to do that anyway?). Ross is sweating and looking more than a bit nervous, because he totally isn't getting paid \$750,000 for this. "Go, go go!" yells the jump leader, and Ross gulps and leaps. The RossCam cuts in now, treating us to a blur of sky and chutes and boots and nothing but labored breathing – all from Falling Ross's point of view. He lands with a thud and curses when his chute briefly drags him along the ground. Then another round of jumps commences. And then, mercifully, we're done.

The troopers celebrate their graduation. With his newly won wings clenched in his teeth, Gonorrhea guzzles his beer, to the appreciative cheers of fellow officers thumping their palms on the table. Carousing. Boozing. Swaying. We get no names, and a million faces, yet we're asked to care about all the forced camaraderie. They swill ale, they slur, they imitate Ross – "Are those dusty jump wings? How do you expect to slay the Huns with dust on your jump wings?" – and okay, I sort of laughed right there, but only because Ross has become my nemesis. Finally, Colonel Sink toasts them and says, "Remember our rallying cry: Currahee!" They all drink to The Mountain that Made them Men. Oh my God. Did I just write that? Sheesh. You could dip me in red wax and call me Edam.

June 23, 1943. Camp Mackall, North Carolina. Like a Whack-A-Mole, Ross's head pops out of a ditch and I desperately crave a blunt mallet with which to bash him. There's complete silence. He whispers frantically for someone called Petty – who? Oh, whatever – and the map. Ross decides they're in the wrong place, and peeks out again at the giant piles of pine needles and leaves stacked up suspiciously at the base of tall trees. Like, really suspiciously – as in, big-enough-to-hide-a-soldier-with-a-gun suspiciously. Winters argues that they're in perfect position and should lie in wait, calmly, for the enemy to approach. But Ross can't stand knowing they're lurking out there, and figures it'd be simple just to walk around and round 'em up. Winters challenges him one more time, which only cements Ross's misguided resolve. "Let's go get 'em," he insists stubbornly, and Winters reluctantly rallies the group for a nice, peaceful, in-plain-view march through the woods. Shockingly, camouflaged soldiers rise up from underneath the suspicious leaf piles. Ross is deflated. "Captain, you've been killed, along with 95 percent of

your company,” says Nameless Man #46, plunging a bayonet through Ross’s sternum and then spinning him like a top. Well, figuratively, at least. So Ross is about as good at military strategy as you’d expect a paleontologist to be.

Now, I love seeing Ross fail, but...is this the Ross Hour, or something? I’m so tired of the good-vs-evil dynamic that I swear I just saw all my empty Diet Coke cans leap out of the garbage and spell I GET IT on the floor. The show is working overtime to make us root for Winters, even though we’d have probably become invested in him anyway given the situation. Yes, it’s a true story, but it’s been presented such that the message is becoming tiresome. And I think we’ve all learned something very important about David Schwimmer – specifically, that if he’s smart he’ll work overtime to make sure *Friends* stays on the air until the six are in nursing homes.

Nixon cheerfully commiserates with Winters, who’s clearly upset about Ross’s foul-up but too diplomatic to complain. Someone else walks in, someone new – oh, good, that’s just what we need. Nameless Man #47 becomes Harry Welsh. Hey, way to go, Harry – you snagged a surname. What’s your secret? There’s a couple folks from the first half who might want to pick your brain. Welsh is Nixon’s replacement, the latter having scored a promotion to the battalion offices. Nixon jokes that Winters has no flaws, vices, or sense of humor. True, that – I’ve seen his smiles, and believe me, I can’t confirm whether he has any teeth under there. Welsh, a slave to exposition, notes that he’s heard rumblings about Ross and how he gets jumpy in the field. Nixon cheerfully points out how dangerous Ross is, almost reveling in his freedom from the inept captain. Winters diplomatically asks that they keep the rumors private, just as Ross appears in the doorway. “We’re moving out,” he says, catching Nixon’s appraising eye for a second before leaving. Nixon turns away and shakes his head with a wry grin.

A group of paratroopers, waiting to board the train, complains about Ross; someone defends him for only screwing up one maneuver, but Nameless Man #48 still wonders whether he could accidentally set off a grenade in Ross’s vicinity. They all agree the Army probably isn’t that concerned about Ross’s deficiencies. A passing Donnie stops, listens, flinches, and keeps going.

The train zips through the countryside. Nixon tells Winters that they’re headed for a ship in New York City that’s sailing to England. “We’re invading Europe, my friend,” he says. “Fortress Europa.” Nixon drinks from his flask and offers some to Winters, who refuses. I think Nixon is an intelligence officer, because Winters expresses concern for what Nixon would do when required to enter combat. “I have every confidence in my scrounging abilities,” he breezily says, adding that, for backup, he’s sneaking a case of liquor over in Winters’s locker. Is this over yet?

Sept. 6, 1943. Brooklyn Naval Shipyard. Ross’s voice over says, “Dear Sir or Madam, soon your son will drop from the sky to engage and defeat the enemy. Your frequent letters of love and encouragement will arm him with a fighting heart. With that he cannot fail, but will win glory for himself, make you proud of him, and his country grateful for his service in its hour of need. And, please tape 7th Heaven while we’re gone, because I don’t want to miss all the hot seminary-school action this season.” Somberly, the soldiers get their last look at the Statue of Liberty, framed by a red sky – which, if it’s morning, is considered a bad omen.

Conditions are cramped on the ship, and for a second, I feel stuck in Titanic hell. Troopers talk big about being jealous of the men stationed in the South Pacific with all the raunchy island girls who sing and dance and help Glenn Close wash a man right out of her hair. Our brash friend Toye brags about taking his knife to Hitler’s neck and getting Thanksgiving re-named “Joe Toye Day,” and for a second, I thought he said “Joe Torre,” and I was frantically trying to do the math on that one. The conversation devolves into a discussion of Ross’s ineptitude, and Pvt. Liebgott – who doesn’t look familiar – professes loyalty to Winters. Gonorrhea demeans Winters as a Quaker and Ross as a “son of Abraham.” Liebgott, Jewish himself, tries to pick a fight. I would care if I knew anything about the two guys mouthing off, but since I’m too inundated with people to weed the regulars from the extras, it’s hard to muster an interest in any of it. Two blasé troopers playing cards ignore the whole thing. “Fighting over [Ross]. That’s smart,” one says.

Sept. 18, 1943. Aldbourne, England. Easy Company is stationed in a cute village, practicing hand-to-hand combat on an open grassy field. It looks like military Tough Enough. Then, bayonets clash, soldiers parry and thrust. Donnie explains the trench concept as the men dig – “cover and concealment” are among its advantages, he says. The soldiers fire off some rounds and then receive an intricately drawn battle plan that’s to serve as their first official exercise.

Winters’s platoon darts across a field and ducks near a hedge. “[Ross] is late,” he frets. Cut to Ross’s platoon, scurrying across another pasture and stopped by a barbed-wire fence. Ross

completely flips his shit. "There should be no fence here," he yells to no one, then grabs the map from Tipper. Wait, I thought Petty was the map guy. I miss Petty. I knew Petty. Fumbling his words, Ross gracelessly tells his men to take cover behind a giant shrub and as they trot away, they all agree that Ross is completely lost and out of his depth. Tipper, ever the well-monikered scamp, offers, "We could go over [the fence], sir." Ross spits, "That's not the point. Where the goddamn hell are we?"

Meanwhile, Perconte has a scheme. He grabs Nameless Man #49 and whispers, "Can you do Major Horton?" Nameless replies, "Who the fuck is THAT? Is Hanks just making this shit up as he goes along?" Except somehow, that answer gets stuck in his throat, and all we get is a nod and a flip imitation of the mythical Major. As the snickering troop hunkers down near him, Nameless shouts out to Ross in an exaggerated Southern accent that sounds exactly the way I remember Major Horton, given that I've never seen or heard him. Ooh, and I think I heard Nameless being referred to as "Muck." Hey, okay. It's Hanks's game, and we're just pawns. "What is the goddamn holdup, [Ross]?" Muck mimics. Ross jumps and turns rigid. He can't believe Major Horton has joined them, and frankly, I know the feeling. "It's...a...fence," Ross sputters, turning to examine it. "A barbed-wire fence!" He says this as though the fence is confusing to him, one of those newfangled inventions that Ron Popeil's father is hawking on the wireless – the kind of fence that protects from intruders and makes a mean rotisserie chicken, while dissolving all your toughest stains. "Cut that bitch and get this goddamn platoon on the move!" Muck shouts. Ross freaks again.

Winters checks his watch and decides that his platoon – the second platoon – has to move ahead with the plan in spite of Ross's lateness. He makes a fervent plan to surround the T-intersection, and then uses hand signals to inform everyone else. My knowledge of military jargon is limited, but it looks like Winters wants them to split up, steal second, and hit a sacrifice fly to right field.

An octogenarian on a bike slowly pedals down the street. Seeing a stream of soldiers pouring across the road, he pulls a U-turn and heads the other direction, but it's also blocked by crossing troopers. Picking the third and final path, he cycles straight into the third oncoming squad. Winters smiles as the man puts up his hands. "You've done it now, Yanks. You've captured me," he teases. From afar, we hear Ross shout, "Hi-ho Silver!" and his platoon comes jogging up the street from a different direction. "Would that be the enemy?" the man asks. "As a matter of fact, yes," Winters metas. He then loudly compliments his platoon on achieving the objective. Which was what? To capture the old man? Winters was so meticulous about time, I can only assume something was supposed to be in the intersection, but...an old man? Who isn't armed or fast enough to realistically escape? What a dumb exercise. What's next? Skydiving from a three-foot coffee table? A standoff against a particularly treasonous oak tree? Sigh. I give up. Anyway, Ross is...wait for it...pissed.

Cows flee through the sliced fence. "Who was the idiot who cut that man's fence?" bellows Nameless Man #50, clearly a superior of Ross – who, in turn, swears that a hidden Major Horton told him to do it. But, ha, joke's on Ross! Major Horton was on leave and couldn't have been there! BAH! Ross is...wait for it...pissed.

By now, Ross is pretty pissed, see? Because people don't seem to like him as much as they like Winters. So in the next scene, we see a lackey serving Winters with a disciplinary notice. Cut to the Company Office, where Ross is explaining the trumped-up charges – apparently, Winters was supposed to inspect the latrines, and he was late. Winters explains that he spent 0930-0955 inspecting the censored mail, then proceeded to the latrine inspection at 1000 as Ross had instructed. Ross bitches that he changed the time to 0945; Winters didn't know. Ross called; Winters doesn't have a phone where he's staying. Ross sent a runner; no runner reached Winters. "Irregardless," Ross shouts...and, by the way, Hanksie? Yeah, "irregardless" is pretty much the poster word for general misuse of the English language. I'm just saying. Ross explains that he doesn't give two shits in a parachute why Winters didn't show up – the point is that, by his absence, he disobeyed a direct order. He can either agree to have his weekend pass revoked for sixty days, or opt for trial by court-martial. Ross can't quite make eye contact with Winters, so he just stares down at his desk and then mutters, "You spend weekends on the base anyway, Dick. Be a man. Take the punishment." Winters ponders Ross's droopy, guilty face and fervently prays that an ebola monkey will drop from the sky and "befriend" the captain. Then he grabs Ross's pen and signs the petition for a court-martial, salutes, and wheels around for a dignified exit.

Ross sits silently in shock, his penis shriveling in embarrassment as he furtively looks around to see if anyone noticed the emasculation.

A man called Ranney – I only know because I've seen both episodes – storms into a strange barn-like place and announces that they've lost Winters to the battalion mess until the hearing, which scares the crap out of everyone who now could be sent into combat with only Ross to lead them. Nearby chickens cluck in protest. The gang decides to act. "We'd all better be clear of the consequences," Donnie intones, saying that they could be lined up against the wall and shot for mutiny. Gonorrhea flatly states that he will not follow Ross into combat, and the others nod nervously. Donnie nods, looks around, checks his hairline for further recession and then says, "Let's do it." Each man – about eight in total, maybe ten – writes onto a paper, "I hereby no longer wish to serve as a non-commissioned officer in Easy Company."

The seething Colonel Sink – or is this Major Horton? Who's to say, really? – reams the mutinous men and orders one, Harris, to turn in his stripes and move to a different regiment. No clue why he's the one who gets the worst punishment, because this is the first time I've seen him or heard his name. Ranney gets busted down to Private. Colonel Major Sink Horton barks that they've disgraced the 101st Airborne, but escape death because it's the eve of the most important action in the division's history. They flee on his command, passing Winters outside and saluting him. As ever, Winters looks like he just sort of knows what they did. Winters is all about knowing smiles. His is the knowingest smile in all the land.

Ross innocently feigns shock at the development, telling Colonel Major Sink Horton that some of the staff sergeants felt more loyal to Winters's platoon than to the whole Easy Company – but, he graciously decides that he could still work with them. CSMH wonders how the staff sergeants convinced everyone else to sign, then deems the whole Winters thing "unpleasant." He then praises Ross's company as one of the finest he's ever seen – which is why he's being transferred to a school that teaches parachute-training for non-infantry types who are still essential to combat, like medics and clergy. Ross is stunned, looking upset and hurt and slightly unsure whether it's a slight or a compliment. "I'm losing Easy Company?" he asks, crushed. CSMH insists that Ross is needed elsewhere in the war effort. Meehan from Baker Company will replace him. "Don't let us down," CSMH finishes before Ross is encouraged to leave the room. Ross just stands there, unable to digest what he's heard, his penis fully retreated into his groin to hibernate – basically, picture Schwimmer method-acting by imagining Marcel the Monkey ran away and Chandler just whizzed in his hair gel. Schwimmer never infused the character with any kind of authority or any real sense of passion for battle and combat and the chance to fight for the country. Sure, he's annoying and spiteful, but there's nothing underlying that behavior to make him anything more than a shallow caricature, and there the fault lies with the writers and the actor together.

A Jeep carries Ross away, past a saluting Winters. Ross looks...wait for it...pissed, while Winters stares after him with...wait for it...a knowing smile. Okey-dokey.

May 31, 1944. Upottery, England. We're back where we started, but four days prior. Big black tents are set up in rows that extend into the horizon and soldiers trudge through the mud. One jovial British soldier greets them, the first indication that the show is acknowledging the existence of other Allied forces. But wait, no one can understand him: The backward slang and heavy accent render our lone Brit utterly unintelligible to the laughing American, because them Brits are from England, but they ain't speakin' no English! Nameless Man #51 admires the Brit's pistol, something called a "Luger" that is referenced again in the upcoming show. And then the moment of international bonding is all over, and we're back to our nice, comfortable illusion of non-coalition warfare.

Wow! It's Nameless Man #46 again, last seen at the site of Ross's first downfall. Welcome back, NM#46. Winters is lecturing him, though, for shooting craps with men who rank underneath him. NM#46 tries to defend himself, saying he's only been part of Easy for six days and he just wants to build a rapport with his soldiers. "But what if you won?" Winters asks, pointedly. NM#46 doesn't understand. "Never put yourself in a position where you can take from these men," Winters warns softly, scoring only a five on the war-platitude scale – he rated highly for execution but low on the applicability scale, plus the Portuguese judge stiffed him with a 2.3.

Up to this point, I thought NM#46 was Meehan, the aforementioned new head of Easy Company. But my theory was crushed when Winters left NM#46 in the car and entered a tent, greeting the occupant by the name Meehan. So much for trying to make sense of the muddle. Anyway, Winters tells Meehan he took a compass along on the last test jump, and Meehan excitedly gets

out a map. They plot the course and apply it to a map of Europe, deducing somehow that they're preparing to invade Normandy. Their method confuses me, but my gut tells me to trust that conclusion.

Nixon outlines the battle plan to congregated troopers. The seafaring infantry are hitting the beaches at a specified time code-named D-Day, hoping to unite two segments called Utah and Omaha into one long strip of Allied land. The paratroopers will drop five hours before the fourth infantry lands at Utah, and Easy Company must use that time to destroy a German garrison that's poised to annihilate the Utah-bound soldiers.

Toye reappears and grouchily rattles off a list of stuff he's toting on the jump, including: K rations, chocolate bars, candy, coffee, sugar, matches, a compass, a bayonet, a trenching tool, ammunition, a gas mask, a bag of more ammo, two weapons, a canteen, two cartons of smokes, four grenades, TNT, two chutes, a more damaging gun, and some other stuff I didn't catch. That, and a leg bag. "Where are you keeping the brass knuckles?" his pal asks with a laugh. Toye contemplates this. "Maybe I need brass knuckles," he decides.

Donnie, clinging to his optimism, patrols the grounds and shouts that everyone must sign the GI life insurance policy "so your families won't miss out on \$10,000." Martin flags him down and whispers that his wife sent a letter updating him on casualty lists, and it seems Gonorrhea's brother Henry was killed. Donnie ponders this, losing a millimeter of hair in the process, and suggests telling Gonorrhea, even though it's a few hours before the jump. Martin communicates his uncertainty by squinting.

Colonel Sink's message arrives, and Liebgott – sure, why not – reads it aloud, which sobers the once-jocular group. "Tonight is the night of nights. Today as you read this, you're en route to the great adventure for which you've trained for over two years." Gonorrhea, blissfully unaware that he's brotherless, stares at his empty dish. "That's why they gave us ice cream," he realizes.

We're back to where we started – our unidentified authority figure from the first segment turns out to be Easy Company's new leader, Lt. Meehan. "No jump tonight," he shouts to the crushed troopers. At the Cary Grant flick's screening, Gonorrhea suddenly fumbles suspiciously through his coat pockets and pulls out a letter that says, "Dearest Johnny," which tips him off that he's wearing someone else's coat. Before he can act, though, he spies his name in the letter – "Johnny" is Martin, and Gonorrhea has spied the portion that discusses his dead brother. We know he's grieving because his jaw clenches and there's some manner of squinting – apparently a preferred dramatic technique on this set – before his nose wrinkles.

The Winters love montage begins. He sits alone at a desk, writing. Cut to a shot of his face staring into space, on which the camera lingers way too long before fading slowly into footage of him pacing outside the tents with his fun. He's utterly alone, looking awed and somewhat resigned to the idea that most of the men are on borrowed time now. Or, he's waiting to use the latrine. Sometimes the expressions are similar. Either way, it's an unforgivably sappy bit.

June 5, 1944. Utoptery Airfield. Spielberg has picked music from his "Stirring" collection, so that we know this is A Major Event. The paratroopers gather their equipment, and we're treated to frontal shots of blank, sometimes sad faces, indistinguishable with the black paint and the steely gazes. Gonorrhea makes a beeline for Martin, returning the letter he found. "You read it?" Martin asks. Gonorrhea nods and looks away. "Where the fuck is Monte Casino?" he asks, trying to locate the place of his brother's demise. "At least somewhere," Martin says, and although I think he means the finality is better than an eternal MIA report, I think it's a poorly written line. Martin offers condolences; Gonorrhea feels worse for his mother, he says, and walks away drooping. "Bill...I'll meet up with you over there," Martin says, fluent in War Platitude and also figuring that on the day of the scariest invasion of their careers, it's really best to tempt death as blatantly as possible.

Airsickness pills. Winters pops his and addresses the crowd. Conveniently, our hero is no longer working the mess and has instead retained an authority position, presumably having resolved the nasty disciplinary snarl. "Good luck, God bless you, and I'll see you in the assembly area," he says to his men, who are seated on the tarmac. One by one, he pulls them up, lingering just long enough for the gesture to become a handshake. Weighed down by their garb, each man needs a boost to get inside the plane; when they're ready, they clutch maps nervously for one last cram session. Propellers whirr and the men look terrified.

Trumpet music heralds the departure of five planes, which join a massive cluster of aircraft in the sky. Gonorrhea locks his jaw once more, staring at the floor and looking angry at the

injustice of it all. Ladies and Gentleman, meet our resident loose cannon. The camera pulls back out of Easy's plane and we lose it amid the crowd, a procession of mechanical lemmings headed to a gruesome battle and, for some, a horrific end. Fade to black.

"Soldiers, sailors and airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force: You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you," the screen reads. "Good luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of the almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking. – Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander."

Day of Days

Season 1

Episode Number: 2

Season Episode: 2

Originally aired:	Sunday September 9, 2001
Writer:	Erik Jendreson, Tom Hanks
Director:	Richard Loncraine
Show Stars:	Michael Cudlitz (Denver 'Bull' Randleman), Ron Livingston (Capt. Lewis Nixon), Scott Grimes (T/Sgt. Donald Malarkey), Donnie Wahlberg (2nd Lt. C. Carwood Lipton), Neal McDonough (1st Lt. Lynn "Buck" Compton), Ross McCall (Joseph D Liebgott), Frank John Hughes (S/Sgt. William "Wild Bill" Guarnere), Rick Gomez (George Luz), Kirk Acevedo (SSgt. Joseph Toye), James Madio (Frank J Perconte), Richard Speight Jr. (Warren 'Skip' Muck), Dale Dye (Colonel Robert Sink), Damian Lewis (Richard D. Winters), Dexter Fletcher (John), Shane Taylor (Eugene G 'doc' Roe), Phil McKee (Major Robert L Strayer), Tom Hardy (Pfc. John Janovec), Matthew Settle (Capt. Ronald Spiers), Philip Barantini (Wayne 'skinny' Sisk), James McAvoy (Pvt. James Miller), Rick Warden (II) (1st Lt. Harry Welsh), Matthew Leitch (Floyd 'Tab' Talbert), Nolan Hemmings (Charles 'Chuck' Grant), Nicholas Aaron (Robert E 'popeye' Wynn), Peter Youngblood Hills (Darrell C 'shifty' Powers), Robin Laing (Edward J 'babe' Heffron), Mark Huberman (Pvt. Lester 'Leo' Hashey), Peter McCabe (IV) (Cpl Donald Hoobler)
Guest Stars:	Jeff Tweedy (German Soldier), Andrew Scott (John D. Hall), Jason O'Mara (Lt. Thomas Meehan), Jonathan Young (Lt. John W. Kelley), Marc Warren (Albert Blithe), Adam James (Cleveland O. Petty), Simon Fenton (Gerald J. Lorraine), Andrew Howard (Clarence Hester), Stephen Graham (Myron Mike Ranney), Ezra Godden (Robert Van Klinken), Alexis Conran (George Lavenson), Iain Robertson (George Smith), Jonie Broom (Hans Schmidt), Paul Williams (Pvt Jack Olsen), Benjamin Montague (Pvt Matt McDowell), Ben Peyton (Warrant Officer Hill), Nicholas Lopez (US Guard), Steve Chaplin (Pilot), David Blair (Co-Pilot), Mark Wakeling (Pilot - Plane 66), Matthew Duquenoey (Co Pilot - Plane 66), Chris Robson (Surrendering German)
Summary:	Easy Company lands in Normandy, but is scattered all across the region and away from their designated drop zone. 1st Lt. Meehan, commander of Easy, is killed when his plane suffers a direct hit and 1st Lt. Winters must take command. With a small group of men, Winters takes out a set of German gun emplacements at Brécourt and thereby wins the respect of his fellow soldiers as a leader. 1st Lt. Speirs is introduced.

Veteran interviews: When Hanksie Met Soldiers. The survivors recall seeing the drop zone from the air, but not jumping until their plane got hit by flying bullets. Nothing went as planned; chin straps broke and leg bags dropped away, and as the men landed, they knew the enemy was lurking in any and every direction. "We lost a lot of people that night, but...you try to put it all out of your mind," chokes one man, biting his lip and battling fresh tears for old memories. Fade to black.

Ominous in B-Minor plays as we fade up on puffy white clouds rolling past the paratroopers' airplane. The whirr of its engine roars louder as we see it slice through the final patch of clear air

space. Inside, Gonorrhea angrily stares at a rosary dangling from his fingers. Next to him, Toye and Malarkey just look sad. Another man jumpily fusses with his chute straps, making sure his chute is tightly fastened to him. No one speaks. Winters gets a glamour shot – a close-up of him sitting next to the wide-open airplane hatch. It's a complete visual handjob, because he manages to be softly lit and isn't disturbed by anything stronger than a light breeze; his look is meant to be contemplative and serious, but instead it comes off like he's making bedroom eyes at the camera. Aw, he's our l'il Mr. September, a pinup boy in the "Hot Men of World War II" calendar. Hands crusted with black filth clutch maps and cigarette. This montage of dread goes on a tad too long.



Suddenly, a loud blast jolts the men's eyes open, and the clouds begin to glow. Through the windshield, the pilot sees other planes flying ahead of them into a flashing orange sky, signaling their arrival in a danger zone. The red ready light glows near the hatch, so each paratrooper stands and hooks himself to a stability cord that stretches the length of the airplane. "Get ready!" shouts Winters, cast in crimson light.

A plane cruises through the air; then an explosion disintegrates its front half.

Easy Company troopers tumble against each other; bits of plane debris assault other jets in the air. "Jesus Christ!" someone screams. A fiery blast of shrapnel zips through the hatch and, with a fearsome crackle, hits one of Easy's men, one of the nameless, faceless many. He shrieks and collapses against the side of the aircraft. Planes are completely throbbing at this point, and if not for the hooks connecting them to the plane, it's unlikely any of the soldiers would be able to remain upright. Pilots battle flaming engines and try to dodge hazards in the atmospheric chaos.

Here's where it gets confusing. From what I've gleaned after my romance with the Rewind and Pause buttons, it appears Meehan and Winters are on separate planes; however, it's unclear which Easy members are on which plane with which leader, so it's tricky to make sense of the images. Meehan's pilot spies his engine aflame and screams – using Meehan's name, thankfully – for immediate evacuation of the troopers. As he says it, fire engulfs the plane bit by bit, and it's hard to tell who, if anyone, escapes. One plane crashes in the countryside. The air is a minefield of shredded metal, bullets, fire, and out-of-control aircraft, but it's computer-generated just enough that, visually, it evokes the old Atari game Asteroids. My sister once got a high score on that game while controlling the joystick with her feet. Not that I'm suggesting WWII pilots should have done the same.

A green light flashes, and paratroopers plunge to the ground. There's TrooperCam action showing how dizzying such leaps can be; the pilot on Winters's craft screams when his windshield is cracked. The co-pilot begs him to flip on the green light. "They can't jump at this speed!" shrieks the pilot, turning to address his partner, who is promptly shot through the head. Terrified, the pilot flips on the go-ahead light and Easy Company commences its jumps. Bullets clog the air; it's incredible anyone made it down without being struck by the whizzing projectiles.

Winters sails over flaming wreckage and lands safely on a barren, bleak field; explosions periodically light the sky. Patting himself down to determine what of his equipment is missing, Winters growls in frustration when he realizes many of his ropes frayed and broke, dropping his supplies over Normandy. Another man falls near him. "Flash," Winters whispers. "Gordon!" answers the man. Except, no, he actually says, "Shit!" Winters wryly notes the incorrect code response, and Hall grudgingly supplies the correct one: "Thunder." As they remove their life vests and disentangle themselves from their chutes, the man whispers, "Coach?" It turns out this kid, called Hall, played on Winters's inter-regiment basketball team. Calmly, Winters dons his helmet; Hall prepares his weapon. "Follow me," Winters says, leading them one way and then doubling back to seek shelter when it becomes apparent that walking upright in an empty field is not the best way to travel covertly. They traverse the brush, stopping to blend with a pair of trees, as bullets continue to pepper the area. Winters spies the guns being fired. "Wait until they reload," he whispers, then curiously regards Hall and realizes he's not from Easy. Hall reveals

he's Able Company. "I guess that means one of us is in the wrong drop zone," Hall says sadly. "Or both of us," Winters sighs.

The two start walking, shrouded in darkness and an eerie silence – the only noise is labored breathing and their boots breaking twigs on the forest floor. Winters admits he has no weapon but a knife. "I lost my radio on the jump," Hall confesses. "I'm sure I'll get chewed out for that." Winters, being our benevolent hero, reassures him: "If you were in my platoon, I'd tell you that you're a rifleman first and a radio man second." Hall is comforted and he and Winters set about looking for landmarks they can use to pinpoint their position. As they inch through the brush, Hall muses, "I wonder if the rest are as lost as we are." Oddly relaxed, Winters replies, "We're not lost. We're in Normandy." Winters's calm here completely creeps me out. The man is almost comatose throughout the entire jump, surreal in his serenity. There's not a scratch on him and his pulse looks to be about sixty beats per minute. I'm in more of a tizzy than that when I'm asleep.

Spying moving foliage across a stream, Winters pauses, hides, and draws his knife, which will obviously be an apt defense against hostile fire because wee pocketknives can probably deflect bullets. "Winters, is that you?" a figure whispers. It's Donnie – armed with TNT and a knife – plus a handful of others, including two men from 82nd Airborne. Hall is alarmed, because they're from 101st, so someone's way off-course. Donnie says he saw a sign that could help them determine their whereabouts; the men watch, rapt, as Winters tears open his pants and intones, "Well, I know how we can find true north." Actually, he just pulls a tiny compass from his fly, hunkers down underneath a borrowed trenchcoat, and uses a flashlight to study Donnie's map. "We're seven kilometers from our objective and four hours from when we need to have it secured," Winters reports. They decide to stick together and head straight for Utah Beach, hoping they'll find Allied encampments along the way. The 82nd doofuses – doofi? – are dumb and dumbfounded. "That man don't even have a weapon," one gasps. Wow. Say what you will about Ross, but at least his trainees know basic grammar.

Walking alongside a railroad track, the soldiers stumble upon another group that includes Malarkey and Gonorrhea, who is totally unwelcoming to the outsider Hall. I guess Gonorrhea doesn't come easy. You gotta earn it. Detecting noise coming from one direction, Hall motions for silence; Winters, who peeks ahead, commands the group to scamper down a steep decline and take cover until his command. The sound of carousing slowly fills the air, followed by a horse-drawn cavalcade manned by apparent enemy troops. It looks like a mess of German fun, but Gonorrhea can't be contained. He's angry, and it's spreading, and no salve can cure this itching and burning spectre of fury. He opens fire, annihilating the enemy. Winters is completely startled; still, when the cavalcade regains its wits and fires back, someone backs up Gonorrhea with a grenade. Gonorrhea remains the main aggressor, standing right in front of the carriage and firing with a deeply trite, "agonized" barbaric yawp. Suddenly I'm watching a bad, bad movie. If Bill Pullman shows up and gives a speech, I'm quitting.

Long after the last corpse falls, Gonorrhea keeps firing until Winters stalks over to him, snatches the gun, and stares angrily into his eyes. "Next time I say 'wait for my command,' you wait for my command, Sergeant," Winters says harshly. Gonorrhea looks daggers at his superior and seethes a defiant, "Yes, sir." Toye shoots a suffering horse. Gonorrhea bitches that the "Quaker" Winters has no right to badmouth him for killing "Krauts." Hall asks what his problem is; Malarkey jokingly replies, "Gonorrhea." A confused Hall gets an explanation for the joke; he then asks, "Besides having a shitty name, what's his problem?" Gonorrhea barks, "None of your business, cowboy."

Daybreak. About eight silhouettes walk along the horizon. Toye defends an unarmed Winters for resisting attack – "What's he gonna do, shout at them?" – but Gonorrhea spits back, "He doesn't even drink." Well. That changes everything. As they trudge away through the swamp, music is drowned out by the buzzing flies and lonely flute music.

Dissolve into a shot of a water tower and a smoldering barn. The group approaches a pasture with mooing cows, and I think we all know what that means: cow-tipping, Normandy-style. While Donnie and Wynn, nicknamed "Popeye," rush ahead to investigate a burning barn, the others survey closer carnage – one paratrooper swings gently from a tree, hung by his own chute. Others lie scorched and bloodied, killed either during the descent or after they touched down. A tall, lean guy called McDowell stares at the dead, his jaw hanging agape in an eerily Ross-ish "lights-on-but- no-one-home" expression. Donnie boldly begins raiding the corpses, defending

himself by citing their desperation for supplies and weapons. Malarkey eagerly rolls over one body and frisks it in search of a Luger pistol for his kid brother – and, to clarify, this obsession is new. Malarkey is not the person from Episode One who admired and fondled the British soldier's Luger; this was either poor planning or just a mistake. Before the men can do much plundering, they hear telltale sounds that Winters identifies as the beginning of the Naval invasion on Utah beach. Winters rounds up the gang and leads them away. Gonorrhea storms around in a right tizzy, disdainfully calling Hall a "cowboy" one more time for no real reason other than to look mad. Malarkey informs Hall that Gonorrhea's brother "got it," and that the news is still stinging him. He's vengeful.

Slogging toward their objective, the soldiers come upon a camp of German warriors being held by two Americans with rifles. Relieved to get directions to the battalion's headquarters, Malarkey celebrates by trash-talking one of the German men; he's startled to hear the youth reply in English. Intrigued, Malarkey doubles back and learns the man was born in Eugene, Oregon, right near where Malarkey himself was raised. The man's German father "answered the call that all true Aryans should return to the fatherland," and, as such, he's fighting on the German side. Malarkey basically reacts with an "ooh, bummer, dude" attitude, then sits down to dish Eugene and the neighborhood haunts and the hot little redheaded girl who gave out easy lovin' behind the bleachers. You know, all the important memories.

Outside the Allied encampment, a wall of dead horses oozes blood onto the muddy soil. McDowell gingerly steps around it, looking sick. Winters and Nameless Man #46 reunite. From watching this episode three times and using a very sophisticated process of elimination, which involves transcribing the credits and crossing out names, I've determined NM#46 is actually Buck Compton. Naturally, his name is never clearly used either here or in the previous hour; for the sake of easy recapping, though, I'm using it from here on out, and I apologize if this moment of clarity detracts from the giant clusterfuck that is this show. Compton seems to be ranked one notch below Winters; he's got very light, close-cropped blond hair and pale eyes, and seems pretty competent and well-liked. He reports that ninety percent of Easy is unaccounted for, including Lt. Meehan. Compton also notes that Winters will be the next Easy Company commander if Meehan remains missing. A dark-haired, muddy officer named Speirs from Dog Company stops by and relays that only twenty of his group made it through; he's the only officer who lived.

Malarkey grins up at his German-American pal in the enemy uniform, unable to believe the coincidence that they grew up within miles of each other and ended up in the same job, but on different sides of the battle lines. McDowell moseys over and shouts for Malarkey to hustle to camp; naïvely, Malarkey says, "Gotta run, see you around," and jogs toward the makeshift headquarters. As he does this, the Allied captors distribute candy and smokes to their prisoners before abruptly executing them; suddenly, Malarkey hears the rapid gunfire and whirls around, crushed. "Shit," he breathes, seeing what we don't: the corpse of his new friend. This scene has a weird greenish glow to it; like every shot, it seems like most colors were muted, but it's always a different set of colors. Sometimes red stands out, and other times, green is prominent. Still other scenes had a gold hue. This tiny color palette seems a trademark of war films' "gritty realism," but damned if I know why, because I'm fairly confident that people back then didn't see the world in monochrome.

A Major Strayer sends out word that he needs Easy Company's CO (commanding officer) to report to his area. Compton grins, "That's you, Dick," because Meehan is still missing. Winters resignedly gets up to go over there. At the same time, a depressed Malarkey plops down next to Toye and guzzles from his canteen, still startled that war apparently involves killing people in enemy uniforms, no matter what language they speak.

Winters arrives at Strayer's table, his hair perfect, with nary a strand sullied or knocked out of place. Now that's some serious hair product. Winters learns that Easy Company is needed to disable a well-armed German garrison so that the Utah segment of Normandy's beach will be safe for incoming Allied troops. Two known guns are assaulting Utah beach, so they assume the presence of two more, plus an extensive German-occupied trench extending behind the guns. Cut to Winters explaining the plan, using crude pencil sketches: attack the first gun and then systematically destroy the rest, then run a quarterback draw up the middle to set up a field goal. He names his men: Liebgott and Petty will take the first gun; Plesha and Hendrix will take the other. Donnie's in charge of the TNT, and Winters will hang out with the others and go wherever they're needed. Incidentally, he calls out the names Compton, Malarkey, Toye, and Gonorrhea,

but they raise their hands in the wrong order, so apparently everyone in the cast is as fucking puzzled as I am sometimes about who the hell everyone is. Although I've finally gotten that core group figured out, I'm thrown by the addition of Plesha and Hendrix. Sigh. Why can't this show be about my needs? Gonorrhea interrupts to ask how many Germans they estimate are manning the area, and Winters can't answer that, so Gonorrhea snorts scornfully; our newest rivalry is born. Gonorrhea now occupies Ross's old position – which, when you think about it in an altered context, also sounds like a Very Special Episode of Friends.

Winters gives Hall and a trooper called Lorraine – who mans a Jeep – permission to join the Easy Company offensive. So add them to the roster.

Easy darts quietly through a decimated cabbage patch, and Winters crawls into a rusted, blown-out vehicle so he can ogle Germans through the windshield but remain relatively protected. Counting three cannons instead of the anticipated four, he bolts to where Compton is hiding and calls over the other men. They hunker down behind spiky bushes only half-full of leaves, having approached the German Battery from behind the trench that the enemy dug to connect its three MG-42s. The plan is this: Petty and the Heartbreakers will divert German fire enough so that Compton, Gonorrhea, and Malarkey can sneak into the trenches and capture the first gun. Donnie and Ranney will hide on another side and divert German fire in that new direction if absolutely necessary; also, they'll deliver the disabling TNT as soon as Gun One is taken. Winters will, uh, "supervise." That's the beauty of being the boss.

Gunfire commences against the German trench, which immediately responds in kind. Agitated, Donnie realizes he can't see and climbs up a tree. Then, seeing no point to being there without a really kick-ass tree fort, he decides to go ahead and start shooting, sparking a real melee of metal projectiles nicking branches and scaring up a flurry of leaves and wood chips. Compton inches close to the trench with Malarkey and Gonorrhea, pantomiming his plan for them all to lob simultaneous grenades into the trench and then go for the two-point conversion. Dirt flies and explosions rock the terrain. A dying German fumbles for his gun and puts Compton in momentary jeopardy because his ammo has run out; Gonorrhea saves him by shooting the bleeding enemy. Winters surveys the situation from behind some very resilient shrubbery.

Fleeing Germans are felled by Allied bullets ripping into their backs. More soldiers have joined the Big Three in the trench; Lorraine gamely fires at a lone German but misses badly. Gonorrhea curses, calling him a Jeep jockey, and picks off the soldier with two well-placed shots. They're now deep in the German trench, which is a long tunnel that widens near where the giant guns sit and, in some cases, has sheltered areas for hiding. They're being fired upon by a gun that's pointed at the three Easy is trying to disable; evidently, this was the Germans' way of protecting the trenches from any treat encroaching from behind, but clearly it's not been terribly effective. Wynn, a.k.a. Popeye, moans to Toye that he's been shot and he screwed up and is deeply sorry. Wish we'd seen it happen.

Peeking through a shard of glass, someone spies a German winding up to pitch a grenade, and the Easy man shoots him, causing the grenade to drop just outside the trench instead of in it; it helps but still causes disruption. The explosion kicks up a shower of soil that knocks Toye atop a bleeding Popeye. Rattled, Toye emerges unscathed, and Gonorrhea shouts that he's a lucky bastard. Meanwhile, Popeye is whining in full Southern splendor: "Ah didn't mean to fuuuck uuup. Ah don't thank it's tooo baaaad," he moans with exaggerated inflection. "But ah don't know nothin' 'bout birthin' no babies!" Compton checks the festering ass wound and marvels at its beauty. Winters arrives in the trench, makes sure Popeye is okay and tells him to crawl back to safety. They heave him out of the trench.

A blast drizzles the trench with more dirt; the camera work is more frenetic now. Compton yanks out the key and is about to throw a grenade when another explosion jostles him and he drops it. Screaming for everyone to take cover, Compton flees and the grenade blows just as Toye is trying to pull himself over the trench wall. "Toye!" shrieks Compton, who runs to his fallen acquaintance. Dazed, Toye sits up – safe again – and brushes soot from his shirt. "Fucking TWICE!" he says, shakily. Now that is a bad day; it appears Toye broke a few dozen mirrors before landing in Normandy. And here I thought losing my keys six times in one day (yup, it's true) was a streak of bad luck.

German bullets are still flying, this time hitting the giant metal gun with a telltale clang. Up in his tree fort, Donnie tells Ranney that they need to hustle because Easy has captured Gun One. Winters, meanwhile, shouts over the din for Compton to take Gun Two, first with grenades

and then with follow-up gunfire. "Go!" he shouts. Compton, Toye, and Gonorrhea take off, with the former prepping a grenade that he launches toward Gun Two. Storming the trenches, they encounter a frightened German soldier begging for mercy. "Don't make dead," he stammers over and over. "Shut the fuck up!" yells a frustrated Toye, smacking him with the butt of a rifle.

This is pandemonium; I've lost track of Petty and the Heartbreakers. Back at Gun One, Winters panics because he can't fathom where Donnie is with the vital TNT; while he checks into it, Winters orders Malarkey to reload and keep up the incessant gunfire. Malarkey eyes a German corpse lying in the battlefield; he decides the "Kraut" might have a coveted Luger pistol, and his kid brother sure does want one for Christmas. The aptly named Malarkey, in a move that's a total load of it, scampers into the devastation and pats down the cadaver, only to find nothing but an air horn. Cursing, and as his comrades protest wildly, Malarkey stands up and runs right back to the trench, diving into it amid a torrent of bullets. "Stupid Mick!" screams Gonorrhea.

Winters panics because he still needs TNT, and Donnie isn't around; we then see Donnie back where he started, treating Popeye's gushing rump wound and trying to comfort the embarrassed soldier. "Think this is a ticket home?" Popeye asks, hopefully. Donnie just laughs. "You just got here!" he grins, then rallies the remaining Easy Company soldiers and makes a push toward Gun One.

Hall heard Winters's cry for TNT, and produces some from his pack. It would've been nice if he'd offered that up a bit sooner, given the apparent scarcity of dynamite, but I suppose someone has to maintain the irony of Easy Company's name. Shoving the TNT down the giant gun barrel, Hall waits for Winters to light it with a flare, and then all men take cover. The cannon is blown into uselessness. Winters commands Hall and Malarkey to defend the area further while he checks up on Compton & Co. at Gun Two. The camera gives us a frontal of Winters's run through the trench, bouncy and jerky and somewhat dizzying to watch. When he catches up with Compton, the duo holes up in the crude trench shelter and watches the Germans; apparently, Easy Company has them so confused that they're firing on their own men, who still operate Gun Three. Compton grins, and they agree to let the Germans destroy each other while they catch up on the whereabouts of their men.

Meanwhile, Hall bolts through the trenches and disappears from sight when an explosion rocks his portion of the trench.

Donnie crawls across the field on his stomach. Liebgott – trust me on this one – suddenly balks and sits up, anxious to turn around and head back to the battalion. As Donnie tries to talk him down, a bullet zips through Liebgott's helmet and fells him. Donnie cocks his head and stares curiously at the corpse of his former colleague, as if to say, "That'll sting tomorrow." Finally, he arrives at Gun One triumphantly waving TNT – only to learn it's not needed anymore.

Running through the Gun Two trench, Winters screeches to a halt when he stumbles over Hall's body. His left cheek torn, cuts and scars slicing his features, Hall looks gruesome, but his eyes are wide open and clear. The breath rushes out of Winters for a split second, and Damian Lewis does an admirable job of conveying his stoic character's obvious distress, yet his keen awareness that he can't dwell on it until the objective is achieved. Abruptly, he shakes it off long enough to spy a map in the sheltered area and pocket the information.

Suddenly, reinforcements arrive from Dog Company, led by Lt. Speirs, who boldly asks for a chance to pop over to Gun Three and have a quick slay-and-capture. Winters and Compton wave him on just as Donnie arrives, panting and apologizing for his delay in getting to and through the trenches, now littered with bodies and debris. Brandishing the TNT once more, he's chagrined to see that Gun Two has also already been reduced to a hollow, smoking mess. Meanwhile, Compton watches and shakes his head as Lt. Speirs executes a sloppy attack on Gun Three, getting most of his Company killed but safely making it to the gun himself, and disabling it.

Or, we presume he does; suddenly, Winters is dashing through the trenches screaming for the men to move out and return to their original positions. As men pour over the walls and out of the trenches, Winters orders his soldiers back to the battalion. The group flees the scene amid a storm of gunfire; slowly, the noises of war diminish.

Corporal Strayer somberly walks beside Winters through the encampment, where wounded warriors meet up with their buddies and attempt treatment of their battle scars. The final tally, Winters reports, was that they killed roughly twenty German soldiers manning three MG-42s; he guesses forty remain, and predicts artillery would cleanly annihilate the Battery. Popeye passes on a stretcher, and Winters waves without smiling. The men stop short when a procession of

tanks and armored vehicles arrives, with none other than Nixon riding on the lip of a tank. "Going my way?" he asks. Winters looks relieved, and compliments Nixon on his sweet ride; the tank takes off with Winters riding shotgun, leaving behind a dirt road bathed in blood.

Through voice-over, Winters relays that the German garrison was secured shortly thereafter, and Allied men and material were being directed to various inland operations centers. But with most of the 101st Airborne still scattered across Normandy, "success [is] far from certain," Winters says. The troops are given one hour to madly scour village streets for food and supplies before moving south to secure another town.

Gonorrhea & The Gang hide out in the back of a truck, cooking what they can and warming their limbs. Malarkey is manning the mini-bonfire. Winters spots Gonorrhea peeking out of the flaps covering their little kitchen, and strolls over to investigate. "Evening," he says, pleasantly. "Something die in here?" Now, I understand the concept of graveyard humor, but isn't that just a trifle inappropriate given that half the company got wiped out that day? It's sort of like walking into an Overeaters Anonymous meeting and saying, "Is anyone else here craving a Whopper Meal?" Compton quietly asks whether Meehan has been located; Winters exhales slowly and shakes his head regretfully. Gonorrhea somberly notes that, because Meehan is still missing, Winters is the acting CO (whereas before he was the executive officer –the XO) of Easy Company. The news doesn't please Winters, who obviously agrees that it takes a sick bastard to relish a promotion coming under such horrendous circumstances. And speaking of sick bastards, Gonorrhea nods appraisingly at Winters's still-soiled face and hands. Winters reaches for the roving liquor bottle, much to the shock of everyone. "It's been a day of firsts, don't you think?" Winters smiles tiredly, lifting the bottle to his lips. Gonorrhea nods with kindling respect, then takes the booze and takes a pull himself before passing it down the line. "Oh, and Sergeant?" Winters calls to Gonorrhea as he walks away. "I'm not a Quaker." Pause. "He's probably a Mennonite," Gonorrhea reasons. Everyone laughs, because intolerance is truly hilarious and we all need a bit more merry prejudice in our lives.

Nixon spots Winters pacing through camp, and hails him. Apparently, the plans Winters pocketed from the German garrison depict the location of "every Kraut gun in Normandy." Winters is silent and, when pressed, admits his reticence stems from shock at losing a man in combat. "John Hall, a New Yorker," Winters says. War Is Hell Platitude, coming right up: "A good man... 'Man.' He wasn't even old enough to buy a beer," Winters broods, handing off his can of food to Nixon and claiming a lack of appetite. As they part, a worried Nixon attempts to soothe Winters's psychological wounds. "I sent that map up to Division," he says. "I think it's going to do some good." Winters barely nods, then turns and walks into solitude.

Spielberg dips into his "Stirring" CD collection again, this time to frame Winters's lonely walk uphill. Removing his hat, Winters stares at the distant fires of war raging in other parts of the country, casting an orange glow on his stolid face. "It took time to thank God for seeing me through that Day of Days, and I prayed I'd make it through D-plus-one," he narrates. "And if somehow I managed to make it home again, I promised God and myself that I would find a quiet piece of land somewhere and spend the rest of my life in peace." Oh, wow, it is way early in the series for our protagonist to be disillusioned with the brutality inherent in war. This could be a really long eight weeks of introspective voice-overs. Still, secure in his sound bite, certain he's satisfactorily realized that War Isn't Fun, Winters turns and walks away, donning his hat once more and ready to rejoin life as a soldier.

Finally, we learn that Bronze Stars were awarded to Hendrix, Malarkey, Plesha, Toye, Petty, Lipton, Ranney, and "Popeye" Wynn. Silver Stars went to Buck Compton, Bill "Gonorrhea" Guarnere, and Lorraine the Jeep Jockey. Finally, Winters got the Distinguished Service Cross, and so finely done was their ambush that West Point still teaches it as a textbook example of assault on a fixed position.

Carentan

Season 1

Episode Number: 3

Season Episode: 3

Originally aired: Sunday September 16, 2001
Writer: E. Max Frye
Director: Mikael Salomon
Show Stars: Michael Cudlitz (Denver 'Bull' Randleman), Ron Livingston (Capt. Lewis Nixon), Scott Grimes (T/Sgt. Donald Malarkey), Donnie Wahlberg (2nd Lt. C. Carwood Lipton), Neal McDonough (1st Lt. Lynn "Buck" Compton), Ross McCall (Joseph D Liebgott), Frank John Hughes (S/Sgt. William "Wild Bill" Guarnere), Rick Gomez (George Luz), Kirk Acevedo (SSgt. Joseph Toye), James Madio (Frank J Perconte), Richard Speight Jr. (Warren 'Skip' Muck), Dale Dye (Colonel Robert Sink), Damian Lewis (Richard D. Winters), Dexter Fletcher (John), Shane Taylor (Eugene G 'doc' Roe), Phil McKee (Major Robert L Strayer), Tom Hardy (Pfc. John Janovec), Matthew Settle (Capt. Ronald Spiers), Philip Barantini (Wayne 'skinny' Sisk), James McAvoy (Pvt. James Miller), Rick Warden (II) (1st Lt. Harry Welsh), Matthew Leitch (Floyd 'Tab' Talbert), Nolan Hemmings (Charles 'Chuck' Grant), Nicholas Aaron (Robert E 'popeye' Wynn), Peter Youngblood Hills (Darrell C 'shifty' Powers), Robin Laing (Edward J 'babe' Heffron), Mark Huberman (Pvt. Lester 'Leo' Hashey), Peter McCabe (IV) (Cpl Donald Hoobler)

Guest Stars: Marc Warren (Pvt. Albert Blithe), Ezra Godden (Robert Van Klinken), Adam James (Cleveland O. Petty), Bart Ruspoli (Edward J. Tipper), Iain Robertson (George Smith), Nigel Hoyle (Leo D. Boyle), Stephen Walters (John McGrath), Doug Cockle (Fr. Maloney), Diana Kent (Mrs. Lamb), Scott Rognlein (Trooper - F Company), Paul Murphy (Young GI), Richard Lynson (Officer in Hospital), Freddie Joe Farnsworth (Trooper on white horse)

Summary: Easy Company are sent to liberate the French village of Carentan, where they lose several men in heavy fighting. Rumors start to circulate that Lt. Speirs killed a group of German prisoners of war. The episode focuses on Private Albert Blithe, who struggles with shell-shock following the battle. After he is finally spurred on and into action by Winters during a German counterattack, Blithe overcomes his fears but days later gets shot in the neck by a German sniper after volunteering to be lead scout in a patrol.

