

BEACHHEAD: A War Epic...

by  
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FINAL DRAFT  
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FADE IN

EXT. AT SEA - FLASHBACK IN B&W

Ocean water passes swiftly.  
Air raid sirens scream in the distance.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEA LONG SHOT - FLASHBACK B&W - CONTINUOUS

Several LANDING CRAFT, full with soldiers, crash through the rough seas.

CUT TO:

INT. LANDING CRAFT - FLASHBACK B&W - CONTINUOUS

It's NOISY, AND SHAKY. A DOZEN+ SOLDIERS stand huddled in SHALLOW FOCUS. Air raid sirens grow louder...

AN EXPLOSION near the boat! It rocks and sways.

At the front of the boat, LIEUTENANT turns to look at the other soldiers.

The landing craft scrapes up onto the beach and the docking doors open. Troops unload onto the beach.

LIEUTENANT  
TAKE THE BEACH!!!

SOLDIERS  
ARRGGHHH!!!

Tracer fire smacks the boat! Some soldiers are hit where they stand, others run past, and we never see the carnage that they face... but we hear it.

CROSS FADE TO:

CLOSE UP ON LIEUTENANT

As he stares blankly at the floor.  
A door slams, Lieutenant looks up. The GENERAL has arrived.

LIEUTENANT  
Atten-tion!

Soldiers look up from their tasks: A RADIO OPERATOR at his station; A TYPIST at a typewriter; TWO SOLDIERS by a blackboard. General is all business.

GENERAL

As you were, gentlemen, there's work to be done. Lieutenant, give me an update.

Lieutenant breaks into the briefing, pointing to a large aerial photo on a map table. WE FOLLOW HIS DESCRIPTION.

LIEUTENANT

Sir, the beachhead is secure. Ammunition, troops and artillery are arriving in steady supply.

Lieutenant points to a small Hamlet.

LIEUTENANT

This hamlet will be swept of snipers and boobytraps. It will become the rally point for further operations.

Lieutenant points to the Train Station/Headquarters.

LIEUTENANT

We have a wide perimeter around the train station that is expanding as more troops arrive.

Lieutenant points to a BRIDGE and continues.

LIEUTENANT

This train bridge poses a threat. Enemy reinforcements are right up this line. We need to capture -

General interrupts.

GENERAL

Destroy it.

LIEUTENANT

Sir, I advise against it; it was clearly stated by command that -

The General is adamant.

GENERAL

Lieutenant, in the field I give the orders. Send a recon team.

(MORE)

GENERAL (cont'd)  
 Your best. Make sure they  
 understand the critical nature of  
 this objective. I want that bridge  
 destroyed.

Lieutenant doesn't hesitate.

LIEUTENANT  
 I know just the team, sir.

CUT TO:

EXT. BURNED OUT HAMLET

The buildings are decimated, debris and rubble. Four soldiers  
 advance through a tight avenue. SERGEANT leads, then PRIVATE,  
 CORPORAL, and lastly, RADIO. This is the RECON team the  
 Lieutenant was talking about...

Sergeant drops to a knee behind some debris. The others  
 follow closely.

SERGEANT  
 Sniper heaven. Lots of vantage  
 points. I'll go first.

PRIVATE  
 No way, Sarge. You always Go first.

Private takes a step and suddenly a shot rings out!  
 Private is hit!

SERGEANT  
 Private? Private?!

PRIVATE  
 (through teeth)  
 Just a surface wound. He's in the  
 bell tower.

CUT TO:

INSERT - SCAN BELL TOWER

CUT TO:

SERGEANT  
 Well spotted, Private. Sit tight.  
 (over shoulder)  
 Radio! Get up here! We're going to  
 need some firepower, ASAP.

Sergeant gets on the radio.

SERGEANT  
(into phone)  
Second unit, bring in the heavy,  
concentrate fire on the bell tower.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP ON TANK TRACKS

A tank rolls powerfully through the avenue. A PLATOON OF SOLDIERS follows behind. Recon watches them pass. The tank reaches the rubble pile, aims at the tower, and without hesitation the canon BLASTS!

WE FOLLOW THE SHELL TO THE TOWER, get a peak of the SNIPER just as the tower explodes!

The tank rolls over the rubble pile into the open space. The Platoon follows and breaks off into different directions.

Recon join Private, who is fine.

CORPORAL  
You need a medic, Private?

PRIVATE  
Naw, just some R&R, Corporal.

SERGEANT  
Private! Recklessly disobeying an order will get you one of two places: killed, or in the brig. Either way, I'll be glad to see you gone from this platoon.

Sergeant walks away, muttering.

PRIVATE  
Jeez, what's up with Sarge?

CORPORAL  
Sarge's platoon was first to hit the beach, Private. They were tasked with taking the bridge that got us all here.

CROSS FADE TO:

EXT. BRIDGE - FLASHBACK B&W

A PLATOON OF SOLDIERS link up to attack the bridge. Sergeant leads the charge.

SERGEANT  
Take the bridge!!!

Troops holler, a tank rumbles past and the battle erupts. Tracer fire fills the air!!