Veteran interviews. This week, the gang waxes reflective about fear. One man recalls being certain he'd die on D-Day. Another says his mind worked in extremes: he'd either die right away or escape unscathed from the whole thing. "I think everyone had fear," muses a third. "There's people that can handle fear....I was just as scared as anyone else, except I could think." A fourth gent relates being frightened he would somehow let down his regiment and comrades. "We all had fear, but we all had training to...try to handle fear...and work to accomplish what you're supposed to be doing," concludes a fourth man. This episode is brought to you by the letters F, E, A, and R, and by the number eighty-three, symbolizing the number of people who go nameless.

June 8, 1944, in Normandy, France. The blue sky is dotted with clouds, including one dark, stormy one and one white rabbit. No, a palm tree. No! It's a Volvo, with a kitten inside. A dirty U.S. soldier stands in a field, perfectly still, staring up at the sky as though he's not sure how

in tarnation Fluffy learned to drive. Three other men cautiously approach from behind, deciding the bewildered soldier "looks like what's-his-name," and in that brief moment I feel complete kinship with their deductive reasoning, because to me, three quarters of the cast looks just like "what's-his-name" and "that one guy" and "Khaki McBaggypants." One man gently calls, "Blithe!" But young Blithe keeps staring at the sky, looking like a six-year-old lost in Wal-Mart. The group repeats his name three times before a vacant-eyed Blithe turns around, puts on his big-boy helmet, and wanders toward them in a daze. "Thought that was you," smiles Pvt. Who. "You alone?" Blithe processes this and finally nods slower than a particularly clumsy snail. "You're the first familiar faces I've seen," he breathes. Pvt. Huh says it's not surprising, given that the entire division is scattered all over the peninsula. "We've been fighting with the 502nd" regiment, Huh explains. Blithe, as if to excuse his lack of participation, stammers that he's just been trying to locate Easy Company. "Join the club," Who says. Blithe dons his gun's shoulder-strap, stares once more at the sky to check on Fluffy – who now seems to be riding a llama – and then follows his three comrades into the forest.



An Easy platoon is huddled around a monument, trying to relax. Blithe & The Gang appear. "Look who decided to show up!" Easy's soldiers tease. Liebgott shows off a Nazi flag he stole, nodding proudly at his souvenir. Blithe silently walks through the group and off-camera, while a Sgt. Talbert flashes the funky German poncho he lifted from one of the dead. "My Luger's gonna put you all to shame, when I get it," says someone who isn't Malarkey. So we have two men competing for a Luger. It's a Luger contest. A

loogie contest. Ha! The ten-year-old in me is very happy right now.

Blithe plops down next to Perconte, who cheerfully asks how his jump went. "Missed the DZ," Blithe says, referring to the drop zone, in which Easy was supposed to land and find all its members easily and, ideally, intact. But on D-Day, the anti-aircraft fire was so intense that soldiers jumped prematurely or tardily and got separated, scattered to the winds and deposited in odd parts of Normandy. As such, Perconte replies, "That goes without saying," but shoots the emotionless Blithe a look that says, "That's not the only zone he's missing." Trying to perk up the quiet private, Perconte says, "Got any souvenirs to trade?" He pulls up his sleeve to reveal a left arm adorned with five wristwatches. "Still ticking, not like their previous owners," Perconte says jovially. Blithe murmurs that he hasn't pocketed any graft, then asks whether Easy has lost anyone. Perconte's pal, Pvt. NoNametag, chips in that "Burgess took one in the face; Popeye Wynn got picked in the be-hind, but they'll be okay." Blithe monotones that he's glad to hear it. When asked whether he ran into Lt. Meehan, the missing Easy Company CO, Blithe allows a flicker of a reaction – he's shocked, shakes his head, and asks who's in charge now that Meehan is MIA. NoNametag says Winters is acting CO, with Lt. Harry Welsh running Winters's old platoon.

At that moment, Welsh bellows for his platoon to gather, because Easy is moving out immediately. "It'll be dark soon," he shares. "I want light-and-noise discipline from now on. No talking, no smoking, and no..." and here, I swear he says, "No playing grab-the-fanny with the man in front of you, Luz." That sounds like a pretty great party game, sort of the sexual version of "pin the tail on the donkey." But it's possible Welsh said something about not snagging graft; it was hard to tell. The plan is to take the French village of Carentan. The infantry that landed on Utah and Omaha beaches need a way to link up and proceed as a united front, and Carentan is the most convenient way to connect the dots. "If we fail, the army's stuck on the sands," Welsh intones. "General Taylor is sending the whole division." The chap named Luz, imp that he is, grins and imitates the good General when he says, "Just give me three days and three nights of hard fighting, and you will be relieved!" Everyone laughs. A skinny Spike Jonze type named Hoobler volunteers to be the lead scout; Welsh welcomes Blithe and then orders 1st Platoon to lead the way and says the other two will follow. "Remember, boys," Luz imitates Gen. Taylor. "Flies spread disease...so keep yours closed!" The platoon cracks up again, but Blithe maintains his nervous and cheerless disposition, with a new fear of plagues in his privates.

Easy Company trudges through a body of water, surrounded by blazing wreckage and dead bodies. Gunshots are so occasional that they sound like firecrackers. A royal-blue darkness has settled; the red flames and blue sky almost look patriotic. Perconte passes a dead German whose arm is aloft from rigor mortis, and he removes the man's watch with a thief's finesse. "Don't wake Jerry," someone cackles. Blithe stares at the cadaver's now-naked wrist and looks very sad. Blithe and his inappropriate name, if this blow to my noggin is to be believed, personifies this week's theme of "fear." Sesame Street would be so proud of this show.

Hoobler stops in his tracks and announces that Fox Company has disappeared. "Again?" complains Welsh, who walks away. "We lost Fox Company," Hoobler tells Perconte. "Again?" Perconte sighs. He turns around to send the information down the line, but Welsh appears first and sends him to get Winters, while Blithe and Hoobler run ahead to find Fox. We cut away to a Soldiers In Silhouette shot, then back to Welsh, who smokes vigorously as Winters approaches. Winters is tasty. It's nice to see him. Welsh says he's got men out there looking. Nixon trots over and says, "Why are we stopped?" Sighing with irritation, Winters says, "This is about officers crapping out on their training, Nix." And the book confirms this. Fox neglected to move at a pace that ensured Easy remained within; for example, Fox would be so eager to move along that, when its men cleared difficult areas of the trek, the entire company would zoom forward and forget to wait for the other companies to clear those same obstacles. Impatient, Winters suggests they just keep going, and Welsh slaps a mosquito on his neck.

Blithe and Hoobler trudge through the brush, panting and smacking bugs. Blithe fights mosquitoes with more zeal than he's put into fighting Germans. After a moment of panic, the duo hears the flash/thunder signal and realizes a nearby cracking twig was under the boot of a Fox Company soldier. "Where you all been?" FoxMan asks. He looks incredibly stupid...stupid like a fox! No, actually, he does look thick as four planks and half as personable. Blithe starts back to tell Easy that Fox has been located. He turns and meanders slowly toward Easy, but freezes when he catches sight of a helmet hiding behind a tree. The hat sits atop the head of a stationary German soldier half-hidden against a tree trunk. Clumsily fumbling for his gun, Blithe trembles ferociously, an earthquake on legs. "He's dead, Private," Winters's voice says, shortly before he appears in body. "Did you find Fox Company?" Blithe nods. "I...thought he...had me," stammers Blithe, sweating almost as many bullets as the Germans fired on D-Day. And if there's one thing Blithe needs, it's more friction for his fraying nerves. The German corpse looks like a papier-mâché man, although he's got a funky gleaming eyeball that's admittedly extremely creepy. He died upright and stiffened that way. Incidentally, that very statement could somehow explain a lot about Hugh Hefner's continued and busy sex life. Nixon appears in Winters's wake, as has become his custom, and identifies the German as an enemy paratrooper. "Division thinks there's a regiment of them holding Carentan," Nixon says. "There's one less to worry about," Winters deadpans. Blithe doesn't seem to appreciate that too much, but then again, Blithe's sense of humor is getting a good night's sleep in a bunk bed back in England. Nixon sees some Edelweiss on the dead man's lapel, and says it only grows in the Alps above the tree line – meaning the guy climbed up there to pick it himself, which I suppose means he's resilient and had a good, solid pair of hiking boots. "It's supposed to be the mark of a true soldier," Nixon says. The eye of the German glints as we fade to black.

D-Plus-Six. Carentan, France. The camera finds an old, deserted building, which a sign proclaims is the Café de Normandie. It's at the end of the only road into Carentan, and looks utterly lifeless and quiet. In other words, its sign might as well read, "Get Shot Here." Easy Company scouts the situation from behind a hill. "Why don't you take the 1st straight up the middle, hard and fast," Winters tells Welsh, who can't help being excited by all the double-meaning in the air. "We have to move quickly. I'll be right behind you with 2nd and 3rd," Winters instructs. He waits a few beats, looks at his watch, then wildly gestures and screams, "Go, go, go!" Welsh and his platoon do, in fact, race right up the Road to Certain Death. Bullets shower the area almost immediately, mostly coming from the machine guns now poking out of the Café du Fatality windows. Most of Easy dives down onto the grass lining both sides of the road, but a few men made it into Carentan and take shelter against the side of an abandoned building. "Where the fuck is everybody?" Pvt. Whoever screams at his partner, Luz. "Where did everybody go?" Luz has no idea, but leans around the corner to shoot at a few windows.

The fire is ceaseless, unrelenting. Easy cowers in the trenches and fires benign bullets back toward Café du Fatality, but Lt. Winters is upset because a handful of Easy men were stranded

in Carentan and would surely be killed unless the rest of the company got up and charged the town. Winters runs around yelling for the men to get off the ground and run into town, stopping to literally kick the asses of a few men who haven't risen. The diversion he created by doing that helped confuse the Germans enough to get Easy into town, but the show does a poor job of communicating all this. The sequence is too quick and lacks clarity.

As Easy runs into town, men drop from gunshot wounds while others scurry through the streets and duck into buildings. Donnie, bless him, picks off a few enemy soldiers. Someone else gets shot in the back. Shelling commences, as do the snipers. Begging for covering fire from Luz, Donnie bolts to a grim-looking building and lobs a grenade inside, then ducks. It explodes, presumably wiping out anyone lurking inside. Bullets fell several more men. A guy named Shifty is instructed to shoot out each pane of a giant window; while he does it, Tipper and Liebgott – ride, sweet Liebgott! – bounce between buildings trying to clear them for U.S. use. Rubble and bodies start to litter the streets, and the noise of fire is neverending. Luz and Hoobler count off and then burst into a building with guns raised, only to find a terrified family huddled in the corner.

Donnie runs up some stairs and blasts open a building, then turns in time to witness a huge explosion a few streets over, debris shooting up far beyond the roofline. He's alarmed. "They got us zeroed! Spread out!" he screams to the men in the streets. "Get the hell out of there! Get out of the street!" More severe explosions are rocking the village now; Blithe, last in a line, stops when he hears one and ducks back into a corner, tearfully sagging to the ground. Soldiers carry wounded men on their own backs, risking their safety just to get the injured men under cover. Now, I can't begin to comprehend the depth of Blithe's terror, but I can't sympathize with him when other equally young men are swallowing their own fear so grandly. And I feel a bit sorry for the real Blithe's family, because much of this isn't in the book and I wonder if Blithe was as big a wuss as he appears here. The TV Blithe is so wimpy, he'd be afraid of a couch cushion.

Pvt. Notinthebook runs through the streets as a shell hits and spins his body into the air, ripping off his left leg below the knee. He lies in the street moaning, and I can damn well see why. His comrade hauls him to safety while barking for a medic.

Donnie stands in the road waving officers to secured locations. He doesn't see a German weapon off to the side; the enemy loads it and blasts the area in which Donnie stands. The impact launches Donnie several feet away and back against a wall, where he lies breathless and bloodied. "Hang in there, buddy," Talbert tells him. Donnie shakily looks down at his crotch, where oozing blood is pooling in his pants. Talbert follows Donnie's gaze and understands, reaching down to rip open Donnie's pants and check his crotch. "Everything's right where it should be," Talbert shouts to Donnie, who heaves a pained sigh and relaxes a tad, relieved that all the Wahlberg Family Jewels are intact and ready for his cameo as Dirk Diggler's cousin in *Boogie Nights 2: Revenge of the Shaken Groove Thang*.

Liebgott and Tipper run into the Pharmacie, shooting a few rooms and an outhouse before deeming the area safe. Liebgott leaves, but Tipper gets caught in a hellacious blast. In a pretty cool effect, all the sound we hear for the next few seconds is muted, heard as the wounded man's injured, half-deaf ears would hear it. The smoke clears to show us a stunned Liebgott staring brokenly at his friend. A few other men stop running and stare. "Looking good, looking real good," an obviously scared Liebgott says, trying to be reassuring. He sits down next to Tipper, who is trembling, and hugs him. Blood is leaking from Tipper's cheek, his left eye is bloodied and could well be a goner, his entire face is red and scarred and there's a gaping chunk missing from his upper right thigh. Both legs are shattered. Liebgott cradles Tipper and whispers, "Hang in there, buddy. We're gonna get you fixed up." Aw. Liebgott went from being dead in one recap to being my gentle hero in this one.

Elsewhere, the onslaught hasn't abated. As bullets smack the land around him, a minister gives extreme unction to dying men felled on the street. Hoobler is amazed and calls it to Malarkey's attention. "Crazy fools, the Irish," Hoobler says. "You should know." But he's clearly touched.

Upstairs in a captured building, a private named Smokey pokes his gun out of an upstairs window and shoots retreating Germans. Almost all of them go down, tipping into lakes or pitching headfirst onto the grassy knoll. Somehow, amid the carnage, Easy ran out the enemy and claimed Carentan for the Allies. I'm not sure how or where this happened, because it looked like a complete shellacking the whole time, but who am I to argue with history? To have achieved

this, they're incredibly brave, probably a little crazy, and damn fine soldiers. Go Easy! Have a slice of provolone on your irony sandwiches!

Winters strolls the street as a white horse approaches. "I'm Sgt. Farnsworth from Able, 501st. I'm here to tell you we got it clear from here all the way to the north of them Krauts, sir," the excited officer says. Winters proudly notes that 506th regiment cleared the southern positions. The Lone Ranger rears his stallion and departs. "Lieutenant Winters! Is it safe to cross now?" a rotund man asks. "We want to move the wounded." Winters half-giggles and swaps amused looks with Nixon, who always seems to be around but never seems to do much except swap amused looks with people. Suddenly, a stray bullet ricochets into Winters's leg; pissed, he limps off-screen and curses his bad luck.

A medic lifts the flattened bullet from just underneath Winters's shin skin. Buck Compton struts in, all swagger and suavity, and grins at Winters. "You gonna be able to stay off it?" he asks, every syllable wrapped in doubt. "Doesn't look that way," Winters sighs. He tells Compton they should expect a counterattack, because Carentan is important to the Germans precisely because the Allies want it so badly. Easy won't be in the village to fight, though, because the battalion wants to head east toward high ground, setting up a defensive position there that blocks the Germans' only point of passage. Compton leaves, having been the Exposition Enabler for plenty long enough. He and his manly gait are needed elsewhere, wherever testosterone is low and chests aren't hairy.

"What's wrong with Blithe?" Winters asks curiously, spotting the private slumped in a corner staring into space. "He can't see," the medic replies, sounding remarkably unconcerned. "So he says." Winters chews on this, then gets up and moseys over to where Blithe sits. "Blithe? It's Lieutenant Winters. What happened?" our hero asks. Blithe is on the verge of tears. "Things, they just kinda went black on me," he whines. Winters waves his hand around to establish that Blithe really can't seem to see a thing. "Take it easy. You're okay, son," Winters smiles sympathetically. "We'll get you outta here and get you back to England." Blithe closes his eyes and fights his rising sobs. "Sir, I didn't want to let anyone down," he chokes. Winters repeats his soothing words and pats Blithe on the arm. Goodness flows freely from every pore on Winters's body, so of course his touch cures Blithe's blindness, and possibly his chronic bacne. "Sir," he says, slowly turning his head toward the lieutenant. "Thank you, sir. I'm okay. I'm okay." Blithe still isn't able to focus completely, but at least he's got sight. "I don't know what happened, but I think I'm okay." His tears dried a trail on his cheeks, which glints in the light as Blithe ambles like a zombie past Winters and over to a rest area. Winters cocks his head a bit and looks pensively after Blithe. You know, it's really decent of Winters to be so caring to this guy, whose hysteria led to the hysterical blindness that could've cost Easy a few more lives. But at this point, as a viewer, it's also refreshing to see abject fear on someone's face, because that's exactly what I'd feel.

In Carentan, the troops relax before the inevitable move deeper into France. Hoobler sucks on a tube of German cheese, grimacing and pronouncing it stinky. Pvt. Whozit bitches that the bread is also stale. "Don't seem like Jerry's got too much fight left," he says. Malarkey says, "Well, don't get hit in the face when Jerry throws in the sponge, okay?" Whozit swears they'll be in Berlin by Christmas. Tall, dark and creepy Lt. Speirs – the Dog Company CO – strolls over and intones that they should enjoy the leisure while it lasts; they're all moving out soon. Someone makes a flip remark that wins a poisonous glare from Deputy Dog (tm Ajax, I think) as he walks away.

Once the man's out of earshot, the soldiers dish divine dirt on devilish Deputy Dog, apparently my latest instrument of alliteration. On D-Day, when Malarkey befriended the German-American from Oregon who was then executed off-camera by a mystery person, rumors swirled that Deputy Dog was the one who killed that group. Hoobler claims Deputy Dog posed the men – offered them cigarettes and a light, then shot them in cold blood while they smoked. We see a black-and-white flashback of it; then back to real time. "I heard he didn't do it," Whozit says. Now we see flashbacks of uniform-clad knees being shot, bodies falling like dominoes and Deputy Dog coldly watching one of his underlings shoot the unarmed prisoners. "No, no, no, it was him all right, but it was more than eight guys. It was more like twenty," a third guy chips in, and finally we see Deputy Dog blowing away a horde of Germans. "All except one guy, who he left alone." That man stands trembling, his cigarette burned so low it's aflame between his fingers. Wow. Deputy Dog is a legend of evil, an epic boil festering on Satan's left nostril. In other words, he's Jewel.

Whozit finally says he heard that Deputy Dog took the last MG at the German garrison by

himself. "I saw that," Malarkey says, shaking his head in something akin to disbelief and grudging respect. Whozit says that's all he needs to know; the nasty stuff be damned. One of the men asks Blithe what he thinks of all this. Blithe is too busy being nervous to think. He looks like he's just been asked to dissect his own foot. "I don't know. I'm gonna have to take everyone's word for it. I didn't see any of it," he says quietly.

Welsh shows up in the distance and shouts that the 1st Platoon is moving out. Blithe is slow to rise.

Easy tromps through a lush green field, Perconte and Luz leading the way and clearly tired, frustrated, and ignorant of a battle plan. They just know to keep walking "until they tell us to stop," in Luz's words. Perconte is hitting his boiling point. "Why is Easy Company the only company who's at the front of an advance, or like now, exposed at the far edge of the line?" he snaps. Hoobler groans that it's just to keep them on their toes. "That's not what I'm saying," argues Perconte. "We're never in the middle, and we're the fifth of nine companies in this regiment – Able through Item. Think of it." Sounds like Easy's own performance record precedes it, pushing it into greater peril. That's the hazard of being the best. I should know, based on my own history of excellence in the ferocious world of sixth-grade Vocabulary Baseball. It wasn't pretty.

Perconte can't finish his thought, though, because the Germans punctuate it for him. Gunfire knocks Easy to the ground, and the men scramble to put up some kind of defense until they can get behind a hedgerow. A few of the guys don't make it that far; Blithe, panting, slides into safety and seems to hide in terror while his comrades return the fire. Fade to black.

Distinct sounds of booze-sodden carousing float across the battlefield. Blithe and Sgt. Martin huddle in their foxhole. "What have they got to sing about?" Martin bitches. Blithe continues his signature silent staring, and I must say the actor's doing a good job holding the shell-shocked façade for so long. Maybe Spielberg just scared the leg hair off him by forcing him to star in some self-reverential auto-biopic Steven Spielberg: *The E.T. Within*. Martin raises his gun and whispers, "Flash!" just as Welsh slides down to join them. He grins. "Thunder," Welsh answers with a mischievous smile. "Catchy tune, ain't it?" Martin looks pissed at being alarmed by this goof, then begs for relief so he can empty his bladder. Welsh demands he be quick about it so Blithe can get some shut-eye. Then Welsh snuggles down inside the pit with his private, and I swear that actor can't smile without looking like he wants to lick the pants off whoever he's with. "How ya doin', Blithe?" he booms. Blithe is okay, but tonight's not a good night for him – he's got a headache, see, and he has to get up real early tomorrow. Welsh enquires about Blithe's eyesight; Blithe assures him the hysterical blindness is past him, but he's less than convincing. There's some stupidity about a canteen. "It's a game, Blithe, that's all," Welsh says. "What is?" Blithe asks. Hmm. In addition to being nervous and humorless, Blithe also appears to be far from the sharpest bayonet in the arms chest. "The whole thing," Welsh smiles cheerfully. "Just a game." And that's how you comfort a soldier who's grappling with the reality of how many human lives are at stake, and how tenuous his grip on his own livelihood really is – just tell the guy it's all a joke, some vicious game of pretend. That'll soothe his soul.

Winters breaks the mood by calling for Welsh, who vacates his spot. Blithe promptly spits on it, but he doesn't look motivated by spite. He might've just needed to rid himself of water. But it cracked me up, regardless. It's odd, disrespectful yet funny, and gross, because Martin's going to come back and park his ass right on top of Blithe's loogie, and that will be so soothing.

"The Germans only left one company to defend Carentan," Winters whispers as he walks with Welsh. "The rest pulled out last night." Welsh curses that he knew the enemy ceded Carentan too easily. Who is he kidding? Christina Aguilera is easy. That last joke was, in fact, easy. But bodies piled up, blood gushed, and one man's leg flying through the air...that shit's at least on the intermediate level. Winters says the enemy troops regrouped south of Carentan and may have been doubling back for the counterattack when Easy ran smack into them. As he dishes strategy, Welsh shoots affectionate glances at Winters. I think we're rapidly approaching naughty time. "They want the town back, and we're in their way," Winters concludes. "If they don't come before then, we're attacking [at] first light at 0530."

Official business complete, Welsh now regards Winters with interest. "Not much of a limp," he says, his gaze slithering down to Winters's leg. "I'll survive," Winters replies blithely. "How is it?" persists Welsh, who honestly looks like he'd suck the hurt from his shin if Winters let him. And to head off some of the hate mail, no, I'm not claming the real Welsh felt this way – just that this actor makes it look like Welsh is really, really horny. Winters looks exasperated. "Hurts," he

says, amused but also annoyed that someone's asking him to admit he has a weakness. Welsh smiles. "War is hell," he says cheerfully, disappearing toward the foxholes.

A guy named Smith snoozes in his hole. Creeping up to him, Talbert – clad in his stolen German poncho – taps Smith's helmet with his gun and whispers, "Come on, Smith, get up, it's your watch!" Smith slowly rouses himself, then looks up at the source of the noise and sees only a shadowy figure wearing enemy garb and holding a pistol. Smith freaks, grabs his bayonet, and pokes the man twice in the belly. Talbert screams. Liebgott, completely alive (yay!) and bent on helping the wounded, restrains Smith. "What the hell are you doing?" Liebgott yells. "That's Talbert!" Smith finally clears the fog from his brain and stares at the wounded Talbert's face, his own now awash with horror. He sputters apologies. "He looked like a Kraut!" Smith insists. A medic comes to the aid of the not-fatally-hurt Talbert.

In his hole, Blithe is rigid, unmoving, barely able to breathe because of his fear. Martin stirs when he hears a strange noise coming from one of their platoon's foxholes. Blithe goes to check it out, because he can't sleep. "Flash," a voice calls out. "Thunder," answers a startled Blithe. From the bushes emerges Deputy Dog. "Where you going, Private?" he asks. Blithe answers that he heard the ruckus and went to investigate it. The Dog coolly blocks him, saying he just came from there and it's completely under control; he then complains about the nervous privates in Easy Company. "They just don't see how simple it is," he says mechanically. "Just do what you have to do." Blithe says, "Like you did on D-Day, sir?" I'm not sure if he's referring to the capture of the gun at the German battery, or the alleged massacre of German prisoners. If it's the latter, then Blithe is a ballsier mofo than I ever thought. Deputy Dog turns around, curious. "Lieutenant, when I landed on D-Day, I found myself in a ditch all by myself," Blithe begins, choking back tears. "I fell asleep. I think it was the airsickness pills they gave us. When I woke up I didn't really try to find my unit to fight. I just kinda stayed put." Blithe actually got my heartstrings on that one, delivering the speech like a toddler tugging on mommy's skirt pleading for her to kiss it better. I can't imagine a lonelier feeling than being dropped onto Normandy amid hellish, unrelenting enemy fire, only to land and be completely alone in the war zone, no one there to rein in a wild imagination or soothe a petrified spirit. The actor looks appropriately tortured by his experience, confused as to where his courage went, and his eyes beg for Deputy Dog to explain it and make it better. Deputy Dog kneels, meets Blithe's gaze with a look of steel, and says, "You know why you hid in that ditch, Blithe?" The private tearfully whispers, "I was scared!" He looks relieved to admit it. "We're all scared," the Dog replies, evenly and with a trace of menace. "You hid in that ditch because you think there's still hope. But Blithe, the only hope you have is to accept the fact that you're already dead. And the sooner you accept that, the sooner you will be able to function the way a soldier is supposed to function – without mercy, without compassion, without remorse. All war depends on it." I realize each man out there needed to become hardened so he kept his wits about him during the war, unlike Blithe. But Deputy Dog's view is truly that of a hollowed-out soul. I pray today's soldiers don't agree, because to abandon compassion and brush off the atrocities of war – to eschew human emotion – is to emulate the callous brutality of the people who bankrolled, conceived, and executed the recent terror attacks. Blithe and I both get goosebumps, because that's what happens when you're in the presence of the Dark Lord, if you've somehow avoided catching fire.

On D-Day-Plus-Seven, the men are still holed up in the outskirts of Carentan. Welsh talks to the staff sergeants, outlining the upcoming plan of attack. They're unsure of the strength of the forces opposing them here, but suspect they're weaker and probably paratroopers – meaning no tanks or heavy artillery. Dog and Fox companies will protect Easy's left flank. Just as Welsh concludes the meeting by saying, "Let's make them holler," the sound of a fired mortar shell cuts the air. "Mortar!" someone screams as everyone dives for cover.

The shell hits as Easy's men line up with their guns to launch a counter-offensive. Winters barks orders to the men, but he's even gentle about that. Luz pulls a fallen Easy trooper into the foxholes, while Welsh announces there's no sign of the Allied Infantry yet. "Watch the horizon!" Winters yells. Blithe, slumped in his hole, twitches and looks absolutely afraid. Winters establishes a base of fire along the line of the hedgerow, which will ideally help to protect any men who have to creep into the battlefield with heavier weaponry. Gonorrhea and Perconte are both instructed to make their cluster of men fire in certain directions. More mortar shells fly as debris showers Blithe's pit. Holding his arms in front of his face, Blithe shrieks, "No, no!" and holds his ears to best drown out the sounds of war. His screams of terror intensify. Is it wrong that

I'm rolling my eyes at this? I'm growing weary of Blithe again – at least he's along the hedgerow; some of his comrades are in far more dangerous positions. Like Malarkey and a few of his men, who are shown huddled behind a hill, firing what I think are mortar shells at the German side.

Suddenly, tanks appear on the horizon – but not Allied Sherman tanks. These are German weapons, and Welsh is appropriately freaked. Immediately, Dog and Fox pull back and leave Easy alone in the line of fire, which infuriates Easy's officers. No one knows who gave the order to retreat, the implication being that no one did and someone bolted out of cowardice. Blithe would've been a better fit in one of those companies. (The book claims that Fox retreated without authorization and its CO got fired on the spot; Dog withdrew because it was too exposed after Fox quit.)

Winters notices Blithe hiding and totally wins me over by being encouraging, not angry. Winters is warm. Wow, so that's Winters, Blithe, Easy Company...man, how is it that a non-fiction show gets to ooze with so much irony? It's a bit sick. "Get on your feet, soldier! That's right, Blithe, you can do it!" Winters shouts with a smile. "Fire your weapon, Blithe, get those goddamn Germans!" His hands trembling, his brow furrowed and sweat beading on his face, Blithe gingerly pulls the trigger, then again, and again, and finally he's in a rhythm. Slowly he's fiercer, more in control. "Let them have it, Blithe!" Winters cheers him. Stunned at his own strength, Blithe quickly reloads and starts shooting off another round.

Someone's finger is shot off. The tanks creep closer to Easy's hedgerow; for its part, Easy is holding ground and praying that the infantry shows up to provide relief. Welsh and a Pvt. McGrath lug a bazooka out into the field. "You're gonna get me killed, Lieutenant!" McGrath yells, shaking his head. "I knew you'd get me killed!" Welsh loads the gun as McGrath aims it; they're going to try to hit the tank just as it comes over the hill's crest. Across the field, two other men toting a bazooka get blasted back to the hedgerow by tank fire. An encouraging omen. As Winters screams for covering fire, Welsh gives the order to fire and McGrath hits the tank with a blast right to its front. Score! U.S.A.! U.S.A.! The tank disabled, they scramble back to the pits as someone praises McGrath's aim.

Several unidentifiable men get hurt: one is shot in the knee, others are shot while firing from the hedgerow; another takes a bullet to the throat, and yet another takes one in the chest. Medics run around trying to tend to all the wounds, but it's hard to get concerned when we don't have anything invested in any of the injured men. They're just extras.

To the delight of Easy, Sherman tanks appear over the hill and start decimating the German side. "Well, hello 2nd Armored," cheers a man we should probably recognize, but whose face is obscured by binoculars. Whose decision was that? Lord, this show is driving me to drink. Well, okay, I was already there, but this show definitely bought me a few shots. Easy begins to celebrate, firing with renewed vigor at the urging of Winters, Welsh, and even young Perconte. Out in the field, Malarkey sighs, "About damn time!" and Winters shouts, "Let's go, pour it on! Let 'em have it!" The American tanks run wild, blasting the hell out of the enemy and even crushing one soldier under its treads.

As things wind down, Blithe spies a pack of Germans fleeing the scene. But I reckon they'll be back. Easy should act with extreme caution if they see a giant wooden bunny on the outskirts of town tonight. Blithe, of course, knows the devils of the Trojan Bunny, so he takes aim and wills one of the men to run within his sights. There is total silence as Blithe focuses, shoots, and hits the man in the abdomen. As the man doubles over and sways, a tank drives past; once it's gone, so is the wounded man. A lone helmet rolls from the vicinity and out into the battlefield. Liebgott offers Welsh a smoke, because it was good for him, too. Back to Blithe, who collapses against the side of his foxhole with a huge sigh. Someone from the 2nd Armored trots over to check on him. "Looks like you fellas had a helluva fight!" Pvt. Cheerful calls out. Blithe staggers to his feet, stares at Cheerful for a second, then proceeds dazedly across the knoll.

The grass is littered with blood puddles. Blithe reaches the corpse of a man who died with his eyes open, and the private stares into them for a second before pilfering an Edelweiss blossom from the dead Nazi's lapel. Affixing it to his own uniform, Blithe *zzzZZZZzzz*. Whaaa? Oh, shoot. I nodded off. Is Winters naked? No? Dang.

D-Plus-25. Easy has advanced, and creeps toward an abandoned farmhouse for reasons unknown. But Nixon reassures us that "we need to know what's in there," and since he exists for plot exposition right now, we accept his words as truth. We absolutely must check out that calm and empty-looking house that is definitely crawling with gun-toting Germans. I know its job is

to sniff out and snuff out the enemy, but Easy is starting to look like the buxom heroine who, while alone in the country with a killer on the loose, hears a noise in her darkened house and goes downstairs to investigate with nothing but a paper clip and a candle.

Welsh isn't sure who to send ahead as scouts, so Nixon tells him to ask for volunteers. "I hate asking for volunteers," Welsh grumbles. "Then pick them," an annoyed Nixon orders. Aw, Winters's two favorites are in a mini-spat. Look, boys, don't be cranky with each other. There's plenty of Winters to go around. Welsh sucks it up and asks for volunteers; Blithe, still trying to get a grip on the kernels of courage within, sticks up his hand. Welsh names him lead scout and picks Martin and Dukeman to follow. "Hubba hubba," Welsh says. I'm not kidding. What a bizarre motivational chant. Unless he just thinks Blithe has a pert ass.

Keeping low, the trio creeps toward the farmhouse. Nixon amusedly points to Welsh's satchel. "What exactly are you doing with your reserve chute?" Nixon grins. "You been hauling that thing around since we jumped?" Cut to the trio creeping. Cut back. Welsh sheepishly looks at the ground. It seems that he's saving it for when they return to England, when he'll send it to his fiancée so she can make a wedding dress. That's kind of cute! A little strange, perhaps, but a sweet thought. The trio approaches the house; now, we're back to Nixon. "Gee, Harry, I never would've guessed," he laughs. "What, that I'm so sentimental?" chuckles Welsh. Nixon replies, "No, that you think we're going to make it back to England." I feel like Nixon is going to die at some point during the next few weeks. It's just a hunch that I can't explain.

Ominous music heralds the scouting trio's final steps toward the farmhouse. It looks deserted; somehow, Blithe decides it's a good idea to move forward, and as he stands to give the order, a sniper zings a bullet through the private's neck. Welsh screams for covering fire as Martin and Dukeman drag Blithe to safety. He lies on the ground, unblinking, as Martin tries to comfort him. Winters stares sadly at the wounded man. "They're pulling us off the front lines," he whispers to Welsh, who is stunned. "To a fuel camp north of Utah Beach. Hot food and showers, and then back to England."

At the Utah Beach camp, near the medic tents, a pile of uniforms sits in the foreground. We zero in on one with an "Airborne" patch and a sprig of Edelweiss. Um, okay. We did actually get that Blithe was hurt, being as we saw it happen and whatnot. I would take this as an omen of his death, but I peeked ahead, and it isn't. So really, it's just an omen of nudity. Fade to black.

Winters walks up to Welsh, who is reclining against an archway with his eyes closed, sensually sucking on a cigarette. Winters confirms that his leg is a bit stiff and sore, so he's trying to take it easy for a few days. "You should," Welsh sighs. Winters says that Colonel Sink really appreciated Easy Company's holding the line when the others bailed out, and notes that General Taylor – the 101st Airborne leader – was also pleased. Welsh groans. "That's why I came to France. To please General Taylor," he says. Winters simply breathes, "Yeah," and looks dejected. Why aren't they proud of this? They're damn brave, and everyone knows it. I suppose they're probably just too exhausted to be proud.

Hospital Tent. Pvt. Gordon, wounded during that second battle, gets the Purple Heart for being hurt in the line of duty. He smiles and poses for a photo. Another man is wheeled in with his head wrapped in gauze; we only see the profile, but we recognize Blithe's stony and vacant blue eyes. "How many does that make?" a recovering soldier asks. Gordon, obviously doing just fine now, pulls up his pillow and places his newest Purple Heart next to two others. "You have no shame," his friend chuckles. "One hole in my shoulder, a second one on my calf and a boil on my shin that has to be lanced," Gordon laughs. His friend points to Blithe. "And he only gets one," he says, sadly. Actually, Gordon's injury is one of my favorite stories from the book (so far): he was bleeding all over the place, but when asked if he was hurt, he said something like, "Oh, I guess, but I really just need this boil lanced, please." So the medic did that first. Gordon tried to go back to Winters and Easy Company, and had to be ordered back to England for recovery.

Cut to a shot of Blithe's bandaged face, expressionless as ever. We see a shot of the same cloudy sky at which he gazed while lost in Normandy. The sky shot transitions us to footage of wacky fun, as Malarkey and his pal More (the book filled in that blank for me) race through the quiet Aldbourne streets in a motorcycle and sidecar. They're elated to be back in England, clean again and safe. It's a joyous frolic. They're blithe in every way Blithe can't be. Malarkey guzzles a beer and giggles as they race past everyone and narrowly escape a collision with a delivery truck. Screeching to a halt, the two men hop out and head for the mess hall.

Inside, the assembled officers are applauding as Gordon, quite sensitively wearing all three of

his Purple Hearts, is standing up and getting ready to recite a poem he wrote about Talbert and Smith's little stabling snafu. It goes like this:

*The night was filled with dark and cold,
When Sgt. Talbert, the story's told,
Pulled on his poncho and headed out
To check the lines dressed like a Kraut.
Upon a trooper, our hero came,
Fast asleep; he called his name.
"Smith, oh Smith, get up, it's time
To take your turn out on the line."
Private Smith, so very weary,
Cracked an eye, all red and bleary,
Grabbed his rifle and did not tarry,
Hearing Floyd, but seeing Jerry.
"It's me!" cried Pat [Talbert]. "Don't do it!" Yet,
Smith charged tout de suite with a bayonet.
He lunged, he thrust, both high and low
And skewered the boy from Kokomo.*

I should point out that this probably isn't the text of the actual poem. Though it did exist, every man interviewed by Stephen Ambrose flatly refused to supply the real thing.

While the poem is recited, a few things happen. Smith and Talbert both look embarrassed, but they giggle. A group of new recruits looks confused and left out, aware only that the oration is called "The Night of the Bayonet," but unsure what that means. Tired of being outside an inside joke, a redheaded kid gets up to leave, but Gonorrhea stops him. It turns out they're from the same area of Philly, and the redhead is immediately welcomed into the fold. His other two friends, of course, get no such warm treatment, but that's what they get for not being from Philly. This is our first real glimpse of Gonorrhea, other than a few facials from the battle scenes, so I thought it was worth noting that he's alive and kicking and not as vengeful.

Meanwhile, a piece of information has made the rounds from Winters through to Donnie, who was listening happily to the recitation until pulled aside for a conference. Back to Gordon, who says Talbert wasn't wounded by the enemy and doesn't qualify for a Purple Heart – therefore, he can have one of Gordon's extra ones. Everyone claps. "I coulda shot the kid a dozen times," Talbert jokes. "I just didn't think we could spare a man."

Donnie moves in front of the crowd to speak. He looks like he wants to cry, but he's hanging tough. (I think a thousand NKOTB fans just groaned in unison.) Donnie cancels a training exercise scheduled for that night at 2200, which elicits cheers from the men that Donnie's second piece of news will silence. He revokes all weekend passes because Easy is heading back to France – and this time, it's for the duration. "Anyone who has not made out a will, go to the supply office," Donnie says calmly. Martin and my boy Liebgott look scared, and several other random people also seem dejected, but that's none of my concern since I don't know who they are.

Malarkey pokes his head inside the makeshift laundromat. He excitedly corrects the female owner when she calls him "Private," since he's just been promoted to Sergeant. The woman smiles and promptly calls him Private again. I think she's just absent-minded, but still, it wouldn't hurt to listen. They're on the same side, after all. Anyway, she passes him the laundry and picks the proper change out from what's sitting in Malarkey's outstretched palm. He's completely cute, because he corrects his language in front of her as a show of respect for a lady. If Malarkey would shut up about Luger pistols, we might have a chance. "Lieutenant Meehan's one of yours, isn't he? Hope he hasn't forgotten his laundry," the woman smiles. Malarkey pauses, and his eyes widen. He stammers that he'll take it, and pays her for the brown-paper parcel containing the clothes of his dead CO. He looks down at it warily, unsure how to feel. She then casually asks him to "help [her] with some of the others" who haven't returned for their clothes, and she promptly rattles off names. She might as well whip out a pad of paper and sing, "Let's count how many of your friends are dead!"

Of the other names the washer-woman reads, the only one we know is the last: Albert Blithe. This scene does what the Edelweiss-uniform shot could also have accomplished, but of course,

we had to have both, which I think was overkill and ruined what might've been poignant. But too often, that's what Spielberg is all about. Fade to black.

Some text tells us Easy Company lost sixty-five men before it pulled out of France on June 29. Blithe didn't die immediately, but never recovered from his wounds and finally perished in 1948.

Next time, Easy travels to Eindhoven, Holland, and participates in a crucial offensive called Market-Garden. Compton gets hit and says, "Leave me here for the Germans!" Finally, Randleman endangers himself and someone screams, "Buuuuullllllll!" Now people we know, people we recognize, people who got paid fatter salaries, are in peril. I might actually be able to get invested in this next one.

Replacements

Season 1

Episode Number: 4

Season Episode: 4

Originally aired:	Sunday September 23, 2001
Writer:	Graham Yost
Director:	David Nutter
Show Stars:	Michael Cudlitz (Denver 'Bull' Randleman), Ron Livingston (Capt. Lewis Nixon), Scott Grimes (T/Sgt. Donald Malarkey), Donnie Wahlberg (2nd Lt. C. Carwood Lipton), Neal McDonough (1st Lt. Lynn "Buck" Compton), Ross McCall (Joseph D Liebgott), Frank John Hughes (S/Sgt. William "Wild Bill" Guarnere), Rick Gomez (George Luz), Kirk Acevedo (SSgt. Joseph Toye), James Madio (Frank J Perconte), Richard Speight Jr. (Warren 'Skip' Muck), Dale Dye (Colonel Robert Sink), Damian Lewis (Richard D. Winters), Dexter Fletcher (John), Shane Taylor (Eugene G 'doc' Roe), Phil McKee (Major Robert L Strayer), Tom Hardy (Pfc. John Janovec), Matthew Settle (Capt. Ronald Spiers), Philip Barantini (Wayne 'skinny' Sisk), James McAvoy (Pvt. James Miller), Rick Warden (II) (1st Lt. Harry Welsh), Matthew Leitch (Floyd 'Tab' Talbert), Nolan Hemmings (Charles 'Chuck' Grant), Nicholas Aaron (Robert E 'popeye' Wynn), Peter Youngblood Hills (Darrell C 'shifty' Powers), Robin Laing (Edward J 'babe' Heffron), Mark Huberman (Pvt. Lester 'Leo' Hashey), Peter McCabe (IV) (Cpl Donald Hoobler)
Guest Stars:	Jonjo O'Neill (Replacement # 1), David Schwimmer (Capt. Herbert M. Sobel), Eion Bailey (David Kenyon Webster), Alex Sabga (Francis J. Mellet), Hugo Metsers (John Van Kooijk), William Tapley (British Tank Commander), Jack Wouterse (Dutch Farmer in Farm), Josefina Hendriks (Young Dutch Girl), Peter Stark (German inside Barn), Freerk Bos (Dutch Farmer), Billy Hill (Dutch Farmer's Son)
Summary:	New characters are introduced when replacements join Easy Company, who struggle to be accepted by the veterans who fought at Normandy. The Company is sent to parachute into and fight in the Netherlands as part of Operation Market Garden, where they liberate Eindhoven. During combat in Nuenen, the replacements integrate themselves with the Company, but the Company is forced to retreat. The episode follows Sergeant Denver "Bull" Randleman, the replacements' immediate superior, as he evades German soldiers in Nuenen after being cut off and forced to stay there and must wait until the enemy leaves in the morning.

Veteran interviews. We're told that the replacement soldiers sent to Easy Company had to prove themselves to the original members. Most of them were qualified but were awfully green, says one man, who cops to hoping they'd just manage to stay alive or be kept alive by the combat-tested men. In fact, some men thought the replacements tried too hard to impress their new comrades; finally, a man admits, "I didn't want to be friendly with replacements going in, because God, I didn't like seeing them get killed." A replacement himself says, "We were in awe of them," referring to the experienced soldiers with stars on their jump wings.

Sept. 13, 1944. Easy Company is in Aldbourne, England. This episode doesn't make clear why they're still there, when at the end of "Carentan," we saw Donnie tell the men it was time to haul ass back to France. The book, thankfully, shares that a series of cancelled operations kept

Easy on friendly shores; by the time the group was ready to load the planes, Allied infantry had already advanced and achieved the objectives. That is, until Eisenhower conceived of a sweeping offensive he thought could get the Allies into Germany.



Lt. Compton, my strapping Buck, narrows his eyes, raises his left arm and aims his dart at ahhh....Oh, sorry, my mind was totally in the gutter just then. He's actually playing darts against some of the lads; his partner, George Luz, quietly encourages him. Compton's shot lands off the board, and opponent Bull Randleman grabs it with a grin and some sarcasm, saying, "Nice shot, sir." Luz comfortingly counters, "You're having a tough night; people have tough nights. It's all right, sir." Compton laughs mer-

rily, swats Luz's lips off his outstanding behind, and steps aside to make way for a scrawny redheaded Malarkey lookalike called Pvt. Heffron. The youth steps up and expertly hits his shot, ending the game and prompting good-natured laughter from the foursome. Gonorrhea wanders over and jokes, "You're embarrassing the lieutenant, here," then cracks that Heffron's "buddies are missing [him]"; we see three new privates nervously sitting at one of the saloon's tables. Gonorrhea decides to go introduce himself; Randleman tells him to be careful, because it doesn't take much to set those guys off, and Martin teasingly calls them "wild-eyed kids." More laughter, because in truth The Replacements are all completely benign-looking. Compton casually pushes for a wee wager on a second contest; Heffron is confident, so they end up betting two packs of cigarettes on Buck's ability to make one shot.

The Replacements stare nervously at the officers, aware that they're about to get the kind of Gonorrhea for which there is no salve. The blustery bloke plops down in the only empty seat and stares intensely at the trio. "That's Babe Heffron's seat," one of them pipes up, and Gonorrhea fixes his gaze on the vocal one. "I don't care if it's fucking Eisenhower's," he snaps. And now, the writers grant me the one thing I've craved: a blatant, even ham-handed way of attaching names to faces. The Replacements are Privates Miller, Garcia, and Hazboy. "I know who you are," Gonorrhea says. "Old Gonorrhea doesn't miss nothing." I can think of a few people from high school who could probably vouch for that. The privates look edgy.

Compton steps up to take aim, and just as he's about to throw, Luz taps him on the arm and mock-curiously asks whether Compton plans to shoot lefty all night. Compton makes a gesture as if to say, "Oh, I forgot, that's why I wasn't playing well," and switches hands. This all feels very Princess Bride to me. "I'm just curious because he's right-handed," Luz whispers to Heffron, who looks half-amused and half-pissed that he's clearly been had. "What would I do without George Luz?" muses Compton, throwing the dart and hitting his shot with precision. Grinning, he and Luz demand their two packs of smokes.

Gonorrhea decides to tell a dirty joke. "Heffron tell you about Doris yet?" he asks The Replacements. Gonorrhea claims that, on the first aborted mission, Heffron was first in line to jump, but that he stopped dead in his tracks because he saw a painting on the front of the plane – a pinup girl with the words "Darling Doris" printed underneath. "That happened to be the name of a skirt who just that day sent Babe one of them letters," Gonorrhea says. Poor Heffron got a Dear John letter from a woman named Doris, Gonorrhea claims, and it freaked him out; then the mission was aborted. "Babe doesn't have to risk getting inside ol' Doris again," finishes Gonorrhea with a cackle. That was a really lame joke. My IQ just dropped ten points.

Turning to Bull Randleman, Gonorrhea says that his squad listens very well. "They're being polite," Martin says. "Like whenever Bull opens his mouth." Faking shock, Gonorrhea says, "Are you saying Bull's boys are humoring him?" Martin winks and says, "Yeah, like whenever he gives out some of his folksy wisdom from back home on the farm." Gonorrhea sputters, "They think he's a fucking hayseed!" Bull just looks amused, puffing away on his cigar and dreaming about that time he asked out Brenda Walsh, and then laughing because no matter what happens to him here, she'll still be psychotic. The Replacements giggle, too, until Gonorrhea snaps his head around and barks at them to stop laughing. Mortified and quite a bit confused, the privates bite

back their mirth and stare at the Sergeant. "He's the smartest guy in the company," Gonorrhea says of Bull. They have some kind of deprecating friendship. Bull's just a big lug, Gonorrhea's a hard-nosed Philly boy with a heart of gold, and Martin...he's there, too.

The discomfort isn't over yet for The Replacements. A weedy-looking guy called Cobb leans in toward Miller and hisses, "Where'd you get that?" He points to a single bar pinned onto Miller's uniform, a navy-blue-ish rectangle. Nervously, Miller answers that it's the Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation commending what the regiment did in Normandy. Angrily, Cobb hisses, "Right, for what the regiment did. You weren't there." The promo made it look like this was building into an enormous, catastrophic spat. But Cobb only looks fierce in a "If we was back home, I'd be siccing my right-mean billy goat on yer yella' ass" way, not in a "If you meet me in a dark alley, or even a well-lit alley, you're a dead bastard" way. From afar, Hoobler yells at Cobb to shut up, because it's a unit citation, after all, and Miller is in the unit now. A tense silence blankets the group until Miller, hand trembling, removes the badge and places it on the table. Rising, he catches Bull's solemn eyes, sadly looks into them, and leaves. Bull takes a controlled stroll over to Miller's empty seat and picks up the badge. "Shit, Cobb, you didn't fight Normandy neither," Bull says softly, walking away. Cobb looks caught out for a moment, then says to no one in particular, "I got [shot] in the plane before I had a chance to jump." The two remaining Replacements consider this for a second, then raise their eyebrows.

Smokey jumps up and shouts to get everyone's attention. We also know Smokey as Pvt. Gordon; this new nickname is no small measure of torture in a show that struggles to make even its core characters a relatable, identifiable group. On so many levels, I want to scream. Smokey Gordon introduces Donnie to the group as Easy Company's new 1st Sergeant, and everyone applauds. Donnie looks distinctly uncomfortable, which is his job, because all he does is notify the men when they need to make out wills because another brutal mission is being developed. And indeed, this is no exception. "Hate to break the mood, but we're moving out again," Donnie says solemnly. Smokey looks totally depressed, as though the sudden sad shower is completely his fault. And it is, obviously, so he will be destroyed. The Replacements look terrified at this turn of events, and Bull Randleman just looks contemplative while he sucks on a cigar.

Lt. Winters briefs the men on Operation Market-Garden, an enormous Allied offensive the scope of which dwarfs Normandy. The division will drop deep into occupied Holland and attempt to take Eindhoven and Arnhem, thus clearing the way for British armored divisions to advance. This, they believe, will eventually help scoot the Allies over the Rhine and into Germany. Donnie looks nervous, Hoobler and Gonorrhea look edgy, and Martin looks plain scared. Nixon says, "The entire European advance is put on hold to allocate resources for this." For the mission, they'll be placed under British command, which elicits loud groans. How polite! Although I'm sure a few British hearts will skip a beat when they hear Gonorrhea is heading their way. Nixon raises a few spirits by saying that this offensive could end the war by Christmas. Malarkey nods appreciatively. Allied intelligence also indicates that the German troops in Holland are mostly comprised of old men or kids; plus, the daytime jump is expected to be rather easy and a surprise to the enemy. "In any case, say goodbye to England," Nixon concludes. "I don't think they're going to call this one off."

Planes zoom overhead as the soldiers line up to board the planes. Replacement Hazboy loads his gun; Replacement Garcia sees this and enquires about it. "I'm doing what Cobb did," Hazboy explains. Cobb imperiously points out that jumping ready to shoot is the surest way to stay alive – short of not jumping at all, apparently, which saved him last time. But as Garcia begins to ready his weapon, Bull Randleman walks over, grabs it, and removes the bullets, the implication being that experienced men don't always know best and that Cobb is a skinny dumb dumb-ass.

Suddenly, a Jeep rolls past and catches the men's attention. It's the return of Ross, looking just as deeply penetrated by an ass-rod as ever before. He stares coldly at Talbert, Gonorrhea, Malarkey, and Hoobler, probably trying to figure out which one is which. Martin and Randleman are equally startled to see him. Ross's bitter glares only underscore what a little, little man he is. Hopping out of the truck, Ross allows himself one minute to gather composure before approaching the men. He's got Popeye Wynn in tow; Donnie greets him enthusiastically, having last seen him on D-Day when Popeye took a bullet in the buttock. "I busted out," Popeye says proudly. "I didn't want to get reassigned to another unit," so he left the hospital early to make sure he rejoined Easy in time for Market-Garden. Donnie is thrilled. "I can jump," Popeye grins. "I just can't sit." Bull Randleman approaches and welcomes him, then asks how Wynn picked up

Ross. "He's the newly appointed regimental [supply officer]," Popeye says, adding that, amazingly, Ross agreed to give him a lift back to Easy. "Couldn't believe it," Wynn laughs. "Maybe he's gonna court-martial me later."

Ross spies Malarkey, who salutes his former commander. Ross leans right up next to the sergeant and whispers, "You thought you'd get away with it?" Malarkey plays dumb. Apparently, that motorcycle and sidecar from the end of "Carentan" were stolen; that would've been a helpful detail that gave this scene some context, but instead we get a minute of boring clutter padding the episode past the sixty-minute standard. Ross barks that the bike is "U.S. Army property. That might not mean anything to you, but it means something to me. Where did you find it?" And that's it. Now, if Ross had administered a good, hard spanking, that might've been something to behold, but as is, this scene is stuck in a fruitless search for context.

Bull stares at Ross. Bull is good at staring, almost as adept as Winters is at knowing looks and invisible smiles. Hey, everyone's got to have a talent. He explains to the newbies that Ross was Easy's first CO, but "got promoted." He says it with tempered revulsion, as though the Army promotes the useless so that they're far away from the people who perform actual combat and feats of courage. Modified slightly, that's probably true of just about any industry. Witness the failed entrepreneurs who now work as venture capitalists.

A lieutenant begs Martin to tap his leg when it's time to jump. Martin groans, "Lieutenant, you'll be in the doorway!" The guy looks embarrassed and says through clenched teeth that it wouldn't kill Martin just to give him a wee smack when the green "jump" light flashes. "The green light will be next to you," grunts a frustrated Martin. Meanwhile, Bull grabs Replacement Garcia, checks his equipment, and utters a rapid-fire list of instructions before moving on down the line. Garcia looks momentarily alarmed, then swells with the pride of the moment and darts off across the field toward the jets.

September 17, 1944, Holland. The sky is replete with billowing arcs of cloth, parachutes unfolding and gracefully dropping their human cargo onto a Dutch field. Liebgott, sweet Liebgott, drifts across the screen and wriggles for me to prove he's alive and not too vexed at me for kicking his bucket a few weeks back. The men rein in the chutes, gather their supplies, and skip around in search of pastry. Well, that's what I'd be doing, anyway. Bull kindly helps a newbie to disentangle himself from his chute, without a word of admonishment. He's a lover, that Bull. The pervert in me is imagining all kinds of explanations for that nickname.

Easy settles into ditches outside a town, which is either Eindhoven or Son; checking with the book, I see they hit Son first, but enjoyed similar greetings at both towns. Cobb and Hoobler excitedly dart over to the gang and hand out what look like bottles of beer. Cobb and Hoobler clearly know how to party; this somehow brings new meaning to the idea of shotgunning a brewsky. It seems they raided a nearby farmhouse. The same hot officer from the Aldbourne pub trots over, and I instantly pretend not to recognize him from his role as the supportive boyfriend of the star ballerina in *Center Stage*. His name is Webster, and his letters to his parents are frequently quoted by Stephen Ambrose because they're rather eloquent. He's a Harvard boy. Webster doesn't do anything here, but that doesn't matter – when he does, I'll know it. The group reassembles and guardedly marches into town, unsure what it will find there.

One flickering orange banner gives way to hundreds, hanging from town windows and pieces of string hanging up between buildings. The villagers are ecstatic to see Allied forces, their saviors against German tyranny, and they sing what sounds like a Dutch translation of "Stars and Stripes Forever," although I don't know when that song was written. The entire town is a hop-pin' party. They totally think it's 1999. Women swoon and grab the soldiers, hugging and often kissing them. Hoobler tears one of his comrades away from the melee, while Donnie instructs Bull to keep his squad moving forward. "Where are the Germans?" shouts Hazboy. An amused Garcia, wrestling with a woman clamped around his neck, laughs that the Germans could be anywhere around town and they wouldn't notice. A matron grabs Perconte and hugs his face to her prodigious bosom. Donnie removes him, but not before her dizzying cleavage knocks the lad's wind clear into Denmark. Winters and Nixon stop to consult their watches and conclude that the clock is ticking; the men must proceed through the jammed streets so that they can clear more towns. Winters gets a peck on the lips, and he distractedly but politely thanks the woman before moving on with his day. His tongue and his libido remain admirably restrained. Some of the Dutch insist on a photo with the Americans; kids have on orange party hats, the orange flags are flying. It's a Syracuse University football game.

Talbert's lips are clamped onto a village lady's mouth, and they're researching the texture of each other's taste buds. The verdict: satisfactory. But Talbert is yanked away, and as his conquest lustily stares after him, she's corralled by two thugs. They drag her, against her will, through a crowd of chanting Dutch folk whose shouts pollute the air with a menace that clashes with other villagers' abject joy. The woman is forced onto her knees and weeps copiously while her head is cruelly shaved. Others, scraped and bleeding and with nothing but nubbly clumps scattered on their naked skulls, have swastikas etched onto their foreheads and are crying amid the town's vocal, scathing derision. Compton, Winters, and Randleman watch the scene unfold, shocked and disgusted that the anti-German sentiment took the Dutch to this extreme. "What did they do?" someone asks. "They slept with the Germans," a blond man answers. "They're lucky – the men who collaborated were shot."

The Dutch man unintelligibly introduces himself. He's with the Dutch resistance, and has been "waiting and hoping for this day." Dutchie promises he can help secure the bridges, and proudly calls over the child spy who he claims can find the German line. Nixon's incredibly skeptical. Dutchie defends his spies and reasserts his desire to help. It strikes me that I don't care. At all. Winters accepts the man's help and sends out scouts to the edge of town.

Webster is looking hot near a haystack on the aforementioned edge of town. The tedium thus far has so consumed me that I pause the tape, shamelessly staring at his sweet mug just to get the blood flowing again. He's napping with Van Klinken. Who? Exactly. Hoobler sneaks over and wakes them up, because with a name like that, you've no choice but to be a randy scampster. They run over to a farmhouse, but encounter the owner and his son; they introduce themselves and he asks how long they'll be around. "As long as we have to. They don't tell us much," snarks Webster. "Or feed us much." The farmer brightens and darts inside, returning with three jars of freshly pickled veggies. "They all speak English, they all love us," Webster grins cutely. "What a fantastic country." In return, he offers a cigarette to the farmer, who elatedly lights it and puffs his way into paradise. Suddenly, Webster eyes the young boy, and offers him a chocolate bar. The child pops a morsel of yummy chocolatey goodness into his mouth, and breaks into a serene smile. I know exactly how he feels, and I'm running to the fridge and grabbing one of those Dove thingies and I'm eating it and ohhh...Yeah, that's the stuff. Webster is moved. "He's never tasted chocolate," the farmer says emotionally. Webster looks thrilled to have given the gift of chocolate. To me, that makes him the most benevolent man of all.

Tanks plow through fields of lavender and yellow flowers. Some soldiers walk beside them, and others have hitched a ride; there are about seven tanks in all. They pass a sign that says "Nuenen," which means they're past both Son and Eindhoven now, and Webster notes that Van Gogh was born in Nuenen. Oh, please let someone lose an ear here. By the side of the road, they see a battered, shorn woman cradling a baby, and one soldier passes her his rations. Martin looks profoundly upset by her fate – guess she didn't get the one with the chocolate brownie.

The tanks slow, but the lead lieutenant – Lt. Brewer – proceeds toward Nuenen and the men are somewhat startled because he's a very easy target. Bull yells at him to stop moving; at the last second, Brewer turns, and a sniper's bullet fells him instantly. As other men dive off the tanks and into the roadside ditches, Randleman runs up to the fallen lieutenant to see whether he's somehow still alive. He is, and Bull screams for a medic, who is then shot himself as he tends to Brewer's oozing throat wound. Randleman returns to his squad and commands the men to keep moving; as they do, they pass the bleeding Brewer and stare agape at the extent of his wound, certain he's a goner.

Easy moves into Nuenen, sprinting across a field and toward various town buildings the company wants to secure. Allied tanks take a big hit, reduced to charred, smoking heaps. The ensuing scene is, I think, the most confusing one yet in terms of tracking who does what, why, and when. Just as we're identifying people and getting invested in their fates, the battle scenes become less lucid than ever. It's one step forward, two steps back with this show – and I get sick when I'm moving backward. Just ask the station wagon from my childhood. Anyway, Compton and Randleman get their men in position, hiding behind building walls and scouting the area for any movement or sign of German forces. Bull freezes, certain he's spotted a tank. I think the long gun barrel poking out from a haystack might have been his first clue, unless of course that haystack is just extraordinarily happy to see him. Martin spies the same tank, but from a different angle, and as soon as British tanks are visible in the distance, he hoofs it out of town to alert them. Martin wildly points to the Germans' general location and encourages the tank driver

to blast the bastard machine. "Don't see it," says the Brit, who we'll call Nigel because, let's face it, that's probably his name. Martin rolls his eyes and says that's precisely why the tank is where it is, what with this being a war and the Germans being aware of the concepts of strategy and hiding and whatnot. He suggests that Nigel shell the building so that they can get a clean shot at the tank, but Nigel shakes his head and says that his orders are to destroy as little property as possible. Well done, Nigel. That little edict of misplaced benevolence would seem to give the Germans a certain advantage. Frantic, Martin screams, "It's right there!" But Nigel is resolute. "If I can't see the bugger, I can't bloody well shoot it," he yells in response, borrowing a pen from the Grim Reaper so that he can sign his own death certificate.

Suddenly, from his spot inside Nuenen, Bull sees the German tank slowly turn its weapon toward the British. It's a chilling sight, because Bull's completely powerless to disarm or disable the thing, so he's left watching and praying for intervention from Allied infantry. Nigel suddenly spots the tank and his jaw drops, just in time to watch it fire upon the other British tank right behind him. Before Nigel can get off a shot of his own, his tank goes up in flames as well. Panicked, Randleman screams for his men to fall back; the German tank then decides to go ahead and level a few buildings just for sport. As Bull flees on all fours, he notices a fiery shell of a British tank still moving in his direction, but in an increasingly crooked path toward the roadside ditch Bull now inhabits. He's in danger of being crushed when it inevitably topples. Bull floors his internal gas pedal and keeps scurrying while staying out of sniper sights.

Easy is atrociously mismatched here, because Allied generals sorely underestimated the German troops' ability to mobilize its soldiers and rebuild morale after bruising losses. Easy's soldiers, outmanned and without sufficient firepower, are caught in this decimated Holland town, trying desperately to escape. Webster and Hoobler run around dodging bullets and dead bodies. Martin catches sight of Randleman's predicament and looks worried because the tank approaching Bull is poised to explode. Martin fulfills the show's melodrama quota with a slow, agonized, "Buuuuuuulllllll!" uttered in such a way that you'd expect to see him throw his body under the tank in slow motion. Aw. His buddy's in danger. Not one to dwell on it, or possibly ready to nail the bastards who might end up rubbing out his pal Randleman, Martin turns and promptly starts shooting at snipers. One of Compton's men bazookas the entire top floor of a building where a handful of gunmen were stashed.

Replacements Miller and Garcia look scared, a mighty useful defense against hostile forces. Hoobler, Webster, and Van Klinken plow through a hedge; as the last of these bursts through, a barrage of enemy fire blasts him in the chest. Yow. Talbert pops up to fire a quick bazooka shot at more windows, but then another German tank crops up and wreaks more fiery havoc on Nuenen. Just a bunch of old men and children, eh? Age doesn't seem to matter if you've got heavy artillery. Easy is getting trounced. Gonorrhea and Compton start screaming for the men to retreat. Webster and Hoobler are freaked about their dying pal Klink, who's hanging onto life, but only about as tightly as he's hanging onto the blood gushing from his torso. A few men lined up against a brick wall decide to bolt for the other side of a field; moments after they make a break for it, German shells level the wall. When the smoke clears, only the corner still stands; huddling in it, petrified, is Cobb, wishing he'd been shot in the airplane again.

Easy continues its race to leave Nuenen; Luz points out that the Germans have infantry all over the place. No one knows where Randleman is, which scares Martin. A few soldiers lie in ditches to provide protective fire for the ones still trying to flee; a shell hits Replacement Miller's ditch while he's reloading his weapon. Garcia and Hazboy scamper over to check on their friend, and stop sharply when they see his lifeless, bloodied skull. In highly technical terms, Miller is Way Dead.

While Compton pauses during his crawl to safety, snipers rip a bullet through his strapping ass. Malarkey stops with him; apparently, the bullet went clean through both buttocks, which is astounding. Compton gingerly touches his wound, wondering in what godforsaken world it's fair for the Germans to tear him not merely one fresh asshole, but four. As the medic runs over, Compton brave-little-soldiers that they should leave him there for the Germans. Buck, it's an ass wound, not a missing limb. If the far-less-strapping Popeye Wynn can live through it, so can your hot swaggering self. Malarkey wants to carry him, but Compton is far too swarthy, hale, and hearty – too much man for Malarkey's skinny shoulders. But not for mine! Rrrrowr. Unwilling to leave a beloved lieutenant, Malarkey blows the door off a building and they use it as a stretcher, with Gonorrhea's help. Ah, Gonorrhea. Always in the mix. "One bullet, four holes," he giggles.

"It's a miracle." Compton doesn't think it's as amusing.

Winters, from a safe distance, screams for everyone to hustle onto transport trucks. Nixon anxiously asks how badly they've been damaged as a unit. "Don't know yet," Winters replies, and at that second a rogue bullet whizzes through the air and into Nixon's helmet, knocking him down. "Nix!" shrieks an understandably terrified Winters, diving onto his pal to check his vitals. Dazed, Nixon lifts off his helmet and stares at it wonderingly. His only mark is a bullet burn across his forehead. Nixon says he's fine, but then gets totally alarmed by Winters's expression and begs for confirmation that he is, in fact, as unscathed as he feels. Winters nods. "Quit looking at me like that!" Nixon says, comically, in a wobbly voice. He struggles to his feet.

Donnie approaches and tallies the damage: four dead, eleven injured. Almost as an afterthought, he adds that Randleman is missing, which does upset Winters. But, they're unable to linger much longer in this enemy zone, so the trucks pull away to leave behind Easy's first failed mission. Its first flop. Hey, guys, call Mariah Carey. She knows how you feel. Webster flexes his hand, thickly coated with the dried blood of his pal Klink. Cobb has the shakes, and Garcia and Hazboy can't quite absorb what just happened; Garcia looks like he feels doomed, a rookie amid a battle in which even seasoned fighters aren't surviving. Hoobler looks on the verge of tears, and Toy's eyes are already flooded. In a low voice, Gonorrhea asks where Bull is. "I don't know," Martin gravely intones, squinting at the disappearing village behind them because four out of five soldiers think better when their eyes are mostly closed.

Night in Nuenen. Tanks are in flames, the buildings are wrecked, and German soldiers swarm the streets. We pan over to a tiny hollow under a bridge, in which Randleman is squatting with his gun ready and his brow furrowed.

Later that night, one residual explosion pops off in the flaming tank. Randleman looks scared for the first time. He's hiding out in a barn, lying on the hay and getting his grenades and ammo in order. Apparently convinced the Germans aren't equipped with a sense of smell, Bull then bites the end off a cigar and looks primed to light it and fill the air with telltale smoke. Ooh, saved by a knock – a native man sneaks into the barn and Bull pounces, pinning him against the wall and holding a knife to his throat. As the man trembles and Bull stares him down, a pretty, waifish blonde walks gingerly inside, frightened of what might befall her. Slowly, Bull registers this, and decides that the man is friend, not foe.

Webster sadly covers the body of Klink, who couldn't overcome his Swiss-cheese chest wounds. Webster looks broken. "I didn't fire a shot the whole time," someone moans dejectedly. Someone reports that Lt. Brewer is going to live, which absolutely shocks all the men who saw the extent of his horrible wound. "He did turn his head at the last second when Sgt. Randleman called out to him," Pvt. Faceless muses, and everyone exchanges glances at the mention of Bull's name and the idea that even a small gesture might've saved Brewer's life.

Bull hustles the Dutch man and his wife into the barn, where they hide as tanks pass and Germans loudly confer. As he reaches for his gun, Randleman winces, and we see a wound on his shoulder; the man gently moves to look at it, bathing it in water from Bull's flask and then tearing a hole in the uniform. Bull winces, pained, as the man reaches into the mess of blood and tissue to retrieve the bullet. He can't, so Bull lends him a knife. I thought this would be really gross, because the camera shows this Dutch man digging around soggy crimson goop and using a knife to dig a bullet from flesh. But really, it just looks like he's dipping into a big pile of strawberry jam. And while I may now never be able to eat strawberry jam ever again, the comparison kept my stomach from doing its usual flip-flops. The man grabs a cloth to press against Bull's shoulder, but at that second German voices come closer to the barn and each of the three people draws a sharp breath.

Bull skips forward to investigate, but bolts back into hiding when he sees a posse of explorers coming to secure the barn area. While he runs, the red-stained cloth drops from his shoulder onto the barn floor, but Randleman doesn't notice. Laughing, elated at the simple victory, the Germans half-heartedly poke around and shine flashlights through the building but don't really seem to consider a cavernous stable – filled with the same hay they used to conceal a tank – as much of a hiding place. Guess that could be why they ultimately lost this thing. The last remaining German is about to leave when he spots Bull's hanky and freezes. Eyes wide, he whirls around and calls out what I imagine equates to, "Is somebody there? Come forward!" or possibly, "If you don't want this, can I put it on eBay?" Randleman launches a surprise attack and slays the man with his bayonet, slicing and dicing and making German julienne. When he finishes,

Bull peers up at the terrified Nuenen natives, blood splashed all over his face and looking very Lord of the Flies. Panting, he stares at the duo before man and wife shake their heads in shock and run away. Okay. They sucked. They had all the point of a baseball.

Easy's men dig bigger ditches, because you know what they say about the size of a man's ditch. Gonorrhea walks over and curtly – as is his way – asks whether anyone in Bull's squad has heard news of their sergeant. "If there ain't no body, then there ain't nobody fucking dead, okay?" he snaps as a way of consoling them. If only soap-opera characters paid heed to that creed. Gonorrhea decides to double back and search for his friend, but Garcia and Hazboy volunteer instead; Gonorrhea allows a thin smile before whispering, "Go get him." Inspired, Webster grins. "All right, what the hell," he shrugs, and the entire squad tromps off in search of its beloved leader. Cobb, of course, doesn't want to go. He's still got the shakes and he's just weedy and gross and unlikable enough that it's possible he'll be The Next One To Go.

Webster takes the lead. From the distance, they see German tanks still actively moving around the Nuenen area and decide to sneak some other way into town; we see a flash of light on Cobb's face as he talks to himself, so he did apparently decide to join rather than be a chickenshit. Meanwhile, gentle Bull buries the dead German under some hay.

Nixon and Winters watch fires blazing on the horizon, a shot we've seen employed in "Day of Days" and which will no doubt show itself again. Winters notes that Eindhoven's being bombed. Nixon, bursting with insight, says, "Yeah." They gaze resignedly at the disaster and agree to turn in for the night. Nixon sighs, "They won't be waving so many orange flags at us tomorrow."

Daybreak. Bull either knows the Germans are gone, or believes them to be a nocturnal people, because he strolls right out into the town center without a gun drawn. Before him lie corpses of his Easy pals; the sight of Miller's crusty head wound particularly tugs at him. Just as he's fingering the private's dog tags, he hears a honking Jeep approaching and waves to the soldier on board, who looks a whole lot like Hoobler and so I'm deeming it thus. Nearby, Bull's squad approaches on foot, excited. Except that by now he no longer needs rescuing, but it's the thought that's important.

The Jeep carries Randleman back toward camp; he encounters the Randleman Rescue Party. Bull says he's delighted to see his men again; "Not as glad as us," one of them says. "We'd almost given up on you, boss." Martin runs over when he sees the car, elatedly shaking Bull's hand. "Get a little lost?" he asks. "No, a flaming tank almost crushed me, and you saw it, asshole. Thanks for helping me with that," Bull is too polite to say. Gonorrhea skips over and says, "I don't know whether to slap you, kiss you, or salute you," he grins. He jokes that he told Bull's "scalawags" not to go on the suicide mission to rescue their man, but they wouldn't listen. "I told them don't bother," Gonorrhea pretends. It's cute, actually, because Bull's men are glowing with happiness and pride at having gone to find him; Gonorrhea and Martin are thrilled to have their friend back but are feigning nonchalance. Bull smiles. "Never did like this company none," he says. Aw. He's endearing.

Easy moves out, and Winters stares calmly at them as they pull away. Bull, his shoulder bandaged, sits on the back of an open truck and nods a hello to Winters, who twitches back with something resembling relief. Winters is the king of fractional smiles. Nixon appears and Winters cracks a non-joke about the incorrect "it's only old men and kids" intelligence about the German army. He hates retreating. "There's a first time for everything," Nixon shrugs. Winters asks how the other divisions did in Market-Garden, and Nixon hedges by admitting, "I think we have to find another way into Germany." The last truck pulls away, leaving ruined towns in its wake.

Easy's regiment, the 506th, lost 180 men and had 560 soldiers wounded during Market-Garden. The entire 101st Airborne lost 750 men and had 2100 injured.

Crossroads

Season 1

Episode Number: 5

Season Episode: 5

Originally aired: Sunday September 30, 2001
Writer: Erik Jendreson
Director: Tom Hanks
Show Stars: Michael Cudlitz (Denver 'Bull' Randleman), Ron Livingston (Capt. Lewis Nixon), Scott Grimes (T/Sgt. Donald Malarkey), Donnie Wahlberg (2nd Lt. C. Carwood Lipton), Neal McDonough (1st Lt. Lynn "Buck" Compton), Ross McCall (Joseph D Liebgott), Frank John Hughes (S/Sgt. William "Wild Bill" Guarnere), Rick Gomez (George Luz), Kirk Acevedo (SSgt. Joseph Toye), James Madio (Frank J Perconte), Richard Speight Jr. (Warren 'Skip' Muck), Dale Dye (Colonel Robert Sink), Damian Lewis (Richard D. Winters), Dexter Fletcher (John), Shane Taylor (Eugene G 'doc' Roe), Phil McKee (Major Robert L Strayer), Tom Hardy (Pfc. John Janovec), Matthew Settle (Capt. Ronald Spiers), Philip Barantini (Wayne 'skinny' Sisk), James McAvoy (Pvt. James Miller), Rick Warden (II) (1st Lt. Harry Welsh), Matthew Leitch (Floyd 'Tab' Talbert), Nolan Hemmings (Charles 'Chuck' Grant), Nicholas Aaron (Robert E 'popeye' Wynn), Peter Youngblood Hills (Darrell C 'shifty' Powers), Robin Laing (Edward J 'babe' Heffron), Mark Huberman (Pvt. Lester 'Leo' Hashey), Peter McCabe (IV) (Cpl Donald Hoobler)

Guest Stars: Luke Roberts (Suerth), Jimmy Fallon (2nd Lt. George Rice)

Summary: Winters writes a report on the challenge of an unexpected resistance to a German attack, and is haunted by his conscience after shooting a teenage German soldier; this flashback occurs several times in later episodes. Operation Pegasus is depicted. Easy Company is called to Bastogne to repel the sudden German counterattack. At the end of the episode, Captain Winters now effectively commands the whole battalion.



This week, the theme is leadership. One man quite astutely points out that if you're a leader, you lead the way. And on tough and easy assignments alike. "A leader has to understand the people that are under him," posits another man. "Understand their needs, their desires, how they think a little bit." The third veteran recalls that "he" always made the right decisions along the way, and was one of the best soldiers around. The final man marvels that "he" survived. The "he" in question, I believe, is Winters, but the

name is never uttered.

Pant-o-vision. Running. Blurry ground. Light glints off a bayonet. This soldier, it seems, is fleeing from the Blair Witch. He stops when he comes upon the Blair Nazi, and shoots the unarmed man at close range.

Oct. 17, 1944. Schoonderlogt, Holland. Captain Winters stands near a window, morosely looking outside, breathing deeply. "Lew?" he calls to a room behind him. "Wake up, they want us

back at Regiment." There's no motion in the backfield, so Winters wheels around and charges into Nixon's sleeping chamber – basically, a bed with a curtain drawn around it. Nixon lies sprawled atop his sheets, boxers twisted up around the end zone. Winters rewards his pal's refusal to wake up by grabbing an nearby pitcher and dumping it all over the bed. Nixon screams, then stops and sniffs the air. "Goddammit, that's my own piss, for chrissake!" Yeah! College rules! Nixon, pissed, on so very many levels, throws a urine-soaked pillow at the laughing Winters.

Ostensibly after a long shower, Nixon sits in a moving Jeep and blathers in Winters's direction. "We're the only unit in the group that has the Germans on the German side of the Rhine," he shouts over the din of the motor. "If we had taken Antwerp, [although] I'm not saying that would've been easy, we'd be over the river, well-supplied, and have the Krauts on their heels." He jokes that all he needs now is to get Ike on the phone. That, and to potty-train. The Jeep stops. Winters cracks that he's been hanging on Nixon's every word, then jumps out with his pal and heads inside HQ.

Apparently, Col. Sink is on some kind of rampage, but no one explains why he's so cheesed. He introduces Nixon and 1st Lt. "Moose" Heyliger to a British officer, Col. Dobie of the country's 1st Airborne. We're reminded just how decimated that airborne division was during the badly botched Market-Garden offensive: of slightly more than 10,000 men, 8,000 were killed or captured. Dobie is tasked with rescuing some of the soldiers who were trapped in Arnhem when it fell to the Germans. There's 140 Brits trapped fifty miles north of the Rhine just outside a town held by the enemy. The plan is to meet them at a river bank and ship them back across to the Allied side. Someone orders Heyliger to assemble an Easy Company team to handle the operation, aided by six boats supplied by Canadian engineers. "The rendezvous point is isolated and doable," Dobie says. "I swam it myself last night." Way to go, big man. But did you swim it uphill both ways in a snowstorm? Winters is watching this happen, anxious to jump into the discussion but biting his tongue. We're not told why. At 0030, apparently, the Brits will signal a "V" for victory with a handheld red torch, which Dobie smarmily translates as "flashlight" for the dense, dirty Americans with their decaf coffee and their inefficient vocabulary. Col. Strayer christens the mission Operation Pegasus, ordering 2nd battalion to step up and achieve the objective. Like they've ever needed to be told.

Strayer grabs Winters and demands his signature on the Market-Garden report; he also needs other battalion paperwork from him. Winters promises them by 1300, as well as a banal inventory of material that the British 43rd division left behind. Winters assents again. Col. Sink shouts out that he wants to give out citations for the Oct. 5 action Easy saw, and he can't do it unless Winters files a report. "Light a fire under it, Dick," he orders. Looking devastated to be away from the action, Winters leaves. Aw. Someone needs a cuddle.

In his office, Winters types slowly, as though the infernal letter-application machine is alien to him. He begins typing a report of the Oct. 5 mission, as promised, and his musing takes us back to the time.

In a wooden building, the lads are discussing where they are, and doing a mighty lousy job of it. All I can glean is that they're inside a wooden building, having a discussion. Talbert strolls over to Winters and smirks that the replacements are learning the ropes. They banter about a dog. They dance the polka and play freeze tag. I don't know. Suddenly, someone screams, "Penetration!" and we hear gunfire. A surprise attack outside has wounded Pvt. Alley, and the confused and scared men are pointing fingers, trying to blame it on Boyle's loud voice or Liebgott's incessant...liebgotting. Pvt. Alley is dragged inside, blood crusting the entire left side of his body. Someone blathers that they're at a crossroads, where a street crosses a Dutch dike. The Germans are defending the dike. Winters screams for everyone to gather all the ammo they can, while they wait for Eugene Roe – the medic – to arrive and tend to Alley. Back in his office, Winters types that an enemy grenade caught Alley and got Easy Company moving.

Winters has a squad from 1st Platoon with him, running through a ditch. They're trying to pinpoint enemy fire, but when an MG-42 fires near their location, the men dive to the ground. "They're shooting down the road at regimental headquarters. But that's three miles away," Winters says. "Why are they giving away their position?" Talbert doesn't know, not being clairvoyant or on the enemy side, or even awake. Winters tells him to await his signal; the word passes down the line that everyone is to hold his position until further notice. Leaping over a high bank, Winters slides down a slope, bolts across a dirt road, scales a fence, and hides again. This gives him a different vantage point, whereby he can see the German soldiers. Darting back over the fence

and across the dirt road, Winters pokes his head over the grassy hill and signals to Talbert; looks like they're supposed to run across the field, pirouette three times, draw the Germans offside, and then thrust ahead to find the G-spot. Talbert nods, then gives the signal; the squad scampers over the hill, across the dirt road and over the fence. Now, everyone's with Winters. Phew. I'm out of breath.

Winters, at his desk, furrows his brow.

Back in battle, Easy's squad fans out along its new ditch. "This is the fallback position, here," Winters whispers. "Mortars, deploy here. First squad, on me. Go!" Fanning out in right angles, some men set up the mortar gun, while the others follow Winters, looking tired, dirty, sweaty, and ready to whoop some Nazi ass. Winters halts the run and studies the Germans from this new position.

Sitting at his desk, Winters furrows his brow.

Swiftly Winters counts the number of Germans manning the MG-42s and decides to fire upon them. He approaches six gunners and tells them to aim at a specific man, following him, ready to kill him on Winters's signal. Winters himself covers a seventh target. We see each man squint and take aim. One guy who doesn't have a weapon narrows his eyes just to share in the killing spirit. Winters shoots, and six other shots follow a second later; seven Germans drop, and the others run around squawking and trying to mount a counterattack. The mortar fire begins, and the gunners keep firing as well, in what looks like an even fight. Winters yells that it's time to fall back, and the mortar fire continues until Easy is safely back where it started. The ploy worked; the Germans' attention is away from annihilating battalion HQ and toward its new threat. Winters screams for someone to try to apprehend the Germans at the base of the dike. He also wants Boyle and Perconte to do...hell, something. Bullets whiz through the night, little neon sparks of danger. Winters gets on the radio and screams for Welsh to bring up Lt. Peacock with the rest of 1st Platoon and a backup machine-gun squad. "Dukeman," he screams, and someone who apparently answers to that name appears. Winters orders him toward the right flank, but as he goes, he's felled by an enemy bullet. Aw, Dukeman, we never knew ye.

The furrowed brow here shown belongs to Winters, who is at his desk, sitting.

Daybreak. Talbert tells Winters that the rest of 1st Platoon has arrived, and Gordon's toting a hefty gun. But enough about his trousers. Winters intently studies a grimy map, determining that the Germans are behind a solid roadway embankment and they're just in a small ditch. "They can outflank us along the dike and catch us here as soon as they figure it out," sighs Winters. But he figures that they have no choice in the matter, and must attack. Or they could adopt one of my patented techniques, which is to sprint like hell to the nearest tavern and clamp their mouths around a keg tap. Winters, being a stickler for honor and duty and courage, and all those pesky qualities, formulates a plan: Talbert takes ten men to the dike, Peacock takes ten along the left flank, and Winters takes ten up the middle. Everyone scatters.

Mid-brow-furrow, a knock at the door interrupts Winters. Nixon saunters up the stairs and dangles his empty flask from one hand, his facial expression conveying exactly why he's there. Rolling his eyes, Winters crosses to his foot locker and opens it, inviting Nixon to it with an exaggerated gesture. "I don't know why I'm still doing this," Nixon says cheerfully. Winters, back at his desk, looks up. "Drinking?" he asks. "No, hiding it in your foot locker," Nixon replies, filling his flask. "I'm a captain, for chrissake." Winters: "Why don't you just give it up?" Nixon: "Drinking?" Winters: "No, hiding it in my foot locker. You're a captain, for pete's sake." Nixon smirks. "Maybe you're right. Maybe this is the perfect place to stop drinking – right here on the business end of an Allied advance," he says, pausing for a second before holding aloft his flask with a wry smile: "Cheers." Winters laughs. Look, they're opposites, but they're still friends! That Paula Abdul is one smart woman – she sang about this. As Nixon replaces the bottle, he notices Winters's complete focus on finishing his report. "That's not lit," he offers helpfully. "Keep it simple. Try writing in the first person plural. Say 'we' a lot." Winters retorts, "Thanks for the tip," but with affectionate annoyance.

"Fix bayonets!" Winters screams. Perconte and Randleman oblige. So does Liebgott, who winks at me to prove his continued vitality. Replacement Garcia readies his weapon, looking like a seasoned soldier with the gritty determination in his face. Or maybe that's actual grit. Winters tosses a can of red smoke into the field, then takes off across the field. Alone. Not sure how this fits into his "I'll take ten men up the middle" plan. Everyone wants to run after him, but Talbert holds them back until the air starts to fill with red smoke from the hissing canister. Under this

extremely dubious cover ("Oi, Helmut, vat is zat suspicious bright redness in ze air?" "Relax, Gunther. Zat is just ze vapors that little wee bunnies kick up ven zey run. All is safe") Easy runs safely to a new position.

Winters, during his mad sprint, comes upon a lone, unarmed German squatting in a field. This is the Blair Nazi from the first scene; Winters looks completely flustered to have come upon him, and abruptly shoots the boy. He continues the barrage of gunfire when he spies a pack of enemy soldiers, taking down several of them. Easy finally catches up to him and hunkers down to form a solid line of fire. It looks like an easy rout, which, as we've learned through Easy's history, means that some serious shit is around the corner. Sure enough: "Holy shit!" shrieks a gunner. We follow his pointing finger and see a fresh company of German soldiers pouring over a wall to aid in the attack. Winters flips and radios to the rest of Easy, begging for reinforcements as shots ring out around him.

Martin and a few other soldiers grab a gang of Germans and take them prisoner. The captives try to pretend they're Polish, but Martin hisses that there are no Poles in the SS. Another nameless Allied soldier screams, "Oh shit!" Luz gets on the radio and does...something. Winters calls it "send[ing] a lightning contact report," but for all I know, that means, "Turn it up – Rick Dees in the Morning is on!" Winters yells for Sgt. Boyle to try to assess the directions from which enemy fire is coming, which means he's toast. An explosion on the road knocks him down, wounding his leg; as Winters calls for Easy to take cover, he screams for help dragging Boyle off the road. Webster appears just in time to fall down and unconvincingly yell, "Jesus Christ, they got me" in the same tone of voice one might use to say, "Jesus Christ, I asked for onion rings and got fries." Um, not that I ever say that, much less after I've already parked the car and started unpacking the Burger King bag. For our edification, Winters shrieks that they're facing German artillery and need to take cover, but not before yanking Boyle off the road.

At his desk, Winters engages in wild brow-furrowing.

The spat has abated, and Winters surveys the carnage. One man realizes with surprise that they were fighting the SS. Liebgott, though, is still shooting off into the distance, and Winters has to yell at the intense soldier to stop doing that. Look, baby, don't try to change him. Winters is alarmed to see Liebgott's neck wound, but my favorite undead man insists it's no big deal, so Winters decides to make sure he gets treated by sending him back to the command post with some German prisoners. Liebgott brightens. "Come on, Kraut boys!" he shouts gleefully, which unsettles Winters. Whirling around, he grabs Liebgott's gun and removes all but one round of ammo, thus ensuring that Liebgott can't brutalize the captives en route. Liebgott doesn't appreciate this, but he complies anyway.

Webster winces while his leg is bandaged. "'They got me.' Can you believe that? Can you believe I said that?" he groans, overcome with the triteness of it all. He limps to his feet and cheerfully bids farewell to his comrades. Meanwhile, Nixon arrives on the scene and gets a report from one of the officers: "The Germans were flooding back towards the ferry crossing when we hit them with artillery. It was like a turkey shoot. Then they hit us with 88s, zeroed in on this crossroad. Lucky, though, only twenty-two wounded." Nixon snorts, "Lucky?" and makes a beeline for Winters.

A brow, furrowed; Winters, seated.

In his flashback, Winters is also seated, this time on a field by a wooden fencepost. He's staring at the carnage. Nixon crouches next to him and tries to be supportive, asking about his pal's health and the man who died. "Dukeman," Winters says sadly. "Dukeman," repeats Nixon, pretty sure he doesn't know who the hell that is. "Well, you're looking at two full companies of the SS out there, fifty dead, another hundred wounded...that's not bad, for Dukeman." Winters is too noble to think that way, so he asks Nixon for a drink...of water, but oh, that Winters scamp had us all going for a second! Nixon sniffs his canteen, proclaims it alcohol-free, and hands it to Winters. Although, I hate to point out, Steve Sanders pulled the same scam on Brandon Walsh, with disastrous consequences...but, as Winters gulps safely, it seems there's no such chicanery here.

Col. Sink explains in Spanish that the...whoa, Spanish? Somehow, my VCR switched into SAP mode. Okay. Bless the captioners. He says the 363 Volksgrenadier hit the town of Opheusden early that morning at exactly same time "your SS" made a run for the battalion command post. Apparently, the 506th third battalion got creamed and 2nd battalion took a brutal hit; Major Horton, who helps run the battalion, died trying to organize a defense. "Major Horton is dead?"

Nixon clumsily exposit. Sink wants no more of this inane dialogue, so he grabs Winters for a moment alone. "How would you feel about handling the battalion?" he asks Winters, who blinks and says, "Sir?" Sink sighs. "I'm moving you up to executive officer, 2nd battalion." Winters smiles that he's certain he could command the men in the field. "You're a solid tactician and a good leader," Sink praises him. "Don't worry about the admin." Suddenly, it hits Winters just what this promotion means – giving up Easy. "Moose Heyliger will command Easy," Sink informs him. Winters nods sadly and agrees with the selection. This explains his earlier reticence to contribute to strategy; clearly, his XO position has entangled him in more admin snarls than he thought. And, incidentally, Heyliger was not really the first choice; an unnamed officer came in first and failed to win the respect of his men; he was fired.

Nixon and Moose barge into Winters's office, interrupting a whopper of a brow-furrow. "Finish your novel yet?" breezes Nix. "That's a lotta homework," Moose grins. "Thought XO was supposed to be a fun job." Nixon eyes a small guy hovering near Winters's right elbow and unceremoniously asks, "Who are you?" It's Zielinski, an orderly who works for Winters. In a pointless aside, I'd like to point out that Zielinski looks like a friend of mine who we called Zippy. I am now having a private laugh at this, simply because I can; shamelessly, I am allowing my supreme recapping power to affect my judgment. And it feels good. Very good. Nixon rudely orders coffee and a bacon sandwich; cowed, Zippy leaves. Winters hands his two-page report to Nixon, telling him to deliver it to Sink "with [his] compliments." Nixon teases Winters about missing Easy. Eagerly, Winters tries to lap up details about Operation Pegasus, which will be Moose's first operation as CO of Easy. Dick nitpicks every detail of the plan, until Nixon finally interrupts, "Dick, Easy's in good hands." Winters looks deflated. "Yeah, right," he frets. "Hang tough." Moose thanks him and departs; before Nixon leaves, Winters has one more question. "Are we sure of the intelligence?...Is Easy walking into another company of Germans no one can see?" he frets. Nixon looks pointedly, but sympathetically, at his pal. "Why not ask Moose when he gets back?" he suggests. Downcast, Winters tries one more time. "If they do run into any trouble, will you let me know?" Nixon cocks his head. "Yeah. If you run into any bacon sandwich, do the same," he replies sarcastically. Left alone, Winters sits dejectedly and breathes, "Yeah," obviously lonely for combat.

Easy quietly rows across the river, safely dragging the boats onto the shore. "So, Colonel, where are they?" Moose asks. Col. Dobie calls for a guy named Leicester, who darts out of the bushes and greets the group enthusiastically. Nice secret signal. "Never thought I'd be so glad to see a bloody Yank," Leicester bubbles. Yes, well, you're welcome for all the help in World War I, asshole. Moose tells Dobie to go collect his men, and Randleman passes word down the line that the Brits are coming. This is tedious. What happened to the threat of danger? They're not hiding, they're barely whispering, and there aren't any code words. What's an operation without code?

Zippy hands Winters a sheaf of papers to sign, and he obliges, but not without tensely checking his watch. I do feel for him, but I also can't think of a more boring operation than Operation Pegasus. Winters is probably facing a bigger threat from the splinters on his wooden desk. Meanwhile, Moose is warmly greeted by another Brit. "God bless you, my man," he says. They load the soldiers onto the boats and push off back across the river.

Raising a glass of lager, the Brits toast their American rescuers. "Moose Heyliger and the American 101st" – wow, that's giving Moose too much power – "have done the Red Devils a great service, making it possible for us to return and fight the enemy on another day," Dobie shouts. "To Easy Company! Victory, and Currahee!" Everyone bellows, "Currahee!" and heavy chugging ensues. Winters, still holed up in his room, peeks at the site of the ruckus through his window and allows his mouth to form a teensy smile. He's proud of Easy, even if he can't command it anymore.

Oct. 31, 1944; Driel, Holland. Winters and Moose stroll beside a deserted railroad track at night. "I was only Easy's CO for four months, Moose," protests Winters, reluctant to give the man definitive advice about the job. Even if it was out of necessity, it's to Winters's credit that he moved up the ranks so quickly and with so little hesitation from his superiors. Moose insists that Winters is the only combat commander the men of Easy have ever known, and here Moose is, coming from a different company altogether.... "You know where they came from, and what they've been through," notes Winters. "Hang tough. Train the new platoon leaders and trust your non-coms." The non-coms (NCOs, or non-commissioned officers) are folks like Gonorrhea, Martin, Malarkey, and Bull Randleman, the staff sergeants who run squads. In Easy's case, most of them were the only original members remaining, and they had the enduring respect of men

both above and below them. We witnessed that last week, when Randleman went missing and his squad risked its life to find him.

A man bellows, "Halt!" and before Moose can identify himself, he's shot and drops to the ground. Winters screams, "Hold your fire!" and a terrified soldier scampers forth to examine what he's wrought. Winters tries to be calm, asking the man to send for Lt. Welsh while also keeping Moose awake and focused. The soldier doesn't move, so Winters yells at him again until it takes effect. This explains what a dullard of an episode this is; the writers needed to establish Winters's promotion and the presence of a new Easy CO, but at the same time this inaction seems like such an awful waste of a budget.

Winters, Welsh, and medic Roe load the wounded Easy CO into an ambulance, aided by the frightened private from Wyoming who wounded him. Not sure why we needed to know his home state, but whatever, I'm not going to scoff at details. Roe asks how much morphine Winters administered, and he flippantly estimates two, maybe three syrettes. "Jesus, you trying to kill him?" barks Roe. He's angry that no one told him yet how much medicine has been pumped into his patient's body, but since Moose is a big guy, he should live through whatever overdose he might've been given. Welsh feebly says they were just trying to ease the pain of their wounded friend, and didn't know what else to do. "Well, you ought," Roe's neck vein throbs. "You are officers, you are grownups. You oughtta know." Winters slams the ambulance doors and pats the window in farewell. His bloodstained hand leaves a mark on the glass, which we see closely as it drives away; it looks exactly like damn Wilson the Volleyball from *Cast Away*. Same color, same sloppy spiky handprint style. I am ashamed of Hanks.

Dec. 10, 1944, Mourmelon-le-Grande, France. Men march and chant, because they're in the military. From the regimental HQ, Winters frets that Easy is only at 65 that number and a new CO, Lt. Dike, no one likes. "They're calling him Foxhole Norman" after only a few weeks under his command, Welsh giggles. Nixon tries to calm Winters by pointing out that nothing's planned until mid-March, which leaves ample time for training and restaffing before they "jump into Berlin and end the war." Winters panics that the NCOs are the only things keeping Easy together. Speaking of which, Gonorrhea's on the loose and he's spreading toward Winters with a quickness. Everyone greets him with smiles, and Gonorrhea pleasantly but sadly says, "Its true. I never thought I'd see you behind a desk." As you can imagine, Winters is thrilled at the reminder. Gonorrhea smirks and notes that he's just gone AWOL from the hospital so that he could rejoin Easy, rather than miss anything and get reassigned; this loyalty, as we've noted, was not uncommon. Popeye Wynn did the same thing. Gonorrhea pretends to worry that he's caused a problem, but then admits he'd have bolted regardless. Winters doesn't look up at him, ostensibly because he's pained at his desk job and misses working with guys like Gonorrhea in the field. Gonorrhea produces a letter for Winters from Moose, who is okay but still facing a long recovery. Awkward pause. Small-talk about a 506th vs 502nd football game, set for Christmas Day; when Gonorrhea notices Winters isn't playing along with the jabber, he ruefully takes his leave.

Winters sits mournfully, then balks loudly when Nixon produces something from his pocket. "What's that, a piece of paper? I don't want to see another piece of paper," Winters growls, at the end of his rope. I confess to feeling a sense of loss as well. When I found out he wasn't Easy's CO any more, I kept complaining in my mind that Stephen Ambrose was clearly telling the story wrong, and needed to cease examining the interior of his own colon so that he could correct the error. But, no. Damn true story. Nixon prefaces his announcement by saying that General Taylor is in Washington, Col. Sink is seeing Marlene Dietrich in a USO show, Strayer is at Lt. Col. Dobie's wedding in London, and Nixon is off to Aldbourne "to look up a certain lady." Nixon! You dog, you! Anyway, his point is that they've decided Winters deserves a forty-eight-hour pass to Paris for some rest and relaxation. And the love of a righteous, saucy French whore.

Eiffel Tower. Paris is crawling with soldiers on leave, most of them carousing – and most of them striking the "c" as well. Winters is seated at a bustling café, listening to soldiers around him brag about the toughness of paratroopers and basically trying to one-up each other with tales from basic training. Winters isn't into the scene at all, much preferring to play the morose loner with a heart of gold, a visage of misery and a bod of mystery. He looks, if I may say it, outstanding in the uniform.

Winters scans the other Metro passengers, laying eyes on a young, amiable-looking French lad and an old woman knitting. He flashes in and out of his memories of Holland, Dukeman's

death, and the wounding of his men. Closing his eyes, Winters relives running across a Dutch field and happening upon the unarmed German. He turns to smile at the French boy, but sees in him the countenance of the young Nazi he killed. The moment of eye contact with the German lasts forever, and for the first time we see fear in Winters's eyes, but not fear of death – fear of himself, and of what he's about to do, and what he knows he must do. And he left the coffee pot on back at the barracks. His eyes flying open, Winters realizes that he's ridden the Metro through to the last stop. Slowly, and I do mean slowly, he rises from his seat, slinks out of the station, exchanges a half-smile with the French lad, and moseys through the dark, deserted section of Paris. He looks so lonely and troubled; this part touched me more than a lot of the WWII killing scenes have. Something about Damian Lewis's portrayal of Winters has me absolutely dying to see the man smiling, happy, and actually enjoying himself, and letting others enjoy him. When he reaches his lodgings, he can only watch people having fun; he doesn't participate.

But oh, forget all that crap. Winters is getting in the bath, and I spy a naked thigh. Exhaling elatedly, Winters leans back and revels in the warm bathwater, and he's all sinew and lean muscle and I've never wanted a bath more in my life.

At the camp in Driel, a John Wayne movie screens in a tent. Luz loudly tries to pull a vocal MBTV of sorts on the movie, imitating the Duke and making fun of the movie. Donnie and Toye get really mad at him for spoiling the movie, because John Wayne is really talented and he deserves his fame, and Luz is just jealous because he has no talent of his own and is just a big lame dorkwad with no life and it's not Jacob and Ashley's fault that they are in a boy band, and they dress really well so you just shut the fuck up about that, and O-TOWN RULZ 4EVA!