CORPORAL  
(voice over)  
Airborne were supposed to attack the enemy's flank, but they were late for the party.

The tank is hit by a rocket and explodes in a fireball.

CORPORAL  
(voice over)  
Sarge lost a lot of soldiers on that bridge. You don't forget that; not ever.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Soldiers mill about. A flag ripples over HQ.

CUT TO:

INT. HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

General stands at the black board with ANOTHER SOLDIER.

Sergeant enters just as General did, with a SLAM of the door. The soldiers look over. Lieutenant looks up. But not General.

SERGEANT  
You got something for me,  
Lieutenant?

Lieutenant wastes no time and begins the briefing. Again he uses the aerial photo. And again, WE FOLLOW HIS DESCRIPTION.

LIEUTENANT

Sergeant, your mission is to head north to the river and observe the village for enemy activity. Radio in your observations, then follow the river east to the train tracks.

Lieutenant pauses.

LIEUTENANT

You a lucky man, Sergeant?

SERGEANT

No, sir. But mother always said I should try new things.

LIEUTENANT

When you reach the bridge, eliminate enemy positions, cross the bridge into enemy territory-

Lieutenant hangs on his words.

LIEUTENANT

- then blow up the bridge.

SERGEANT

Blow up the bridge, Lieutenant?

LIEUTENANT

With extreme prejudice.

Sergeant looks over to the General.

SERGEANT

What should we do then? Have a picnic?

LIEUTENANT

Then await further instruction. The success of this mission is imperative to the entire operation. Failure is not an option.

SERGEANT

Sounds like a peach. When can we leave?

Sergeant stares intensely.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEADQUARTERS - DAY

An ENTIRE BRIGADE arrives in the background.

Recon wait outside HQ. Other Soldiers mill about in the distance.

PRIVATE

Looks like a parade down there.

RADIO

Welcome to the beachhead fresh fish. They better be thankful for the easy landing.

CORPORAL

The breakout isn't going to be easy. I don't envy those soldiers one bit.

RADIO

The breakout will be a walk in the country, compared to what I saw on that beach.

CUT TO:

EXT. MORTAR PIT - FLASHBACK B&W

The MORTAR TEAM awaits orders. Radio is with them.

RADIO

(voice over)

I was radio operator in a mortar platoon during the invasion; support fire for the first wave.

CUT TO:

THROUGH BINOCULARS - THE BATTLE ON THE BRIDGE - FLASHBACK B&W

Rages on.

RADIO

(voice over)

Sarge's attack on the bridge? I saw the whole thing. It was fierce.

CUT TO:

EXT. MORTAR PIT - FLASHBACK B&W

CUT TO:

THROUGH BINOCULARS - TANK RACES TOWARD BATTLE - FLASHBACK B&W

Radio's radio squawks orders about a tank.

RADIO'S RADIO

(muffled)

Enemy tank bearing six nine nine,  
observe and immobilize.

RADIO

(into radio)

Roger that, target acquired.

The Mortar Team adjusts and fires.

The tank continues along until suddenly - BAM! a mortar round  
explodes and flips it!!

CUT TO:

EXT. HEADQUARTERS - PRESENT

Sergeant arrives.

SERGEANT

We've got our orders, gentleman.  
Let's move out.

PRIVATE

Where they sending us now, Sarge?

RADIO

Yeah, where they sending us?  
Something light and easy, Sarge?

They turn and begin walking.

SERGEANT

North to the river.

PRIVATE

The river, yeah? That's swell of  
the General to give us some R&R in  
the countryside.

SERGEANT

Don't get your hopes up, Private.  
The general isn't thinking of our  
well being.

CORPORAL

So what is the General thinking?

SERGEANT

The short version is, recon the  
village across the river, then west  
to the train bridge. Cross the  
train bridge-

(beat)

-then blow the bridge behind us.

PRIVATE

What?

SERGEANT

You heard me, Private.

PRIVATE

Blow the bridge.

SERGEANT

That's right.

CORPORAL

Sounds like a peach.

SERGEANT

That's what I said.

CORPORAL

And after we blow the bridge?

SERGEANT

Await further instructions.  
Eventually, they will mobilize to  
take the village. And so will we.

BAZOOKA approaches.

BAZOOKA

Sergeant! Hey, Sergeant!

Sergeant stops, turns.

SERGEANT

What is it, soldier?

BAZOOKA

Bazooka soldier reporting for duty,  
sir!

SERGEANT

Not in this outfit, Bazooka.  
Where's your platoon?

BAZOOKA

They got pretty diced up on the  
beach. Let me come with you. I'm a  
crack shot, sir!

SERGEANT

This outfit is not the dregs of the  
army, soldier. This is Recon, the  
first company to leave, the last to  
return. You think you can handle  
that?

BAZOOKA

Yes sir! I know I can, sir. I'm  
airborne!

Sergeant turns to walk away.

SERGEANT

Airborne? That's your problem,  
soldier.

BAZOOKA

Hunh? Hey, wait up!

They walk off screen.