Suddenly, Malarkey dashes inside and throws sixty dollars at his pal Skip, from whom he borrowed the initial stake for what became an epic night of gambling. He throws Skip an extra tip and brags that he won as much as six thousand on the tables, but ended up with only \$3600. Skip is shocked. Malarkey grins that he's going to blow it all in Paris as soon as possible. That's fairly insensitive, because in the book, Malarkey's excitement stems from his ability to pay for his remaining semesters of University of Oregon tuition. That's one of my favorite details from the book, and I'm sad they scrapped it here in favor of making him look like a total boner.

Winters creeps through the rows and sits directly behind Compton, who stares transfixed at the screen. He asks after Buck, and his four ass wounds, and whether he's seen the movie before; stony silence greets every inquiry. Dick slaps Buck's arm, and Compton revives himself long enough to call the movie "a real corker." I didn't quite understand this scene. Is Buck just shell-shocked from his injury, and facing his own mortality? Is he annoyed at Winters? Is he upset that Winters isn't commanding Easy? Is he upset because they ran out of supplies and plugged his four bullet holes with chocolate chips? Seriously, though, this just makes me even sadder for Winters. He needed a buddy, and Compton's all zoned out and useless.

Luz gets excited because the movie's female star is about to say her line. He imitates it really, really badly three times before she gets around to uttering it herself, and Donnie rightly spins around and shoots a major stink-eye at Luz. Suddenly, soldiers march through the tent, shut off the movie, and turn on the lights. Luz is under arrest for perpetrating an illegal assault of our senses, and will be flogged forty times in the town square with a copy of the regiment scrapbook. And once that's done, Easy will move out again. "Elements of the 1st and 6th Panzer divisions broke [into the] Ardennes Forest," a man barks. The Germans have overrun the U.S. 28th infantry and parts of its 4th, so the 101st is in line to reinforce the line. Dejected, Luz, Toye, Donnie, Malarkey, and Skip file out of the tent to collect their things. Compton sneaks one look at Winters, then stares straight ahead and doesn't move. Dick rises and briefly waits for Buck, then strolls toward the exit. Stopping, Winters makes a half-turn, which is enough to jack Compton's holy butt off its seat. Buck is not at his most strapping; I guess a bullet through the buttocks can do that to a person. But he can still swagger.

Near the vehicles, which are being loaded, Winters hails Lt. Peacock and asks him whether he's seen Col. Strayer yet. Peacock is too busy looking for the Easy CO, Lt. Dike, and complains that the 4th Army's problem is being unfairly dumped on the paratroopers. Suddenly, CO Dike appears and bitches that Strayer hasn't returned from London yet, of all the damn nerve. Winters is curt with him, pointing out that Dike's bigger problems are myriad: his men will return to action in the dead of winter without enough cold-weather clothes or ammunition. Dike doesn't get it. Winters doesn't order him to canvass the whole base and gather sufficient supplies like rations, clothes, and weapons; rather, he suggests it with an air of helpfulness and an undercurrent of

menace, as if to imply Dike's ineptitude as Easy CO. Dike promptly turns forty-five degrees and delegates all those instructions to Peacock and Compton. It's barely perceptible, but I think Winters flinches.

Tires crunch on the snowy, icy road. Soldiers huddled in the trucks joke about the ruckus they're making in transit. "The Luftwaffe must be asleep," Compton says emotionlessly. Gonorrhea moans that he misses the C-47 jets, and another soldier cracks that this is just a tailgate jump. Everyone complains about the lack of socks, ammunition, coats, and hats, teasing the newbies and basically amusing themselves to pass the time. A new kid called Suerth Jr. has a carton of smokes that they goad him into sharing. When they finally disembark, they're disoriented, know nothing about the mission, and have full bladders that need relief. Officers create gas fires in snow pits just to provide a little light and warmth.

Col. Sink briefs Winters. "Welcome to Belgium," he says – specifically to Bastogne, a vital crossroads town with seven roads leading in and out of the city. If the Allies can hold Bastogne, it will deny the Germans critical supply routes for the armored divisions, so Eisenhower ordered U.S. troops to surround Bastogne and "dig in tight as a tick." Col. Strayer returns. Sink explains that 2nd battalion will be in the woods, 1st battalion will man the left flank, and the third will be in reserve. Finally, they're ordered to snag ammo from any source they can find, because they're going in completely understocked.

An Easy private notices a parade of dejected, destroyed soldiers trailing away from the front lines. They're zombies in uniforms. "Jesus Christ," breathes the private. "Bill, Don, look at this!" Gonorrhea and Malarkey cease urination and drop their jaws at the sight of this trail of tears. "You're going the wrong way!" Gonorrhea shrieks. Grabbing one retreating soldier, Gonorrhea begs for an explanation. "They came out of nowhere they slaughtered us gotta get outta here," the actor says robotically, in the planet's worst interpretation of "shell-shocked." Scared, Gonorrhea and the Gang exchange looks and promptly start plucking ammo and grenades from every retreating soldier they see.

Jimmy Fallon to the rescue! In Stupid Cameo 101, Fallon drives a Jeep full of ammo up to the cavalcade, beeping to part the crowds as though he's on one of those irritating little airport carts. Winters calls him a Godsend. Jimmy says he heard the 101st was arriving, so he high-tailed it to the site of a recent ammo dump and grabbed anything he could fit into the Jeep. He exposit in a monotone that the Germans attacked with Tigers, Panthers, and the rest of the Barnum & Bailey Three-Ring Artillery Circus. Winters praises his good work. Jimmy Fallon can't deliver a line without looking like he's chewing on the inside of his cheeks to keep from breaking character. Since he can't appear on Saturday Night Live without cracking up during a sketch, I wonder how many takes he needed here. Sitting back in the Jeep, Jimmy gets a glamour shot, set against a parade of soldiers. "A Panzer division is about to cut the road south. Looks like you guys are gonna be surrounded," he says flatly. Boo! Jimmy Fallon shouldn't be here. And I usually like him. Winters strikes a gallant pose and intones, "We're paratroopers. We're supposed to be surrounded." Propaganda 1, Fallon 0.

The men trudge toward the front lines, having reached a metaphorical as well as literal crossroads in the war campaign. Winters flashes his trademark look of somber contemplation, watching as Gonorrhea, Liebgott, Skip, and Toye pass by looking grimly intent on kicking some Nazi behinds. Pleased, Winters follows them toward battle. He's back where he belongs, fighting alongside the 506th's finest and commanding their collective fate.

A graphic tells us that Easy moved into the Bastogne woods without support from the sky or from artillery, and that they lacked food, ammunition, and winter clothes. Finally, a quote from the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment's "Currahee Scrapbook": "Farthest from your mind is the thought of falling back; in fact, it isn't there at all. And so you dig your hole carefully and deep, and wait."

This episode, to me, is the worst of the five, but I have high hopes for six and seven because they've gotten critical raves and center on some of the most crucial Allied operations. See you in Bastogne.

Bastogne

Season 1
Episode Number: 6
Season Episode: 6

Originally aired: Sunday October 7, 2001
Writer: Bruce McKenna
Director: David Leland
Show Stars: Michael Cudlitz (Denver 'Bull' Randleman), Ron Livingston (Capt. Lewis Nixon), Scott Grimes (T/Sgt. Donald Malarkey), Donnie Wahlberg (2nd Lt. C. Carwood Lipton), Neal McDonough (1st Lt. Lynn "Buck" Compton), Ross McCall (Joseph D Liebgott), Frank John Hughes (S/Sgt. William "Wild Bill" Guarnere), Rick Gomez (George Luz), Kirk Acevedo (SSgt. Joseph Toye), James Madio (Frank J Perconte), Richard Speight Jr. (Warren 'Skip' Muck), Dale Dye (Colonel Robert Sink), Damian Lewis (Richard D. Winters), Dexter Fletcher (John), Shane Taylor (Eugene G 'doc' Roe), Phil McKee (Major Robert L Strayer), Tom Hardy (Pfc. John Janovec), Matthew Settle (Capt. Ronald Spiers), Philip Barantini (Wayne 'skinny' Sisk), James McAvoy (Pvt. James Miller), Rick Warden (II) (1st Lt. Harry Welsh), Matthew Leitch (Floyd 'Tab' Talbert), Nolan Hemmings (Charles 'Chuck' Grant), Nicholas Aaron (Robert E 'popeye' Wynn), Peter Youngblood Hills (Darrell C 'shifty' Powers), Robin Laing (Edward J 'babe' Heffron), Mark Huberman (Pvt. Lester 'Leo' Hashey), Peter McCabe (IV) (Cpl Donald Hoobler)

Guest Stars: Laird MacIntosh (Jeep Driver), Lucie Jeanne (Renée Lemaire), William Armstrong (General McAuliffe)

Summary: Easy Company experiences the Battle of the Bulge and have to hold ground near Bastogne while running low on ammunition and other supplies. The episode focuses on medic Eugene "Doc" Roe as he helps out his fellow soldiers where he can, while also scrounging for medical supplies, of which the Company is dangerously low. He also befriends a Belgian nurse in Bastogne, who is later killed during a German bombing raid.



Veteran interviews. We learn that, despite a major supply shortage, Easy soldiers trusted the higher-ups to deliver whatever they needed. So the company dug in along a line of trees, but couldn't mask the location from the Germans, who "gave [them] a shellacking," one man remembers with a shake of his head. On the most dire days, Easy had one round of ammo per soldier. "There was this fog" that complicated the process of resupplying the front lines from the air. "Every time they tried, they missed us and

dropped to the Germans," one man says with a chuckle. I suppose, in retrospect, that would be funny. Another groovy old man shares the story of a comrade whose arm got sheared off below the elbow by a piece of flying shrapnel, and that as he was treated, he demanded that someone recover his wristwatch from the severed limb. A fourth man credits his continuing existence to

the savvy of a medic who stuck him with a morphine syrette at just the right spot. Finally, the last man comments that every time he climbs into bed on a cold night, he turns to his wife and says, "I'm glad I'm not in Bastogne." These clips are my favorite part of the show because of priceless, colorful details like that.

Boots crunch across tightly packed snow. A medic kneels, touches the ground, and draws away his hand with a gasp. He's cut himself on the coil of wire lying there, and takes a second to squeeze the cut and let crimson blood color his finger so that we know this actor will bleed for work. Unless that's an uncanny special effect, the man really did pierce his own skin. Then he wipes away the evidence and peers around him, surrounded by nothingness.

The medic is Eugene Roe, a serious-looking man of average height and sharp features. He appears to be lost, darting through endless snow and trees and fog, and finding nothing. Suddenly, he spots a dead body, and freezes in his tracks. Panning across the landscape, we see a horde of other corpses, most of them dead from the cold and all of them in enemy uniforms. Catching his gasp in his throat, Roe surveys the pile of bodies and realizes his battalion most certainly is not located at the second star on the right and straight on until morning; horribly misdirected, he backs away frantically.

Winters, perched on the upper edge of his foxhole, cracks ice with his knife in an effort to produce enough drops of water to enable a shave. That is dedication. That's the point at which I'd trade my razor for food and embrace my future as a sasquatch. As he spies Roe emerging from the fog, he also hears a suspicious noise behind him and hurriedly whispers for the medic to duck. Winters draws his rifle and points it at a very distant figure, shouting, "Kommen sie hier! Schnell!" Now, my German's a little rusty, but I'm pretty sure he's not offering the man hot strudel. Sure enough, moments later Winters is searching the prisoner's pockets, handing a wad of bandages to Roe for his supply chest.

General McAuliffe, the acting division commander because General Taylor was called to Washington – not that we've met him, either – arrives via Jeep to get an update on the battalion's status. Col. Strayer sighs that for every advance one spot makes, another portion of the line gets pushed back; the German artillery is mercilessly firing upon them and they have no aid station to treat the wounded conveniently. Strayer tosses the violin over to Winters, who then fiddles the "Got no ammo, got no clothes, got no food and my baby done left me" blues. He explains that the line is spread so thin that the enemy has wandered across it to, er, relieve their anuses (which is what happened above). "We just can't cover the line," Winters says glumly. Just then, Nixon pokes his hung-over head out of a covered foxhole and slurs, "Morning." He adds to the song by fretting that he paced the line at 0300 and couldn't find the 501st on their right flank, so he plugged the hole with a squad from 2nd platoon. Strayer verifies that there are, in fact, too few people stretched across too much land. Faced with this grim reality, McAuliffe helpfully says, "Hold the line and close the gaps." He goes on to cheer everyone by confirming that yes, the fog makes it impossible to drop supplies to them, and yes, there isn't much backup artillery for them, and yes, there's a whole lot of German shit headed their way. He then actually grabs everyone's morale and blows his nose on it.

Now that everyone's hopes are in the toilet, Roe quietly returns to Winters's foxhole and begs him for a comforting cuddle. Oh, wait, sorry, that was me talking. Apparently, Roe and the medics are short on bandages, and he needs to raid some individual aid kits. He got lost trying to find 3rd battalion to raid its supply chest. Winters has very little to give, but does note, "Get everything you can. You're going to need it."

Roe scrambles over to the hole of another medic, Spina. They pool supplies; Roe realizes he's got only one syrette of morphine and then fills in that 1st battalion pulled out of nearby Foy with major casualties. "If they're back, what the hell are we doing here?" groans Spina, reclined in his hole drinking water. Roe, all business, asks for scissors, but learns that Spina has none. Spying two medics in the same hole, Lt. Dike storms over and bitches at them for being careless. Donnie is with him. "Where the hell is my hole?" screams Dike. Donnie politely answers, "Right back there, sir. Maybe you missed it, huh? I'll walk you back." He obviously thinks Dike is three pounds short of a potbelly. Roe, for his part, doesn't seem to appreciate a reprimand from someone who gets to sit instead of running from hole to hole.

Boots on snow. Roe is running again, this time to Gonorrhea's hole. Gonorrhea has no morphine, but wants to talk to Roe about another problem; the medic, however, is already on the run. "How's the leg?" calls Roe. "To hell with the leg, I'm pissing needles!" screams Gonorrhea.

Great – if he could just piss a few filled with morphine, then Roe would be in business. Roe waves off Gonorrhoea and promises to return.

Next, Roe sprints and scrambles into Gordon's foxhole. "Seen 'em?" he asks. "No, but they're out there," says Gordon's pal. Gordon offers Roe coffee, but the medic is more desperately in need of scissors. "I have to check the sewing room," muses Gordon. "They might be upstairs in the study, in that skinny old drawer in the desk..." Roe rolls his eyes, getting the sarcasm but unwilling to make time for it. Politely, he asks for a syrette of morphine. "Hide your morphine!" Gordon cheerfully shouts to the guys, but before anyone can laugh, a blast knocks them to the ground.

Nearby, Skip and Malarkey dive for cover, the former freaked because his helmet is peppered with bullet dents. He tosses Roe a syrette as the medic scrambles through the maze of holes, dodging bullets and diving onto his belly at times. He lands in a hole occupied by Babe Heffron and Pvt. Julian, a replacement; establishing that neither is injured, Roe hears Penkala screaming for him and takes off again. "It's the artery, I can feel it!" panics Penkala. Roe examines the wound, a long, ugly tear in the man's forearm. Penkala is convinced he's going to bleed to death, so Roe tries to console him; suddenly, as more shots barrage the area, Penkala begs Roe not to take him to an aid station. "I can't go out in that shit!" he yells. Roe tenses. "You don't want to go out in this shit, and [yet] you yell 'Medic'?" he bristles, stunned at the sheer disregard for the doctors' safety and at the same time resigned to the job. Tersely, he informs Penkala that there is no aid station, bandages his arm, and then pauses as the shelling finally stops. Through the silence, Roe hears more screaming; before he sprints away, he snatches Penkala's aid kit.

Meeting up with Spina, Roe orders him to grab a pal and find 3rd Battalion, begging them for bandages, plasma, and whatever other supplies they can offer. "And get yourself a hot meal, too," he adds, softly, patting his friend on the arm. Spina scampers off; Roe removes his helmet, lets out a breath, and sits for his first respite in a long while.

Heffron and Spina trudge through the snow. "You know he told me he's a goddamn virgin?" Babe marvels. Spina has no idea who "he" is. "The replacement in my foxhole – Julian," answers Heffron. "A goddamn virgin. Just a kid." They snicker that the only virgin they know is the Virgin Mary. The only Mary I know is Bloody Mary. The men look around, confused, unable to distinguish one patch of tree-filled snow with another. Suddenly, Heffron drops right into a hidden foxhole. "Hinkel? Hinkel?" calls out a confused German soldier. Scrambling out, Babe grabs Spina and sprints in the opposite direction, as the enemy man grabs his gun to fire at the non- Hinkels.

The 3rd battalion aid station is a trench lined and supported with logs. Medics run though it and offer up bandages to Spina, but can't give away any morphine. Blasts pepper the area too vigorously for Spina to stay and make any kind of case for himself, although he does squeak that 2nd battalion has no aid station and no surgeon. He's bummed at the idea of having to backtrack to Bastogne to scrounge up morphine.

Dinnertime. A ring of NCOs and privates giggles about the Hinkel incident while they try to keep warm. Roe sits alone, off to the side, using physical distance to help keep him emotionally separated from these men he will one day see mortally wounded. "These smell like my armpit," a soldier complains of his beans. "At least your armpit's warm," counters Skip. A few Hinkel jokes ensue, as well as some disparaging remarks about the courage of Lt. Dike. Finally, someone suggests that Roe should check with Dike, who might have some extra syrettes in his relatively unused aid kit – a condition they appear to ascribe to their commander's propensity to stay put. Not a bad solution, actually, but maybe I'm just chickenshit. And, strike the "maybe." Skip shouts that Hinkel might have a syrette for him, and the group busts up laughing; even Roe smirks.

Sure enough, Dike is snoozing in his foxhole. He's alone, which strikes me as a mistake, because shouldn't one awake person be there to make sure a German doesn't march up to the sleeping Easy CO and rip a bullet through his forehead? Roe wakes him and begs for the aid kit because he's so short on supplies. Dike obliges, but does ask, "What happens if I get hit?" Roe assures him, "I'll be there, sir." Dike hands over the kit and intones, "I don't plan on getting hit." Roe smiles and dashes away. He encounters a coughing Heffron. "Hey, Heffron, you okay?" Roe asks. Heffron snaps that he's sick and tired of being called by his surname. "Edward, right?" Roe tries, confused. "'Edward,' are you serious?" screams Heffron. "Only the goddamn nuns call me 'Edward.'" And they only call him that when he calls them "goddamn nuns." Roe is very

unsettled and gingerly asks whether Babe has any morphine. Babe snaps that he's already been asked that. "I don't recall," Roe says gently, and sadly. Tempers are flaring.

Next up is Gordon's foxhole, where Roe slides in and covers the gap through which he entered. Gordon passes him a handful of syrettes, joking that 3rd platoon ponied up its contraband. Roe is grateful, accepting the hot coffee Gordon offers and visibly brightening when the man whispers that Perconte has scissors. "And check on Joe Toye...he's missing something," Gordon adds. Roe replies that he understands, but just isn't capable of providing the love of a good woman.

Toye is stationed at the OP, a special watch post. Roe bellies up to the edge of the hole and checks on Toye and Earl McClung, whose name indicates that he should run home and open a diner that serves killer meatloaf. Seriously, Earl McClung sounds so down-home. Toye brushes off the inquiries until Roe demands to see his feet. "Where are your boots?" demands Roe. "In Washington, up General Taylor's ass," grouses Toye. Roe is irritated, so Toye gives the real reason: "I took off my boots to dry my goddamn socks, and they got blown to hell, okay?" Roe kindly asks what size he wears. "Nine, just like everybody else," he sighs. Wow, poor Toye. It's absolutely bone-cold out there, and he's forced to go shoeless because of an ill-timed blast from the enemy.

Perconte is vigorously brushing his teeth. "Keep cleaning those teeth, and the Germans will see you a mile away," jokes Skinny Sisk, his hole-mate. That sounds so saucy. It looks like wordplay is about the only fun we're going to have for the next nine pages or so. Roe descends and unceremoniously grabs Perconte's knapsack, dumping out the contents until he locates the hidden scissors. Perconte is steamed, but he can't fight too hard because Roe's the doctor and his needs are generally for nobler causes. Roe should abuse his power and demand medicinal earmuffs. Before Perconte can really protest, though, Roe is already gone, bolting past Gonorrhea's hole with a quick hello. "Marlene, is that you?" he jokes, then realizes the running man is Roe, and takes off after him. Meanwhile, Alley and Liebgott are singing, trying to stay merry in the hope that merriness can beget warmth. They're singing with an almost drunk vigor; contrary to the evidence, they claim to be without morphine. Gonorrhea grabs Roe and begs for help – he still has "the itching, and every time I pee, it's murder!" Oh, my! Could it be that Gonorrhea got gonorrhea from a nubile townswench somewhere? That would be too pretty. Roe apologizes, but says he's got no penicillin, then notices a lieutenant nursing sore feet. Gently, Roe suggests he loosen his boots but keep them on, taking care to walk on his foot whenever possible. Finally, he tells Gonorrhea that he's sorry about his crotch, but that he should drink lots of water, which is that bogus cure-all everyone suggests for cleaning the body of disease. I prefer drinking plenty of Diet Coke and moving as little as possible from my bed. Gonorrhea doesn't like that answer, either. "Water? It's pissing that hurts!" he moans.

Finally, Roe gets another moment alone. A signal of some kind – probably a flare – shoots up into the sky and explodes like a firework, lighting the surrounding area. Roe stares at it, and recites a prayer which, set to music and modified slightly, is also a popular Catholic hymn called "Make me a Channel of Your Peace." And I'm totally calling my mother in a second, because she will never believe that I remember all this. Roe's recitation is as follows: "O Lord, grant that I shall never seek so much to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, and be loved, as to love with all my heart." Grimly, Roe tips his head back and repeats the last line, seeking some kind of guidance. If my count is correct, he's been to thirteen holes so far, back and forth and around and answering everyone's questions and risking his safety to ensure everyone else's. Fade to white.

"MEDIC!" someone screams. Roe darts lightning-quick through the maze of trees and felled branches. Explosions litter the air, and bullets pound the snow around Roe. He leaps into Perconte's hole. "Look what they did to my leg!" screams Skinny. Sharp bits of shrapnel poke through his torn shin. Roe calmly tells Perconte to call for a Jeep, and methodically yanks out the shrapnel he can see, then pours sulfur powder over the wound, to tenderize it, or season it to taste, or whatever. "Ain't that bad," Roe says, trying to calm Skinny while he wraps the wound. He groans with anguish, then jolts upright when he sees Roe about to administer morphine. "No, Doc, I can make it!" he insists. "Save it, okay?" Skinny, right now, is the hugest of men. His leg is torn up and he's yelping, yet he decides someone else might need morphine more. He's lost his mind, certainly, but in his insanity he is heroic. Perconte and Roe grab Skinny and carry him as far as they can before they trip, unfortunately dropping Skinny gracelessly atop his injury. The howl he emits is straight out of Wolf Lake, except it sounds halfway realistic. "Aw, Skinny, you got blood

all over my trousers!" gripes Perconte, who is either forcing levity, or tempting fate to tear out his spleen and dump it atop someone who will complain about the inconsiderateness of leaving one's organs atop a perfectly clean shirt. Roe sends Perconte after Spina, to let the other medic know Roe has gone into Bastogne with a patient and in search of plasma.

The Jeep rolls into a burned-out town stacked with bodies. The driver exoposits that the Allies have no backup beyond Bastogne, and that the German captured the 326th Medical and raided it for doctors and supplies. "We got nothing," he frets. "They're giving the boys hooch for pain!" Hey, at least it works. Roe is stone-faced. He unloads Skinny and explains his injury, then chases a nurse to ask her for supplies. She makes him wait. Curious, Roe pokes around and watches men get bandaged; inside a smaller room, a nurse washes bloodied, used bandages so they can be recycled. He is perturbed by the conditions there. "Why aren't these men evacuated?" he asks. "They can't," answers a medic. "[Transportation is] cut off. This is as far as it goes."

After she gives Skinny a pill, a young nurse with a blue head-kerchief leads Roe into the supply room and hands him a box full of bandages, to which she adds some units of plasma. He is startled to see she has torn up sheets as makeshift bandages. In French, he thanks her and asks her name. "Renée," she answers, pleased. Roe introduces himself, explaining that he's a Louisiana boy who's half-Cajun. Then they part; Roe is all flirted out. This was an exertion for him.

Outside, Roe makes a beeline for the body pile, snagging a pair of boots that might fit Toye. "Eugene," calls Renée. He turns, and she tosses him a chocolate bar with an angelic smile and *The Wringing Hands of I'm Trying Not to Touch You Intimately*. A grin flickers across Roe's face only briefly, because he prefers to remain all-business, and the medic turns to rejoin the 2nd battalion.

Father Maloney leads a prayer circle on a patch of snowy land identical to any other. "Fight well for your God and your country. God bless you all," he finishes. "Stay safe." Skip rises and grins, "That's it, guys, nothing to worry about. If we're gonna die now, we're gonna die in a state of grace." Spina sees Roe and relieves him of the cardboard box, informing him that this group is a reconnaissance patrol about to probe for the German line. Roe tosses Spina the boots, tells him to deliver them to Toye, and trots after the departing patrol. "Peacock is leading, right?" Luz asks. "Asshole couldn't find a snowball in a blizzard." Randleman chuckles. Hoobler and Babe Heffron are among the familiar faces in the group. Sgt. Martin is leading the patrol; young replacement Julian begs to be lead scout, but Martin orders him to fall in with the rest of the men, forming tactical columns in which to advance slowly into no-man's-land. Sensing Roe wants to trail them, Martin palms the medic's chest and orders him to stay put and, thus, intact. Fretting, Roe watches them go.

Snow falls lightly on the barren, tall trees; the men trudge through the woods, gray silhouettes against a creamy fog. Roe sits cross-legged under a tree, ears perked, waiting, watching the fog ahead of him. Back with the patrol, Martin waves the men into their positions; Julian gets sniped in the neck and drops to the snow. Chaos erupts. Martin shrieks to all within earshot that Julian is down; Babe flips out and screams that they need to rescue his pal. The blood seeps freely from Julian's neck, drenching the kid's face. German fire pounds the earth around the kid's writhing body. Roe's jaw tenses as he hears obvious distress from the distance, but he doesn't move. Martin screams for suppressing and covering fire so that they can drag Julian's body to safety, but every time Heffron strikes out to retrieve his friend, German bullets narrowly miss him and slam into the snow nearby. Blood is pooling in Julian's nostrils, bathing his whole face in crimson. Babe screams, "Don't move! If you're still they'll stop shooting!" Julian twitches uncontrollably.

Roe sees a lone figure sprinting back from the patrol site. "We're pulling back, we made contact," Lt. Peacock gulps. "I gotta get to CP [command post]." Meanwhile, bullets rain around Julian, and Heffron tearfully screams that they must save him. Martin, cognizant that the shooting won't cease, finally gives the order to fall back. Babe is devastated, but shouts to his friend, "Hold on, look at me! Stay with us! Hold on! Don't move, we're coming back!" Finally, Julian lies alone on the snow, barely breathing, oozing blood, bullets still striking the snow around his body.

As the retreating men sprint toward Roe, someone goes down with a bullet to the back. Roe runs forward and helps drag the soldier to relative safety, tearing open the man's shirt and covering the messy wound with his hand until he can wrap a bandage around it. The patrolmen

scatter and hide behind different trees, guns pointed toward the German line, poised to fire but not fully able to fight back because of the ammunition shortages and lack of artillery backup. They provoked, but couldn't follow through. Nixon appears and asks whether they hit the German line or the OP (a watch post); Martin confirms that it was indeed the line, although how they knew this is unclear. Either way, it's a maelstrom of gunfire. Babe screams that he has to go back and collect Julian, but no one lets him; someone else frets that they lost Peacock, but Nixon confirms that he's already back at CP. Nixon, vocally backed by Luz, demands that everyone fall back even further. Roe won't go until he has his patient fixed up and stuck with a morphine syrette; finally, they pick up the man and scamper away.

Depressed, the men sit and gather their wits. Martin impassively notifies Winters that they couldn't save Julian despite Babe's best efforts. Winters, arms crossed, stoically registers distress and then goes to sit with his men. That's such a lovely, Winters-like gesture, wanting to share in the emotions of his men because he doesn't want them feeling alone. Roe still sits apart, cradling his chocolate bar, just as I do every day.

Nightfall. Roe runs alone. Peeking into a foxhole, he's disturbed to find it empty, and darts along the line looking for others. He sees Toye sitting on the lip of his hole, depressed. "Thanks for the boots," he says quietly. Roe wants to see Toye's problematic foot, so the man displays a foot that looks dipped in flour – it's white and powdery, and decidedly abnormal-looking. He winces when Roe touches it. "It's trench foot, Toye," Roe informs him. "If it turns gangrene, you could lose it." Toye staunchly refuses to leave the line; acknowledging his drive with silent respect, Roe finally says, "Massage your feet, change your socks every day and dry the wet ones around your neck." Toye edgily says he's working on this; Roe pats Toye's leg and leaves, then spins around and asks if Heffron has passed. "No. Why?" Toye asks. "He ain't in his hole," Roe replies.

Diving into his own hole, Roe is surprised to notice that he's sitting next to both Spina and the missing Heffron, who is leaning catatonic against the medic's shoulder. Spina is hugging him gently, but very awkwardly, as though he realizes he's expected to mother this poor boy and hasn't the faintest clue how to cuddle. Roe unwraps a piece of chocolate and offers a chunk to Heffron, calling him "Edward" in an attempt to be more personal, familiar. "I promised him if he got hit, I'd get his stuff and bring it to his Ma, you know?" Heffron chokes, staring straight ahead, unblinking. "Now the fucking Krauts will strip him!" Roe tries to comfort him. "It's not okay!" snaps Heffron. "We shoulda got to him." Spina still looks like he has intimacy issues, but to his credit he doesn't try to disengage, aware that Babe isn't done mourning. The three men settle in for the night.

Another flare goes up, illuminating the sky. Babe is snoozing gently against Spina, who is wide awake. "What do you call those people again, those Cajun healers?" he asks Roe, whose eyes were closed. Roe gets up and bitch-slaps Spina for interrupting that recurring dream where Florence Nightingale and Scarlett O'Hara are spanking him with a roll of bandages. "Traiteurs," Roe says. "My grandmother was a traiteur." Spina is impressed. Roe insists that the simple touch of her hand healed cancers and sickness – the two being somehow mutually exclusive. "Wow, you're shitting me!" Spina sputters elegantly. "I remember she used to pray a lot...talked to God about the pain she pulled out," Roe recalls. "Asked him to carry it away. That's what she did." He smiles slightly. Spina is still completely amazed. "I'm still trying to figure out why they picked me as a medic," he marvels. "God knows. Snap of a finger, and just like that, you're a medic." Spina sighs that he's sick of playing doctor. Roe stares blankly ahead, as if seeking the kind of divine guidance his grandmother received, but getting a damn hangnail instead.

An explosion jolts Roe awake. Aware something vaguely resembling feces might be hitting the Allied fan, Roe scrambles out of his hole, tries to get his bearings, then staggers off into the fog to make his rounds. Suddenly, planes zoom overhead. Men sprint toward them, cheering; canisters of red smoke explode along a clearing to cover them, and I'm pretty sure that, yet again, standing behind a bright red plume of smoke is hardly the way to be inconspicuous. Donnie shouts to Roe that these are American C-47s, and they're making a drop. Aid has arrived.

Parachutes drape all over Bastogne buildings, carrying boxes crammed with cargo. Renée spots them and looks delighted. Donnie and Roe arrive in a Jeep, backed by a few other men, to grab whatever they can to reinforce their medics and their men. Roe briefly juggles a box, but stops moving when he spies Renée gently ministering to a dying soldier. She transfixes him. Good thing he's holding something large. Suddenly, he sees her respond to a frantic shriek for medical aid; putting down his box, Roe runs after her and into a large room that's empty but for

Renée and a devastatingly wounded man. They speak in French, which doesn't help me to figure out what's wrong, but from what I gather, the man is bleeding out and she needs to put pressure on his chest while Roe grabs the artery. This entails slipping his hand inside a hole in the man's belly and reaching up toward the heart. Quickly, this episode has reinforced my decision to leave med school to the brave and the iron-stomached masses. I can barely look. Blood and goo leak all over his chest; Roe looks like he's in up to the elbow, reaching around for the right artery. The man's mouth froths with blood. "Anna!" screams Renée. Another nurse enters and tries to help manage the large dying patient, but it's futile: Renée looks at Roe, who sees in her eyes that it's over and then turns to the man himself for confirmation. Sure enough, his eyes are glassy and he's still. Angry and distressed, Roe yanks his hand out and curses. He and Renée stare into each other's eyes, wordless, unable to look away. Renée's lip trembles. Roe simply stares. "Get a room," croaks the dead man.

Outside – cleaned up and seated side-by-side on a bench of sorts – Roe and Renée continue their silent love affair. They're close, reveling in the nearness of a sympathetic soul, but still a safe enough distance apart to avoid the spread of the Almighty Cootie. He makes small talk about Anna, who Renée shares is from the Congo and came simply to offer aid: "Just like me." She whips out a chocolate bar and absently breaks it into manageable pieces. "Hmm," murmurs Roe. "Your hands." She wonders what he means. "You're a good nurse," he praises her softly. Renée shakes her head in agony and rips the blue kerchief from her brown hair. "No," she sniffles. "I never want to treat another wounded man again. I'd rather work in a butcher's shop." Roe eagerly leans forward and assures Renée that she possesses a calming touch, a divine gift that's rare and beautiful. Again, Renée disagrees. "No, it's not a gift," she whispers tearfully. "God would never give such a painful thing." This character is a bit heavy-handed for me. I can't handle getting slapped with *The Point* quite this hard. Roe once again gazes intensely at her hanging head. For the first time, Roe appears to be open to the emotionality of his job, the impossibility of disengaging from the patients. A man shot through the stomach arrives at the hospital, and Renée calmly returns to her job, plodding ahead despite her pain. Roe silently watches her go, then collects his gear and searches for Donnie and his Jeep.

Snowflakes gracefully blanket the woods. Compton, Gonorrhea, and Heffron peek out from under the tarp covering their foxhole, shivering. "Now we know how they felt," Compton muses. They have no idea to what he's referring. "The legionnaires, when they were watching the Huns, Goths, Visigoths," Compton lists. Gonorrhea rolls his eyes, lost and wondering where the hell Buck learned his smooth-as-sandpaper small talk. "Barbarians," clarifies Compton. "They came right through these trees, sweeping down to burn the shit outta Rome." The others laugh at what a long ride that is. Earnestly, Heffron inches toward Compton. "What's college like, Buck?" he asks. "D'you have time to hit the books with cheerleaders running their fingers through your hair?" Compton's expression remains blank. "Hell, Babe, I can't even remember," he says quietly.

Roe descends with his usual abrupt slide, making sure they're all intact. "Wrap up," he says, before departing. Gonorrhea marvels that Roe never addresses anyone by a nickname. "He once called me 'Edward,'" Heffron offers. Gonorrhea snickers. Buck suddenly looks surprised. "You don't look like an Edward," he says. Gonorrhea snorts with mirth and he and Heffron slap Compton affectionately. Compton shouldn't play that game – his first name is Lynn, and that's the last name I'd have picked for Strapping Buck, Alpha Male.

Daybreak. Snow piles up on tree branches, the fog is still thick, the wind is strong, and the sky blends seamlessly with the pristine white land. Roe curls up in a foxhole, but the rumble of approaching tanks slices through the silence. It begins again. Donnie pops by for a quick understatement: "Hey, Doc, it's gonna get busy, pal!" He shouts for everyone to hold their fire, lest the tanks actually pinpoint any of them. "What the hell we gonna hit those things with, [Donnie]?" someone screams. Donnie again shouts for everyone to ready their guns; Gordon stands to prepare his, and a bullet whizzes through his shoulder and, I believe, out through part of his back. Gasping sharply, Gordon falls against his foxhole and drops hot coffee all over his pants. No! Gordon! He's been around since the beginning, scamming for those three Purple Hearts and reciting "The Night of the Bayonet," so seeing him struck like this affected me. I bit my nails and caught myself wincing. "Eugene!" screams Spina, rousing Roe with some difficulty. He seems reluctant to play the game one more time. Two men drag Gordon from the foxhole toward a more desolate clearing, until Roe can reach him. Gordon is conscious; he sees his pal remove a pistol and say, "I'm keeping it for you!" Gordon whimpers, "I can't feel my legs, Gene." In

the distance, Winters screams, "Here they come!" and we hear tanks and gunfire with increasing volume and frequency. Roe tears open Gordon's shirt to treat the wound. Donnie appears and urges Roe to move Gordon immediately, then notices his pal is fading. "Stay with us, Smokey!" he shouts, slapping Gordon's cheek. "Stay with us!" Poor defenseless Gordon can't slap back, which seems a tad unfair. The duo drags him to a safe spot for the Jeep pickup, and Roe preps an IV for plasma infusion. Frantic to return to the line yet unable to leave until Roe has the situation in hand, Donnie tries to help. Gordon's eyelids flutter open. "You're standing on my hand," he croaks. Hey, at least he can feel his hand. Donnie anxiously promises Gordon another Purple Heart for his trouble. This will be unparalleled consolation for Gordon when he's lying immobile in a hospital bed, paralyzed forever. "At least I got a Purple Heart!" he can say. "I was tired of moving my legs anyway." The Jeep arrives to cart them away, and Donnie trots back to the front line.

Roe unloads Gordon and follows him into the hospital. The medic there somehow can't quite ascertain what the problem is; Roe flatly states, "He's paralyzed. Can't feel a thing." I thought he felt Donnie on his hand! Dang. Roe then watches a priest administer last rites to a dead man, which disturbs him a bit. "Eugene?" Renée calls to him. She's needed elsewhere, but she doesn't budge, looking quizzically at him. "Are you all right?" she asks. Roe does what he does best – he looks at her without uttering a word. Unable to dally any longer, Renée darts away to a patient.

Back in the forest, the soldiers get hot soup ladled into metal cups. Roe still sits alone, away from the group; someone thoughtfully brings him soup, which he accepts without even the smallest flicker of recognition. Colonel Sink arrives with another message of morale-boosting cheer: "I'm sitting down to a dinner of turkey and hooch at CP." He fumbles something about missing the Easy cook's rancid beans, but the knife has been twisted. Idiot. He greets Easy and still gets a warm response. Quietly, he tells Winters that Gen. McAuliffe has a Christmas message that the men might want to hear, and Winters defers the pleasure of relaying it to Sink himself. Sink smiles and booms that the General wishes all of them a merry Christmas; he then reads from a piece of paper. "What's merry about all this, you ask? Just this: we've stopped cold everything that's been thrown at us from the north, east, south and west. Two days ago, the German commander demanded our honorable surrender to save the USA-encircled troops from total annihilation. The German commander received the following reply: 'To the German commander: Nuts!'" Easy Company snickers. I guess, in times of desperation, one draws inspiration from wherever one can – but, whoa. "Nuts"? Crap. "We're giving our country and our loves ones at home a worthy Christmas present. being privileged to participate in this gallant feat of arms, we're truly making for ourselves a merry Christmas," Sink reads, then looks up and echoes that wish from himself. Throughout, Winters has darted concerned glances at the withdrawn and gaunt Roe; as Easy giggles and shouts, "Nuts!" amid gales of laughter, Roe's expression remains serious. He is increasingly miserable, perhaps worried about his destiny, or terrified to lose a man of his own. It's hard to say; the toll of his job is enormous in so many ways.

Winters creeps toward Roe's foxhole to check on the troubled medic. The sound of a German chorus diverts his attention; the enemy is singing "Silent Night." Winters listens, amazed that the very act of singing that song makes it a lie. Nearby, Compton and Gonorrhea huddle in a foxhole; the former plucks a photo from his pocket and shows it to Gonorrhea. "Picture of my girl," he says, a proud smile flashing briefly across his face. Gonorrhea compliments her as sincerely as he ever can: "Good-looking broad, Buck," he says. Compton drops the picture onto his friend's chest, choking, "She's finished with me." Startled, Gonorrhea stammers, "Yeah?" and looks at the photo of a pretty brunette hugging Compton. "Yeah, she's, er..." Buck begins, then trails off and stares into the distance again. "Just in time for Christmas, eh?" Gonorrhea says, regretfully. Compton wipes his face and half-laughs, half-cries, but doing both in a strangely serene manner. "Just in time for Christmas," he whispers. Aw. That about broke my heart. The vengeful part of me hopes she's still alive and watching, so she knows exactly what fresh hell he was enduring when she dumped his strapping behind. Witchy woman.

"Shit!" a shivering Malarkey curses. "Almost forgot!" He triumphantly whips cigarettes from his pocket, to the delight of his hole-mates Skip and Penkala. They inhale with orgasmic delight, as if a simple cigarette is the first sliver of warmth they've cradled in too long. Skip passes the smoke to Penkala. "I'm shaking so goddamn much, I feel like I'm dancing," he trembles. Skip slips the cigarette between his friend's grateful lips. Over in Perconte's area, meanwhile, the guys

are taking lemonade powder and mixing it with snow to yield a dessert of sorts. "Merry fucking Christmas," gripes Perconte.

Winters slinks over toward Welsh and Peacock, who have lit a small fire for warmth. "Fire's not a good idea," Winters softly admonishes. "Just a couple minutes," pleads Welsh. "We're in a dell." Winters: "A dell? Where fairies and gnomes live?" Nixon approaches and whispers, "I did smell a fire. Are you out of your mind?" Winters calmly replies, "Well, we're in a dell." I love this sarcastic Winters. But before he can remedy the fire situation, mortar fire bombards them and knocks Welsh backwards. "Noooo! Oh, God!" he screams, chillingly. Shit, I just gnawed on my nails again from tension – I like Welsh. He's friendly, and he's a friend of Winters's, and seeing a trusted lieutenant felled like that freaks me out. Winters yells for a medic while Nixon frantically phones for a Jeep, and Peacock stamps out the tiny fire. Heffron violently shakes Roe out of a stupor; the medic is completely reluctant to move, suddenly, but Heffron forces him out of his hole. In leaving, Roe steps on Babe's hand and draws blood; the young soldier swears in frustration. So, how is it that the Germans can sing "Silent Night" unmolested, but the tiniest of controlled fires on the Allied side whips enemy gunners into a firing frenzy? I guess that's the benefit of firing on a decimated line with no artillery backup.

Roe nears Welsh and stops again, staring at an above-the-knee leg wound which Winters is holding tightly to slow blood flow. "Eugene," Winters says, calmly, but not without urgency. "Ohhhhhh!" Welsh howls. "Ohhh, Jesus! No!" In a second, Roe snaps into medic mode, grabbing the wound and making a tourniquet, then sprinkling the open cuts with sulfur. He instructs Winters to administer a syrette of morphine, which promptly quells Welsh's agony. Elevating his patient's head, Roe takes a bloody finger and marks it with an M indicating that the drug has been administered. Welsh's countenance is utterly sallow. After loading him onto a Jeep, Winters returns to Roe and pats him comfortingly on the shoulder. "Get yourself into town, get a hot meal," he says. Roe, still uneasy, heads silently to the car.

But Bastogne, too, is under siege. Planes rain explosives down upon the town. People frenetically evacuate, even as Roe's Jeep plows through the burning streets. Buildings explode, raining debris upon the roads in fiery, billowing plumes of black poison. Roe leaps out of the Jeep and runs toward the hospital, getting no further than the door before realizing that the facility has been reduced to rubble. "Stay out of there!" someone screams, but Roe is deaf to it, having seen something chilling amid the wreckage. Slowly, agonizingly, he bends and withdraws a simple blue kerchief from amid the ruins, cradling it with roiling emotions in his eyes. "Hinkel, sweet Hinkel," he breathes, a single tear escaping and trickling down his dirty cheek. And, if this was Melrose Place, that last bit would've actually happened, because a Swedish plastic surgeon would've appeared to reveal that Hinkel and Renée are one and the same. "Medic!" shouts a soldier. "Get your ass out here!" Roe remains motionless for several more seconds, unable to tear his eyes from the remnant of Renée. Finally, he stuffs the hanky into his pocket and walks, then trots toward the wounded, never looking back.

Frosty forest. Roe walks purposefully across the snow, blazing past Winters's foxhole and into one he now shares with Heffron. "Everything okay, Babe?" he asks. Babe nods glumly. Roe catches sight of the man's hand wound and inquires, "How'd you do that?" Babe turns to regard him for a second, then sighs, "You did it." Roe is alarmed. He hurriedly promises to fix it up, rummaging for bandages but withdrawing only Renée's scarf. He stares at it again and decides to put it away, then changes his mind, possibly recalling the tenderness with which the wearer ministered to her patients. Or, he's just following his director's orders. I love how his inner peace, his resolution, comes from a small square of cloth. A slight oversimplification of his problem, I think. Tearing the kerchief in half, he begins wrapping Babe's hand. Heffron suddenly looks over at Roe with a wondering smile. "Hey, Gene, you called me Babe," he grins. Roe stops. "I did?" he asks, then tries it out again. "Babe," he says, his lilting Cajun accent drawing out the word. "I guess I did." Babe laughs and imitates him. "Heffron, watch the goddamn line," Roe commands, but he's chuckling too, because "Babe" is the worst nickname of all.

Flipping to a shot from behind their heads, we see their view of the line – still a nebulous fog hiding Satan only knows what. In front of Roe's foxhole, two giant patches of red-stained snow mar the white landscape.

"On December 26, 1944, General Patton's 3rd Army broke through the German lines, allowing supplies to flow in and the wounded to be evacuated," the screen reads. "The story of 'The Battle of the Bulge,' as told today, is one of Patton coming to the rescue of the encircled 101st Airborne."

A pause. Then, "No member of the 101st has ever agreed that the division needed to be rescued." A *New Yorker* review of the show aptly noted that what that remark is missing is the exclamation point Stephen Ambrose used to punctuate it. It's a choice that gave the statement both the emphasis the veterans would've added, but also the wink of a reader who knows that no Easy Company man would ever admit to needing assistance.

The Breaking Point

Season 1
Episode Number: 7
Season Episode: 7

Originally aired: Sunday October 14, 2001
Writer: Graham Yost
Director: David Frankel
Show Stars: Michael Cudlitz (Denver 'Bull' Randleman), Ron Livingston (Capt. Lewis Nixon), Scott Grimes (T/Sgt. Donald Malarkey), Donnie Wahlberg (2nd Lt. C. Carwood Lipton), Neal McDonough (1st Lt. Lynn "Buck" Compton), Ross McCall (Joseph D Lieb Gott), Frank John Hughes (S/Sgt. William "Wild Bill" Guarnere), Rick Gomez (George Luz), Kirk Acevedo (SSgt. Joseph Toye), James Madio (Frank J Perconte), Richard Speight Jr. (Warren 'Skip' Muck), Dale Dye (Colonel Robert Sink), Damian Lewis (Richard D. Winters), Dexter Fletcher (John), Shane Taylor (Eugene G 'doc' Roe), Phil McKee (Major Robert L Strayer), Tom Hardy (Pfc. John Janovec), Matthew Settle (Capt. Ronald Spiers), Philip Barantini (Wayne 'skinny' Sisk), James McAvoy (Pvt. James Miller), Rick Warden (II) (1st Lt. Harry Welsh), Matthew Leitch (Floyd 'Tab' Talbert), Nolan Hemmings (Charles 'Chuck' Grant), Nicholas Aaron (Robert E 'popeye' Wynn), Peter Youngblood Hills (Darrell C 'shifty' Powers), Robin Laing (Edward J 'babe' Heffron), Mark Huberman (Pvt. Lester 'Leo' Hashey), Peter McCabe (IV) (Cpl Donald Hoobler)

Guest Stars: Alex Sabga (Francis J. Mellett)
Summary: Easy Company battles near Foy, Belgium, losing numerous men. The episode examines and questions the actions of 1st Lt. Norman Dike, the Company's commander. He is eventually relieved by 1st Lt. Ronald Speirs, who becomes the Company's new leader. Serving as narrator is First Sergeant Carwood Lipton, who attempts to keep the morale of the men up as they endure their trials in the forest near Foy, earning him a battlefield promotion to 2nd Lt. for his leadership ability.



Last time, Easy Company and the rest of the 101st Airborne dug in to protect Bastogne, filling gaps on a stretched-thin Allied front line. The brutal winter stand was made worse by a supply, clothing, and food shortage. Joe Toye got trench foot, and medic Eugene Roe warned him it could turn gangrenous. Babe Heffron watched his foxhole friend Pvt. Julian get shot in the throat during a patrol trip to the German front lines; the soldiers had to fall back and leave the writhing man there to die alone. At Christmas, Gen.

McAuliffe – acting 101st commander – replied, "Nuts!" when the German leader called for Allied surrender. Harry Welsh, a popular Easy platoon leader and friend of Winters, got hit in the leg and sent off to the hospital.

"I've seen death. I've seen my friends, my men, being killed," recalls one veteran. "And...it doesn't take too many days of that, and you change dramatically." Another man recalls again

the shortage of food and ammunition, plus the way blistering cold cut through their insufficient layers. "Couldn't be able to fire, and if you could, some crazy thing would shoot at you," he says. A third man recalls with sorrow that everywhere they looked, they saw death – dead animals, dead enemy and Allied soldiers. "You don't have a chance, when your friends go down, to really take care of them as you might...especially if you're under attack, moving, or whatever," says a fourth man. "I withstood it well, but I had a lot of trouble later in life because those events would come back, and..." He looks down, shakes his head, and chokes away tears. "You never forget 'em," he finishes, his voice clogged with unshed tears.

The theme music gets me choked now. I can't help it. I see Eugene Roe's distressed face from last week, and I see Winters and the injured Welsh and Compton talking about his breakup, and I'm totally moved. I have become...sigh...a sucker.

January 2, 1945: Ardennes Forest, Belgium. Donnie narrates, noting that Easy's tragic but successful stance holding the line at Bastogne prompted HQ to call upon the men again, this time to push the Germans backwards. Compton and Donnie stare at a map, which is spread across hunched Malarkey's back. "We were here this morning, then we came this way," Donnie theorizes, tracing a line. Compton grins and punches the map with his pointer finger, deliberately poking Malarkey, who complains. "Stop crying, Malarkey, or I'll nail it to your head," Buck Compton grins. "Ya should, it's made of wood," Gonorrhea says. Merry at Malarkey's good-natured expense, Compton tells Gonorrhea to lead the men out, and lets Malarkey free himself from the Bitch position.

Donnie calls for 2nd platoon to fall out behind him. He narrates that he was happy to be out of his foxhole and moving, if only to get the blood flowing and generate any kind of warmth. The men fan out slowly and trudge through the snowy woods to clear the Bois Jacques, a stretch of forest overlooking the German-held town of Foy, "in preparation for what we all knew would be the eventual assault on Foy itself." In the background, scouts call for soldiers to watch for mines. Donnie recalls only light fire raining down upon them, surprisingly little resistance from a well-fortified German side. The men look cautious, but not too terrified. "Hoobler's run-in with the German on horseback was the most dramatic moment of the day," Donnie says.

Flash back to Hoobler ducking behind a tree, taking cover as the German rides past. Darting out, he fires three quick shots; the third rips through the man's helmet and drops him off the horse and onto the ground in a slump. Those helmets are outstanding. He might as well have worn aluminum foil. Hoobler grins proudly and cheers his successful snipe, bounding over to the corpse and poking it to ensure its complete expiration. His brains trickle gently out of the helmet hole. Suddenly, inspired, Hoobler bends down and searches the dead man's pockets, withdrawing with ecstasy a covered Luger pistol. His brain orgasms. Hoobler shoots it off into the distance.

"Hoobler had been talking about getting a Luger since Normandy," Donnie says. "As we dug in, he went from foxhole to foxhole telling everybody just how he got one." Hoob stops at Randleman's, Martin's, and Perconte's holes, among others, gleefully recounting his accurate shot and subsequent raid. "Outstanding accuracy, if I do say so myself," he boasts. "And you do," Donnie says wryly. "And I do," agrees Hoobler. And I do, because I can't even hit a stationary target from two feet out with a balled-up Kleenex. Hoobler jokes with Shifty Powers, the company's best marksman, that he could've challenged him for accuracy that day. "No, no, I'm not a good shot," Shifty says modestly. "Now, Dad, he was excellent, excellent, I declare, he could shoot the wings off a fly." Shifty is evidently some kind of southern belle. He should've said, "Dad could've shot the bun off that mealy-mouthed Melanie Wilkes." Hoobler wonders what a horseman was doing in the forest; Donnie suggests that it was probably reconnaissance work, figuring a horse would be quieter. Than what? A Jeep, I guess, because a huge panting, snarling, stomping animal probably makes more noise than a man on foot. Unless you're Mike Tyson. Someone snarks that the German was probably trying to escape, and they momentarily wonder whether the horse is okay. Donnie helps Shifty dig his foxhole, because he's selfless and believes in the group, not the solo career, and Jordan, we're looking at you, here.

Compton flags down Donnie, who hands his shovel to Malarkey and heaves himself out to chat with Buck. The officer wonders where Lt. Dike might be. "He's around," hedges Donnie, clearly ill-at-ease but unwilling to demean the man. "Could you be more specific, Sergeant?" Compton asks, his lips twisted into an amused scowl. "Uh, not really," Donnie says, evading an insult again. "Dammit," Buck curses in his most strapping voice. "I haven't seen him all day,

I haven't since we went through the woods, and I have to figure out how we ended up." From memory, Donnie informs him that Brown and Stevens are wounded, but that's it. "Goddammit, where the hell is Dike?" Compton hisses to no one in particular, then shrugs helplessly. "Where the hell does he ever go?" Malarkey, digging a foxhole behind them, says what no one else will: "I don't know, but I wish he'd stay the hell there. Be nice if he took Lt. Shames with him, too." Donnie immediately silences them. "Shutting up, Sarge," Malarkey says pleasantly.

A lone gunshot cracks through the air, sending all men diving into the nearest foxhole – in this case, the one Shifty and Malarkey are digging. They hear nothing else, and jumpily whisper that they can't fathom what the noise was: it's not a patrol, and it wasn't a sniper's rifle. "No one out there," Shifty reports, confusedly.

"Ah, Jesus, it's Hoob!" screams a soldier. Frantic, the men scour the area for the source of fire. "No, no, he shot himself!" screams the man, who then hollers for a medic. "Stupid, stupid," Hoobler pants, twitching and wincing from the pain. "It's my fucking leg!" he moans. It seems he had the loaded Luger in his pants and it just went off without warning. Any euphemism scouts will be happy with this. Buck scolds him. "Shit, Buck, I wasn't touching it!" gasps Hoobler, struggling for strength. Perconte shrieks for a medic again. Blood gushes from the leg wound. Everyone scrambles to help, shedding layers of their own to keep heat from escaping Hoobler's body. "It hurts like a sonofabitch," Hoobler wails. "I think I hit bone!" More screams for a doctor; the men smack their friend's cheeks to keep him conscious and try to keep him talking. Hoobler is shivering and convulsing. Blood pools on the fabric of his pants. Pvt. Eugene Roe slides into the hole and teases, "Did you think it was a German leg, Hoob?" Oh, so Roe's a joker now. Right. But, heh. Roe desperately tries to cut through Hoobler's layers to dress and treat the flesh wound itself. "Hey [Donnie]," Hoobler breathes shakily. "You said I was a great shot, right?" Donnie soothingly assures him that he is, and tries to cheer up his weakened friend. "Come on, Hoob, you can jump out of planes, you're a tough man!" someone insists. Buck props up Hoobler's head; the patient's body still jerking and twitching beyond all control. Quietly, Roe despairs that he can't see a thing and desperately must take Hoobler to an aid station. Suddenly, Hoobler stops quaking. "Doc!" Buck blurts, his hand on Hoobler's neck. Everyone looks, as Buck leans back and sighs with frustration. Everyone exhales, looking like it's the first time they've drawn a full breath in hours. Donnie stares sadly at the Luger that dehoobled the division. I always knew the Luger hunt would backfire tragically. Hasn't Hoobler been watching?

At their hovel near battalion CP, Donnie debriefs Nixon and Winters...and then tells them about the Hoobler situation. "He was wearing so many clothes, we couldn't tell how bad he was bleeding," Donnie explains. "By the time we got to the aid station, he was already dead. The bullet cut the main artery in his leg." Nixon sighs with regret, but reassures Donnie that with that main artery destroyed, Hoobler was a goner even if they'd gotten right to the wound and to the aid station. God, that really sucks – after all that fighting, after facing danger and living, he kills himself by sticking a Luger in his trousers and breathing on it wrong. On a shallow personal level, this is why I absolutely refuse to contract Mad Cow Disease. Anything that will have people snickering at my funeral is totally out of the question. Donnie, still troubled, nods and turns to go check on his men, but Winters stops him. "Where's Dike?" he asks. Interestingly, Winters is shivering himself silly – either the battalion HQ officers don't get special treatment, or Winters refuses any amenities that the lower-ranked soldiers on the line can't get. I prefer to believe the latter. "You want to see him, sir?" Donnie says uneasily. "No," Winters replies, pointedly. "I just would've expected to get this kind of news from him." Donnie pauses, considers the situation and swallows his basest instincts to blow the whistle on the bastard. "Well, I was there, sir," he answers carefully. "I figured it might as well be me." Winters's eyebrow twitches, his face a picture of gentle skepticism tinged with respect for Donnie's integrity.

Donnie wanders through the forest to check on all his men, making sure they're okay and set up in foxholes. He voice-overs that the question of Dike's whereabouts had plagued him, due to long stretches of time when the CO wandered away without warning. "Wouldn't have been so bad if he was just one of the guys in the company, but Lt. Dike was supposed to be leading the company," Donnie says. His narration is really quite flat, although that monotone does reinforce the idea that this is a journal entry reenacted. Donnie stops to help the men dig, pats them on the shoulders, and basically behaves impressively. He muses in voice-over that Winters was a CO everyone adored and respected, and Moose Heyliger never had a chance to follow in those footsteps because a jumpy Allied sentry felled him with a bullet in Holland. "Then came Norman

Dike," Donnie tells us. "Dike wasn't a bad leader because he made bad decisions. He was a bad leader because he made no decisions."

We see Dike instructing a handful of officers and NCOs as to a battle plan involving the movement toward Foy. He blathers about tight security, then explains that the battalion is planning an S-3 move, "so I'll probably be called away regularly." Shit leaks out the coward Dike's eyeballs, so full is he of his own crap. "Uh, yeah," Buck says, biting his lip. "What's the formation you want us to go for?" Dike says, "At present, per usual, but I'll clarify that with you at a later time," but he's thinking, "It doesn't matter, because I'll be running in the opposite direction." Then, Dike does the strangest thing: He yawns. It occurs to me that despite the hardship, and the difficulty of sleeping in cold trenches with intermittent gunfire, one rarely sees an Easy soldier yawn. "All right, uh, I gotta make a call," Dike says before fleeing. Everyone watches him go, slightly disgusted at how accustomed they are to seeing this man's backside in motion. "Let's move out," Compton says wryly.

Donnie explains that someone at division HQ liked Dike, stationing him with Easy Company just to get him the combat experience he needed to climb up the ladder. Dike treated his post with the according lack of commitment, like "something unpleasant he had to get through before continuing his march up the ladder." That clicking noise you hear is Dike's offspring changing the channel and canceling HBO. Gonorrhea moans that the boys are screwed. Pvt. Extra announces that he's glad Dike is gone. "We're doing all right, even with Foxhole Norman," argues Malarkey. Gonorrhea takes issue with this – yeah, they're fine now. "In case you ain't noticed, there's a town down the hill, and in that town are these guys. These guys are called Germans, and these Germans got tanks," Gonorrhea sasses, finishing that they're headed right into that town to knock on their doors. "We gotta do all this with a CO who's got his head so far up his fucking ass that the lump in his throat is his nose," Gonorrhea growls. I love him. He's the type of guy whose glass is half-empty, and he'll swear a blue streak at it for having the audacity to stay that way. But he's also a hell of a soldier and loyal to the end. He's charmingly brash. Apparently, I've developed a love affair with all these people. I am such a slut.

Donnie arrives and interrupts the laughter. They greet him warmly and crack that they're just sitting there freezing their asses off, singing Dike's praises. Donnie nods understandingly, then perches at the edge of the foxhole. "Well, I'll tell you, I wouldn't want to be a replacement officer coming in here, getting thrown in with a group of guys who've known each other for, what, two years?" he suggests gently, adding that it's hard for anyone to show up and lead a tight-knit group like that. "How could anyone really hope to gain the respect of the toughest, most professional, most dedicated sons-of-bitches in the entire ETO? Huh?" Donnie asks the silent group of men. "If you ask me, a guy'd have to march off to Berlin and come back with Hitler's mustache or something," Gonorrhea chuckles. I'm not sure why Donnie is the man who defends Dike and answers for his whereabouts, other than the fact that he's the company's top NCO. Why wouldn't the commissioned lieutenants, directly below Dike in the chain of command, be responsible for this? Donnie calmly tells the guys not to think twice about Dike, because as long as Easy's stellar sergeants and privates do their jobs, the company will be just fine. Everyone smiles, because he is right and he is friendly and he's going to go bald before his brother Mark does.

Donnie then answers my question, partly. He claims he doesn't know whether he believed the PR he just spewed, but "as company 1st sergeant, it was my job, not to protect Dike but to protect the integrity of the company." I'll buy that.

Winters and Nixon huddle up in their love shack and commence pillow talk. Winters deadpans that Dike's big problem is that he's another arrogant rich jerk from Yale. Nixon laughs, so I take it he is one such jerk and Winters is just yanking his chain with gentle man-love. Winters feels powerless, unable to jettison Dike just because of something so nebulous as a bad feeling. But the bigger problem: "Who would I put in his place?" Winters muses. "Lt. Shames?" We flash to an intense man screaming himself blue, eyes bugging out from the effort. "Both of you little crapheads did not listen to a word I said during that briefing, did you?" his forehead throbs, venom and saliva flying from his rabid mouth. "Shames has seen too many war movies and thinks he has to yell all the time," Winters notes. The Spanks team didn't notice that self-referential humor went out when *Scream 3* tanked. Back to Winters, who says that Lt. Peacock – another platoon leader – is also a possibility. "Bless him, no one tries harder, but he's not cut out to take men into combat," Winters observes as we see Peacock confusedly staring at a map and

trying to determine his platoon's position. We saw his uncertainty in action in "Bastogne," when he took a patrol group on a mission toward the German line and it ended in disaster and the death of replacement Pvt. Julian. Winters can't promote him to CO when Peacock struggles with commanding a platoon. Nixon pipes up that Buck Compton is an obvious choice, what with his swagger and his hotness. Nixon's reasons aren't quite those, but I know they were lingering in the back of his mind. "He's the only real choice," Winters agrees. "Buck's a real combat leader, but you know, I want Easy Company to have at least one experienced platoon leader." Still, he laments, it's a moot point because Dike is there for the duration. "Well, we all know who you'd like to have run Easy, but the trouble is, it's not your job anymore, Dick," Nixon reminds him kindly, massaging his friend's troubled thigh. Well, he might've been. Winters worries silently.

"We all agreed Buck Compton would've been the best choice to run Easy if Winters had been able to get rid of Dike," Donnie narrates. "But to be honest, Buck wasn't the same soldier...since he got shot in Holland. He was more serious somehow." Yeah, because he got shot in the ass and then dumped on it. There's no justice. No one man could be that strapping, I guess, without being fated for a fall. Buck, perched in a foxhole with Heffron and Gonorrhea, can't believe Hoobler had a loaded Luger in his pants. I feel like I've written an awful lot today about the contents of Hoobler's pants. "Don't you two do something stupid like that, all right?" Buck demands. "You, Wild Bill, I've invested too much goddamn time shaping you into something useful." Gonorrhea laughs affectionately. Yeah, G-Spot, I love him too. "If you do something crazy, get yourself knocked out of this thing..." Buck warns. "I know, you'll kill me," interrupts a grinning Gonorrhea. "Even if you're dead, I'll still kill you," Compton finishes. His warning complete, Compton stares joy-free at his friends, then leaves to go spread a little gloom and doom wherever sunshine threatens to sparkle. Heffron watches his departure. "Crazy Joe McClosky," he says. Gonorrhea figures Babe has finally gone nuts. Heffron clarifies that Crazy Joe is a Philly denizen (both these men call that city their home) who hung out in front of Delancey's and stared at people silently. "Buck reminds me of him now," Heffron says. Gonorrhea, stunned, can't fathom Heffron's assertion that Buck is loony. Upset, Heffron backs off a bit, then changes his mind. "Come on, you've seen him!" he insists. "He's all wound up like spring!" Gonorrhea flatly states that his friend is fine. "It wasn't getting shot that got him," he says, quietly. "It was being in that hospital. I've been there, okay? It ain't pretty....You saw, once he was up moving around he was his old self again. I'm telling you, Buck Compton's fine." The Jinx Fairy plops down next to me and shows me her ass, which now has Buck Compton's name tattooed across it. But, since we're just getting started and she's clearly got time to kill, I pass her twenty bucks for a beer run.

Compton rains on a foxhole containing George Luz, Skip Muck, and Alex Penkala. "I'm serious!" he tells them. "Sure thing, boss. Nothing stupid. We got it," Skip and Penkala say. Compton demands the same assertion from tired, unenergized Luz, and finally gets it. Compton leaves, satisfied that he could make a run at the Grim Reaper's racket once this dang ol' war ends. "Don't do anything stupid? Who the hell is he talking to? A bunch of morons who volunteered to jump out of a perfectly good airplane," Penkala giggles. "Can it get more stupid than that?" Luz moans, "Probably not." Skip gulps and admits he swam across Niagara once on a bet. "What, in a barrel?" Luz asks, curious and dubious at once. "No, I didn't go over the Falls, I swam the river ten miles up," insists Skip. "That current is damn strong. Must've carried me two miles downstream before I got across." He laughs that he didn't find it stupid, but his mother and sister thought otherwise and blasted him for doing it; so did his girlfriend Faye. "Well, they had a point," grumbles Penkala. "You're an idiot."

Donnie sits quietly in his foxhole and cleans Hoobler's Luger. That sounds like an internal organ of the goeey, non-essential variety. "I heard about Hoobler," a voice says. Donnie looks up in surprise to see Lt. Dike standing above his foxhole. "Shame." Donnie agrees. Dike asks whether that's the Luger; Donnie says it is, but that he hasn't ascertained just what to do with the offending weapon yet. "Where'd you grow up?" Dike asks. "Huntington, West Virginia," Donnie says, shooting Dike a confused look that reflects the randomness of this quiz. "What kind of work did you do there?" Dike wonders. "My brother and I helped my mother run a boarding house," he answers. We learn that Donnie's father died in an automobile when the lad was ten. "That's sad," Dike says, as though Donnie just confessed that he's got a zit festering on his chin and no Oxy. Dike then decides to investigate why Donnie became a paratrooper, probably trying to understand something about the men he's commanding. Or, he's killing time between bathroom breaks. Donnie explains that he read an article about paratroopers in Life magazine,

which discussed the grueling training and concluded that only the very best men succeed to become certified paratroopers. "I wanted to fight with the best," Donnie tells his superior yet vastly inferior officer, the irony of that situation not completely lost on the sergeant. Dike asks whether Donnie misses Huntington. "Honestly, I try not to think about it that much," Donnie replies. "What about you, where are you fr..." At that second, Donnie realizes Dike has trotted away without warning. He shakes his head in amazement, having learned that dorks come in all kinds of uniforms.

A Jeep plows through the snow and stops at Nixon's foxhole, waking up the decidedly hung over captain. The new arrival is a messenger, who hands Nixon a piece of paper and then flees the stench of whiskey, vomit, and morning breath that no doubt clouds the air around Nixon's foxhole like dirt clouds cling to Pigpen.

"Morning, sir," Nixon says jauntily to Winters, who is shaving and looks outstanding. Red hair against snow...mmm. I'm such a girl about this show. Nixon grins that a notice came from division, and he brandishes it dramatically. "Eviction notice?" Winters asks, dryly. Nixon is glowing. "I think I got something to help you with your leadership problem," he replies happily. Winters hopes against all reason that Dike has been transferred. "No, can't help you there," Nixon says. "But, division is plucking one officer from each regiment that served in the heroic defense of Bastogne and sending them back to the States for a three-day furlough, getting them out banging the drum for the war-bond drive, that sort of thing." Nixon grins that he's been plucked, and passes the notice to Winters, who is genuinely delighted for his pal but fails to see how his boyfriend's absence could possibly help him. "It doesn't. That's why I'm not going," Nixon announces. "I've been to the States. I grew up there. That's why I came to Europe. Just wish they'd told me there was a war on." Aw! Nixon's a boozehound and not cut out for combat, but he's committed to his friends and he's giving up the free ticket home and what if something happens to him now and I'm getting choked here and need to sit down. Winters is obviously appreciative of the sacrifice, as Nixon drives home the point that surely another man in the battalion could use a long trip back to the U.S.

Cut to the elated face of Lt. Peacock, who is being presented the pass and told it's some kind of honor. He's grinning, his eyes are moist, and he's genuinely thrilled. Everyone gathers around and tells him they're delighted for him, and that he's a great guy who deserves this high honor, and poor Peacock is so touched and feels so loved. How sad! He has no idea. "Thanks, guys, this really means a lot!" he chokes. Everyone offers three very low-key cheers for Peacock, lest the Germans hear them roar. This leaves Easy down one platoon leader; I assume they can slide in another officer somewhere, or they'll just do without since Peacock was sweet but barely capable anyway.

A filmmaker films Easy's men smiling and singing and toasting each other. The camera lens colors the surroundings, making everything look green and warm and rosy; then we see the man filming it and the stark contrast between the film and the harsh reality. This feels like a swipe at shallow war propaganda, and it's actually quite effective. "Remember to smile for the camera," the visiting Col. Sink says. "Got to keep morale up for the folks back home." Winters asks, "Why?" Sink shakes his head slightly. "Damned if I know," sighs the older officer. He then asks intelligence officer Nixon what awaits them in Foy. "At least one company from the 10th Panzergrenadiers dug in here," he answers, pointing to a spot on the map. "There's at least one 88 [machine gun], but we haven't been able to spot it." Nixon adds that there's a lot of artillery there as well, but Winters has spied something intriguing and takes his leave of the two men.

Joe Toye addresses the videographer in a gravelly voice as the film rolls. "How do I feel about being rescued by Patton?" he repeats. "I'd feel pretty peachy about it if it wasn't for one thing: we didn't need to be fucking rescued by Patton. Got that?" Winters smiles and greets Toye, pulling him aside for a conference. Toye immediately apologizes for his Patton remark, but Winters waves it aside, since he feels exactly the same way. He's more curious about why Toye is there. "I want to head back to the line, sir," he says. Winters insists he doesn't have to, and tries to shuttle the soldier off to an aid station. "I'd really like to head back with the fellas, sir," Toye repeats firmly, removing his helmet so he can slide his sling off and cast it aside. Winters is impressed and grants Toye permission to rejoin the line. He looks so proud of his soldier.

"Joe Toye had been at the aid station for three days," Donnie narrates. "Everybody was glad to have him back, especially [Gonorrhoea]." We see the gonorrhific guy warmly greeting his friend. "Had to make sure you're on top of things," Toye postures. Gonorrhoea grins and plays along.

"Tied me own boots last week, all by meself," he jokes, unfortunately sounding incredibly forced with the childish pronoun manipulations. I choose to believe it's because the actor cherishes grammar. The rest of the group is equally pleased to see Toye. "Where'd you get hit?" asks one young private. "What's that?" Toye asks Skip, pointing at Webb. Ha! We learn it's Webb, a replacement. "Thought it was some guy I've known for two years but forgot his face!" laughs a relieved Toye.

Skip decides to take us all on a nostalgic tour through the men of Easy Company and the weaponry that felled them, kind of like a Sally Jessy theme but without the freaks. Joe got an arm wound on New Year's Eve, courtesy of the Luftwaffe. James Alley "landed on broken glass in Normandy and got peppered by a potato-masher in Holland," Skip explains. Heh. What if it really had been a screaming German who assaulted Toye with one of those manual potato-mashing utensils? Not as effective, maybe, but at least it's a novel approach to combat. They don't show Alley – unfortunately, since I have no idea what he looks like and would've welcomed the chance to know him. Moving on, we're reminded that Bull Randleman took a piece of an exploding tank in Holland, Liebgott got "pinked" in the neck there, and Popeye Wynn took a butt bullet in Normandy. Interestingly, Luz hasn't ever been hit. "Lucky bastard," Skip grins. "Takes one to know one," Luz notes. The Jinx Fairy dumps out her pack of smokes and spells, "Boo-ya!" on the rug. Buck Compton's butt bullet hit him in Holland; playfully, Buck bends over and points to his bum and ahhhhhh, shake the booty, baby. Someone else notes the tradition of ass wounds within Easy. "Even [Donnie] over there got a couple pieces of a tank shell burst in Carentan," Skip notes. "One chunk in the face, [and] another chunk almost took out his nuts." Donnie snickers, leaning against a tree while eating his dinner. Gonorrhea regards him with interest. "Yeah, how are those nuts, Sarge?" he asks. "Doing fine...Nice of you to ask," Donnie says calmly, but with a slight mirthful quaver.

"On the afternoon of Jan. 3, most of Easy headed back to its old position in the woods overlooking Foy," Donnie voice-overs, as we see it happen. "A few men remained in the Bois Jacques attached to D Company to hold the main line of resistance." Gonorrhea and Toye pass the huddled Easy men and mock them. "Wouldn't drink too much if I was you," someone calls out. "Hey, be careful if he offers you a cigarette," Skip giggles. Christenson is confused. He doesn't know they're referring to Lt. Speirs, a.k.a. Deputy Dog, the company's commander with a legend of evil. Perconte supplies the rumors, which we heard in "Carentan": that Speirs shot one of his own men simply for being drunk, and that he annihilated a group of twenty prisoners right after charitably offering them all cigarettes. We've seen bits of the second incident, but not enough to confirm the level of Speirs's involvement, and nothing of the first. Right as they dish Deputy Dog's devilish past, the man himself approaches and asks what they're all doing. "Watching the line, sir," trembles Christenson, obviously afraid that the man will determine "line-watching" a killable offense. "Well, keep up the good work," D-Dog says pleasantly. "While you're at it, you might want to reinforce your cover." Perconte pipes up that Lt. Dike told them not to bother because they'd only be there one day, to which D-Dog whatevers that they might as well do as Dike ordered. Turning to leave, D-Dog pauses and says, "Anyone care for a smoke?" Christenson stares at him in fear. No one responds.

Late that afternoon, Easy arrives at its old foxholes and Toye eagerly jumps into his. "Aaaah, you gotta be fucking kidding me!" he screams. "Someone's gonna die, someone's gonna fucking die! Look at this shit!" He means it literally. The 1st battalion saw fit to take dumps in every Easy foxhole. Woohoo! Fun with excrement! Gonorrhea attributes it to the soldiers' wimpy refusals to spend any time above ground. Donnie notes in voice-over that the 1st battalion obviously withstood heavy artillery fire in Easy's absence; the broken trees, strewn branches and shards of bark, it seems, were a dead giveaway. No cruel war pun intended.

The men inch closer to visibility, while Donnie watches the Germans in Foy through his binoculars; they're scampering from building to building, setting up heavy guns and scrambling to get in position. "Still couldn't see the artillery, but I knew it was down there," Donnie tells us. He reports to Dike that the Germans have the line zeroed, and appear to be biding their time until it's apparent that Allied troops have reoccupied the position like lambs to the slaughter. The plan is established: hold the line. Good plan, brainiac. I bet he could also explain what sweaters do. Dike then decides he's due at regimental HQ and leaves the fortification of foxholes to people with actual competence.

Donnie helps the men carry logs and enormous leafy branches toward foxholes. As usual,

he's more concerned with his comrades' safety than he is in setting up his own secure spot, underscoring yet another inadequacy of Lt. Dike's. "Incoming!" someone screams. The company scrambles to take cover, diving into whatever pits are nearby and trying to shield themselves with foliage. What ensues is madness – men running to and fro, zig-zagging between potent explosions and a barrage of gunfire. Every shell blows up a tree or hits the snow and shoots up a geyser of dirt and debris. Donnie drops into a shallow hole and watches everything unfold, a strange smile on his face. "For some reason, at that moment in that half-finished foxhole, all I could think about was the Fourth of July when I was a kid. I loved to make my own firecrackers...loved to blow up dirt clods and pop bottles," he remembers aloud to us. "What I saw that day was the most awesome display of firepower I'd seen in my life." A tree blows apart in an awe-inspiring cloud of orange flame. The forest looks like a minefield – there's no safe spot, which makes it amazing that so many people lived. Of course, not everyone who lived did so in one piece. "I wouldn't have been laughing if I'd known what happened to Joe Toye," Donnie says.

Toye lies on the ground, a trickle of blood oozing from the corner of his mouth. He twitches, struggles for air, shivers, and coughs at the same time. He tries to sit up, or roll over, or even prop himself up on an elbow, but he's weak and in pain and stricken by what he sees on the ground. Panning out, we see it too: his leg, blown off above the knee and lying, twisted, a foot away on the snow. His stump bleeds profusely. Donnie jerks his head up, but sees nothing; still, he peers around curiously, as if he has leg empathy. Malarkey and Gonorrhea slowly start to emerge, wondering aloud whether they should check for any wounded men, but also fretting that the Germans are waiting for exactly that to happen before shelling the Allies again. "Gotta get up," Toye says, his words almost indecipherable through gritted teeth and a filter of sheer agony. "Gotta get up! I need my helmet!" He's valiantly fighting tears. In the distance, Malarkey hears noises and grimaces, trying to recognize the source. "I need help," the voice calls feebly. Gonorrhea screams, "I think that's Joe!" and runs out of his hole toward his fallen friend. Compton screams for Gonorrhea to stay under cover in a foxhole, but Wild Bill ignores him and keeps charging toward Toye.

Heffron, meanwhile, is trapped in his foxhole, a fallen tree blocking the opening. "Help," he calls pathetically. Gonorrhea gets to Toye and, to his credit, doesn't react with alarm or terror; instead, he just tries to help his pal scramble to safety. "I gotta get up," Toye mumbles, panting, anguish contorting his features. He's trying so hard, being so brave, and he can't get any leverage without that leg. "Come on, Joe, come on pal," Gonorrhea tries to reassure him, and they joke tensely that Gonorrhea always kidded about making it back to the U.S.A. first. He starts to drag Toye away. Donnie and Compton dig Heffron out from his tree prison. "Think I overdid it on the cover of my foxhole?" he laughs, sheepishly. Toye is bellowing in pain while also insisting he must return to his foxhole, utterly dedicated to his men and his job and aching for normalcy. Gonorrhea swears he's trying to get Toye to his foxhole, but the going is slow.

"Incoming!" someone shrieks again. More blasts, as terrifying as the last, besiege the area. "Hurry up!" Compton screams at Gonorrhea, petrified. "You're gonna get bombed!" Gonorrhea never loses his cool, clamping down on Toye's arms and dragging him inch by inch toward a foxhole. "Move it, Bill!" Compton begs him. Gonorrhea calmly swears, "Come on, Joe." Compton notices snow volcanoes erupting all across the forest, products of intensifying shellfire. "Hold on, I'll be there!" he yells. "I'm going to help you!" Just then, a shell hits right where Gonorrhea stood, and they disappear from sight. "NO!" screams Buck, darting forward until a blast knocks him backward into his foxhole. God, I'm so tense. I can't believe this. The special effects make that forest look like the freshest hell of all, a perilous pit of shrapnel and fire. It's worse than a Jewel concert.

Cries for a medic rip through the air. Donnie dives into a different hole, trembling. "During the second barrage I wasn't laughing anymore," he narrates. Bodies are everywhere, as is the debris of a decimated wood. Toye and Gonorrhea lie motionless on the snow, both men with mangled right limbs. No! Not Gonorrhea, too! This is awful! God, I kept wishing the other episodes had emotional resonance like this, but when it comes right down to it, I didn't want it this badly. I'm crying. Gonorrhea lost most of his leg because he's brave and loyal and utterly heroic, refusing to run and hide and abandon his legless friend Toye. I want to hug him. Luz peeks out of his hole and screams for Donnie to make sure he's all right. "Stay down!" Donnie orders. Dike runs up, barely in uniform and panting. "You get things organized here. I'm going to go for help," he pants, then takes off again from whence he came. "What the FUCK?" Luz sputters, having overheard

the exchange. Donnie looks sad. "Where the fuck's he going?" screams Luz. Donnie waves off the inquiry and orders Luz to get battalion on the line.

When the dust cloud clears, Compton spies the motionless bodies of Gonorrhea and Toye, tangled in a heap, and loses the power of speech. "Mmm...mmm...MEDIC!" he stutters, aggrieved, bolting toward the duo. Gasping with shock and sorrow, he removes his helmet and stares at the horror before him, his fingers going slack and dropping his hat on the blood-soaked snow. Donnie bolts between foxholes to check on the health of his men. "Stay ready!" he calls. "Those stupid sons of bitches might be trying to come though!" Popeye Wynn proclaims himself "100 Amen! Avenge the boys! I'm taking this awfully personally. But I've recapped their every move, and it's hard to recap their near-demise.

Donnie halts when he sees Toye and Gonorrhea, as does a startled Malarkey. He pales and asks the just-arrived Roe what he can do to help. "Got a smoke?" Toye trembles, wincing and still staring at the mangled flesh and bone mess that's where his kneecap should be. Gonorrhea likewise can't look away from his wound; his leg is still there, but only a thin strip of it connecting foot to knee. The rest is gone, blown to oblivion, carried away as ash on the winds of war. "Jesus, what's a guy got to do to get killed around here?" he breathes through his clenched jaw, equally terrified by what he's seeing where shin used to be. Roe orders for medics to load Gonorrhea onto a stretcher while he attends to Toye. The flesh left on Gonorrhea's leg twitches and jerks. "They got ol' Guarnere this time," he says, hiding tears with a pained chuckle. Donnie nods, broken, as Gonorrhea's stretcher moves toward a jeep. "Hey Joe, I told you I'd beat you back to the States," Gonorrhea calls to his buddy. Toye, agonized, can only stare. Luz walks over to Donnie, and his voice falters when he spies the horrible hit Easy Company just took. He suggests that Donnie go tend to Buck, who is seated on a branch nearby cradling his head in his hands.

Gingerly, Donnie approaches the lieutenant, crouching next to him and speaking softly and with sympathy. In voice-over, Donnie reckons that the real change in Buck came after seeing his close friends Toye and Gonorrhea lying in pieces on Belgian soil. Compton looks off in the distance to avoid showing the depth of his pain.

An ambulance tears toward a town hospital, but it's unclear where, since Bastogne was left in ruins and Foy still belongs to the Germans. "One report said Compton was taken off the line because of a bad case of trench foot," Donnie says. "It didn't say anything about him losing his friends." Panning across a hospital, where soldiers visit their felled friends, we see Compton lying on a bed, alone, staring at the ceiling. "Buck was a great combat leader. He was wounded in Normandy, and again in Holland. He received a Silver Star for his part in taking out those guns on D-Day. He took everything the Krauts could throw at him, time and again," Donnie says. Except, apparently, whatever the Krauts threw at his nearest and dearest. Buck rolls over toward the camera, exposing red puffy eyes on the verge of another torrent of tears. Malarkey arrives to visit Buck, sitting by his bedside and reading aloud a piece of mail from Compton's home. "UCLA didn't make the Rose Bowl this winter, probably because you weren't there," he reads. "Gosh, how we all know what an exciting young man you are, and how your heart and love..." Buck reaches over and grabs the letter, throwing it down on the bed and burying his face in the pillow, weeping. Silently, Malarkey folds the note gently and tucks it in his former boss's pocket. "I guess he couldn't take seeing his friends Toye and Guarnere all torn up like that," Donnie voice-overs. "No one ever thought less of him for it." Compton, too, then. I can't take much more of this. I'm openly crying now.

Donnie meanders along the line, again checking up on his soldiers' morale. He notes to us that Buck's absence eliminated the only contender for Lt. Dike's spot, should a miracle remove him from command of Easy. He asks Skip Muck where Lt. Dike is; they realize he was off taking a walk, and Donnie walks away with a head-shake. Skip digs his foxhole with renewed vigor, wishing he could put the shovel to better use by ramming it up the smallest available cavity on Dike's body. We learn that Easy cleared the woods east of Foy, then moved a few days later through the western part of the forest and secured that, too. They met with surprisingly little resistance, which probably means the Germans were busy fortifying Foy. They Foy-tified it. See this? I'm reduced to a drooling, sniveling pun machine.

Luz gathers a few rapt NCOs and regales them with the unbelievable take of Dike's idiocy – how he ran up to Donnie, clearly having been hiding near regimental HQ during the abominable shellfire, and ordered him to organize things. "I'm gonna go for...help," mimics Luz. "I need to go polish my oak-leaf clusters." Donnie, appearing behind the wannabe comic, clears his throat

discreetly. Luz knows he's caught, turns around, and trots over to his boss. Donnie enthusiastically compliments his dead-on Dike impression, then begs Luz not to use it anymore. "Doesn't do anybody any good, okay?" he pleads. Luz gets it and agrees to stop. He then yawns, a direct jab at Dike again. "Wise-ass," Donnie chuckles.

Then, a familiar cry: "Incoming!" Trees explode. It's hard to imagine that any are left standing to then dissolve at the touch of shrapnel. My muscles are starting to ache from the periodic clenching. In a stunning outside shot of the forest, the deep blue night turns bright white, bathed in the glow of bursting shells. Luz sprints through the woods, but keeps tripping and stumbling, unable to reach his hole. "Hurry!" scream his hole-mates, Skip and Penkala. "Come on, get in here!" With everything in him, Luz strains to reach the foxhole but can't get there quickly enough. Suddenly, a shell drops inside the hole and disintegrates Skip and Penkala, thus exposing the fatal flaw in the foxhole plan: they're HOLES. In the middle of a battlefield. Not, in fact, bomb-repellants. Huddling inside them seems as much a crapshoot as running between the trees. Luz, eyes big as planets, lies still on the snow, covers his head, and quivers, terrified at a near-miss and rocked by the death of his close friends. Donnie yanks him inside his hole. "Muck and Penkala," sputters Luz. "Muck and Penkala got hit!" A bearded dude called Hashey gets hit in the shoulder.

Suddenly, a smoking canister drops from the sky and lands at the lip of Donnie's and Luz's foxhole. They stare at it without breathing, instantly pallid and clammy. It sizzles. They wait. It mocks them. They stiffen. It hisses. Luz slowly removes a cigarette from his jacket and lights it; Donnie reaches over and snags it. "Thought you didn't smoke," Luz whispers. "I don't," Donnie says flatly. Hell, I don't either, but that looks divine right now. I'm all unnerved and jumpy, and I'm on a comfy couch in sweats. Luz nods and lights a new one for himself. They never stop staring at the canister.

"The shell that hit the foxhole Luz and I were in was a dud," Donnie explains. "The one that hit Muck and Penkala's wasn't. That's just the way it was." He compliments Muck and Penkala, praising them as great men and alerting us that Malarkey took their deaths the hardest. His best friends in Easy were Compton, Muck, and Penkala, and "in less than a week, he'd seen two of them die." Thank God Malarkey is still with us. Someone picks a broken string of rosary beads – the crucifix intact – from the Muck/Penkala hole and slowly hands it to Malarkey, who cradles between his fingers. He's so crushed, he can't cry. He's dry.

"We were all worried about Malarkey," Donnie narrates, switching the scene to later that day, watching Foy and preparing to invade it. Gently, he nudges his friend. "Didn't I hear you say you wanted to bring a Luger home for your kid brother?" Donnie asks. Malarkey turns his head slightly and allows a wee flicker of a smile. "Yeah," he breathes. Donnie fumbles inside his coat and produces a Luger. "Why don't you give him that?" he offers. Malarkey takes it, staring wonderingly at it, and recognizing it as Hoobler's. He seems to thaw a bit, regarding the pistol almost as a piece of the past, a reminder of people and places and faces from Easy's combat history. Donnie then kindly informs Malarkey that Winters needs a runner for a few days, and wondered if Malarkey might want the job. Malarkey thinks for a minute, then slowly shakes his head, regaining more and more fragments of his former cheer. "Tell him thanks," he says, still gazing upon the Luger. "I'm gonna stay here." Donnie tells Malarkey to join him at HQ for an hour or two to bid Buck farewell. "All right," Malarkey agrees, still dazed. Donnie exposit that going even just fifty yards away from the front lines for a couple of hours can completely regenerate a soldier's fraying psyche. Cut to a young man on all fours, scraping frenetically at the rocky snow. "I saw a soldier try to dig a foxhole with his bare hands," Donnie recalls. "He didn't notice that he'd torn off all his fingernails. I got him out of there quickly; not for his sake, but for ours. Fear is poison in combat...destructive, contagious." Donnie gently puts the kid's helmet back on for him and helps him off the ground.

Donnie then watches as Malarkey and Compton say an awkward farewell. He repeats that Buck was forever changed that day, as we see him stoically salute Malarkey and hop atop a Jeep, riding off into the sunset. But not, fortunately, out of the opening credits, so we'll all still get our fix of strapping Buck.

And now, after all that, Donnie decides to note the obvious. "The barrages on Jan. 3 and the shelling on the ninth marked a low point in the war for many of the men in Easy," he understates. But he's got more than just no-shit-Sherlock details for us. "Few actually broke, but I knew the terror of those shellings and the unrelenting pressure we'd been under since we got to Bastogne

would take a toll in many ways," he continues. "I was afraid men would lose focus, suffer a drop in morale, and that was dangerous, especially in combat...More of which lay in store for us." More combat? This is still going? Are we there yet? How much further? Mom, Julie just made a face at me! Lordy, this is the Shellacking That Wouldn't End. Someone other than Hoobler's trousers needs to fire a gun.

Donnie repeats again that they've cleared the woods on either side of Foy, but the Foy-a-thon was still imminent, and he dreaded it with every fiber of his being. The week's carnage and casualties belted home the reality not only that some men who ran Currahee together would die, but that all of them might. So, in sum, there is death all around. Thanks, big D. Blessed Perconte and Randleman are still kicking, as is my undead Liebgott, survivor of the weapon that is this Compaq keyboard. Donnie frets to us that Easy will be diving into combat again without a proper leader.

"The night before the attack, I did something as a 1st Sergeant that I would never have imagined myself doing," he voice-overs. Given what's coming, he didn't need to elucidate this for us; we've known all along that he bucked the trend and never badmouthed his boss. Waiting outside Winters's shelter, Donnie lights a smoke. "Didn't figure you for a smoking man," Winters's voice says, followed out of the darkness by the man himself. "Neither did I," sighs Donnie with war-weary typicality. They make small talk about the stillness of Foy, and Donnie's strong confidence in Easy Company's ability to carry out its part in the plan. Donnie then gulps, looks at the ground, and does the one thing he's resisted. "On the other hand, I have no confidence in our CO, sir," he begins. Winters looks up, amazed. "Lt. Dike is an empty uniform, Captain. He's just...he's not there, sir." Winters opts for the literal response, pointing out that Dike will indeed be there tomorrow. "I understand he'll be there physically, but tomorrow's the real deal and he's going to have to lead those men," Donnie argues, calling into question Dike's decision-making skills under pressure and under fire. Donnie concludes by asserting that a lot of Easy Company men will die the next day under Dike's command. He's struggling to get this all out, clearly enjoying precisely none of it. Winters bites his lip and dismisses Donnie, who admits in voice-over that he knew Winters could do nothing to remove a well-connected CO, but he could stay silent no longer. He's far more generous than I am; I'd have been mouthing off like Gonorrhoea. I don't fully understand why Winters, as the battalion XO, couldn't make some recommendation to have Dike removed; after all, he's the man's boss in both rank and title. But I refuse to doubt my hero; he wouldn't lie to me.

Morning dawns on Foy. Donnie isn't sure we quite get that Winters couldn't remove Dike from power based only on gut feelings, so he repeats it for our benefit and coughs up an anvil onto his shoe. Winters outlines the battle plan to Dike. The men must traverse an eighth of a mile of open field in order to reach Foy, but there's little cover on that short stretch, so speed is essential. Winters set up a group of light machine guns at either end of the field to provide covering fire. Item Company will lead the 3rd battalion toward Foy from the east to help draw attention away from Easy, and Dog Company will be in reserve, although Winters doubts Easy will need it. Dike nods and looks pensive, as though he's digesting this, although he's clearly more concerned with how far his wussy legs can carry him before he's considered a deserter. Winters sums up: get to Foy faster than the Germans can gear up the mortar and artillery fire. Speed, speed, speed. And, speed. "I'm relying on you," Winters hammers. "Get. It. Done." Dike meets his gaze, then yawns. Winters, pissed, kicks him in the nose, feeds him a box of bullets, then tickles Dike so fiercely that his mouth becomes a lethal weapon.

The attack begins. Easy scampers across the field while snipers fell a few of the fellows. At least one tank is prepared enough to fire. Liebgott makes it as far as a building, inside which three Germans have hidden; he and a few others prepare to smoke the bitches out. There's total confusion now, because gunfire is deluging the area and Dike has lost track of 1st platoon. Dike panics and tells everyone to stop, despite only having covered part of the stretch toward Foy. From the tree line, Winters frantically screams for everyone to keep moving, which directly counters Dike's confused cries to halt and fall back. This buys the Germans more time, which contravenes Winters's orders yet again. He is irate. Explosions are everywhere. The men try to take cover when ordered to, but look totally angry and annoyed at this disorganized disaster. They run every which way, while voices scream out instructions. It looks like a square-dancing convention gone horribly, horribly wrong.

Winters seethes that he wants Dike on that radio right now. Soldiers surround Dike and

demand to know why they stopped. His head swimming, Dike stares at the angry faces and everything in his sights slows down to a crawl. Men are screaming at him for a plan. "I don't know!" he screams. Luz throws the phone at him and tells him to get on the horn with Winters immediately. Dike shakes off the trauma and blathers that he wants 1st platoon – under Lt. Foley, probably Peacock's replacement – to slink around the village and attack from the rear. Donnie yells that the rest of the men can't just stay put; it's a death trap. They're outclassed by the range and devastating power of German infantry weapons. He's also upset that 1st platoon will be alone out there. "We will provide suppressing fire!" stammers Dike. "We're gonna be kind of alone out there, Lieutenant," shouts a soldier. "WE WILL PROVIDE SUPPRESSING FIRE!" Dike shrieks, insane again.

As the platoon moves out, a man is shot and drops to the ground. Luz thrusts the radio at Dike again and demands that he speak to Captain Winters. Dike pants. His balls are actually inverted by now. Winters, steaming, paces the sideline in a right snit. A sniper shoots from the Foy church's steeple as Donnie screams for suppressing fire to abet 1st platoon's dangerous mission. Perconte drops down. No! Stop it, Spanks! Stop killing the guys I know! You're annihilating the plucky ones and have reduced me to excessive use of exclamation points! Bah!!!! Luckily, Perconte's ass is the only wounded part of his body, in fine Easy Company tradition. Donnie notes that snipers are in the building with the caved-in roof, and yelps to Dike that they're sitting ducks out there and desperately need to keep moving. Winters is screaming exactly the same thing from the forest line, and starts to charge out there. I'm totally rooting for this, but Col. Sink bellows for Winters to return because battalion commanders don't dart out into battle like that; Winters and I are both chagrined. Finally at the boiling point and feeling justified in his actions, Winters flags down Lt. Speirs and orders him to relieve Lt. Dike of command and lead that attack into Foy. Speirs trots out into the fire without a second thought to his own safety. Near Foy, Martin screams for Webb to fall back and take better cover, but when he taps the young soldier on the shoulder, he realizes Webb is dead.

Speirs charges up to Dike and grabs his chest. "I'm taking over," he seethes. Donnie briefs him: Easy is spread out all over the place, and 1st platoon is stretched across Foy's flank and unable to move because of a deadly sniper. He also points out the caved-in roof under which the worst of the snipers lurks. Speirs needs one second to make a decision. "I want mortars and grenade launchers on that building until it's gone and when it's gone I want 1st platoon to go straight in forget going around everyone else follow me," he rapid-fires, completely eschewing implied punctuation because dammit, we don't have time for pauses where commas would be. Donnie relays these orders to the other platoons, one of which he is leading in Compton's absence. James Alley sets up the mortar gun and shells the fuck out of the building with the caved-in roof. "Come on, Luz, let's get the bastards!" shouts a soldier. Shells pepper the fields as Easy finally scurries toward Foy.

Donnie arrives in town and takes cover behind a wall. Peering out, he recoils when a sniper bullet dings off the wall and scrapes his cheek. Stunned, he looks up and then notices a whole mess of German infantrymen and their weaponry approaching. He frets that Item Company is nowhere to be found, and Easy must link with those men in order to successfully capture Foy. He's also nervous that Item will just pull back and leave Easy alone. Speirs sets his jaw, then makes a rash decision. Bolting away from cover, he sprints across the town in search of Item Company. Donnie gapes at this selfless act. "At first the Germans didn't shoot at him," he narrates. "I think they couldn't quite believe what they were seeing. But that wasn't the really astounding thing." From the smoke, Speirs suddenly emerges again. "The astounding thing was that after he hooked up with I Company, he came back," Donnie informs us. Speirs slow-motion runs toward the camera, and I swear Chariots of Fire should be playing in the background as a beaming smile breaks across Donnie's face. His hairline celebrates by inching forward a few centimeters.

Jolly men sing "I've been working on the railroad, all the livelong day," as the videographer films the jubilation. Donnie exoposits that they cleared Foy and took more than one hundred German prisoners in the process. Suddenly, a sniper kills two singing soldiers, and everyone races for cover. Dried blood crusts the right side of Donnie's face, still there from his earlier close call. Donnie can't see the sniper, so he leans out again and spots the rifleman aiming right at him. Whipping back around the wall, he tells Shifty Powers exactly where to shoot and melodramatically begs him, "Don't miss, Shifty." Bracing himself, Donnie then bolts out across

the street to draw the sniper's attention, having drunk of the Speirs goblet and colored himself heroic. The man gets off one missed shot at Donnie before Shifty slays him with a well-placed single shot. Everyone cheers. The peril is no more.

As the men clean up Foy, Donnie reveals for us that Mellot, Herron, Sowasko, and Ken Webb died from the sniper's fire. "Would've been more if it hadn't been for Shifty Powers," he says. Randleman approaches, carrying little Perconte on his back. "Shot me right through my ass," he grins. "Hang tough," Donnie smiles back, as Jordan, Jon, and little Joey wipe their runny noses and slap a lawsuit on his been-around-the-block behind. They start to leave until Perconte calls out, "Is it true about Dike?" Donnie nods. "Thank God for small miracles," sighs Perconte. I'd have chosen much ruder language, something starting with "a" and ending with "sshole bastard wimp." Randleman and his cargo trudge away. As Donnie takes a walk and leaves smoking, burning Foy behind him, he shares his relief that the specter of the Foy offensive is finally behind them. "I guess a lot of the men thought once we'd taken Foy, they'd take us off the line and ship us to Mourmelon for a breather," he says. "That wasn't to be." Easy took two more towns, Novelle and Rachamps, a few days later, in a siege apparently not fit for television.

Inside the Rachamps church, a choir sings gentle hymns to soothe Easy's demolished spirit. Donnie tells us that it was their first night indoors in a month. Lieb Gott, Randleman, and Talbert stare morosely into the distance, seated in pews and letting the idyllic, peaceful setting wash over them. The room is cast in an orange glow. "It was heaven," Donnie shares, adding that the men had been told they'd go to Mourmelon soon for relaxation and recuperation. "Of course, in the morning, we found out Mourmelon would wait," because Hitler had attacked toward Alsace and Easy would be deployed to Haganau to hold part of that line. "We didn't know it yet," Donnie says. "That night, we were okay."