In the BACKGROUND, an artillery unit fires and reloads.

CUT TO:

**A GRASSY PLAIN - LATER**

**Recon are silhouetted as they walk across a grassy plain.**

**BAZOOKA**

**(distant)**

**I'm just saying, I'm no rookie,  
Sarge. I'm Second company Airborne.**  
We dropped in behind enemy lines  
when the first troops were still in  
their landing craft. Well, we were  
supposed to.

CROSS FADE TO:

EXT. BEACH - FLASHBACK B&W

A CARGO PLANE flies past, ejecting paratroopers as it does.

The paratroopers fall to the ground

BAZOOKA

(voice over)

We missed our drop zone on account  
of the wind - landed right on top  
of a sniper.

The paratroopers land and group up.  
A sniper peaks out and fires at them.

BAZOOKA

(voice over)

He was a crack shot, but like I've  
been telling ya, so am I. I fired a  
rocket and blew up the entire  
building around him. Must have been  
a munitions depot. I ain't  
bragging, Sarge, but -

CUT TO:

C/U CORPORAL

as he looks through binoculars.

CORPORAL

Save your stories for your  
grandchildren, Bazooka. Try using  
your eyes for once, instead of your  
big mouth.

CUT TO:

A VILLAGE THROUGH BINOCULARS - EVENING

In the distance, across the river is a village.

CORPORAL

There's the village. Radio, report  
in to headquarters.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEADOW - CONTINUOUS

Recon squat by the river side, with the village in the background. Radio chats into his radio. Corporal uses binoculars.

RADIO  
(into radio)  
Recon team, situation report.  
Village in sight, structures  
intact, no sign of enemy activity,  
no sign of civilian activity.

Radio continues calling it in.

CORPORAL  
Looks abandoned.

PRIVATE  
Maybe they got the message and  
scrammed.

SERGEANT  
Unlikely. They need to hold this  
village.

BAZOOKA  
But they ain't gonna, are they,  
Sarge?

SERGEANT  
Let's move on. Radio, wrap it up.

RADIO  
(into radio)  
Condition grey. Recon moving to  
next objective. Over and out.

Recon move away from the river, towards the forest.

PRIVATE  
So we're going to be stuck on the  
wrong side of things until  
Headquarters is ready to attack the  
village?

BAZOOKA  
Yeah, Sarge. What kind of a mission  
is this, anyway?

RADIO  
Sounds like a suicide mission.

SERGEANT

So turn around and face the General  
if you're not interested.  
Otherwise, I don't want to hear  
about it.

CUT TO:

EXT. IN THICKETS - CONTINUOUS

PRIVATE

I can't wait until this lousy war  
is over.

CORPORAL

This war might never end.

BAZOOKA

It will for me, in three months.  
I'm gonna go home and forget all  
about this mess.

CORPORAL

Soldiers never forget. Now zip it,  
and stay on your -

SOUND: TRAIN IN DISTANCE

Sergeant stops.

SERGEANT

Listen!

Recon pauses.

SOUND: TRAIN IN DISTANCE

SERGEANT

Train coming. Get to the bridge!

CUT TO:

NEAR BRIDGE

The bridge sits high above the river. Recon run towards it.  
Bazooka trips.

The others reach the bridge and begin to cross.

SERGEANT  
Get to the other side, I'll set the  
explosives.

Recon runs past Sarge who stops to set the charge - numerous  
tubes of TNT.

Shots ring out from A BUNKER on the other side of the bridge -  
just where Recon need to get.

CORPORAL  
We're pinned down!

PRIVATE  
Where's bazooka?!

SERGEANT  
Destroy that bunker!

Sergeant continues to rig the TNT as Recon return fire.

Corporal, Radio and Private hold their ground, returning  
fire!

In the distance, plumes of smoke puff up into the air!

CORPORAL  
Sarge, the train!

SERGEANT  
HOLD YOUR GROUND!!

Bazooka appears behind Sergeant.

BAZOOKA  
I'll take care of that bunker,  
Sarge!

Bazooka fires right over Sergeant's head! The rockets sails  
inside the bunker, exploding it with a deafening bang and  
abundance of shrapnel!!

BAZOOKA  
Yeeeeeoww!! What did I tell you,  
Sarge? I'm a crack shot!

SERGEANT  
Bazooka, quit bragging and get to  
the other side!

Sergeant fumbles with the TNT.

The SOUND OF THE TRAIN crescendos as it nears.

LIEUTENANT  
Sarge! Train!!

The train is now clearly visible, and so are its assets:  
dozens of soldiers, artillery and ammunition.

With a crashing explosion, a rocket slams into the train and  
drives it off of the tracks. It careens loudly in a fireball  
over the side of the ravine, into the river.

Sarge watches the calamity from the bridge.

SERGEANT  
Whoa!

He turns to Bazooka.

SERGEANT  
Well done, soldier.  
(to Corporal)  
Corporal! Private! Recon that  
bunker for hardware and set up a  
defensive position. Radio, call it  
in. The BRIDGEHEAD begins here.

FADE OUT.