Panning across the tired faces, we see Luz slumped against the pew, dirty and hollow and inert. Roe's stony façade is in place, and Perconte is stretched out next to him on his good cheek. Donnie, curled up in his seat with a journal, gives us the final devastating tally: of 121 men and twenty-four replacements; Easy exited Belgium with a total of sixty-three men, less than half the initial number. We then see a batch of familiar faces sitting in the pews, men we know have left Easy one way or another during the company's catastrophic month fighting for Bastogne and Foy. One by one, Donnie identifies them and recounts their circumstances; one by one, they fade away. This is incredibly cheesy and anvil-tastic, but with all the familiar faces in there, it manages to be incredibly moving as well. "Our month in Belgium cost us one good officer, Buck Compton, and one bad one, Norman Dike," Donnie says. "But we gained a good one in the end, so I guess we came out ahead." The camera stops on Lt. Speirs, who catches Donnie's eye.

After some light banter, Speirs cocks his head and says, "You wanna ask me, don't you?" Donnie is confused, so Speirs elaborates that he thinks Donnie wants confirmation of all the wild rumors. Shaking his head, he marvels that the grapevine invariably delivers gossip that claims to come straight from someone who saw the event in question unfold, but no first-hand sources ever appear. He references Tercius from ancient Rome, and how centurions probably yakked all day about how Tercius lopped off the heads of Carthaginian prisoners, blah intellect blah snore obscure reference. Donnie suggests that perhaps Tercius never denied it, which only set the embers aflame; Speirs counters that by noting that there's an advantage to being perceived as the vilest bastard in the entire army. But there, in the Church, so unfazed by his heroism, Speirs radiates good. And good looks. I knew Dike couldn't last because he wasn't gorgeous enough to be in Easy. Donnie softly assures Speirs that the men don't care about stories, instead caring most about finally regaining a strong, respectable leader. "From what I've heard, they always had one," Speirs replies. He lists the feats of one mystery man who held Easy together, proved dependable, led them through Bois Jacques, boosted morale, and gave the men invaluable direction and focus. Donnie furrows his brow in endearing modesty. Speirs calls him on it. "Hell, it was you, First Sergeant," he grins. "Ever since Winters made battalion, you've been the leader of Easy Company." Donnie can't speak, fighting hard to hold an impassive expression but clearly elated at being perceived that way by men he believes are the finest soldiers in the army. As he leaves, Speirs tosses off the final tidbit that Winters put in for a battlefield commission that would kick Donnie up from NCO status straight to lieutenant. Sink approved it. "Congratulations, Lieutenant," Speirs says softly, leaving.

Easy packs into a truck and rides away, passing pedestrians who turn out to be 1st battalion's soldiers. Luz bitterly thanks them for crapping in their foxholes. "Enjoy the walk," Randleman

laughs, puffing on his omnipresent cigar. Luz passes Donnie a smoke, delighting in the officer's acceptance of this life-threatening vice. Donnie smiles, too, eager for that smooth tar taste and lung-constricting carcinogens. They motor off into the distance as someone calls out, "There they go, Easy Company, riding out again." Except the editors had the good sense to mute the latter part of that line.

"Beyond the wounded and killed, every man at Bastogne suffered. Men unhit by shrapnel and bullets were nevertheless casualties," Stephen Ambrose wrote.

"I'm not sure that anybody who lived through that one hasn't carried with him, in some hidden ways, the scars," Winters has said. "Perhaps that is the factor that helps keep Easy men bonded so unusually close together."

The Last Patrol

Season 1

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Season Episode: 8

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Writer: Erik Jendresen
Director: Phil Alden Robinson
Show Stars: Michael Cudlitz (Denver 'Bull' Randleman), Ron Livingston (Capt. Lewis Nixon), Scott Grimes (T/Sgt. Donald Malarkey), Donnie Wahlberg (2nd Lt. C. Carwood Lipton), Neal McDonough (1st Lt. Lynn "Buck" Compton), Ross McCall (Joseph D Lieb Gott), Frank John Hughes (S/Sgt. William "Wild Bill" Guarnere), Rick Gomez (George Luz), Kirk Acevedo (SSgt. Joseph Toye), James Madio (Frank J Perconte), Richard Speight Jr. (Warren 'Skip' Muck), Dale Dye (Colonel Robert Sink), Damian Lewis (Richard D. Winters), Dexter Fletcher (John), Shane Taylor (Eugene G 'doc' Roe), Phil McKee (Major Robert L Strayer), Tom Hardy (Pfc. John Janovec), Matthew Settle (Capt. Ronald Spiers), Philip Barantini (Wayne 'skinny' Sisk), James McAvoy (Pvt. James Miller), Rick Warden (II) (1st Lt. Harry Welsh), Matthew Leitch (Floyd 'Tab' Talbert), Nolan Hemmings (Charles 'Chuck' Grant), Nicholas Aaron (Robert E 'popeye' Wynn), Peter Youngblood Hills (Darrell C 'shifty' Powers), Robin Laing (Edward J 'babe' Heffron), Mark Huberman (Pvt. Lester 'Leo' Hashey), Peter McCabe (IV) (Cpl Donald Hoobler)

Guest Stars: Colin Hanks (2nd Lt. Hank Jones), Eion Bailey (David Kenyon Webster), Jamie Bamber (Jack E. Foley), Andrew Lee Potts (Eugene E. Jackson), Kieran O'Brien (Allen E. Vest), Christoph Dostal (Senior German), Martin Arno (Junior German), Colin Ridgewell (German Soldier shot), Brian Ethan Tyler (Curtis Jackson)

Summary: Easy Company carries out a dangerous mission in Haguenau as David Webster (who narrates this episode) returns from a hospital. Together with new replacement 2nd Lt. Jones, he eventually (re)integrates with the other soldiers, whose experiences at Bastogne have made them weary and closed off from Webster due to the fact he didn't try to leave hospital early unlike other soldiers in the company. At the end of the episode, Captain Winters is promoted to Major, and Lipton is officially promoted to 2nd Lt.



Veteran interviews. One kindly old man reiterates for us that Easy lost some very good men while defending Bastogne and Foy. He mentions Toye, Gonorrhea, and Smokey Gordon in particular. "I don't know the exact amount of men that got killed in that, but six, seven of them were real close friends of mine," a man says. I wonder if this man is Malarkey, who was pals with Skip, Gonorrhea, and Compton, at the very least. It's also interesting to me that neither of these first two men used names for these towns – one said

"there," and the other said "that," almost as though it's too emotional for them to spit out the proper nouns. A third man recalls that medic Eugene Roe approached him after Skip Muck died and asked him whether he wanted to go look; certain he couldn't handle it, the man declined, and the camera lingers on an absolutely wrenching expression of grief in his eyes. A fourth man exists only to exposit that Haguenau was Easy's next stop, in the hope of leading a push across the river. Finally the last man – who I personally think is Winters, but I honestly don't know and haven't seen any photos to confirm or refute this – muses that once in Haguenau, everyone developed an indescribable gut feeling that the worst had passed and death was no longer a certainty. They felt they might live, and so treaded a bit more carefully.

February 9, 1945: Haguenau, France. We fade up on a snow-covered town, but the vista is spoiled by more narration – this week, it's from Private Daniel Webster, or as some of the female audience might know him, Hot Jim from Center Stage. Some of his narration is interesting, but some feels like the product of indecision from a writing staff that yearned to use as much as possible from the book (and the soldiers' actual letters home), and figured voice-over would be an easy out. The result is a lack of subtlety. The voice informs us that, on U.S. soil, the 101st Airborne earned widespread fame for its stand in the Battle of the Bulge. "Newspapers called them 'The Battered Bastards of Bastogne,'" says Webster. "They'd been through hell on Earth and were now pulling into the comparative paradise of Haguenau, the sounds of war still coming from just across the river." Okay, again, we knew they left Belgium for France, and the visuals alone display more favorable conditions than snowy foxholes, but whatever. I'll quit playing the harp. Webster missed Bastogne, having been hurt in Holland in "Crossroads" and sent away to the hospital. In the replacement depot, he heard tales of a broken German front and a war about to end. As we learn all this, we see a caravan of Army vehicles chugging along the road, meeting up with Jeeps; from one, Webster emerges, clean and grinning. Ominously, Webster voice-overs that when he rejoined the men of Easy, "they looked nothing like the heroes who had just helped win the war."

Trotting toward one truck, Webster grins, "George Luz!" No reaction. "It's me!" presses Webster. "Come on, I haven't been gone that long." Luz, slumped in his seat, mutters, "Jesus, yes, you have." Waving off this reaction, Webster struts on toward the truck carrying 1st Platoon, his old group. "Sgt. Martin!" he yells, pleasantly. Curtly, a lieutenant – Lt. Foley, I believe – sits up and demands that Webster explain himself. "My name's Private Webster. I just got back from the hospital," Webster says, proud of himself the way a four-year-old is when he announces that he's gone in the potty. Cobb bitterly greets this news with scorn, staring emptily at his former comrade. Cobb resents people. All people. Webster, fully aware that they've just come off a terrible and crippling mission, does the tactful thing here and asks where all the others from 1st Platoon are. "Oh, come on, Sgt. Martin, this can't be everybody," he says, smiling. Right about now, Harvard University officials are thinking, "We gave this guy a degree? Were we DeVry back then?" But Webster forges ahead undeterred, bent on being as dense as he can. "What about Hoobler, where's he?" asks the village idiot. Martin and Randleman just stare at him, blinking, yearning to piss in Webster's helmet. Lt. Foley quietly cuts in and tells Webster that 2nd Platoon is the more decimated, so he should report there and expect to join it. Startled, Webster obeys, leaving.

Plastering yet another goofy grin on his face, Webster approaches 2nd Platoon's truck and informs them of his transfer. No one reacts. They're all depressed, too – Malarkey in particular; he's standing, but staring absently into the distance and barely acknowledging the existence of anyone. Aw, Malark, I miss Buck too. Keep that hairy chin up, pal. "Jackson, right?" Webster says to a young kid sitting on the edge of the truck bench. Jackson confirms the ID. Webster looks around and wonders why there isn't an officer present; Liebgott pipes up that Malarkey is receiving a battlefield commission. "Jackson, help me up," Webster orders, but the kid only slides over and makes a half-hearted reach to stabilize Webster's rifle as he heaves himself onboard. At that second, the truck starts up with a jarring motion, knocking Webster onto his seat.

Liebgott studies Webster for a second, then curiously asks whether he's been in the hospital. "What's it like in that hospital?" Liebgott snipes. "'Cause we left Holland four months ago." Webster, ignoring the implication, explains that he wasn't there the whole time; he also needed rehab and then had to go through the replacement depot. Liebgott sarcastically says he's sure Webster was trying hard to bust out and help his old group get through a grueling campaign. "Don't know how I would've done that," Webster says, his smile losing strength. "Funny...Popeye

found a way," Liebgott says, gesturing to his friend. "So did Alley, right?" So did Gonorrhea. But it's a little unfair to harass Webster for not being a renegade like those others; still, I want to slap Webster for the happy-go-lucky attitude he's projected, like he expected everyone to kowtow to the brave soldier who beat a leg wound in four months. Although part of my urge to slap comes from wanting to touch Eion Bailey's face. Is that wrong? Webster asks whether Gonorrhea is still a platoon sergeant, so Jackson fills in the details of Gonorrhea's wound. Given all the disastrous injuries, Webster seems remarkably unaffected by it all, except to be mildly surprised and faintly desirous of a bear hug and a big slap-you-on-the-ass fantastic greeting.

The trucks stop in the town center. Webster gets out and calls for Malarkey; as he does, the shrill sound of a descending shell pierces the air. Malarkey just turns around and plugs his ears, but Webster dives for the ground and covers his head. Let's hope that fatigues conceal urine stains. "What's the matter there, Webster?" Malarkey asks, amused. "Nervous in the service?" Webster tries to act nonchalant, as though he didn't just brick his trousers. Malarkey orders him to company CP, telling him that he should make sure Captain Speirs wants him in 2nd Platoon. Webster's face is blah when he learns Winters is now running the battalion. It's a good thing Eion Bailey is pretty, because he's not going to win any acting awards. I have a shoe that could've brought more life to this scene.

"So Easy had a new CO to go along with all the other new faces," Webster obviates, clarifying for the confused that all the guys he knew are either gone, or different. In the hands of a better actor, that would've been visible from one facial expression, but alas, we have to sit through more narration. "I was a veteran of D-Day and Market-Garden and had been with the company since its formation, but now, since I had missed Bastogne, I was treated as if I was a replacement and felt like I was starting all over again," Webster tells us.

The company headquarters are located in an old, multi-storey building with green wallpaper and crumbling old furniture. It's a lush mansion compared to the narrow trenches and crude shelters of the Ardennes Forest. Webster enters and greets Donnie, who is lying on a couch while Luz covers him with a blanket. It seems Donnie actually did act his ass off in the last episode, and has been ordered to rest until a new one can be airlifted to him. Luz thinks Donnie has pneumonia. "Sorry to hear that," Webster says. Luz jokes that Donnie's just fine, what with the luxury of a blanket and a couch to give him comfort. Donnie tells Webster to sit and wait for Speirs, at which time they'll get him situated in a platoon. Donnie looks tired. Small talk ensues.

Outside, Winters and a scruffy, bearded Nixon stare across the river. "He wants us to cross the river," Winters says softly, almost in disbelief. "Bet that water's cold," Nixon notes. "Should be able to get you some boats." Winters gets a glamour shot of the right side of his face. Well-deserved, too. He gripes that the night's full moon will deny them the cover of darkness.

CP. A clean, stern-looking Colin "Nepotism Rules" Hanks trots into the room. He's a lieutenant, so everyone in the room makes haste to stand. "As you were," Colin "Everything I Know About Auditioning, I Learned from Tori Spelling" Hanks nods importantly. His name is Lieutenant Jones – yeah, like I'll be using that – and he's looking for Captain Speirs. Lipton tells Colin "My Dad Swore No Son of His Would Be Seen on Roswell" Hanks to sit and wait for Speirs to return to CP. Webster blathers that we're about to find out what platoon he's in, but the suspense is lost on me.

Winters and Nixon trot purposefully toward Easy's CP. He's telling Nixon that he's not sure how best to handle "this," and will put the decision in Speirs's hands.

Speaking of Speirs, the Easy CO arrives at company CP and blows right past Hanks, who has bolted upright to stand at attention. Donnie tries to introduce Hanks, but Speirs ignores this and instead orders Donnie to go and recuperate in a private back room – ostensibly so that the germs don't spread. Winters and Nixon enter at that moment, announcing that the regiment wants to send a patrol across the river on a mission to grab prisoners. "This one comes straight from Col. Sink, so it's not my idea," Nixon blurts. Webster watches this silently. Winters exposit that intelligence has identified an occupied three-storey building that's an optimal target for the 0100 raid, and calls for a fifteen-man patrol that includes a lead scout and a translator. The entire battalion will man guns along its side of the river, providing covering fire during the patrol's retreat. For good measure, Winters notes that he wants this to be a foolproof and safe mission. "Don't take chances on those men," Nixon cautions Speirs. "We're too far along for that."

As Winters and Speirs begin hushed discussions about who should lead the patrol, Nixon notices Hanks and earns an introduction. "Right, our West Point-er," Nix grins. Figures. Colin

Hanks looks stiff, uncomfortable, and as though his ill-fitting uniform has never sustained a crease. He's so brand-new that I can see the tag swinging from his earlobe. Nixon learns that Hanks graduated from West Point on June 6, 1944. "D-Day, yes, sir," Hanks nods, uneasily. Nixon chuckles, "All right, don't get hurt!" Hanks looks a bit bruised, but woodenly – sort of the way an oak tree would look if you kicked it while on acid, but without the talking and the pink badgers. Hanks rotates toward Winters and asks to be put on the patrol. Winters considers him briefly, then goes right on talking to Speirs. Hey, Dick? It's dangerous to ignore the boss's son. Just a warning. Winters exits.

Speirs and Donnie whisper about whether an NCO can lead the patrol, suggesting Martin, Malarkey, or Grant. Donnie figures they're all capable, but exhausted. "Captain, request permission to go on the patrol," Hanks says. "No," Speirs says calmly. He establishes that Hanks is inexperienced, then assigns him to 2nd Platoon and tells him Heffron, Ramirez, and McClung will be pulled for the patrol. Feeling ignored, Webster pops up and introduces himself, trying to explain his situation, but Speirs doesn't much care and dispatches him to 2nd Platoon as well. See? See what they're doing? Hanks is a replacement and gets no respect, and Webster is treated like a replacement while getting no respect? I just want to make sure you see the parallel lines here – sometimes it's hard to spot them when they're being dipped in Tabasco and rammed up your nostrils.

Large stacks of sacks line the sidewalks of Haguenau, providing shelter for the men darting from building to building; apparently, the Germans are keeping a close eye on the town and are firing at will. Webster leads Hanks through the streets, ducking and dashing. During this time, Hanks learns he's the only officer in the platoon – isn't that standard? – and Webster speculates that if Malarkey gets a battlefield commission as planned, perhaps he will co-lead the platoon. "Webster?" someone asks. It's Sgt. Kiehn! Yay! Except...who? Kiehn and a pal brag that they ganked bags of potatoes from one of the houses. Suddenly, a screaming shell starts to fall. Everyone flees, and it hits right where they stood. Everyone is fine; Webster and Hanks flatten themselves against the wall of OP-2, the watch station in which some platoons have taken up residence. When someone gives the all-clear call, Webster heaves their bags over a balcony and scrambles over it himself, reaching back to help Hanks. Because he's new, Hanks can't recall the names of the men flagged for the patrol, so Webster reminds him. And us.

The men of the platoon relax in a bedroom lined with bunks. "This taken?" Webster asks, pointing to an upper bunk. He tosses his stuff atop it and leads Hanks toward Malarkey for an introduction. "Congratulations on the battlefield commission," Hanks offers politely. Malarkey is confused, and clarifies that Donnie is the one earning the commission. "So you're without a platoon leader?" Hanks inquires. "Not anymore, Lieutenant," Malarkey replies, busying himself and resisting looking anyone in the eye. Awkwardly, Hanks presses, "Want to introduce me to the men?" Malarkey stops, inwardly sighs, and shoots Hanks a drained look. "Well, some are sleeping downstairs, and the rest are right here," he says, certain he read somewhere – probably in *Cat Fancy* or something – that it's okay for sadness to beget rudeness. The assembled men raise their tin cups at Hanks by way of greeting him. No one salutes; I'm not clear on whether they have to or not, but the place is teeming with disrespect, which is a major no-no in the armed forces even when a snot-nosed academy grad shows up on your turf. Have some finesse, guys. Serve him Dandruff Coffee. Quietly, Hanks tells Malarkey about the patrol, explaining that regiment has a major POW hankering. The soldiers overhear enough of this to realize Webster might know something important, so Liebgott draws him aside.

While the men congregate around Webster, Liebgott eyes Hanks and asks, "This kid outta high-school yet?" Webster exposit that Hanks is a West Point alumnus who graduated with Eisenhower's son. Liebgott doesn't care; he's got more pressing matters on the mind. "What do you know about this patrol?" he quizzes. Webster looks away and unconvincingly denies knowing anything about it. Webster will never be a politician. McClung and Liebgott persist, the latter positing that Webster heard all about it and that it's a prisoner-snatching patrol. "Speirs is to pick fifteen men," begins Webster. "[Hanks] wants to be one of them." Liebgott snorts that they should let him go to get the experience. "And send fourteen replacements to help," grins Ramirez.

Near the windows, Malarkey suffers through small talk with Hanks about the OP, which housed the 79th infantry before Easy. Hanks wants a report on enemy activity in the area. The Germans have been showering the area with flares, mortar fire, scattered fire from an 88 (a railroad gun with huge shells), and some shots from snipers. Hanks importantly shares that

he and Webster dodged mortar shelling on the way in, but Malarkey isn't impressed in the slightest. He's all, "Kid, I could eat an exploding mortar shell in my sleep and live to brag about it." Hanks wonders whether the Germans have tried to cross the river themselves. "They have roofs over their heads, sir, just like us," Malarkey says hollowly. "I don't think anybody wants to do anything stupid at this point." Except for the patrol. Except. For the. Patrol. Yeah, this patrol? Stupid idea. Just so you know.

Webster tries valiantly to keep confidence – although whose, I don't know, since Winters certainly didn't mind discussing this in front of him – and not reveal the names of the chosen soldiers. To buy time, he decides to be dramatic about it. "There's three men here in this room that they think should be on the patrol," he intones, enjoying this. Oh, bite me, Webster. This isn't fucking Red Rover. This patrol isn't skipping across the field to test the strength of little Bobby's grip. Which, incidentally, is about as tough as the Harvard football team's defense. Oooh, I burned Webster! Fully aware he's going to break like a condom in an orgy, Webster begs for the men to act surprised when they find out through more official channels. "Secret's safe, Web," Liebgott promises, with a hint of menace. Webster meets Heffron's gaze. Babe shakes his head. "Yeah, Heffron," Webster says. McClung pats his disgruntled friend's back. "McClung," Webster adds. McClung stops patting Heffron and looks ready to pat himself on the back with sympathy. "And you," Webster says, pointing toward Ramirez, who winces. Webster doesn't know of any others.

Meanwhile, Malarkey is repeating the three names. Hanks wants to make the announcement, but he's in the middle of telling this to Malarkey when the latter man spins around and shouts, "Listen up!" Hanks' ass is chapped. "I've got bad news," Malarkey says. "There's a patrol set for tonight. So far..." The men interrupt that they know, and Webster told them. Hanks looks pissed. Malarkey answers the phone. Webster turns toward his bed and grimaces at the betrayal. Slamming down the phone, Malarkey announces that more rations have arrived, including the winter packs that would've been really handy when they lived outside. "Also, we get showers," he adds. Oh, maybe that's why Hanks's nose looks pinched – he isn't breathing through it.

Explosions rock the building. German shells pepper the area, hitting the building across the street. Everyone darts down the stairs, diving underneath tables as dust blankets them. But the peril is over, and laughter ripples across the room. Dust is hilarious!

Running outside toward the showers, Hanks follows the platoon and is the only one to duck when he hears any noises. Suddenly, a commotion: It seems Sgt. Kiehn is wounded, lying on the street as a passel of soldiers runs over and screeches to a halt at the sight of his motionless body. His potato-snagging partner wilts and breathes, "I just left him. I was on my way back." Webster watches this impassively. "In war, soldiers sometimes die in the fever pitch of a firefight, or by artillery when they're huddled in a foxhole," he narrates. "Bill Kiehn, a Toccoa [where Easy trained] man, was killed because he was carrying a sack of potatoes from one building to another, in the wrong place at the wrong time." Do not blame this on the potatoes, Webster. Potatoes would never hurt a human being. Turnips, now, they're another story. Kiehn died out there on the street before Roe even heard the frantic screams for a medic. "Did you know him well?" Hanks whispers to Webster. "No, not really," Webster says in a tone that borders on cheerful. God, I find myself longing for Donnie – has anyone ever said that before? Christenson and young Jackson linger, staring sadly at Kiehn.

McClung is in the shower, stripped down to his shorts like most of the other men. He catches the soap. Insert Oz joke here. Naturally, all the men whose fronts we can see are clad in their boxers, possibly because this is the only way to launder them; however, as we pan out of the shower, a big fat extra is buck naked (oooh, Buck naked...mmmm...) and filmed in profile. He's tucked his tackle, though, bless his portly ass. Outside the shower tent, Lipton hails Malarkey and whispers something urgent about Jackson, Wynn, Liebgott, Powers, and Webster. Crumpling slightly, Malarkey turns slowly and calls for 2nd Platoon to gather around him. "All right, I'm leading this patrol," Malarkey sighs, hands jammed deep into his pockets to hide his twitching middle fingers. He explains that Speirs wants Wynn, Grant, Liebgott, Jackson, Shifty Powers from 3rd platoon, and Webster; no one from 1st platoon got the call. "Is there anyone they don't want from 2nd?" Liebgott barks. "It's always 2nd platoon. I swear to God, if we were down to three guys they'd still want us for it." By now, Malarkey has turned and left the group; Liebgott follows once his diatribe is finished. Grant can't believe Malarkey must lead the patrol. "Christ, he only lost his five best friends," another guy cracks. "What the fuck's he got to live for?" The

fans, friend. He's gonna live for the fans.

Cobb has been lurking this entire time, glaring fiercely at Webster. "Been a long time since your last shower, Professor?" he snarls. This makes Webster uncomfortable, and he walks toward the showers. Malarkey removes his shirt. Hello! Bet the Germans don't have guns like those. We cut inside the shower, where Malarkey stares at the ground while water pounds against the back of his neck. He doesn't move and wears a traumatized expression, as if he's reliving Belgium one more time. Finally, he closes his eyes, tips back his head and lets the water cleanse him of grime and agony.

Webster strolls back toward Hanks. "Guess I don't really need a shower," he says. Conspiratorially, Webster grabs Hanks and plants the idea that Malarkey deserves a break from the front lines; if Hanks offered to replace him on the patrol, the sergeant might be very grateful and pleased. "They want experience," frets Hanks. Webster counters that the other fourteen men have it in spades, and when Malarkey walks past, he nudges Hanks encouragingly. "[Hanks] wanted to experience combat before the war was over," Webster narrates, as he watches Hanks jog toward Malarkey. "Don Malarkey had been on the front lines every day Easy had seen action since D-Day. If it was possible for them to switch places for the patrol, it would be a small moment of justice as welcome as a hot shower and a fresh uniform." Again, things that the scene itself communicated amply. Maybe I'd feel more warmly toward the narration if the actor imbued it with more enthusiasm than, say, an oral report on the history of pulp in orange juice. Webster ominously portends that the decision was not Hanks's and Malarkey's alone.

At the CP, Luz is taking inventory of the rations. Martin and Cobb are jokingly begging for chocolate bars, but Luz fends them off. A kid named Vest – who is assisting Luz – exoposits that "they" want to pepper an enemy building with bazooka fire that night because there are reports of movement within it. Cobb is still trying to wheedle a Hershey bar out of Luz, playing on the whole "we were in the same platoon" bond. Luz says fuck that shit, but I suppose he uses longer words. "There's not enough to go around!" he barks. "Come on, give the kid a Hershey bar," a voice calls from off-camera. "Hey, pigmouth!" someone else yells at the source. The camera cuts to Perconte, fresh from the hospital and almost fully recovered. Everyone clamors to ask how he's feeling. "As long as you keep your hands off my ass, I'll be fine," Perconte winks. So, in two hours, he'll be a writhing pretzel of soreness. Luz tosses him a candy bar over the protests of the other soldiers, citing as his defense that Perconte got shot in the ass and deserves some sugar. Amen. If I stub my toe, I reward myself thusly. A few Perconte ass jokes ensue. "Want me to rub it for you?" teases Martin. Cut to Hanks, who looks distinctly unhappy, because he's trained to hate homoerotica. "Can you believe it? Try to get him out of the fuckin' war, [and] he came right back," Martin grins. Webster stares at the ground. This is the homecoming he expected, so it's hard to get shown up by a kid half his size; also, Perconte clearly gets points for coming back quickly, whereas Webster took four months. He's coming off like a total mope here. Perconte says he heard the Germans are almost defeated, and Liebgott grouses that they're rowing across the river that night to grab a few and ask them in person whether that's true. "Are you kidding me?" Perconte asks, shocked. "Wish I was," Liebgott moans ruefully. "Welcome back, Frank."

Luz snaps Webster out of his reverie, ordering him to grab a box of grenade launchers and deliver them to the night patrol. Webster takes the box, and Liebgott sarcastically intones, "Been working out?" Wow, he is one bitter man. I didn't realize there was such mistrust of the wounded who, rather than going AWOL, actually waited out their recoveries. Liebgott clearly ate his Bitchy-Os this morning. Vest interrupts to share a tale of a Dog Patrol lieutenant, fresh from West Point, who stepped on a Schu mine and lost a foot. To top it off, the patrol returned empty-handed. Now it's Hanks's turn to frown, an expression that deepens when Luz impolitely cracks that Hanks probably knew the felled soldier. A pencil sharpener strolls past, but I dismiss it because I've already got the point.

Cobb makes a rude remark about Luz hoarding chocolate bars, and Luz smacks him down appropriately. Can I have Muck back, please? I'll trade Cobb and even throw in a Hershey bar and some replacements. No? But...shit, that means I'm stuck with this shlub. Luz and Webster leave, and Hanks and Vest follow them because they both want to talk to Winters and Speirs. They leave the men to grapple over cigarettes and chocolate bars, and the last thing we hear is Perconte screaming, "I got a wounded ass!"

Winters and Speirs stare across the river. It's amazing how much larger Damian Lewis looks – not in weight, but in stature. He just seems to loom larger, tougher, more seasoned. More

tasty. Speirs reveals that the third structure on the left is the enemy CP. "As soon as our men are back in the boats, I want a Quad 50 to open up," Winters instructs. Hanks approaches and interrupts, begging for inclusion on the patrol and flogging a nearby dead horse with his script. Winters summarily denies the petition, seconded by Speirs. To Hanks's credit, he hasn't asked to lead the patrol, although Speirs informs him he will not; Hanks just wants experience. That's true on so many levels. Jones steps forward toward the men's backs and asks permission to speak. They turn. "It looks like Malarkey could use a break," Hanks explains. "I discussed it with him, and he said he did not mind." Dryly, Winters responds, "That was nice of him." Need I reiterate how awesome Winters is? Vest scampers up behind Hanks and explains that all he's done is deliver the mail and type morning reports; if it's true the war is ending, he'd cherish a chance to participate even once on a more critical level. "Absolutely," Winters smiles. Hanks tenses. His ass is so tight that even air couldn't escape. Winters leans toward Speirs and notes, "He's got a point about Sgt. Malarkey." Speirs agrees warily. Winters finally tells Hanks he can go, and that he must attend a briefing at CP at 1700. Once they're gone, Speirs questions who should lead the patrol with Malarkey gone.

That evening, Jones waits by the door, his profile facing the men while he watches for Winters. "He can't be leading," someone whispers. "Not on his first day." Hanks pretends he didn't hear that, but you know he's also praying to be spared the responsibility. Cobb, Garcia, and Shifty Powers pour into the room, the latter growling something typically war-movie cool about who the hell is running this show. "Ten HUTT!" shouts Hanks. Grudgingly everyone gets up, as if they resent the order coming from runny-nosed Pallid O'Tight-Ass over there. Winters enters and wastes no time giving the briefing, sharing that four rubber boats wait to carry them across the river that night. "[Hanks] is the ranking officer, and he'll be along as an observer," Winters explains. Jones indiscreetly catches Webster's eye and nods, openly acknowledging that the Web played a role in this. Webster returns the nod, smiling, proud, puffed and chuffed. "Sergeant Martin here will lead the patrol in Sergeant Malarkey's place," continues Winters. Having noticed the signal between Webster and Hanks, Martin finally clues into the fact that he's present because of some finagling from Webster. He looks affronted, and Webster suddenly shrugs and plays innocent and widens his eyes in "I didn't do it" insistence. Winters adds that they'll be backed up by battalion gunmen at fixed points along the Allied side of the river, and hands the men whistles to blow when they're ready for the covering fire. "Don't blow [the whistles] until you're back in the boats with the prisoners," Winters warns. He orders them to destroy the house in the unlikely event that they burst inside and find it empty; they'll lay down time-delayed ammo and beat a hasty retreat. Finally, he outlines an attack plan – secure the perimeter of the house, then shoot a rifle grenade through the first-floor window and send an assault team inside to round up prisoners. "Remember, this is about prisoners," he emphasizes. "Don't pop the first thing that moves." Turning to Martin, Winters asks him to identify his desired assault team. "McClung, Sisk, Cobb, Garcia...and Webster as a translator," Martin spits, staring pointedly at Webster. Sgt. Grant will establish the perimeter security. "You speak German, right, Webster?" Martin asks, coldly. "Yeah, a little bit," hedges Webster. Satisfied, Winters leaves, dismissing another forceful "ten hutt" from Hanks, who has now made a career out of looking decidedly put-out.

"A little," scoffs Liebgott. "His German's as good as mine." He's implying that Webster deliberately downplayed his skills to try to skirt his assignment to the assault force. The thing is, it's unclear whether he's right or wrong, because Webster's reaction isn't decipherable. He looks guilty, not resentful, but I can't shake the feeling that the show wanted him to come off as wrongly maligned. This is just weird. I want to shake Webster until some emotion falls out of his pocket.

As Webster strides toward Martin, the men lag behind and whisper, "Can you believe that guy?" and "Webster tries to get out of everything." Blinking slowly and tensing his jaw, Webster shoulders his rifle and approaches the conferencing Martin and Winters. "Sir? Liebgott and I, we both speak German," begins Webster. "Yes?" Martin asks, annoyed. "You said fifteen men. There are sixteen, including two translators," points out Webster. Liebgott strolls past. "Hey Liebgott, wanna sit this one out?" Martin asks. "Yes sir," accepts Liebgott, winking at Webster and thanking him. "Thank you, sir," Webster tells Martin.

The men gather in the OP as Martin barks out instructions. "Nothing rattles, nothing shines, no helmets," he says. Malarkey ladles either food or drink into everyone's mugs. He spots Hanks sitting alone, isolated, and makes a gentle stab at reaching out to the young officer. "Set for

tonight?" he asks genially. "Those Krauts are gonna catch some hell." Hanks clearly appreciates the conversational gesture, but he's still bumming. "So I hear," he tells Malarkey. "I'm not personally going in." Malarkey wonders whether Martin is leading the patrol. "Martin and McClung," Hanks replies. Is it? I thought Grant was leading the perimeter security stuff and Martin was leading the assault team; McClung's first name is Earl, not Grant, so I know they're not the same person. Help. I'm floundering. Hanks sadly says he's supposed to stay in the rear and provide covering fire. "That's the place to be," Malarkey says, trying to sound cheerful and comforting. A semi-distant explosion drops a cloud of dust on their heads.

Somberly, we cut to a Montage of Doom. Men try to dull anything that sparkles and remove adornments from their uniforms. Hanks fingers his class ring, then slides it onto a chain with his dog-tags and tucks it under his shirt. This is a very long moment of obvious symbolism, only effective because it lacks narration. So what does the show do? It adds narration. "Fifteen men crossing a river to capture prisoners from a German observation post," Webster voice-overs. "Getting back safely could be successfully accomplished in as little as ten minutes. The same mission could be met with disaster and result in nothing more than fifteen Americans killed or wounded in action." Dousing himself in anvil-repellant, Webster poses near the window and prepares to spew more elegiac exposition posing as profundity. "Those of us who had seen combat before put that out of our minds," he intones. "Those that hadn't thought of little else as we waited for darkness.

Fortunately, we don't have to wait. The camera pans up and onto a view of the river at night. A flare shoots up, bursts, and lights the sky with its trail. Two strobe lights emanating from the German buildings sweep the sky, because it's Friday night and the strippers are taking it ALL off at Der Tittenhausen! Soldiers with bullet scars get in free. On the riverbank, the Allied soldiers creep toward the boats and relay messages about the lack of AP mines. A rope has been stretched across the river somehow, affixed to a strong point on the German side. Rather than rowing and creating a ruckus with oar splash, the men will get in the boats, grab the suspended rope and pull themselves across the river. Of course, the men slosh around and splash while cutting loose the boats and climbing into them. So much for silence. This sounds like a damn pool party. I think I see Perconte strolling past with a tray of margaritas.

The group is barely away from the riverbank when the last boat capsizes, stranding it. Garcia and Sisk are in there, among others. Martin frantically whispers that the mission must continue, so they keep slinking across and beach the boats on the grass. The men pour out and climb over the embankment, sprinting toward town. Cut to Martin and an aide on their stomachs, one holding barbed wire while the other snips through it. Each man then holds the wire aside long enough for the patrolmen to wiggle underneath it. Once standing, the men scamper toward a wall and cower behind it, keeping quiet and trying to remain undetected. Too bad their footsteps are loud.

Once everyone is huddled behind the wall, Martin barks the next wave of orders: Shifty and Popeye are to secure the left perimeter, while Hanks, Grant, and Heffron take care of the right side and the crossroads. He dismisses them, and they flee. Everyone else darts toward the actual building, stopping first at an outhouse and then rolling around it before stopping against the wall. All very ingenious, I'm sure. Martin's actually very Winters-esque in his efficiency. One man loads up and blows out the upstairs window, as planned. Jackson, eager, bolts for the door and whips out a grenade. "Jackson, hold on!" screams Martin. He yells it again, but Jackson is eager and lobs the grenade inside; in his impatient enthusiasm, he charges inside after it without waiting long enough, and catches some of the fire right in the face. Jackson drops. "AAAAAAHHHHH," he tells us. Three Germans huddle inside the building, screaming and waving their hands. Martin rolls over Jackson and recoils when he sees the private's bloodied face, his left eye a mushy mess and his entire mug streaked with dark red blood. "Vest, take care of him! Ramirez, watch Vest!" shouts Martin. Everyone else darts inside and tries to round up the prisoners, whose yelling matches Jackson's anguished screams. Vest cradles his comrade's head, repulsed and twitching himself and unable to function. Martin shouts for Webster to disarm the Germans and sweep the room for weapons, while loudly demanding that everyone else – including the prisoners – shut the hell up. McClung watches the prisoners, while Webster is told to grab the time-delayed ammo, prime it, then bury it. "Shut up, you two!" Martin then screams at the prisoners. The third German is, apparently, wounded, although with all the noise and pandemonium it's hard to keep track. Ramirez picks up Jackson and drags Vest to his feet so they can move out with

the prisoners. The Germans make more noise. "Shut up, you!" Martin screams again. He hurries Webster along. Finally finished with his task, Webster follows them out of the house.

Guns raised, Easy retreats, as the perimeter men unleash covering fire. Martin bellows that Easy must fall back immediately, and one by one the perimeter men drop back and head toward the riverbank. Bullets whiz through the air; the Germans have deduced that some shit is indeed going down at their OP. Liebgott watches bullets fly like little electric pulses through the air. He's ready at a gun on the Allied side, itching for the patrol to blow its whistles. Martin tosses the whistle to Hanks. "Jesus Christ, blow the goddamn whistle!" Liebgott wills them urgently. Hanks blows with all his might, which will make him a huge hit in the gay community. Second battalion unleashes its fire, which hits ground and water and showers the men in dirt and droplets. The patrols struggle into the boats. Vest is freaking out about Jackson's injury, screaming, "I'm gonna shoot you, you fucking Kraut!"

Finally, they set off across the river, shouting to Jackson that he'll be okay despite all the twitching and panting he's doing. Bullets hit the water with ferocity, missing the boats each time. Perconte helps them onto land. Jackson is screaming and gasping for air. "Take cover!" everyone yells, scurrying to safety. Somewhere in the process, they ditch the injured German, although I didn't see it happen.

Inside, Martin orders Popeye to pat down the Germans and restrict them to one corner; McClung is to radio CP and inform them of the mission's success. Men are screaming and waving hands and gnashing teeth. Jackson convulses on the ground. "I can't do this, I can't do this," wails Vest, obviously wondering why the hell he thought mail delivery was such a shitty job. Webster takes over, crouching next to Jackson and trying to comfort him while Shifty tries to settle down Vest. Martin leaves Hanks in charge while he scrounges up a medic. As Hanks supervises helpfully, the men try to hold down Jackson's fiercely quivering legs. Webster tries to talk Jackson out of his terrified fit, while Vest only exacerbates matters by shrieking, "He's gonna fucking die! He's gonna fucking die!" Webster, frustrated, leans down close to Jackson and insists, "Don't listen to him. Look at me. You're gonna be fine. Everything's going to be okay." In gratitude, Jackson horks up some blood. His ruined eye is a gelatinous mess. Ramirez, on whose lap Jackson's head is resting, tries to wipe off the streaking blood.

Sudden explosions are audible, and set Vest into a complete fury. He points his gun at the Germans and cusses them out insanely, while three men try to restrain him and the Germans just cower in a corner, freaked and certain the Americans have way too much sugar and not enough schnitzel in their rations. Hanks finally throws Vest against the wall and shouts, "We're not going to get more prisoners because you killed one! Listen to me, Private, sit down!"

Eugene Roe arrives and kneels next to Jackson, checking his airway and shining a light into his good eye. All other noise dies down, so that we only hear Jackson's labored breathing and Roe's sincere but pointless assurances that he'll be okay. "I don't wanna die, I don't wanna die," whimpers Jackson. As they try to carry him out, Jackson emits one final gurgle and seizes briefly before going limp. Roe rips off his own helmet and looks angry at the injustice of it all. Heffron shakes his head, turning toward the rest of the assembled group and letting his shock say it all. Slowly, Martin picks up a blanket and carries it toward Jackson's body, gazing mournfully at it for a moment before gently covering it.

"Eugene Jackson was twenty. He lied about his age when he joined the Army at sixteen," Webster tells us. "His family, I'm sure, got a telegram from the war department saying he died a hero on an important mission that would help win the war. In fact, Eugene lost his life on a stretcher in a dank basement in Haguenau, crying out in agony while his friends looked on helplessly. Just one more casualty in a war that was supposed to be all but over." The men continue to stare, broken, at their dead friend, not mourning the man so much as the fact of another lost life.

Later, Winters and Speirs chat in low voices about the report of the patrol's success. The German prisoners are loaded into a truck. Martin and Hanks arrive, and the former relays that Jackson took a grenade fragment in the face. "He died of his wounds, sir," Hanks interjects. Martin is mildly irritated. Winters is relieved to hear no one else got hurt, but clearly regrets that even one man had to get hit. "Well executed," he praises Martin. "It's not your fault." They part ways, and we pull back to see Webster puffing on a cigarette, watching.

Perconte, Liebgott, Malarkey, and the others smoke and sulk in the OP. Webster and Hanks file inside. "Heard you got two prisoners," Malarkey says. "Good work." Webster melodramatically

shares that Jackson is dead, but they knew already. Perconte tonelessly notes that the regiment wants another patrol tonight, which startles people to a point, but they react to the news with the air of a group that once more expects the worst. Webster is dazed, the cocky cheerfulness gone from his demeanor.

Cobb stands stone-faced on the balcony, staring out across the river and listening to the faint screams of a wounded man. Martin, Hanks, and Webster stroll over to make sure they earn their paychecks. "You leave someone on the bank?" Cobb asks. "Yeah, we did," Martin says. They listen and hear his wailing, too. "It's the third prisoner that was too far gone to bring back," Hanks opines, awed that the man lived long enough to howl. "Maybe we should put him out of his misery." Cobb, seething, spits, "Fuck his misery." Martin can't listen to any more of it, and leaves. In the book, the men lobbed two grenades at the dying German, the second one killing him and stopping the noise for good. Here, Hanks just stands and listens, dirty and pasty, to a symphony of agony.

The men sit around a table, wiped out and doing little other than smoking. Cobb stands by the fireplace, holding an open bottle of wine from which he swigs. Hanks sparks up a cigarette, clearly a first for his pristine fingers. Webster appears rattled, but boasts flawless hair, which is a bonus. "Whatcha lookin' at, Webster?" sneers Cobb. Silently, Webster shrugs. "That's what I thought, college boy," Cobb spits. Hanks turns slowly and regards Cobb with disgust, asking whether the private is hammered. Cobb disrespects him, but Hanks calmly repeats his query. "Yes, sir, I am drunk," Cobb retorts. "Drunk, sick and tired of fucking patrols, taking orders..." At this, Martin bristles and swivels to face his soldier. "Hey, Cobb," he calls. "Shut up. It's boring, okay?" Cobb grits his teeth, leans against the wall, and intones, "Takin' his side, Johnny?" When I close my eyes and replay that part, Cobb sounds fresh out of some 1950s gang flick. Martin turns his back to Cobb and quietly says, "Yeah, I am." Cobb chugs his wine and continues being bitter, but on the inside. It's all about suppression.

That evening, Winters once again stares at the water with Nixon by his side. "He knows we lost a man?" Winters asks. Nixon says that "he" does know, but "he" also sees a successful patrol that picked up two prisoners eager to spill their guts. Winters wonders what they talked about. "Supply trouble...Hitler's favorite color...None of it gets us across the river," Nixon sighs, both men overcome by the futility of the patrols and the bullheadedness of upper management. Nixon confides that he thinks Col. Sink – our mystery "he" – is frankly just bragging about Easy's excellence, showing off. "You gave him a successful patrol, now he wants two," Nixon concludes. Winters laughs in disbelief at the relativity of the term "successful."

Stealthily, Speirs approaches and informs Winters that the men are gathered and ready for a briefing. "Same roster as last night," Speirs says. "Well, mostly." Shouldn't someone mention that Cobb is stinking drunk and clearly unable to participate? Shouldn't they trade him for two third-round draft picks next year? Just then, Col. Sink approaches and drawls, "Damn fine job on a tough mission last night, and I wish you good luck tonight because I'll be expecting more of the same." Winters musters all his strength and resists the urge to throw a huge tantrum and yank on Sink's mustache. Sink wants the men to know how proud he is, and totters off for a drink. Winters decides he'll brief the men himself.

Martin calls the men to attention as Winters, Speirs, and Nixon enter. "At ease," Winters says calmly. Winters moves to the head of the table and compliments the men on their mission the previous night, adding Col. Sink's praise to the pile. The men hang their heads when Winters confirms Sink's order for another patrol. "Any moment now, the outpost we hit last night will go up in flames," Winters says. "This means we have to venture farther into town." Speirs passes him a map, which they unroll and spread out on the table. Winters explains where the enemy is moving and which house will be the new target; he adds that all boats were recovered and will be reused, setting off an hour later from the same place. "That clear?" he asks, raising an eyebrow. Everyone nods. "Good, because I want you all to get a full night's sleep tonight," Winters informs them, the merest hint of a smile on his face. "Which means in the morning, you will report to me that you made it across the river...but were unable to secure any live prisoners." Hanks is intrigued, and the rest of the men's hangdog expressions lighten into relief and amazement. Winters tries to act matter-of-fact, but he's clearly enjoying this. "Look sharp for tomorrow," he adds in a whisper. "We're moving off the line." With that, he leaves. "Did I fucking hear that right?" the men whisper to each other, praising Winters and shaking each others' hands. Hanks nods, certain he's learned an important lesson about leadership that he'll forget the second he's

safely behind a desk.

The men emerge to see Nixon and Speirs grinning at Winters. "It's a whole new way to fight a war," Nixon snickers. "Don't bother writing this up. I'll take care of it. Might actually enjoy it. I think you might be onto something, Dick." Aw, I'd love to put a joke there about something, but I'm too proud of my man to say anything. Suddenly, the outpost across the river explodes in a lovely plume of flame and smoke, which Webster watches with another introspective smile. Speirs orders Hanks to join him at the CP, so Hanks obediently trots away.

At the CP, Donnie receives his Honorable Discharge as an enlisted man, which must come before he can accept a commission. Everyone congratulates him heartily, and an obviously delighted Donnie beams broadly. At the same time, everyone welcomes back Harry Welsh, felled in "Bastogne" during another surprise shelling. "Harry, didn't expect to see you this soon," jokes Nixon. "Figured you'd be nursing that scratch for another month or two." Winters departs the merriment just long enough to hand Hanks his new orders – he's been promoted to 1st Lieutenant because, as a West Point grad, he's been earmarked for a staff job. Luz, watching next to the omnipresent Webster, whispers, "Looks like you lost another platoon leader, huh, Web?" More knowing smiles. It used to be Winters, now it's Webster.

Webster narrates that Nixon did indeed write the bogus patrol report, and regiment never caught on to the lie. When Easy pulled out of Haguenau the next day, everyone felt like they'd crossed a major milestone and would doubtless live through the war. Nixon grabs Winters near one of the Jeeps and offhandedly says, "Oh, before I forget – Col. Sink's a bit unhappy with the appearance of your uniform." He removes a box from his pocket and adds, "He says it's not befitting of your rank." Stunned, Winters opens the box and realizes he's getting an oak-leaf insignia. Nixon salutes him. "Congratulations, Major," he says. Webster watches again. Again! Enough with the watching and the narrating, dork.

Hanks seeks out Martin and Malarkey, shaking their hands and bidding them farewell, hoping this is enough to snag him a better TV gig than some damn WB-reject UPN show. Before he gets on the Jeep, Hanks exchanges a look with Webster, smiling at him. Guess what? Webster smiles back, and watches. He turns to board his own truck, tossing his bag inside and getting ready to propel himself up there. Liebgott, though, intercedes and offers his hand, because Webster proved himself in combat. Hmm, didn't see that one coming, except for the fact that it was flying right at my nose for the past hour. "I wondered if people back home would ever know what it cost soldiers to win this war," Webster muses in voice-over, noting that in America, it felt like peacetime already, with hotels and racetracks and clubs booming with business. "How could anyone know the price paid by soldiers in terror, agony, and bloodshed, if they'd never been to places like Normandy, Bastogne, or Haguenau?" he asks us. Well, that's what television is for, silly.

At the end, we learn Easy is headed for Germany soon. Insert ominous music here.

Why We Fight

Season 1
Episode Number: 9
Season Episode: 9

Originally aired: Sunday October 28, 2001
Writer: Erik Jendresen
Director: Phil Alden Robinson
Show Stars: Michael Cudlitz (Denver 'Bull' Randleman), Ron Livingston (Capt. Lewis Nixon), Scott Grimes (T/Sgt. Donald Malarkey), Donnie Wahlberg (2nd Lt. C. Carwood Lipton), Neal McDonough (1st Lt. Lynn "Buck" Compton), Ross McCall (Joseph D Liebgott), Frank John Hughes (S/Sgt. William "Wild Bill" Guarnere), Rick Gomez (George Luz), Kirk Acevedo (SSgt. Joseph Toye), James Madio (Frank J Perconte), Richard Speight Jr. (Warren 'Skip' Muck), Dale Dye (Colonel Robert Sink), Damian Lewis (Richard D. Winters), Dexter Fletcher (John), Shane Taylor (Eugene G 'doc' Roe), Phil McKee (Major Robert L Strayer), Tom Hardy (Pfc. John Janovec), Matthew Settle (Capt. Ronald Spiers), Philip Barantini (Wayne 'skinny' Sisk), James McAvoy (Pvt. James Miller), Rick Warden (II) (1st Lt. Harry Welsh), Matthew Leitch (Floyd 'Tab' Talbert), Nolan Hemmings (Charles 'Chuck' Grant), Nicholas Aaron (Robert E 'popeye' Wynn), Peter Youngblood Hills (Darrell C 'shifty' Powers), Robin Laing (Edward J 'babe' Heffron), Mark Huberman (Pvt. Lester 'Leo' Hashey), Peter McCabe (IV) (Cpl Donald Hoobler)

Guest Stars: Christian Malcolm (Military Policeman)
Summary: As Nixon battles alcoholism, Easy Company enters Germany. A concentration camp near Landsberg is discovered by a patrol. This sight leaves many soldiers both shocked and disgusted at what they're witnessing at the hands of the Nazis. The episode was based on the liberation of Kaufering IV in the area of Hurlach.



Veteran interviews. A man opines that people felt like the war was finally coming to an end, and that the Germans just didn't have the heart to keep it going. "We used to say the only good Kraut was a dead Kraut," recalls a second veteran. But he marvels that, behind all the bravado, everyone realized the enemy soldiers and Allied soldiers alike were just kids. A third man takes it further, noting that, just like their German counterparts, "we did the job that we had to do." The fourth man remembers entering the war

firm in his belief that Germans were the vilest people in the entire world – but as the battle progressed, and when they arrived in Germany itself, they realized that Nazis and Germans weren't always one and the same. Another veteran muses that, sometimes, he'd spot an enemy soldier and wonder whether they shared common interests or personality traits. "Under different circumstances, we might've been good friends," he says.

April 11, 1945: Thalham, Germany. We fade up on a violin slowly being lifted out of its box; as it moves, the shot remains tightly focused on the bridge of the instrument. It turns, rests snugly

under a man's chin (of which we only see a tiny, tiny part), and a bow gently begins caressing the violin's strings. The camera backs out to reveal the doleful musician, who pours as much feeling into his face as into his instrument. We now see he's standing in a makeshift clearing, one of few empty spots in a town of rubble piles. A handful of other musicians plays with him, bowing violins or violas with equal emotion.

As the camera continues its backward journey, the villagers reveal themselves. Quietly, they sift through rubble, forming human chains stretching to the top of a pile and helping pass down salvageable remnants. There are tables with three legs, cracked chairs, and pieces of serviceable lumber. But the people move slowly, ghost-like, through their motions, as though the soul of Thalham crumbled with its buildings. Importantly, fanatically, a villager stacks whatever whole bricks he can find amid the wreckage; another couple carries rolled-up rugs and still more people collect a set of intact, if dirty, dining-room chairs.

Some Easy men – Webster, Liegbott, Luz, Perconte, and Randleman, at least – breathe in the music and watch this ballet of the damned from a balcony overlooking Thalham. They smoke. "Tell ya one thing about the Krauts," Luz offers. "They sure clean up good." But the men aren't relishing the sight. Liebgott sighs. "All you need's a little Mozart," he says. "Beethoven," a voice calls out. Nixon emerges, hypnotized, from the shadows, inhaling as though the music's bars are balm to his fraying nerves. "That's not Mozart," he repeats. "It's Beethoven." Dave Beethoven? Of the Long Island Beethovens?

Leaving Nixon to stare at the violin players, we backtrack a month, rejoining Easy during its stint in Sturzelburg, Germany. "Moo," a cow says. "Moo," agrees its sister. "Moo MOOOOO," the first cow argues, because she hates it when Hilda gets all compliant and doesn't form her own opinions. Luz and Perconte are in a barn, engaging in some hijinks with chickens. The animals squawk and cluck with enthusiasm, trying desperately to out-act the cows. The director is pleased. There's nothing like a chicken or three to ensure a little comic relief. Luz and Perconte are trying to steal eggs; a young maiden catches them and flees, scared they'll want her woman-eggs as well. Pitching a sturdy trouser-tent, Luz bolts after her. "I just wanna talk to you," Luz shouts after the fraulein. Perconte feels totally dumped.

Strolling into another barn, Perconte finds Luz still trying to work his native lass. "Luz, leave her alone," he complains, but Luz spits at him to piss off and let him work the mojo. Except he's not quite so Austin Powers about it. Luz offers the girl chocolate. "You don't like chocolate? Okay, I don't like it, either," he amends, proffering cigarettes instead. She gingerly takes one, clearly unaware of the cigarette's enduring sexual symbolism. Perconte again whines for Luz to cut it out. "Frank, please, go make your omelet, okay?" Luz pleads, the desperation seeping through his pores. He's sweating desire. Perconte gripes that he won't be sharing his eggs, and leaves in a huff as Luz guides his fraulein to a nearby seat. "Moo," the cow suggests.

Perconte stalks away alone, but in a few seconds, Luz bolts from the barn to join him. "Hold on," he calls, but Perconte is dishing out a deluxe version of *The Silent Treatment* – new this fall in card form from Mattel. A Jeep whizzes past, a grim Nixon sitting in the passenger seat. "What the hell's he doing in his harness?" wonders Luz, referring to the parachuting equipment strapped to Nixon's back. Perconte decides they've jumped into Berlin and ended the war. "So what happened?" he asks Luz. "No dice with the fraulein?" Luz admits she socked him in the mouth, which is German for "Not tonight; I have a headache." But he's still encouraged that Germany will prove excellent fraternization territory.

Indeed, some enthusiastic fraternization is happening in a nearby bedroom – and by "fraternization," I mean "penetration." A blonde lady vigorously rides a tall, skinny, pale U.S. soldier named Janovec. While she moans and quivers, he stares entranced at her bare breasts, looking completely fascinated by this thing called "acting" and wondering if every job is this fantastic. He's going to buy his agent a Jaguar for this. Is there a boob mandate at HBO? I can just see the programming execs giving notes on the concentration-camp episode. "Love it. Good stuff. Groundbreaking television," they gush. "But didn't World War II have more boobies in it? Because there's no Emmy without breasts." And so Restraint gets drop-kicked out the window and replaced with Gratuity, who's just as nice but dresses real slutty and has wandering hands. Gracefully, Janovec flips his bitch over and pumps her with renewed interest, all the while carefully holding onto the covers so as to shield the fact that she's probably wearing jeans. As she's shrieking, "Ja! Ja!" Janovec freezes, hearing Speirs's voice and footsteps. He leaps off Fraulein Boobenklaus and stands at attention, nude, saluting the entering Speirs with whatever happens

to be rigid. Speirs doesn't even react. "Where's my stuff?" he asks, as Fraulein Jumblyheisen giggles in bed. Janovec points to a silver tea service sitting atop a dresser, untainted by the sin of fornication. Speirs grabs it and leaves, totally unfazed. Janovec snickers.

Speirs carries his loot through town, but a Jeep nearly flattens him, which would be tragic – after all, brain matter and blood can really devalue a piece of silver. Nixon sits in the Jeep. Looking sullen, he tells the driver to stop and let him out. Speirs continues into the post office, bumping into two men on their way out. Vest cheerfully greets Speirs. "Got a box all this stuff will fit into?" Speirs asks, dumping his loot on the counter. Vest promises to box it all up and send it first thing in the morning to the usual destination. "Boy, your folks will sure have quite a collection by the time you...get home, sir," Vest says. I can't figure out why he paused like that, but whatever. The book reveals that Speirs sent everything to his wife in England. Bitch ended up leaving him for her presumed-dead first husband, and keeps the goodies and Speirs's son. Now, I know Matthew Settle isn't the real Speirs, but still – you don't leave that. Speirs looks at Vest and grins coolly. "Finders keepers," he says, a twinkle of mischief in his dark eyes.

In his room, Nixon downs shot after shot of Vat 69 whiskey. This is what Nixon calls "brunch." Shrugging off his jacket, Nixon stares at himself in the mirror, splashing cold water onto his face and thinking how pretty he looks when he's drunk. Nixon flicks off his suspenders and plops down on the bed just as Winters appears in the doorway. "Dog," Winters grins. "Making combat jumps with the 17th while I'm in supply briefings all morning." Nixon heaves a huge sigh, sarcastically blessing his good luck. Winters congratulates him, guessing that he's the only man in the 101st Airborne with three combat stars pinned over his jump wings. Nixon, based on his expression, figures three pieces of dung pinned over his jump wings would mean about as much. "Not bad for someone who's never fired his weapon in combat," he says. Winters can't believe that, with all the action Easy has seen, Nixon never once pulled the trigger. He's intrigued. Nixon is intrigued by the empty shot glass, and promptly fills and drains it once more. He expositively grouches that, during his freelance ride with the 17th, the plane got hit and went down, exploding over Germany. Everyone died except Nixon and two others. Winters apologizes blandly for the trauma. "Oh, the boys – right, terrible," Nixon brats. "Oh well, wasn't me!" His false cheer drives home the point that Nixon's grown embittered of late and is disenchanted with the idea of war and wasteful death. And he really, really wants some pancakes. "You know, the real tragedy is, they also lost the CO, so guess who gets to write all the letters home?" grouches Nixon, throwing the empty Vat 69 bottle into a metal trash can. Swoosh. Nothing but net. "Goddamn nightmare," he breathes through clenched teeth. Winters stares straight ahead, unflinching but concerned.

Nixon charges into the building's dining room and opens a fresh bottle. Winters strolls in and expositively that Col. Sink paid him a visit that morning. Nixon cares more about navel lint. "How is the good Colonel?" he says flatly. "Concerned," responds Winters. "Still drinking nothing but the Vat 69, huh?" Nixon smartmouths, "Only the finest for Mrs. Nixon's baby boy." Winters grimly explains that Sink is demoting Nixon back to battalion S-3; Nixon had been working on the regiment level. Nixon ignores this. "What do you think I should write to these parents, Dick?" he asks. "Did you hear what I said, Nix? You've been demoted," Winters booms, in case the whiskey dulled his pal's hearing. Nixon continues on his subject of choice, noting with a tinge of anger that he can't quite find the words to tell these families that the sons died before even evacuating the plane. "You tell them what you always tell them – their sons died as heroes," Winters heroically intones. Nixon marvels that his friend still believes the propaganda. "Yeah, I do," Winters calmly states. "Don't you?" Nixon wears the rueful smile of one who no longer believes in anything.

Outside, Nixon delivers a current-events briefing to some assembled Easy Company men. He talks about a charity drive in the U.S. to help aid European families who've been displaced because of the chaos, reading a plea for soldiers to write home and encourage their own families to be generous. Very sneaky. Nixon scans the list. "I'm sure you'll be happy to know Oklahoma! is still playing on Broadway," he notes wryly. Luz jovially gets the guys to sing one of the show's songs, then cuts everyone off so that the young replacement, O'Keefe, sings the last line alone – and hits a high note. "O'Keefe, you sitting on your bayonet, there?" they tease. Aw, O'Keefe looks primed to drop through the Earth. He tries to be a good sport, but he'd clearly rather romance his bayonet than repeat this experience. Nixon blabs about Rita Hayworth getting married, then finds an item about news that German resistance in the Ruhr is crumbling. "The boys in the

17th Airborne did okay after all," Nixon muses. Luz pshaws this. "We'd be in Berlin right now, sir, if it was us instead of them," he blusters.

Later, O'Keefe and Perconte stroll from town to the observation post, the former impatiently wondering when they'll jump into Berlin so that he can see some real action. That does strike me as slightly insensitive, given that O'Keefe is talking to a guy that endured some of the most hellish action of all – and I'm not talking about sex with Marilyn Manson. "What, you in a rush?" snaps Perconte. "Wanna go home and get a Congressional Medal of Honor, or something?" O'Keefe looks startled. "No, just thought I'd ask," he mutters. Perconte snipes that O'Keefe should probably stop thinking. "Damn replacements," he growls, speeding up to walk ahead of O'Keefe.

Garcia and Hashey are psyched that Perconte and O'Keefe are relieving them. Besides some light artillery fire from the German side at dawn, there isn't much happening at the OP. Hashey tosses Perconte a book to read. "Any sex in it?" he asks, interestedly. Um, no. As he curls up with it, we see the title, and it's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. And unless two trees mate in graphic detail to produce the scrappy little titular sapling, I'm pretty sure Perconte won't be getting off on the novel. O'Keefe clumsily moves around and bumps into anything metal, totally uncoordinated and making a ruckus. This irritates Perconte who himself has never made nor caused a ruckus of any sort. "O'Brien, relax, would ya?" he groans. O'Keefe quietly corrects him on the name. "Patrick O'Keefe," he says. "My friends call me Paddy." And Perconte will henceforth call you O'Deadmeat. Perconte picks up the book again, but gets distracted anew by O'Keefe's attempts to load the machine gun, and his amusing insistence on peering through the sights in anticipation of heavy combat. He begins to whistle "She'll be Coming 'Round the Mountain," which irritates Perconte further and certainly doesn't help take his mind off sex. "O'Brien, shut up!" Perconte barks. "I told you, it's O'Keefe," snaps the young private. Perconte loses it, bitching that no one knows his name because no one cares enough to remember it – too many O'Replacements show up anxious for action, eager to prove themselves and begging for fights without understanding how grueling and gruesome war really is. They replace Toccoa men – original Easy Company members – who died because they were forced to compensate for ill-prepared rookies, Perconte insists. "Two days later, there they are, blood and guts hanging out, screaming for a medic," he sneers. O'Keefe wants to cry, I think. "Do you understand that this is the best part of fucking war I've seen?" Perconte rages, explaining that hot food, showers, a bed, and toilet paper constitutes luxury that borders on overindulgence. He yells at O'Keefe to quit blathering about war action. O'Keefe hangs his head, smarting like a kicked puppy. Didn't we tread this ground in episode four? And didn't we get it then? Didn't The Point try to buy me a drink and cop a feel? Perconte, overcome with guilt at his outburst, positions himself next to O'Keefe and shares another hard-luck story, but in a more genial tone. "It's been two years since I seen home," he says quietly. "Two years. This fuckin' war."

Winters and Speirs confer about failed night patrols. Nixon enters. "The President is dead," he says. Everyone looks mildly surprised, but not broken, as though they just learned it's meatloaf night in the mess tent. And just like that, we're done with the Roosevelt stuff. Granted, the book glosses over it a bit, too, but this exemplifies part of what I dislike about this episode. Many details feel like useless filler, shoved in to flesh out the hour. This whole scene took thirty seconds. Why bother? Maybe a thirty-second pause in the storyline passes for a sex interlude in *Spanks World*.

Welsh, Donnie, Nixon, and Speirs enjoy a late-night poker game. At least, one assumes Nixon is having fun – he's drained another whiskey bottle, so every hand for him has at least ten cards and a whole lot of pairs. But because the booze is gone, Nixon wants out – he's got an important scouting mission, and must apprehend the runaway amber liquid. They chatter that Eisenhower seems ready to let the Russians drop into Berlin instead of American airborne divisions. "This war's not about fighting anymore," Speirs notes. "It's about who gets what." This from a man who would loot a raisin store if the shopkeep disappeared for thirty seconds. Nixon curses energetically, having searched the rooms for liquor and come up empty-handed. He storms out, barking for the gang to deal him out of the hand.

Rain pounds the pavement as Nixon staggers outside, scanning the streets for anything vaguely resembling a liquor store. The CGI rain is pretty nifty, falling all around Nixon, yet never striking his body and splashing off. He breaks a shop window, rousing the owner, who screams and shouts in German, and whose dogs bark in protest. When Nixon realizes he'll score no whiskey there, he staggers away just as some apparent looters arrive to fill their pockets.

The next morning, Nixon staggers to the post office, a black cloud of withdrawal and hangover lurking above his no-doubt-aching noggin. Aw, muffin. Vest greets him too brightly to have ever so much as fondled the cruel mistress that is whiskey. He hands Nixon a letter, but that's not why the good captain came; Nixon leans across the counter and quietly explains that he's encountered some trouble finding a particular brand of the booze. "Vat 69," grins Vest knowingly. "Gotta be honest, that ain't gonna be easy to find here in Germany. Pickings are slim." Vest conspiratorially whispers that, should he happen to snag some Vat 69, it wouldn't come cheap to Nixon's tumbler. "Well, that won't be a problem," Nixon promises, aware he's being swindled to a degree but appreciating the artistry involved. Janovec, our naked sex officer, charges inside, pauses to salute Nixon, then exoposits that 300,000 Germans surrendered. "We're moving out in an hour," he chirps. Nixon is startled, and begins to bolt without his mail; Vest hails him and hands over the envelope. "Keep looking," he says pointedly, pretty sure he'll need alcohol now that Easy's calm respite has momentarily ended.

Roughly an hour later, the battalion packs up and loads the trucks. Nixon, dressed in full uniform, strolls outside absently, nose-deep in is letter. "Jesus Christ, the dog?" he moans. Winters strolls up behind him. "Cathy's divorcing me," Nixon spits. "She's taking everything – taking the house, she's taking the kid, she's taking the dog. It's not even her dog! It's MY dog! SHE'S TAKING MY DOG!" screams Nixon, his tantrum mounting and culminating in an angry toss of the helmet. All the extras stop on cue and method-act that Winters is naked, and whisper their "peas and carrots" gibberish before strolling off-screen to update their résumés. Winters, as usual, does little but breathe a bit harder and don a concerned expression. Oh, but he does it very well.

Bull Randleman helps the men load bags onto the trucks. Speirs appears and asks Perconte for a lighter. "No, sir, I don't smoke," Perconte says. Bull asks where they're headed. "The Alps," Speirs answers. "Let me see that lighter." Reluctantly, Perconte hands it over; maybe he's scared to give Speirs anything for fear the man will ship it to England for his wife to pawn. Speirs fondles it. Webster makes a big show of realizing they're headed for Bavaria, "the birthplace of National Socialism." Methinks Webster wants a cookie. Speirs informs the men that Hitler ordered the Waffen S.S. to hole up in the mountains to repel invaders via guerilla warfare. Bull draws that he likes the sound of that. Bull has gotten chunkier and more Southern since that tank almost killed him. Same old story. Speirs starts to walk away, forcing Perconte to yell after him to return the lighter. Speirs, cradling the thing in his palm, thinks at least four times about it before finally tossing it back to its rightful owner. "Nice lighter," he says, thoughtfully. Shaking his head, Perconte turns back to the assembled men in the truck. "Waffen S.S., huh?" he says, telling "O'Flannery" that he'll likely get his combat wish. "It's O'Keefe," the kid practically whispers.

As they drive, the men loudly and merrily sing a song to the tune of "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah." The chorus goes as follows:

*Gory, gory what a helluwa way to die!
Gory, gory what a helluwa way to die!
Gory, gory what a helluwa way to die!
He ain't gonna jump no more.*

The men sing with vigor, harmonizing and occasionally shouting. They love this song. For them, it's Top 40. For me, it beats half the Top 40 crap assaulting us today. Nixon scowls in the back seat of his jeep. "You okay, Nix?" shouts Winters. Nixon grunts that he's doing just fine. "She hates that dog," he mutters. Winters smiles. His boyfriend is free and clear and ready to embark on a new life without needless estrogen. Conceding to the mood of the moment, Nixon half-heartedly sings along with the rest of the men.

"It's gonna be good times, Web," Liebgott says. We cut to the truck, where Webster is chowing down and listening to Liebgott wax rhapsodic about his post-war plans. "First thing I do is get my job back at the cab company in 'Frisco," he begins. "Make a killing off the sailors coming home. Then, I'll find me a nice Jewish girl with great big, soft titties and a smile to die for." He wants to marry She of the Chest Pillows and buy them a huge house for all the MiniLiebgotts they'll conceive. Webster doesn't look too interested, but Liebgott doesn't notice, grinning elatedly at his little plan. Across the truck, Luz asks Janovec about the article he's reading so intently. "It's about why we're fighting the war," Janovec replies. "It seems that the Germans are bad.

Very bad." Luz deadpans, "You don't say. Germans are bad, huh? Hey Frank..." He passes the newsflash down the line. Aw, I laughed out loud. But we switch back to Liebgott, who asks Webster to share his dreams for the future. Webster totally acts uninterested in being social, which sort of sucks for this man's real-life family, because the book portrays Webster as being enamored of the sense of fraternity engendered by the men of Easy. Here, though, Webster looks like he's tempted to scalp himself rather than chat. He does choke out something about finishing college, and Liebgott immediately stops him, amazed that with all his tales of Harvard, Webster somehow glossed over the wee detail that he isn't yet a graduate. "I haven't told you anything!" Webster fumes. Liebgott backs off, sensing he's gnawing on a very sensitive nerve. "It's just the way you always talked, you know? We all figured that..." Liebgott begins, but he sneaks another peek at Webster's face and retreats anew. "Hey, you know what? So the fuck what," he amends, changing course and asking what Webster studied. "Literature," Webster smarms. He doesn't expect a peon like Liebgott to understand a four-syllable word. "Get outta here! Are you serious? I love to read!" exclaims Liebgott, happily. "Dick Tracy, Flash Gordon, mostly." Webster cocks his head and regards Liebgott with amusement, and more than a little condescension. Damn this show for making fun of Liebgott! I want to force-feed Webster my fist.

The caravan of soldiers passes a sign warning that this is an area of heightened alert because it's enemy territory. This sign is pretty – clean, white, with important-looking black lettering. It's downright civil. When did anyone have time to do that? I had no idea the Army was so committed to proper signage. It might as well say, "Welcome to Enemy Territory! Visit our prison camps! Watch our guns blaze! Be Kind – Please Rewind! And keep our streets clean." Charging into German houses, Easy evacuates the families inside with something less than the civility displayed on its lovely signs. They barge in, and demand that everyone evacuate in five minutes or less. Some of the soldiers protest this rudeness, pointing out to Speirs that the people have nowhere else to go; Speirs shows no mercy, ordering them to leave for one night. Liebgott tries to translate this gently, but it's total chaos anyway.

Two little moppets scamper about on a roof, the sound of ordered marching piquing their curiosity. Skipping to the edge, they peer over and gawk at a thick column of German soldiers marching between two Allied vehicle cavalcades. The expanse of prisoners extends into the distant horizon. Winters watches, amazed, remarking to Nixon that even in defeat, the Germans march with pride and dignity. At this point, Webster decides that the Germans need to look even classier. "That's right, you stupid Kraut bastards," he shouts politely. "That's right! Say hello to Ford and General fucking Motors, you stupid fascist pigs!" Where is this coming from? Last week, Webster was so comatose, I could've dissected his pelvis and he'd have yawned. He was Mr. Calm and Collected; during the patrol lunacy, Webster never so much feigned disillusionment or distress. Now, he's a loose cannon, rambling stupidly without any story arc to back up his fury. Plus...what the fuck was that about Ford? This scene grates me like cheddar. "Look at you! You have horses! What were you thinking?" Webster screams. The men with him try to calm their newly apoplectic friend, but Webster woodenly slings a few more arrows. "Dragging our asses halfway around the world, interrupting our lives, [and] for what?" he booms. "You ignorant, servile scum! What the fuck are we doing here? Huh?" It looks like that last line took quite a lot of effort. Eion Bailey couldn't quite pull it off. His problem? Talking. In this role, he can't use words like he means them. If anyone out there is making another ballet movie, please help this guy out; otherwise, he's doomed. Nixon engages in a very satisfying, hard think. He's somber. He read the book and can't believe how hard this scene sucked in comparison.

Cut to a country road, across which the Allied vehicles trek, having passed the German soldiers. Two more soldiers roust three Germans from a random shed, shooting them one by one. A geyser of blood squirts up from the first man's head. O'Keefe's eyes bulge to the diameter of Jupiter. Scanning his comrades' faces, he sees nothing but resignation and disinterest. As the last of the cars passes, the two Allied soldiers loot the bodies of the Germans they just killed.

Finally, the cars arrive in town, and everyone leaps off elatedly. Winters locates Speirs and informs him that some patrols should scour the area in case they stay overnight. Easy and Fox companies are to take the woods, with Dog Company scouting the village. Speirs turns around and tells Donnie where each Easy platoon should go; in the true spirit of delegation, Donnie runs off calling for 1st Sgt. Talbert. Then he tells two friends, and they tell two friends, and so on until the plan is clear: Easy will play the Green Bay Packers in the Super Bowl. "Not worried about an ambush, are you?" Nixon asks Winters, who just shrugs and suggests that they make sure the

town is secured.

A group of men – including Perconte, O’Keefe, Bull Randleman, and Luz – tiptoes through the forest, illuminated by light gently filtering through tall trees and lush foliage. They clutch their guns, but without menace; it’s as though they’re genuinely afraid of having to use them, because to pull the trigger is to admit this war isn’t quite over yet. Bull Randleman is stolid, though, as usual – and he teases O’Keefe for being so jumpy. “Can hear your heart pounding in Arkansas, boy,” he drawls. What’s his heart doing in Arkansas? Yes! Thank you, thank you. I’ll be here for one more week, folks! Don’t forget to tip your internet service provider. Perconte opines to Luz that this forest evokes memories of Bastogne. “Yeah, now that you mention it,” Luz says. “Except, of course, there’s no snow, we got warm grub in our bellies, and the trees aren’t fucking exploding from Kraut artillery. But yeah, Frank, other than that, it’s a lot like Bastogne.” Wow. When did Luz and I become the same person? Luz asks Randleman to smack Perconte; he obliges.

Nixon warily enters a lavish, well-appointed house. He receives no response to his shouts, and assumes the place is deserted, which can mean only one thing: kegger! Feel the rage! But first, Nix hunts for booze, as is his custom. Do you suppose...gosh, I’m going out on a limb here...that Nixon is something of an alcoholic? I wish Spanks would stop doing the tango with Subtlety, because what with all the shots of Nixon drinking, and the demotion, and the drinking, and the trying to find booze, and the drinking, plus all that drinking, it’s hard to tell whether Nixon has a problem with excessive drinking. Opening a carafe of liquid, Nixon inhales deeply but does not drink, satisfied momentarily with the aromatherapy. A collection of photographs on a tiny end table diverts his attention. Nixon grabs a large, framed glamour shot of a high-ranking German officer and stares tensely at it. I would love it if he hurled it to the ground and screamed, “Damn you, Father! DAMN YOUR DISAPPOINTED EYES!” But that’s just because I watched a lot of daytime drama last month. Like, a lot. Like, suddenly, I’m fairly certain I was switched at birth and then adopted, and now I work as the maid at my actual birth parents’ house, so I’m secretly the heiress to a multinational conglomerate that’s headquartered on an obscure island nation. Anyway, Marion Ross’s stunt-double enters, all gray-coiffed and nervous in the red cardigan she ganked from the Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood set. Mrs. Cunningham takes one look at the shattered glass of the photo, which Nixon did at least drop, and eyes the culprit sternly, a silently scathing rebuke. Nixon stares at her, then makes a hasty exit. A dog barks at him from the stairs. “Woof,” it explains. Nixon stares at the pooch, unable to conjure a reason for its presence in this scene.

Meanwhile, a handful of men from Easy still creep through the woods. No one talks. “Sure is quiet,” O’Keefe finally says. Clearly, the silence unnerves everyone. And here, quoted verbatim, are my notes from the ensuing sequence: “Nothing around, nothing nothing, nothing, Bull and his gun, nothing, creeping, silence, nothing.” I think that about covers it. Slowly, the men edge toward a clearing, forming an impromptu line with guns raised half-heartedly. As they inch closer and closer, their arms begin to falter, and disbelief takes over their faces. Cut to a frontal shot of them emerging from the forest, smoke and dust blowing across the clearing. They stop, agape.

Perconte sprints back through the woods toward HQ, darting alone down abandoned roads and evoking images of the Greek myth of Marathon. Panting, he scrambles through the town trying to find any available officer. Confused men beg him to stop and explain why he’s in such a state, but Perconte won’t. Finally, he grabs Major Winters (I love typing that) and coughs, “Sir, we found something.” But he can’t quite get out the words, leaving Winters a bit confused. “What, what, what?” he asks, worried. “Frank, what is it?” Perconte simply shrugs. “I don’t know, sir,” he replies, helplessly. Webster hears this, but it doesn’t matter, really. I just happened to notice him in the background, camera-hogging like a pro.

A Jeep speeds toward the patrol’s location, with Perconte guiding Winters and Nixon. As the trees thin out and reveal the clearing, we see a high, wire fence and a locked gate, forming a very makeshift open-air prison in which stands a long line of human beings who are each physically and mentally emaciated and destroyed. Their fingers wrap weakly around the fence’s chain links, heads bobbing low, eyes skittishly avoiding contact with these soldiers for fear of whatever new torture they might bring. Nonplussed, Winters cautiously walks toward the fence, passing Bull Randleman, who has perched on a rock and turned himself away from the horror. Easy gradually congregates behind Winters, every man equally startled by the discovery.

The men’s complexions are gray, sallow, with sunken cheeks and dark-ringed eyes. Ghostly,

they stand, like dangling puppets without a guiding hand. Winters quietly orders his soldiers to open the prison gates; they do, but can't get all of the men out of the way in time, so many end up swinging backwards with the door. Nixon removes his helmet, proceeding forward with trepidation. A bony man in a black-and-white striped jumpsuit and hat – the standard "uniform" for this torture chamber – hugs one of the gate's poles, but loosely; his defeated, dead-eyed gaze never rises above knee-level. Another man clutches the precious blanket wrapped around his shoulders. All heads are shaved bald. No one can speak.

As Winters gingerly walks forward, weak fingers reach gently toward his arm, touching him in gratitude and disbelief, clasping him with the desperation of men too long denied strength and good health. The gesture speaks volumes of their despondency, louder than any oration. One man's skin is literally green, so deprived of nourishment is he. Winters removes his helmet as Nixon did – he's uncomfortable, but not because he fears these creatures; rather, he fears the breed of man who could perpetrate such atrocities, and he fears the bigger force propelling them. Winters chokes that he needs Liebgott immediately, because Liebgott can speak German. Donnie runs back outside the camp to fetch the soldier, ordering the remaining men to distribute water and rations to these starving, dying people.

Nixon stops moving. "Oh my God," he almost gags. "Dick?" Winters joins him, emptily staring ahead. We suddenly see what they do: hovels lining two sides of a dirt passage, extending deep into the horizon. Prisoners stagger brokenly into the light, squinting as if they hadn't dared step foot outside since being herded into their caves. Thick smoke clogs the air. Men limp in droves toward their saviors, barely able to milk movement from their diminished legs, hobbled into twisted, weak echoes of humanity. Malarkey covers his nose and mouth, sickened by the smell of decay, death, and charred ruins. Prisoners grab each other, drawing whatever support they can from each others' frail frames. Bones protrude from under waxen skin, dangerously close to penetrating the surface. Sunken bellies turn concave, flanked by starkly visible rib and pelvic bones. One fragile man carries the wispy skeleton of another, magically still breathing despite legs feebler than a string of rags. His bones have all but disintegrated, his body barely human, his eerie, ashen skin stretched like tissue paper over his skull. He is a feather. Faltering, the man with him sinks to his knees, unintelligibly begging for help. Speirs stares bewildered at this, and finally sputters that someone needs to give this person water. Either Talbert or Grant doubles over and vomits. "Jesus, Web, can you believe this place?" Luz whispers. "No," Webster answers grimly.

A prisoner, his eyes liquid pools of undiluted emotion, stumbles toward a soldier and limply embraces him, kissing his cheek. The man cannot speak, but his body convulses with sobs pent-up from month upon month of barbarous oppression. "It's okay," the officer murmurs. But the man weeps anyway.

Winters, Nixon, Speirs, and others listen intently to the statements of one low-voiced prisoner who responds sadly to Liebgott's questions. As he delivers his answers in hushed German, Liebgott translates, never tearing his eyes from the man's face. I can't think of a name for this prisoner, so I'll call him Bob for simplicity's sake. Bob reveals that the guards deserted the camp that morning, but burned a handful of huts as a final, brutal parting gift – without evacuating the prisoners first. "They killed as many as they could," Liebgott translates. As Bob talks, he nervously rubs his bald head, as if shielding himself or preparing to cringe, or perhaps just simply trying to shrink into himself. Several other prisoners do this, too. It's an incredibly natural, heartbreakingly vulnerable motion. The camera swings in a circle around Bob as he speaks, catching Winters and Nixon's suppressed horror, Speirs's unease, and Liebgott's sympathetic intensity, which we see through the crook in Bob's raised arm. Bob begins to tremble. "Jesus Christ," Winters says. Liebgott relays that several prisoners tried to stop the guards, but failed, and their watchdogs responded by trying to kill as many people as they could before finally fleeing and locking the gates behind them. Nixon seethes. They all guess that a villager alerted the guards to the oncoming Allied forces. Winters, with considerable effort, swallows his mounting emotion and rasps that Liebgott must ask what manner of camp this is. He's barely preserving his cool-and-collected façade. Liebgott learns that it's a work camp for a certain type of person, but he doesn't understand the translation – he thinks it's "unwanted," or "disliked." For clarification, he asks Bob if they're all criminals. "No," Liebgott translates. "No, no. Doctors, musicians, tailors, clerks, farmers, intelligent – I mean, normal, people." Bob stammers with anguish, "Juden...Juden. Juden." Liebgott's face freezes. "Jews," he chokes. "They're Jews. [And] Poles and

Gypsies." Bob reveals that the women's camp is ahead at the next railroad stop. He can't continue; wailing, he wanders away, unable to relive it. Cries of anguish erupt throughout the camp. Winters can't look up, too immersed is he in roiling shock and grief.

The charred huts continue to emit noxious fumes. Lumber, having fallen in careless piles, sticks up from the rubble at odd angles that give the appearance of skewed crosses marking the mass graves. Malarkey comes upon a pile of dead bodies. "Hey Babe," he calls to Heffron. "Look at their arms." Imprinted on a wasted, wan wrist is a black-ink number. "Like cattle," laments Heffron. "Goddamn," Malarkey says, shaking his head and covering his mouth anew.

Coughing, Bull and Luz open a door to one of the huts. Inside, men huddle in bunks, crammed tightly into tiny spaces and trembling from trauma and terror. Bruised and battered, they gag and cringe at the specks of light streaming in from the insufficient doorway. Outside, Winters and others slide open the door of what looks like a train compartment, revealing by far the biggest stack of dead bodies we've yet seen. Perconte can't even look at it, and neither can I. Feet and hands and shins and ribcages stand out, along with lifeless, lolling heads, but bodies become indistinguishable in this repellant flesh pile.

Elsewhere, Janovec sadly removes his helmet to pay respect to another pile of corpses on the ground. The misshapen torsos and jutting jaws, hollowed cheeks, further illustrate the appalling conditions in which these people were expected to...well, not to live, but to wither, and languidly expire. A grateful walking cadaver claws his way out of a hut, spots Perconte, and smiles feebly, saluting. Touched, Perconte stiffens and salutes back.

Winters approaches Nixon, stopping next to him; the men face away from each other, as if to lock eyes is to break face and break down. Winters plans to call Sink; in the meantime, he wants Nix and Speirs to somehow get food and water to the tortured masses. Nearby, a scraped and wasted man kneels, caressing the head of a dead friend, which rests in his lap. The corpse's skin is loose, hanging in folds from his emaciated body.

In town, Donnie and Martin try to double-time the process of loading food onto army vans. A red-faced, puffy German baker protests the pilfering of his food, but Webster has no patience for this and shouts for him to shut up. The baker screams anyway, until Webster whips out a pistol and shoves the man backward against his own counter, gun pressed to his neck. "Shut up, you Nazi fuck!" he yells. The baker, frightened, swears he isn't a Nazi. "You're not a Nazi? My mistake, you fat fucking prick," Webster fumes. "How about a human being? You one of those? Are you gonna tell me you never smelled the fucking stench?" A fellow soldier tries to calm Webster. "He says he doesn't know what the hell you're talking about," the guy insists. A few people have questioned why Webster didn't know that, given his working knowledge of German; I posit that his anger made him deaf to the other man's words. He just didn't listen, because he was too caught up in spitting nails at the baker's doughy head. Webster menaces, "Bullshit," but does withdraw and leaves the quivering baker alone with his yeast and flour. This reaction seems much more organic than his earlier tirade at the German prisoners; in fact, I feel like that scene might have actually made sense had it followed this stuff instead of preceding the concentration-camp discovery.

Hungry hands reach up at the Army truck, grasping for the crumbs of bread being torn from towering loaves and distributed by soldiers. "There's plenty to go around, please!" the men yell, trying to calm the frantic masses. Col. Sink arrives, summoning Winters and Nixon and introducing them to a Dr. Kent, who has an important medical bulletin. "Stop giving them food right now," Kent insists. "They're starving. If you give them too much to eat too quick, they'll eat themselves to death." It's true – they're not used to nutrients of any kind, so eating will give them diarrhea, among other ailments. "Keep them in camp until we can find a place for them in town," Kent urges. Nixon can't believe this. "You want us to lock these people back up?" he gapes. Sink sadly says that they have no other choice, and Kent chips in that it's a convenient centralized location in which doctors can monitor their food, drink and medicine intake. "It's a crying-ass shame, but let's get it done," Sink says. Strolling over to the phone, he dials General Taylor and informs him that they're in Landberg, on the other side of Buchloe. "We found something you ought to see, sir," he sighs.

Winters has relayed the orders to Liebgott, who can't believe what he's hearing. "I can't tell them that, sir," he panics. "You've got to, Joe," Winters replies. Why can't Webster do it? No one's respecting how crushing this must be for Liebgott as a Jewish man, and one who's tightly tied to his faith. Finally, Liebgott whispers, "Yes, sir." Slowly, he squeezes through the starving

throng and scoots up onto the back of the truck. "Achtung! Bitte!" he calls out. Leaning against the back of the truck, addressing the collective face of ultimate suffering and a group of his spiritual brethren, Liebgott shakily tries to explain that they must stop eating, and remain in their prison until further notice. The men grow afraid, rubbing their heads and wailing, their liberation suddenly disappearing. Liebgott bites his lip and tries to continue, but his voice grows heavy with emotion. His face twitches and trembles, tears visibly welling despite his most fervent attempts at stoicism. Ducking his face away from the group, Liebgott's voice breaks, and he backs away to slump down in the back of the truck, gutted. Sniffling softly, Liebgott fights sobs until his body can't steel itself any longer. Rubbing his head and covering his face, Liebgott weeps. Brilliant performance – subtle, totally lacking in histrionics, yet stunningly moving. I'm so glad he didn't die when I claimed he did, back in episode two, before I understood The Power of Liebgott.

Nixon knocks on Winters's door. "Turns out I'm staying in the only dry house in Germany," he complains, rifling through the bottles lined up in Winters's lodgings. "Thought you weren't drinking local," observes Winters, amused. He somberly adds that the division headquarters is reporting several more concentration camps dotted throughout Germany. "It seems the Russians liberated a worse one," Winters says, shaking his head. Nixon can't imagine anything worse. "Apparently, ten times as big," Winters marvels. "Locals [at the prison Easy found] claim they never knew the camp existed. They say we're exaggerating." Laughing without mirth, Winters notes that the villagers will get an immersive education tomorrow – General Taylor declared martial law in the town, ordering any able-bodied person from age fourteen to eighty to help bury the dead, supervised by the 10th Armored. Easy and its battalion will leave for Thalham at noon. Nixon exits, haggard.

Cut to Nixon speeding through the German countryside in a borrowed Jeep. He's unshaven and smoking, ash dropping off a cigarette that's practically affixed to his lips. He parks outside the concentration camp, having returned to remind himself of all the things that were at stake in this war – things he didn't know about even as he helped fight it. The guard offers him a handkerchief to cover his nose and mouth. A gaggle of nuns in bizarre habits strolls past. There are bodies on stretchers. A gangrenous green-hued man is carried to a mass grave. Women wince; everyone cries, either silent tears or body-shaking sobs. Charred corpses are carried one by one by women and men of all ages. Can you imagine being a fourteen-year-old and cleaning up this pit that so encapsulates the worst humanity can do to itself? How harrowing, especially when it's your army that perpetrated it. Nixon's eyes fall upon Mrs. Cunningham, doubled over and trying to drag a dead body from the pile. She meets his gaze with an air of defiance, almost daring him to define her in the kind of heartless terms usually reserved for the German soldiers. Nixon can't stop staring at her, stunned and moved that she – the military wife – is cleaning up this mess. Nixon's face is the last shot we see in the concentration camp...

...and we're still looking at Nixon, but it's the shot from early in the episode, where he's on a Thalham balcony listening to the violin group play Beethoven. Bull, Luz, Liebgott, Webster, and Perconte listen silently to the gorgeous string melody. "Hitler's dead," Nixon announces. "Shot himself in Berlin." Bull wonders whether this means the war has ended, but Nixon shakes his head and reveals they've received orders to Bertesgaden – the site of Hitler's famed Eagle's Nest hideaway. Webster snarks that Hitler should've killed himself three years ago and "saved [them] a lot of trouble." Nixon sighs, tired. "Yeah, he should've," Nixon agrees. "But he didn't."

The band lightly bows their instruments while townspeople continue to tidy up their hobbled town. The camera zeroes in on the original violin just as the musician plays the last note, gently laying his instrument inside its case and clicking it shut. Don't you wonder what became of a violin like that, and in whose hands it might be today?

"During the following months, Allied forces discovered numerous POW concentration and death camps," the screen reads. "These camps were part of the Nazi attempt to effect the 'final solution' to the 'Jewish question.' Between 1942 and 1945, five million ethnic minorities and six million Jews were murdered – many of them in the camps."

The credits roll, this time set to gentle violin music and a slower, more classical version of the theme song that's very stirring.

Points

Season 1

Episode Number: 10

Season Episode: 10

Originally aired:	Sunday November 4, 2001
Writer:	Erik Jendresen, Erik Bork
Director:	Mikael Salomon
Show Stars:	Michael Cudlitz (Denver 'Bull' Randleman), Ron Livingston (Capt. Lewis Nixon), Scott Grimes (T/Sgt. Donald Malarkey), Donnie Wahlberg (2nd Lt. C. Carwood Lipton), Neal McDonough (1st Lt. Lynn "Buck" Compton), Ross McCall (Joseph D Liebgott), Frank John Hughes (S/Sgt. William "Wild Bill" Guarnere), Rick Gomez (George Luz), Kirk Acevedo (SSgt. Joseph Toye), James Madio (Frank J Perconte), Richard Speight Jr. (Warren 'Skip' Muck), Dale Dye (Colonel Robert Sink), Damian Lewis (Richard D. Winters), Dexter Fletcher (John), Shane Taylor (Eugene G 'doc' Roe), Phil McKee (Major Robert L Strayer), Tom Hardy (Pfc. John Janovec), Matthew Settle (Capt. Ronald Spiers), Philip Barantini (Wayne 'skinny' Sisk), James McAvoy (Pvt. James Miller), Rick Warden (II) (1st Lt. Harry Welsh), Matthew Leitch (Floyd 'Tab' Talbert), Nolan Hemmings (Charles 'Chuck' Grant), Nicholas Aaron (Robert E 'popeye' Wynn), Peter Youngblood Hills (Darrell C 'shifty' Powers), Robin Laing (Edward J 'babe' Heffron), Mark Huberman (Pvt. Lester 'Leo' Hashey), Peter McCabe (IV) (Cpl Donald Hoobler)
Guest Stars:	Christian Malcolm (MP at Lansberg), Corey Johnson (Major Louis Kent), Matt Hickey (Patrick S. O'Keefe), Tom Hardy (John A. Janovec), Wolf Kahler (German General), Dan van Husen (Alleged Commandant), Jason Done (Drunk GI), Jonjo O'Neill (Replacement #1), Joe Villa (Replacement #2), Paul Herzberg (German Doctor at Checkpoint), Philip Rham (German Colonel), Dirk Galuba (German MP), Milo Twomey (Army Doctor), Rupert Wickham (Brain Surgeon), David Schwimmer (Capt. Herbert M. Sobel)
Summary:	The company captures Eagle's Nest in Berchtesgaden, and also discover Herman Goering's house. The battalion heads out to Austria where the end of the war in Europe is announced. While those with enough points go home, the remainder of Easy Company stays behind until the end of the Pacific War is declared.



July 1945. We're in Zell Am See, Austria – a lovely mountainous area where sun glints off clear, placid water, lush green foliage swishes in the breeze, sound engineers lovingly play Assorted Bird Sounds II: The Call of the Titmouse, and hot red-headed men wear tight shorts with jaunty abandon. Dick Winters, embracing the glory of his thighs, strolls down a dirt path clad in navy trunks, a white undershirt, and a towel snaked around his neck. "It was more than three years since Lewis Nixon and I decided to join the

paratroopers," he narrates. "More than a year since we'd first gone to war, not knowing what would happen to us, how long we'd be fighting, where we'd end up." Winters pauses on a ledge, staring out at the glorious view and ruminating aloud that he never thought their war experience would take them to such a paradise.

Nixon sneaks up behind Winters and jokes that he heard word of a redheaded Eskimo skulking around the neighborhood. Given the underlying man-love, maybe Nixon meant that as a secret euphemism. "Come to join me for a swim?" Winters asks cheerfully, which elicits a chuckle from the decidedly un-physical Nixon. A mail delivery brought Nixon there: it seems Winters met up with the regimental photographer, and traded him two Lugers for a collection of snapshots from as far back as Toccoa. Winters whips out one photo of himself and Nixon in their uniforms, flashing barely perceptible grins. I want it for my desk. "What do you think you'll do after this?" Nixon wonders. Winters straight-answers that he'll probably get some breakfast, but of course, Nixon was trying to paint a grander picture. Winters reveals that Col. Sink has discussed an Army career with him, but no decisions have been made. "I said I'd think about it," Winters clarifies noncommittally. Nixon raises his eyebrows a bit, then turns away and looks at the ground. He wants to grow old with Dick in a country cottage with two dogs, a vegetable garden full of carrots, and a collection of hugely hilarious penis statues painted to look like celebrities – and nowhere, but nowhere, does the Army fit into the plan. Tentatively, he asks Winters what he thinks about New Jersey, because there's a job awaiting him at company in Nixon, NJ, called Nixon Nitration Works. "Oddly enough, I know the owners," Nixon snickers. "[They] expect me to make something of myself. Thought I'd drag you with me." The whole time, Nixon barely glances up at his boyfriend, afraid of his burgeoning passion and the warmth spreading in his Army-issue trousers. "Are you offering me a job?" Winters asks, twitching his face into the usual wry, knowing grin, the expression of which he is king. Nixon teases that it hinges on the interview, but based on Winters' résumé, a position with commensurate salary might just open up for him. Here, Winters and Nixon share a long look. The chemistry between them crackles louder and hotter than a blender in the bathtub, and fries me just as thoroughly. If I were a gay man, this scene might be my money shot. "I'll think about it," Winters says slowly. "I really appreciate it." And he does. Nixon awkwardly repeats that Winters should, indeed, give it some thought. "Yeah," Winters says. It's like they've already woken up in each other's sweaty clutches and aren't sure how to handle the subsequent feelings of neediness. Winters stands up and treats the camera to a close-up of his thigh and crotch, because he's totally toying with me. Strutting down the pier, Winters rips off his shirt and leaps into the water just as music crescendos behind him.

In a voice-over, Winters explains that he couldn't focus on job offers when the war hadn't even officially ended. "I was still getting used to hot showers and morning swims," he tells us, gliding through the water in idyllic Austria.

We flash back to a winding mountain road. Winters explains that Easy Company et al entered Bavaria in early May hoping to capture Berchtesgaden, a small Alpine town the Nazis used as its symbolic headquarters because all of the Third Reich's most powerful people owned houses there. It seems that Hitler, prior to plugging himself with a coward's bullet, ordered the SS to hold fast in Berchtesgaden, using all means – even guerilla warfare – to keep the Allies out. A few bored Easy men loiter near their trucks, which sit bumper-to-bumper in the usual military caravan. Webster either reads or writes in his journal; Talbert just watches, and Liebgott leans against a wheel. "The first step [for the SS] was blocking the roads," Winters narrates. An explosion rocks the area; Easy is, bit by bit, blasting its way up the hill. Impatiently, Winters wonders aloud when the engineers were supposed to arrive and assist them. "A half-hour ago," groans Nixon. "We're stuck here until they do, Nix," Winters growls. Nixon grins that he can't exactly blame the SS for protecting the house of their fuhrer. "You'd probably throw a few rocks at us yourself," he notes. Speirs marches over and announces that Easy is ready and willing to find another way up the mountain. "Duly noted," Winters smiles. "I've already recommended you to Col. Sink." Speirs is pumped. "Terrific," he practically bubbles. "Let's go find out where Hitler lived." So he can loot the place right down to the shampoo and Charmin. Winters stops him from proceeding, playing the first-name card and telling "Ron" that Sink doesn't want any unnecessary risks this late in the war – so, they're going to proceed slowly. "So the French are going to beat us to the Eagle's Nest?" Speirs groans, visions of diamond-crusted champagne flutes dancing out of his head.

Sink arrives in a Jeep, gunning straight past Sgt. Talbert's lips and parking next to Winters, Speirs, and Nixon. He smokes. Sink smokes expertly. A few soldiers pile grenades atop a rock

pile and bolt away from them, ducking. Sink reveals that he spoke to Gen. LeClerc from the French army; the man whose troops reached Paris first also wants to be the first soldier into Berchtesgaden. A soldier fires his bazooka at the grenade pile, blasting the obstruction. "Told him I understood his point," Sink sighs, then smirks. "Now you fire up 2nd battalion and outflank that French son-of-a-bitch." Winters clearly wants to whoop it up, but contents himself with a demure "yes, sir," while Nixon chuckles gently in the background. Speirs is as delighted as Speirs ever is – that is to say, his eyes defrost a full degree. Winters tells Speirs that Easy will lead the charge.

So, it seems Easy has indeed found its route into Berchtesgaden. What tipped me off was the parade of Allied Jeeps passing through the town streets. Harry Welsh gazes appreciatively at the enormous white flags of surrender swinging from the rooftops. "Eerie," he says. "Not even any natives." Nixon figures that's because any native to Berchtesgaden can't very well deny being a Nazi; after all, devotion to the Third Reich is practically a residency requirement. Winters muses that he needs a place to put Col. Sink, as if the man is luggage in search of an overhead compartment. Nixon obligingly trucks them right up to the Berchtesgadener Hof, a brick building bedecked in the iconic red, white, and black Swastika flag.

The men pour inside the building, passing a bust of Hitler carefully placed in the foreground. Nixon glares at it. Yeah, that'll show him who's boss! Adolf is no Tony Danza, and it's about time the world knew it. A frightened old man spots the American soldiers and tries to flee with what looks like a guest register, but Nixon draws a gun and puts a stop to the getaway. Everyone else filters into the dining room. It's lined with enormous rectangular tables, parked under equally monstrous chandeliers. A man putting away the silver reveals his position by clinking it too loudly; freaked when he spies soldiers, he drops everything and scurries out of the building. He's dressed like a waiter; I'm not wholly sure why the building still needed a waiter, given that the city's entire populace deserted him. And without a tip! It's the ultimate stiffing.

Welsh scampers over to the graceful wooden box in which the silver is stashed. Awed, he rips off his helmet and starts scooping the utensils into it. "Kitty would love this," Welsh gushes. "How many brides get a wedding present from Hitler?" None, and for a good reason. Celebrating a lifelong union with your one true love by giving them Hitler's dinnerware is a lot like birthing an epileptic parrot from your left nostril and teaching it to meow: really, really fucked up. He generously offers to let Winters grab a few pieces. "You know whoever comes in after us is gonna take whatever isn't nailed down," Welsh insists. Smiling, Winters removes his helmet and commences thievery. Intrigued, Speirs walks over and reaches for a knife. "Don't even think about it," snaps Welsh. Speirs is clearly startled, but completely amused. Speirs is a career pillager, an amateur looter's nightmare. Winters giggles.

Speirs moves on, having spied gleaming silver across the room. Pvt. More strolls over and asks Winters for permission to climb the mountain and infiltrate the Eagle's Nest. Winters pauses, then gives Welsh some appropriate security and administrative orders. A ripping noise takes us to Speirs, who has relieved the wall of a Third Reich flag and is rolling it casually, as if it's the most natural sight in the world. He wants to know what role Easy will play in the securing of Berchtesgaden. Smiling, Winters reveals that Easy will ascend through the Obersalzberg to claim the Eagle's Nest. More beams. He loves Winters the best.

"Hi-ho Silver! Currahee!" the men of Easy shout, their cavalcade crawling up the mountain. Some men run, others drive; all are overjoyed at their good luck. Winters exposit for us that Eagle's Nest is a mountaintop stone retreat, eight thousand feet up, accessible by a gold-plated elevator. The Nazi Party built it with its own funds and surprised Hitler with it on his birthday. That's a tough gift to top. A set of those silver pickle forks he saw in the Williams-Sonoma catalogue just won't cut it after a gold-plated elevator. Winters dubs it "the crown jewel of the German empire." And the man was afraid of heights," he muses.

Speirs, Grant, More, and Malarkey, among some others, trickle into a sparsely decorated concrete lounge. The Cello Concerto of Mama Needs a Brand New Set of Swastika Placemats plays as they stand in momentary awe of the stunning vista, then commence scrounging. Speirs kicks over a corpse to make sure the man is dead, then steals his pistol. A cracking pop startles him, but it's just Malarkey opening a bottle of champagne. "Here's to him," Malarkey grins, swigging from the bottle. Champagne trickles down his face. Throwing back his head, Malarkey shakes his wet hair to and fro with sensual abandon, dumping more and more champagne down his saturated and clingy shirt. He licks the bottle and moans. Aw, shit – I fell asleep again, didn't

I?

More curiously flips through a photo album chronicling Hitler's rule. It's a personal record that belonged to the man himself. He sold it on eBay a week later for \$40,000 and a penis-shaped cupcake tin.

Nixon, Speirs, and Welsh lounge on Hitler's deck chairs, drunk on Hitler's champagne and trying to remember Hitler's chain of command. They settle on Hitler, then Himmler, then Goering, then Goebbels, but they're too hammered to pronounce anything clearly, and raucous guffaws drown out conversation. Winters and Donnie arrive, smirking. "Hey Adolf," Welsh slurs. "Love your Eagle's Nest." He totters that they made themselves right at home, and love what he's done with the place. Winters doesn't seem to mind that Welsh just called him "Adolf." It's not exactly a term of endearment that's sweeping our fair nation. Welsh engulfs his boss in a huge bear hug. The actor already plays Welsh as a raging horndog; now, his boozed-up Welsh is basically running around drooling with his tongue hanging out. Welsh offers Winters a drink just for the novelty of it, but Winters smiles angelically and announces that he's got news. "All troops stand fast on present positions," he reads. Playfully, Welsh attempt this, and it's pretty funny – he grins from ear to ear, sways noticeably, and ogles Winters's mouth. "Standing fast," Nixon drones from his seated position. Speirs looks like he wants to vomit immediately. Welsh snorts. "Wanna hear [the news]?" Winters asks. "Mmm hmm," Welsh giggles. "Mmm hmm?" mimics Winters, delighted. He slaps Welsh's tipsy shoulder and prods, "Ready for it?" He is. Welsh is so ready for it. He's about three inches away from toppling onto Winters's shoulder and having a quick suckle. "The German army's surrendered," Winters announces. Nixon's hands drop from behind his head as he abruptly sits forward. Welsh's face falls into a stunned stupor. Winters gamely slaps his arm. "I've got a present for you," Winters tells Nixon. "Come on." As Nixon gets up, Welsh embraces Donnie euphorically, dazed, drunk, and not quite able to believe that the war on his front is finally finished.

Winters speeds through the forest while Nixon, clad in suave sunglasses, rides shotgun and cradles a bottle of booze. The vehicle stops in front of a modest cottage that we learn is Hermann Goering's house. "We found it yesterday; had it on double guard ever since," Winters says. "I can vouch for that, sir," chirps an impossibly irrepressible O'Keefe. Winters teases him about being antsy to skip out on his responsibility. "No, there's just so much to see and do here, sir," O'Keefe bubbles innocently. He slaps a skeleton key into Winters's outstretched palm.

Leading Nixon down a flight of stairs, Winters unlocks an iron gate and flicks on the light. Nixon rips off his glasses and his face becomes the priceless embodiment of sheer, unadulterated astonishment. What he beholds is the largest wine cellar I've ever seen – floor-to-ceiling racks of alcohol surrounding an iron tasting table that forms a three-quarter circle. "Ten thousand bottles of the world's finest liquor, wine, and champagne helped Easy Company mark the day the war in Europe came to an end," Winters narrates for us. In scene, he tells a stunned Nixon to help himself to anything he desires. Nixon can't even speak. This is his utopia. This is better than life in New Jersey with Winters. This is better than an orgy. Hell, this is better than college football! No, wait, I've gone too far there. Cheerfully, Winters instructs Nixon to have his pick, and then order each company to take a truckload back to camp. "We're headed for Austria in the morning," Winters exposit. "Don't feel you have to leave anything here for whoever comes next." O'Keefe is stunned that they're leaving. "Happy VE Day," Winters calls out, leaving. O'Keefe is completely confused. That's basically his lot in life – utter confusion. "Victory in Europe," explains Nixon. He strolls across the hard floor, covered in parts with broken glass, and mumbles, "Happy VE Day." Staring up the length of the enormous liquor rack, Nixon lovingly grabs a bottle. "Instead of an aggressive combat unit, we became an occupation force, and no one wanted to leave Berchtesgaden," Winters narrates. "Until they saw Austria."

Cut to more absolutely breathtaking scenery. The battalion trucks peacefully drive past towns bathed in a golden glow, with majestic mountains poking above pristine valley lakes. Everything is clean, devoid of rubble, merry; even the villagers wave excited salutations. "Wonder if they'll make us run up those, or ski down them," Talbert jokes, recalling the Currahee days. Oh, and he's talking about the mountains, not the village women. It occurs to me that I should clarify that point. The men grin like heroes – which they are, naturally – and bask in the warm welcome they receive. "I think the war is over!" Malarkey cheers, looping his arms around two comrades' necks. Three shepherd girls wiggle their chests and coo.

Nixon completes a very macho ascent of some Austrian stairs and notes, "We'll be comfortable

here.” He’s referring to a multi-storey building on the water – a stunning location for their battalion headquarters and a stark contrast to the broken buildings Easy used in “The Last Patrol,” at which time the simple fact of a roof and some walls seemed like Earth’s greatest paradise.

Inside an ornate room, two high-ranking German officers stand opposite a seated Winters; one table separates them. Yes, it’s time for our favorite segment – the one in which opposite sides of the conflict see something human in each other and make forced, awkward comments about What Will Happen Next in their not-so-dissimilar lives. You’ve seen this type of segment before. It’s everywhere. I saw it at the grocery store last week buying Hamburger Helper and some Midol. “I wonder what will happen to us, to people like you and me, when there are finally no more wars to occupy us,” Herr Moralizer intones thickly. Winters regards him silently, then orders Herr Moralizer to have his men collect all their weapons and deposit them at the village’s church, school, and airfield. Stony-eyed, Herr Moralizer whips out his sidearm and chokes, “Please accept this as my formal surrender, Major. It is better than to lay it on the desk of a clerk.” Winters decides not to deprive the man of his weapon, which ignites a respectful glow in the eyes of the German colonel. The men salute each other.

Nixon struts into a makeshift screening room, where soldiers watch news footage of the war in the Pacific. It paints an extremely grim picture of the Okinawa battles, calling the slow progression there “one of the fiercest artillery barrages of the war.” Dramatically, the soldiers there are described as showing true grit in the face of a suicidal enemy that’s slowly being forced into a retreat. “The going is brutal, the casualties are high,” the film tells us, adding that Okinawa “is the next big step to victory over Japan.” Then, the sly propagandists share that this battle will only be won by “work, war bonds, and heroic sacrifice,” but I’m sure not in that order, because we all know that only war bonds can truly win a global battle. Buy today and get a free FDR travel alarm clock.

When the film ends, the men grouchily disperse. Speirs voices what everyone is thinking, asking Winters when the 101st will deploy to Japan. Winters isn’t sure yet, and notes that some of the men will have accrued enough points to go home instead of back into battle. “Not many, if their only medal is a Purple Heart,” Nixon points out. Winters nods, noting that most of the officers should have enough. “Each of us will have to decide what to do,” he says curtly. He then dons his Boss Pants and orders up a grueling regimen of physical training to prepare both the veterans and replacements for a return to action. “They’re gonna love you,” Nixon smirks.

Bull Randleman, Liebgott, Shifty, Perconte, and Malarkey – among others – fan out in the forest, ever so slowly creeping forward with guns raised. Perconte crouches nervously. “What are you crouching for, Perco?” Liebgott teases. “Think the deer’s gonna shoot back?” Apparently, they’re hunting for some dinner. Bull crabs that they should shut up and let Shifty shoot something tasty; in retaliation, Liebgott suggests that they kill Bull and feed the company for a week. The sight of an enormous buck silences the group, especially once Shifty aims his rifle and delicately massages the trigger. But the deer escapes, and provides fodder for a few barbs about how the Army should be thrilled to get rid of Shifty. “Seems they want me to stay around awhile,” Shifty says sadly in his gentle Virginia accent. He needs fifteen more points before qualifying to return home. Malarkey is stunned. “Jesus Christ,” he breathes. “I thought I had it bad!” Shifty explains that he never got injured, and thus never got a Purple Heart. Funny how his good fortune to skirt injury has become a liability.

Speirs runs Easy Company through a few drills, barking orders in a raspy tone that some voice coach decided is exactly the way military men should speak. It’s called “Constipation of the Diaphragm.” Speirs finally shares that, because so many veterans lack the eighty-five points required for a discharge, General Taylor has authorized a lottery. Each company will draw one name, and that lucky soldier gets to leave immediately, and with honor. Welsh makes a big show of the drawing while guys like Talbert and Bull hold their breath. “Come on,” a guy mumbles, tense. “The winner is...Sgt. Darrell C. Powerrrrrrrrrs,” intones Speirs. Bashfully, Shifty hangs his head and blushes. The gang applauds enthusiastically. “That’s how it’s done, Shifty,” Luz cheers. Aw, they’re all so happy for him. It’s very sweet. I need a hug.

Sgt. Grant congratulates Shifty, but his glee is short-lived, because Speirs then taps his platoon as the crossroads guards for the night. He confirms that the 101st will indeed ship out to Japan eventually, so the requisite training will commence at 0600 hours. One by one, happy expressions fade. In what may be an unprecedented event on cable television, several smiles literally turn completely upside-down. Webster’s more cheesed than the state of Wisconsin. Malarkey

and his oddly flesh-colored lips look very dismayed.

While Winters hunches over a balcony table and pretends to work very hard, Shifty approaches for a final soft, Southern goodbye. "You know, you was...you was...well, it's been a long time," shy Shifty sputters. Winters nods. We're yanked out of the moment in a poorly chosen edit, swapping instead to a long shot showing that the balcony on which they stand juts out over the cerulean water. It's critical to know that Shifty left on a pretty day in a lovely town – otherwise, his story wouldn't be complete, and some bonehead like Webster wouldn't be able to write the seminal *Ode to Brotherhood*, "The Water was Calm When Shifty Bugged Off." Winters politely asks whether Shifty has everything he needs. Small talk ensues. It's all very uncomfortable. No one would accuse Winters of smooth conversation. "Back home, in Virginia," begins Shifty. "Well, I just don't rightly know how I'm gonna explain all this." Winters remains silent, courteously jacking up the discomfort level to notches heretofore un-notched by mankind. "See, I've...I've seen....I've seen..." Shifty tries again, but can't quite get the words out; it seems like he's trying to find the words to describe the intensity of his year in World War II, coupled with a reluctance to leave the only people in the world who truly understand what he endured. It's also possible that he's loath to explain the easy circumstances of his discharge. Winters smiles gently and says, "You're a helluva fine soldier, Shifty. There's nothing more to explain." They salute. And as the adorable, timid Virginia boy strolls out of sight for good, Winters informs us that Shifty's departing truck was hit head-on by a corporal driving drunk. Shifty broke his pelvis and arm, and suffered a concussion, surviving but spending the next few months in a handful of hospitals. These guys cannot win. They're like a company of Ziggys.

Winters narrates that Shifty wasn't the only casualty in Austria. We immediately cut to Welsh, so at first I assumed he was a goner; as the scene progressed, though, I realized it was just a stupid transition. For shame, Spanks. Welsh insists to Nixon that he's quitting the Army – he has the points, so he refuses to risk his life another minute when he could easily return to Kitty and get married. "You think that Kitty hasn't run off with some 4-F by now?" jokes Nixon. Welsh curses at him. Winters strolls over and mildly warns Welsh against paying attention to the jaded Nixon. Again, we cut to a long establishing shot that shows Winters standing jauntily on the stairs while Welsh and Nixon sit and relax on the landing. It's just brief enough that it quashes the scene's energy. Nixon argues that Welsh has been gone three years already, so another three in Tokyo shouldn't be a problem for Kitty – especially if Welsh doesn't ever tell her that he had the chance to return home early. Welsh, along with everyone else in the entire world, figures this is a totally stupid idea, especially because it's likely that Easy will linger in Austria for several months before the Army gets around to redeploying the division. No, Welsh opts to return home to Wilkes-Barre, PA, to make monkey love to his bride and conceive a few babies in the process. He's far too lusty for war. "You didn't tell him?" Winters asks, arching a brow at Nixon. "I couldn't get him to shut up," snarks Nixon. Addressing Welsh, Nixon explains, pointing to Winters, "Guts and Glory here applied for a transfer." Evidently, the 13th Airborne is poised to head straight for Japan, and Winters wants to get his stint in the Pacific over with as quickly as possible. The first time I heard this, I wanted to rail against the writers for scripting something so totally out-of-character for the man who cherished and championed Easy Company so ardently. I wanted to belly-flop onto the carpet and kick and wail and scream, and bemoan the stupidity of the show; then, I remembered it's a true damn story and that Richard Winters might actually have wanted this. Then, I unclenched my fists, picked up my jaw from its place of honor on the rug, and poured myself a Hard Cider. That really helped. Welsh, though, is as startled as I was. "Are you in on this, too?" he demands of Nixon, who was indeed privy to the plan. "I can't let him go by himself," Nixon protests. "He doesn't know where it is!" And, you're in love with him. It's okay, Nix. We all are. Welsh just can't come to grips with the idea of Dick Winters leaving his men. "They don't need me anymore," Winters insists feebly. Birds loudly chirp in protest.

A high-ranking officer rifles through Winters's file. Eyebrows notes that Winters suffered a leg wound in Normandy, and seems impressed that Winters's record of service stretches back to D-Day. Winters blows off the injury as a minor flesh wound, though he'd likely take the same stoic approach even if, say, his torso had been de-limbed and left to writhe in a forest. Wearing armor. And a tiara. What? It could've happened. I'm just saying he doesn't dwell on his own misfortune. Eyebrows notes that twenty-four men of Easy died on D-Day, and Winters clarifies that seventeen of those dead soldiers were on the company CO's plane, which crashed over Normandy. "So you were given command of the company on D-Day," Eyebrows notes. Winters absently flashes back

to his first assignment as acting CO – capturing the German garrison in “Day of Days,” during which he lost his first man and reacted with tightly suppressed grief.

“In Holland, they bumped you up to battalion XO,” Eyebrows reads from the file. “Bastards took your company away.” Damn right! I loved this subtle acknowledgement from someone in power that it must’ve been painful for Winters to have been wrenched from a company he loved and led with extreme skill and grace. The line’s delivery is also a nod to the fact that Winters himself didn’t ask to withdraw from the heat of combat; rather, he was ordered to do so. Winters drifts away again, this time recalling the young, unarmed German boy he killed in “Crossroads,” right before Col. Sink awarded him the promotion. “I fired my last shots there,” Winters whispers, back in the present with Eyebrows. For his part, Eyebrows can’t believe that Winters stayed in Bastogne with his men and endangered himself almost equally, yet never shot his gun after that day in Holland. And, Winters’s last shots took someone’s life – that’s rather poignant, and retroactively makes sense of his inability to shake the disturbing image of killing that boy. “I can’t imagine a tougher test for a leader [than] having to sit through a siege like that under those conditions,” sympathizes Eyebrows. Winters humbly replies, “We got through it.” He flashes back to the horrific conditions in the Ardennes Forest, with randomly exploding trees, relentless shellings, and frantic scrambles to reach the relative – and ultimately unreliable – safety of the foxholes.

Intrigued, Eyebrows asks point-blank why Winters wants to leave his men. Altruistically, Winters explains that he’d like to do as much good as possible in the war; as such, he’s needed in the Pacific, where the true fighting is taking place. Eyebrows speculates that Winters wants to run his own division, or perhaps position himself for a prestigious lifelong career in the Army. “Because if you think you need more combat experience to get stars on your helmet, let me tell you something, son – you’ve done enough,” Eyebrows sighs. Winters appreciates the sentiment, but assures the man that his objective isn’t so self-serving. “Major, I took this meeting out of respect for your achievements and for the 101st,” Eyebrows begins, leaning back in his chair. This ominous start leads exactly where one might expect – Winters is denied the transfer, because he’s deemed too valuable to the 101st. “Frankly, I think your men have earned the right to keep you around,” Eyebrows compliments. Winters stands, somewhat startled to have his request so summarily refused. “Thank you, sir,” he manages. Meeting adjourned.

“So I would stay in Austria for the time being, waiting for orders and trying to watch over soldiers who had no enemy to fight,” Winters shares. This narration takes us into a lush green field, at the end of which stands a modest cottage surrounded by sheep. Liebgott narrows his eyes. These aren’t just sheep. They’re Danger Sheep. “Lieb, I fucking hate this,” complains Webster. He’s pouting in the front seat of the Jeep while Liebgott glares at the cottage. “They fingered him,” argues Liebgott. “He was in the fucking room, Web. One of those Polacks at the slave camp says this is the guy.” But he can’t give specifics. Liebgott is venting, hoping he’s found a target for his ire at the atrocities committed against the Jewish people; Webster prefers to be a pacifist and not invite Trouble to run up his dress. Liebgott grouchy hops out of the car and murderously strides toward the house. “Is this a personal thing, Joe?” pants Webster, jogging to catch his friend. “Does Major Winters know?” Liebgott doesn’t give a damn. He’s convinced that this cottage’s owner could be tied to a concentration camp, and therefore, he deserves to be extinguished. “It’s a goddamn order,” he seethes. In the book, Speirs gave the order for Liebgott, Sisk, and a chap called Moone to interrogate the man; that’s not made totally clear here. Webster clings to the innocent-until-proven-guilty mantra. “Were you at Landsberg?” Liebgott hisses quietly. “Think he’s a soldier like you and me? An innocent German officer? Where the hell have you been for the past three years?”

Liebgott charges into the cabin and screams in German at the portly resident. Webster and Sisk secure the place while Liebgott menacingly advances upon the man. “Come here, old man,” he growls. More German than I don’t understand; I think Liebgott is trying to interrogate him about the prison camps, but it’s probable that his line of questioning is less than impartial. “Don’t fucking lie to me!” he screams. “See what you did to my fucking people!” The man protests, “Nein, nein!” Disgusted, Webster storms out, unable to watch Liebgott fly off the handle and threaten the man with his gun. He lights up and smokes tensely. “He’s guilty,” Sisk whispers over Webster’s shoulder. “Liebgott says so.” Webster grimaces. A gunshot cracks through the air, and the cabin owner staggers out the front door, grabbing a bleeding neck wound and running limply toward the hills. Liebgott bursts out behind him and tries to kill him, but he’s out of bullets. “Shoot

him!" he screams at Webster, who flatly refuses. Just as it seems the hurt German might escape, a bullet tears through his chest, felling him with an inglorious thud. Webster whirls to see Sisk lowering his smoking weapon.

The trio drives back to camp stone-faced. "Officers don't run," Liebgott spits, still insisting that if the man had been a soldier just like them, he wouldn't have fled so guiltily. Webster disagrees. "The war's over," he notes. "Anybody would run." Damn right.

"Summer in this alpine paradise should've been a welcome relief, especially now we were at peace with the Germans," Winters narrates. "But everyone wanted to go home." This transitions us to the crossroads checkpoint, at which Allied soldiers control the flow of traffic in and out of the region. A much older soldier from Mannheim chats idly with Pvt. Janovec, the Strumpet Humper from last time. The banter is unremarkable but for the phrase, "Russia is not desirable," which struck me funny somehow but for an undefined reason. Janovec is duly impressed that the man survived both World Wars, then leaves the cozy chat long enough to wave through a truckload of German soldiers. He salutes them respectfully just as Webster pulls up to relieve him. "Don't salute the Germans!" Webster scolds him, amused. Janovec giggles that he gets a kick out of it, especially now that his rage has been redirected toward the Japanese. Webster delivers his lines with a cigarette hanging stiffly from his lips. You can practically see the thought-bubble pop above his head: "You're Danny Zuko. Be the Zuko. Live the Zuko." Alas, Webster looks like he'd be more comfortable conversing with a bayonet between his teeth. Janovec complains about having only seventy-five points of the possible 85, then bounds happily to the Jeep bound for the barracks. Webster, having been prodded for the information, yells that he's got eighty-one points. Janovec snickers. "That's just not good enough," he jokes as the Jeep speeds away.

Webster busies himself in finding a ride for a lone traveler, finally settling on yanking the luggage from an upscale family's back seat and foisting the Munich-bound man upon the complaining people. Meanwhile, a barrel drops out of the back of a supply truck, dropping in front of Janovec's Jeep and causing a horrible crash. Webster's head snaps up when he hears the accident; scared, he sprints toward the smoking wreckage. "Oh, Jesus," he sputters, freaked. When Winters arrives at the ambulance, Janovec is already dead. Webster mournfully reveals that the lively kid was a mere ten points shy of discharge.

"The enemy had surrendered, but somehow" soldiers kept dying, Winters's narration tells us as we see regret in his eyes. He notes the stunning unfairness of it all – men who served bravely and with distinction since as far back as Normandy still could not return home, all due to an arcane point system. It certainly seems sadistic to punish people for successfully dodging bullets. "What [the soldiers] did have plenty of were weapons, alcohol, and too much time on their hands," Winters informs us. Late at night, Sgt. Grant carts around a handful of soldiers while telling a merry tale of ol' Gonorrhea's D-Day landing – but, like everything else, it ends sadly when Grant rehashes the circumstances of Gonorrhea's departure from the front lines. I really miss him, too, which says a lot because you can't imagine how tiresome it is to type the word "gonorrhea" over and over until my fingers feel like they've caught it. As I reminisce about Gonorrhea, though, Sgt. Grant notices a commotion up ahead and idles the Jeep, hopping out to investigate.

A man lies dead on the ground; another staggers down the road, drunk off his tree. Grant offers help. "They wouldn't give me any gas," slurs the man, frenetically waving a pistol. "I tried to explain; this fucking Limey wouldn't listen. I think he was a major." So, it sounds like he shot an Allied officer; I'm no expert on the military, but my best guess is that murdering a major constitutes a tiny breach of protocol. Grant gently tries to coax the man's gun away, but the pistol goes off in a moment of fury and a bullet smacks the top left portion of Grant's skull. Determined to sign his own death warrant, the culprit hops into the dead major's Jeep and hightails it away into the night. "Sarge!" screams one of Grant's men. "He's hit!" Look, this is it, okay? I've had it. I can't take any more of these guys getting mortally wounded or killed. So the next time it happens, I'm going to switch the channel and start recapping whatever's on TNN.

Speirs, barely concealing his fear, learns from the battalion doctor that Grant probably won't live much longer unless a brain surgeon operates on his head. As opposed to the brain surgeons who perform vasectomies. Grabbing Talbert, Speirs orders him to root out the bastard who felled Grant. "I want him alive," Speirs growls dangerously.

Briskly, Talbert gathers the men. He relays Speirs's orders that an NCO should guard each roadblock, with two men watching all roads leading out of town. Bull and Malarkey will each cull together a squad and comb camp for witnesses, performing house-to-house searches if neces-

sary.

Speirs impatiently raps on a neighborhood door. "Open up," he demands. The startled older man balks when Speirs forces the door open and brandishes a weapon. "Come with me," he orders. The man stalls. "Get in the Jeep," Speirs insists, grabbing him and dragging him closer to the car. "If you're going to shoot me, shoot me," pleads the man. "If you're not, put the gun away." Speirs shoves him into the street again, at which point the man notices Grant's body lying in the back of the car. "He was shot in the head," Roe explains. It seems Speirs has scared up the only brain surgeon in town, which is mighty resourceful of him. Unless he found a phone book, or a copy of the script that said, "Bang on the door on stage three." It's all very convenient that Hitler kept a brain specialist in Berchtesgaden. Having spotted blood gushing freely from a head wound, the doctor deduces that Grant is the injured man and peeks at the injury. "If you want him to live, you'll help me," urges the man. "First, by putting the gun away." Reluctantly, Speirs lowers his weapon. The doc then demands to be the driver, and Speirs lets him. Speirs's worry about Grant is adorable – if the doctor wanted nothing but to put cream cheese on Speirs's nipple, I think Speirs would make it happen.

Talbert and Luz play poker in a lobby area, trying to ignore the sounds of bloody murder emanating from a room behind them. That settles it – they must be in Vegas. Luz groans as Talbert wins the hand. "I don't know who's taking a bigger beating, me or him," Luz grouches good-naturedly, gesturing to the Smackdown arena. We hear groans and grunts and vicious punches, and the crackle of fresh whoop-ass cans being popped open and dumped into someone's unfortunate lap. Talbert stiffens, visibly unhappy. He's one notch above the other NCOs, so I assume he's holding back because of rank. "You all right?" Luz asks. "You want to join in?" Talbert grumps that he should be in there stopping the brutality. The antithesis of "Stop the Brutality" enters just then – Speirs, in full authoritative mode and itching to sting the skin of another man. He's hungry. "Where is he?" Speirs asks. He repeats it twice more with mounting fury, uninterested in Talbert's attempts to deflect him with questions about Grant's welfare. "WHERE IS HE?" screams Speirs, rage seeping from every pore and forming a big puddle of wrath at his feet. Talbert nods toward the door.

Speirs shoves through the throng of soldiers and faces off against Grant's shooter; the wrecked man is strapped to a chair. His mouth is clogged with pasty blood and his eyes are barely open. He gasps for breath, but can't find any. Bull informs us that the culprit is an Item Company replacement. "Where's your weapon?" Speirs seethes through pursed lips. The broken kid defiantly stares up and Speirs sasses, "What weapon?" Like lightning, Speirs's gun-toting arm shoots out and rockets across the man's face. A huge chunk of blood, tissue, and teeth flies out of the kid's mouth; some of the soldiers recoil a tad. Suddenly, everyone seems grossed out, especially Perconte. Beatings just aren't as funny when they're administered by a man with a reputation of evil. No, no, who am I kidding – beatings are always funny. Those guys are just wusses. The image of fury, Speirs points his pistol right at the replacement's head and steels himself for the impact of the shot. Speirs's gun cocks. I totally chose those words on purpose. The palpable tension thickens as men like Malarkey close their eyes and back away from the sitting corpse. But Speirs never fires his weapon, staring down the chump instead before growling, "Have the MPs take care of this piece of shit." As Speirs angrily flounces out, someone asks whether Grant is dead. "Nope," Speirs answers. "Kraut surgeon says he's gonna make it." Luz smiles, relieved. Liebgott escorts the quivering mass of pulp outside.

The next day, Speirs grills More about Hitler's personal photo albums. "So you looked at 'em but didn't take 'em?" Speirs asks, annoyed. More insists he didn't take the books. Speirs doesn't believe him, but Talbert interrupts the confrontation, and Speirs has to let it slide. "I'll be watching you," Speirs spits at More. "You'd better not be lying to me." More turns and exits with a smug smirk on his face. Clearly, he lied through his teeth. Clearly, on the inside, More is running around in a circle waving the snapshots and whooping and wiggling his ass in Speirs's face. I'm not sure why the albums are an issue for Speirs – he's probably just pissed that someone else snagged them first.

Peeved, Speirs turns his attention to Talbert. "Sir, if it's not going to put you in too much of a bind, I'd like to resign as Company 1st Sergeant," he blurts, relieved just to get out the words. "If I had my choice...I miss being back amongst the men." Speirs gruffly acknowledges this. "I guess you've earned the right to demote yourself," he says. The expression on Speirs's face is classic. He's baffled out of his gourd, and suddenly wants nothing more than to crawl back into

the gourd-womb and curl up with a cup of coffee and some relaxing Dostoevsky. But first, he sends Talbert to replace Sgt. Grant, reporting to Lt. Peacock. Delighted, Talbert salutes his boss. "Let me know if he gives you any trouble," Speirs mutters. God, this actor is good – it's so obvious he respects Talbert's action enormously despite not fully agreeing with it, and he even manages to imbue his words with traces of affection even as his character tries desperately to maintain the façade of disaffected remove. Speirs, it seems, is as attached to Easy as Winters was. He is Easy. Ooh, I wish that was true. Talbert starts to leave, then pauses to ask whether Speirs has made his decision. "Yeah, I did," Speirs sighs.

"Anything else on your mind?" Winters asks. He and Speirs casually stroll through the encampment. Speirs broaches the subject of Easy. "I know Easy Company's going to need a CO post-war – somebody to hold their hands, keep them from killing each other," he says, a tinge of humor in his words. "It had better be somebody who knows what they're doing." Winters nods, interested. Amused, even. Speirs adds that it's thoroughly irresponsible to leave Easy in the wrong hands, because the company is a valuable military resource. "I couldn't agree more," Winters grins. He hops inside a Jeep and swivels to face his well-chosen replacement as Easy CO. "So you've decided to stay in the Army?" he asks, obviously delighted but containing the depth of his emotion. Speirs nods. He will stay with Easy. Winters praises the decision and leaves, a grinning and gleeful Speirs standing in the Jeep's wake. Go Speirs! Rock on with your Easy self.

"So, some of us would stay by choice," Winters narrates. "But others were stuck here unless we could find excuses to send them away." The recipient of one such action is Malarkey. We see him walking apace with Major Winters, listening raptly to the description of his new gig working as a technical advisor to an exhibition of equipment and material used by the airborne divisions. Winters drives home the point that it's up to Malarkey to make sure "they" get it right. "Sorry it's not a more hospitable location," Winters teases. Malarkey chuckles. "No, sir, Paris is just fine," he nods. "If you need me to go..." Winters insists that they absolutely do need Malarkey to go. It's a sweet scene. Winters obviously did whatever he could to give his men interesting assignments that got them out of active service. "I don't think we'll see you back here any time soon," Winters says, smiling. Malarkey promises not to let him down, then salutes his superior officer. Ignoring the gesture, Winters holds out his hand to shake his friend's. Clearly touched, Malarkey slowly meets the gesture, and I start to slobber all over the television.

Once Malarkey departs, Donnie is next. He's so very pleasant-looking, what with his thin and sensible hair, his mild manner, and his relaxed grin. I'd say Clan Wahlberg defied just about everyone's expectations. I mean, who figured either one of the kids would win serious acting roles, much less critical acclaim? Sure, "Cover Girl" was a killer tune, but I think his role in this series might surpass it on Donnie's résumé. Unless they recorded an acoustic version. Winters starts out with a rueful gaze, informing Donnie that soldiers who receive battlefield commissions – vaulting them from NCO ranks and erasing the "N" – aren't usually allowed to remain in the same company because of the perception that other non-coms wouldn't show him the proper degree of respect. "It's a good theory," Donnie says politely. He knew this was coming, but still looks like Winters smacked him in the gut with Hitler's photo albums. "It's an idiotic theory, especially in your case," Winters grins. He announces that Donnie has been promoted to battalion HQ, which is darling of him because it keeps Donnie more or less with Easy Company. "I can think of few better [assignments], sir," glows Donnie. He wants to smooch Winters, he's so grateful. Get in line, Donnie – it winds around the nation and ends somewhere in Idaho. Mischievously, Winters orders Donnie to join him at the airfield because a certain German general is a trifle pissed at having to surrender to Pvt. Babe Heffron of South Philly. "He thinks it's beneath his stature," smirks Winters. Donnie loves it. "I thought 2nd Lt. [Donnie] from West Virginia could soothe his ruffled feathers," Winters adds. Donnie wonders whether this is the sort of gig he can come to expect as part of battalion administration. "Yeah," Winters admits. "When we're not sunning ourselves by the lake." Aw. Donnie's so glowy. If Winters isn't careful, he'll have a string of boyfriends that's longer than the equator.

A gaggle of Easy men arrive at the airfield to watch the German officer surrender. In clipped tones, the general begs Donnie for a minute to address his troops. "That would be fine, General," Donnie says respectfully. Meanwhile, Winters, perched like a stud in his Jeep, spots Ross marching across the field. They make brief eye contact, and Ross keeps walking with nary a gesture of respect. Winters barks, "We salute the rank, not the man." Sickened, Captain Ross turns and half-heartedly salutes Major Winters, a man who got at least four promotions in the course of

the series (to 1st Lt., to Captain, to battalion XO, and to Major) compared to Ross's one. If Ross had pepper spray, I swear he'd use it to melt his own eyes if it meant never having to salute Dick Winters again. Liebgott and Nixon watch this with barely hidden satisfaction. Nixon shakes his head in disbelief. Winters just wears a sunny expression, because he won.

As the German general begins his speech, Liebgott translates at Winters's bidding. I'll copy the whole thing: "Men, it's been a long war, it's been a tough war. You have fought bravely, proudly, for your country. You are a special group. We have found in one another a bond that only exists in combat, among brothers of shared foxholes, [who] held each other in dire moments, who've seen death and suffered together. I am proud to have served with each and every one of you. May you serve long and happy lives of peace." His words, syllabic anvils all, penetrate the men, who seem awed by the man's class, regal stature, and meaningful speech. Donnie's head turns almost instinctively toward his Easy comrades, as though he senses that the oration applies just as aptly to their shared experience. The enemy soldiers seem vulnerable, cut and scraped and bleeding just as the Allies were. Winters stares into space, moved and pensive and totally psyched that the war is ending and he can return to America, the land of opportunity, and the freedom to unite graham crackers and cake frosting.

And we're back in *Lake Homoerotica II: The Awakening of Richard Winters*. Our hero drips with sun-kissed water droplets. Nixon waits for him, perched on the edge of the pier and lovingly ogling a photograph of their youthful selves. In it, they're wearing physical-training gear and crouching on the ground. It's the type of photo that says, "Uh, well, he just dropped his, uh, pencil, and we both bent down to get it, and then our heads bumped together, sir, and uh, that's all we were doing. Our fingers weren't touching on purpose." Nixon can't believe how innocent they seem. "What the hell happened to them?" he wonders. Winters stands waist-deep in water and gazes affectionately at his boyfriend. "New Jersey, huh?" he asks. Nixon nods and reiterates his wish that Winters consider the job. "Yeah, I am," Winters says. "You awake yet?" Nixon snickers. "Awake? It's time to go to bed!" he giggles, standing. Then, in a fit of impulsiveness matched in predictability only by the outcome of a Tic-Tac-Toe game, Nixon leaps crazily off the pier and into the water, never taking off his clothes. That wacky man. He bathes himself in the soothing waters of man-love, home at last after a year of cold denial and bad oatmeal.

Then, we're treated to a slow-motion softball game, lovingly filmed to show off the cast. Buck Compton throws off the catcher's mask and backs up to catch a pop-up, looking as strapping and sensational as ever. "Buck Compton came back to see the Company to let us know he was all right," Winters tells us. Compton became a prosecuting attorney in Los Angeles, famously convicting Sirhan Sirhan of the murder of Robert Kennedy. He later served on the California Court of Appeals. Webster became a writer for *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Saturday Evening Post*. And, incongruously, Winters chirps that Webster later wrote a book about sharks. Maybe that's deeply symbolic of his career in journalism. Apparently, though, Webster went out to sea alone in 1961 and never returned. That's incredibly sad; it makes me vaguely uneasy to know he wrote about sharks and then died on the cruel waters he probably studied. Gulp. Replacement Garcia swings – uh, he put on a bit of weight in Austria, I think. He doesn't merit a mention here, sadly. Johnny Martin makes a catch, at which point we learn he returned to his job on the railroad, then started his own construction company and splits his residency between Arizona and Montana. Martin throws to Luz; Winters shares that George lived out his days as a handyman in Providence, Rhode Island. "As a testament to his character, 1600 people attended his funeral in 1998." Okay, that, coupled with the gorgeous shot of the actor, totally had my lip trembling. I'm not sure 1600 people even know that I'm alive.

Eugene Roe is up next, literally – he's batting. After a life as a construction contractor, Roe died in Louisiana in 1998. Perconte returned to Chicago and "worked a postal route as a mailman," as though he could somehow work the postal route as a bagel chef, or a male prostitute. Perconte slides toward the base, but Liebgott merrily calls him out. I love Liebgott. I'm so, so glad he survived my recaps – narrowly, but still successfully. He did indeed return to his cab company in San Francisco. Fortunately, he didn't embark upon a career as a baseball umpire, because Perconte was totally safe and everyone knows it. "Bull Randleman was one of the best soldiers I ever had," Winters chirps as the big man hulks up to the plate and swings a bat into position. His typical cigar stub dangles from his lips. "He went into the earth-moving business in Arkansas. He's still there." Yay! Anyone up for a road trip? Bull swings and we pretend he hit the ball. There's something incredibly moving about the modest post-war lives of men who performed

with such extraordinary heroism during battle. Winters shares that Alton More returned home to Wyoming with a wicked souvenir – Hitler’s personal photo albums. Heh. I knew it. But he died in a 1958 car accident. “Talbert – we all lost touch with in civilian life,” Winters notes with regret. “Until he showed up at a reunion before his death in 1981.” He expositis that everyone chose a unique path for himself – like Donnie, who lived in North Carolina and became a glassmaking executive in charge of global factories. That’s pretty cool, actually. Donnie applauds the game while wearing a tank top, which does fabulous things for his shoulders. I didn’t know he was so...broad. “Harry Welsh!” Winters exclaims as we see the man beside Donnie. “He married Kitty Grogan and became an administrator for the Wilkes-Barre, Penn., school system.” Ronald Speirs, we learn, stayed in the Army through Korea, then retired to Germany in 1958 to serve as governor of Spandau Prison. He was a lieutenant colonel. Buck smiles. I don’t know why, but he’s there, and he’s grinning, and it warms my cynical heart.

Winters and Nixon stroll toward the gang. “Easy Company!” barks Speirs. “School circle!” The gang jogs toward Winters. “President Truman received unconditional surrender from the Japanese,” he relays. “The war’s over.” It was D-Day-plus-434 for Easy Company when World War II finally ended, and the men’s expressions show varying degrees of surprise at the sudden finality of it all. “Regardless of points, medals, or wounds, each man in the 101st Airborne would be going home,” Winters narrates. “Each of us would be forever connected by our shared experience, and each would have to rejoin the world as best he could.” Everyone cheers, delighted at the good news. Winters and Nixon watch the men sprint back to the barracks. “Lewis Nixon had tough times after the war,” Winters tells us. Apparently, he divorced several women before finding Mrs. Right – an angel named Grace, who married him in 1956 and gave Nixon the happy life he always craved and deserved. “My friend Lew died in 1995,” Winters says sadly. If anyone doubts the ineptitude of Webster-as-narrator, they should juxtapose episodes eight and ten. Damian Lewis infuses his words with so much more care, turning ordinary sentences into nuggets of light emotion, never overstated and never tossed off like boring voice-over work. During this last scene, you can feel how much Winters respects each and every man of which he speaks, especially Welsh and Nixon, and even Bull Randleman. Sorry to harp on Eion Bailey yet again, but I’m sort of stunned that the production crew let him get away with being so lackluster during his special episode.

Finally, we learn The Fate of Dick Winters. It seems he accepted Nixon’s job offer, serving as personnel manager at Nixon Nitration until the Army recruited him in 1950 to train officers and rangers. “I chose not to go to Korea,” he reveals. “I’d had enough of war.” Winters settled down in Hershey, PA, living on a tiny farm on peaceful land – which he swore he’d do back in “Day of Days.” Bless the man for being consistent. “Not a day goes by that I do not think of the men I served with, who never got to enjoy the world without war.” And with that, we have our final glimpse of Winters, Nixon, and their merry, unified band of brothers. Oh, don’t roll your eyes – you knew that was coming. But what about Grant? I want to know how he recovered from that pesky bullet that sliced into his brain. And Malarkey! Where’s he?

It’s our last Veteranapalooza – this time, with names. The first man is Dick Winters himself, who – for those of you who’ve seen other episodes and wonder what came from him – wears glasses. I think Winters is the only one who did have specs. “It’s a very unusual feeling,” he shares. “A very unusual happening and it’s a very unusual bonding.” He’s framed against trees blowing in the breeze, which is strange because every other interview took place indoors. It feels like they went back to him at a later date for further comment. Carwood Lipton – no longer Donnie – appears next. He’s cute and old. God, I don’t know how else to describe him! That won’t be very helpful. “We knew that we could depend on each other,” Lipton says. “And so we were a close-knit group.” Don Malarkey is next, oddly omitted from the “where are they now” segment – presumably because he’d been sent to Paris and wasn’t present for the baseball-game scene. “Just brave,” Malarkey begins. “So brave, it was unbelievable. And I don’t know anybody that I admire more than Bill Guarnere [Gonorrhoea] and Joe Toye, and...uh...they were very, very special.” He chokes up. Aw.

“I’m just one part of the big war,” a sweet old man says. “That’s all. One little part. And I’m proud to be a part of it.” The man is Guarnere himself, and the actor playing ol’ Gonorrhoea totally nailed the accent. They sound absolutely identical, and that’s either a credit to him or to casting; probably both. “Sometimes it makes me cry,” he whispers. The real Babe Heffron is up next. “The real men – the real heroes – are the fellas that are still buried over there and those that came

home to be buried," he says. I feel bad saying this, but that line sounded...well, pre-written. Maybe he was just nervous and stiff in front of the cameras, and that's why it came off like a recitation. Shifty, a mustachioed man in a plaid shirt, explains in lilting tones, "Seems like you figured that you thought you could do just about anything," he says awkwardly. "And after the war was over...why, you lost a lot of that, or at least I did. I lost all that confidence." And we sort of saw it start to happen in his earlier scene with Winters. Good synergy there between the documentary portion and the show's script. Johnny Martin shows up next. "We was hoping to stay alive, that's all," he sputters, wiping his face to keep from crying. Lipton returns for a nice, long quote. "Henry the Fifth was talking to his men," he begins. "He said, 'From this day to the ending of the world, we in it shall be remembered. We lucky few, we band of brothers, for he who today sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.'" That was a great choice, but come on – do we really think Lipton carried that quote around with him throughout his life, memorizing it and spitting it out during these interviews? It would be nice, but I don't buy it. Too convenient. Reeks of Stephen Ambrose. But I should point out that I never read the last chapters, so it's entirely possible Ambrose waxes rhapsodic about how Lipton quoted Shakespeare and it inspired the book's title.

Apropos of everything, Winters gets the last line. He recalls a letter that Mike Ranney wrote to him; Ranney recalled his grandson asking, "Grandpa, were you a hero in the war?" Ranney said, "No, but I served in a company of heroes." This final anecdote awakens Winters's sadness, and we fade to black on the image of his emotion-filled face.

Actor Appearances

A

William Armstrong 1
0106 (General McAuliffe)
Martin Arno 1
0108 (Junior German)

B

Eion Bailey 2
0104 (David Kenyon Webster); 0108 (David Kenyon Webster)
Jamie Bamber 2
0101 (Jack E. Foley); 0108 (Jack E. Foley)
David Blair 1
0102 (Co-Pilot)
Freerk Bos 1
0104 (Dutch Farmer)
Jonie Broom 1
0102 (Hans Schmidt)

C

Steve Chaplin 1
0102 (Pilot)
Doug Cockle 1
0103 (Fr. Maloney)
Alexis Conran 1
0102 (George Lavenson)
David Crow 1
0101 (Corporal)

D

Marcos D'Cruze 1
0101 (Joseph P. Domingus)
Jason Done 1
0110 (Drunk GI)
Christoph Dostal 1
0108 (Senior German)
Matthew Duquenoy 1
0102 (Co Pilot - Plane 66)

F

Jimmy Fallon 1
0105 (2nd Lt. George Rice)
Freddie Joe Farnsworth 1
0103 (Trooper on white horse)
Michael Fassbender 1
0101 (Sgt. Burton "Pat" Christenson)
Simon Fenton 1
0102 (Gerald J. Lorraine)
Jordan Frieda 1
0101 (Replacement)

G

Dirk Galuba 1
0110 (German MP)
Tom George 1
0101 (Pvt. White)
Ezra Godden 2
0102 (Robert Van Klinken); 0103 (Robert Van Klinken)
Stephen Graham 1
0102 (Myron Mike Ranney)
Luke Griffin 1
0101 (Sgt Terence "Salty" Harris)

H

Colin Hanks 1
0108 (2nd Lt. Hank Jones)
Tom Hardy 1
0110 (John A. Janovec)
Josefine Hendriks 1
0104 (Young Dutch Girl)
Paul Herzberg 1
0110 (German Doctor at Checkpoint)
Matt Hickey 1
0110 (Patrick S. O'Keefe)
Billy Hill 1
0104 (Dutch Farmer's Son)
Andrew Howard 1
0102 (Clarence Hester)
Nigel Hoyle 1
0103 (Leo D. Boyle)
Dan van Husen 1
0110 (Alleged Commandant)

J

Adam James 2
0102 (Cleveland O. Petty); 0103 (Cleveland O. Petty)
Lucie Jeanne 1
0106 (Renée Lemaire)
Corey Johnson 1
0110 (Major Louis Kent)

K

Wolf Kahler 1
0110 (German General)
Diana Kent 1
0103 (Mrs. Lamb)

L

Nicholas Lopez 1
0102 (US Guard)
Richard Lynson 1
0103 (Officer in Hospital)

M

Laird MacIntosh..... 1
 0106 (Jeep Driver)
 Christian Malcolm..... 2
 0109 (Military Policeman); 0110 (MP at Lansberg)
 Rocky Marshall..... 1
 0101 (Earl J. McClung)
 Joseph May..... 1
 0101 (Edward J. Shames)
 Hugo Metsers..... 1
 0104 (John Van Kooijk)
 Benjamin Montague..... 1
 0102 (Pvt Matt McDowell)
 Paul Murphy..... 1
 0103 (Young GI)

O

Kieran O'Brien..... 1
 0108 (Allen E. Vest)
 Jason O'Mara..... 2
 0101 (Lt. Thomas Meehan); 0102 (Lt. Thomas Meehan)
 Jonjo O'Neill..... 2
 0104 (Replacement # 1); 0110 (Replacement #1)

P

Simon Pegg..... 1
 0101 (William S. Evans)
 Ben Peyton..... 1
 0102 (Warrant Officer Hill)
 Andrew Lee Potts..... 1
 0108 (Eugene E. Jackson)

R

Philip Rham..... 1
 0110 (German Colonel)
 Colin Ridgewell..... 1
 0108 (German Soldier shot)
 Luke Roberts..... 1
 0105 (Suerth)
 Iain Robertson..... 2
 0102 (George Smith); 0103 (George Smith)
 Chris Robson..... 1
 0102 (Surrendering German)
 Scott Rognlein..... 1
 0103 (Trooper - F Company)
 Bart Ruspoli..... 1
 0103 (Edward J. Tipper)

S

Alex Sabga..... 3
 0101 (Francis J. Mellet); 0104 (Francis J. Mellet);
 0107 (Francis J. Mellett)
 Simon Schatzberger..... 1
 0101 (Joseph A. Lesniewski)
 David Schwimmer..... 3
 0101 (Lt. Herbert Sobel); 0104 (Capt. Herbert M. Sobel);
 0110 (Capt. Herbert M. Sobel)
 Andrew Scott..... 1
 0102 (John D. Hall)
 Peter Stark..... 1
 0104 (German inside Barn)

T

William Tapley..... 1
 0104 (British Tank Commander)
 Jeff Tweedy..... 1
 0102 (German Soldier)
 Milo Twomey..... 1
 0110 (Army Doctor)
 Brian Ethan Tyler..... 1
 0108 (Curtis Jackson)

V

Joe Villa..... 1
 0110 (Replacement #2)

W

Mark Wakeling..... 1
 0102 (Pilot - Plane 66)
 Stephen Walters..... 1
 0103 (John McGrath)
 Marc Warren..... 2
 0102 (Albert Blithe); 0103 (Pvt. Albert Blithe)
 Rupert Wickham..... 1
 0110 (Brain Surgeon)
 Paul Williams..... 1
 0102 (Pvt Jack Olsen)
 Jack Wouterse..... 1
 0104 (Dutch Farmer in Farm)

Y

Jonathan Young..... 1
 0102 (Lt. John W. Kelley)