THE PACIFIC

EPISODE FIVE "Peleliu Landing"

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CAST LIST

SPEAKING

EUGENE SLEDGE JOHN BASILONE ROBERT LECKIE SID PHILLIPS

MERRIELL "SNAFU" SHELTON
CORPORAL R.V. BURGIN
CHUCKLER
HOOSIER
RUNNER
CAPTAIN "ACK ACK" HALDANE
BILL LEYDEN
JAY DE L'EAU
VIRGINIA GREY
SERGEANT MARMET
CHESTY PULLER
ROBERT OSWALT
1ST LIEUTENANT "HILLBILLY" JONES
GUNNY SERGEANT HANEY

CRAZY VETERAN (PAVUVU)
AMTRAC DRIVER
LIEUTENANT
BLONDE MARINE
PREP CHEF
YOUNG PRIVATE
ANOTHER VETERAN (PAVUVU)
CORPSMAN

NON-SPEAKING

SECOND LIEUTENANT CHAPLAIN SOUS CHEF VET (DISTILLING) VETERAN MARINE (AMTRAC)

SET LIST

EXTERIORS

PAVUVU

USS GENERAL HOWZE

BEACH

PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT

TENT

 $3^{\text{RD}} \ BATTALION$

 2^{ND} BATTALION

LECKIE'S TENT

MESS TENT

MOVIE THEATER

SMALL CAMPFIRE

RIFLE RANGE

PHILLIPS' TENT

PELELIU

OFF PELELIU BEACH

SLEDGE'S AMTRAC

LECKIE'S AMTRAC

BEACH

TANK TRAP

SCRUBLAND BY AIRFIELD

SHELL CRATER

LECKIE'S 2ND SHELL CRATER

SCRUBLAND BY EDGE OF AIRFIELD

AIRFIELD

BY POWER STATION

INTERIORS

HOTEL

SERVICE HALLWAY

ELEVATOR

HOTEL ROOM

<u>PAVUVU</u>

PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT

TENT

LECKIE'S TENT

PHILLIPS' TENT

PELELIU

TROOPSHIP (LST)

SHIP'S HOLD

AMTRACS

FADE IN:

501 INT. HOTEL - SERVICE HALLWAY - NIGHT

FOUR CHEFS (in whites) are playing dice on the linoleum of a service hall in a hotel basement. Their hats are on the floor — one of them filled with dollar bills. These cooks range in age from 45 (HEAD CHEF) to 18 (PREP CHEF). Their dice chatter and reverberate down the long, hard hall. And then they hear footsteps — two sets, approaching. And voices.

MAN (O.S.)

Now, this is glamorous.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Believe me, it's easier this way.

The kitchen workers scramble to cover up their gambling -- pocket the dice, put on their hats, try to look nonchalant.

The man and woman come around the corner. The man we recognize -- it's JOHN BASILONE in his Green Service Uniform. With him is film actress VIRGINIA GREY, late 20s, beautiful.

Basilone and Virginia walk on by. Basilone grins at the men, eyes the SOUS CHEF.

BASILONE

Nice hat. But it's leaking money.

And now we see that a couple of dollar bills are poking out from under the guy's hat. Basilone points at the youngest of the bunch, the Prep Chef.

BASILONE (cont'd)

Check the dice, Chef. Make sure they got all the numbers.

Basilone and Virginia keep walking.

The Prep Chef and Sous Chef share a look.

PREP CHEF

You see who that was?

502 INT. HOTEL - SERVICE HALLWAY/ELEVATOR - NIGHT

502

Basilone and Virginia get to the elevator. Basilone opens the doors and Virginia walks in. Footsteps come up fast behind them.

502

PREP CHEF

Hey! 'Scuse me!

Virginia is used to this, looks back, starts to smile.

PREP CHEF (cont'd)

You're John Basilone!

Virginia is not used to that, but she's got a sense of humor.

VIRGINIA

Who's John Basilone?

Basilone steps onto the elevator.

PREP CHEF

I don't believe this!

(because...)

I gonna be in the Marine Corps.

BASILONE

A fine branch of our Armed Forces.

PREP CHEF

I report next Tuesday.

BASILONE

Boot Camp's a breeze. You get to sleep in on Mondays...

PREP CHEF

What else?

The elevator doors start closing.

BASILONE

Uh... keep your head down and keep moving...

PREP CHEF

Head down, keep moving...

As the doors close...

BASILONE

And listen to your NCO's!

The Prep Chef yells through the closed doors.

502 CONTINUED: (2)

502

PREP CHEF

Thanks!

(then)

What's an NCO?!

502A INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

502A

John Basilone fucks Virginia Gray -- with no small amount of passion. Which is okay with her...

VIRGINIA

Oh... John... God...

503 INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

503

Basilone, dressed in a pair of boxers, takes a swig from a glass as he looks out the window.

VIRGINIA (O.C.)

You handle it well.

BASILONE

Handle what?

VIRGINIA

Membership in the Famous Peoples Club.

He turns and looks at her. She lies in the bed, naked.

VIRGINIA (cont'd)

Just don't be surprised if it's not quite what you expect.

BASILONE

Go on stage. Say "back the attack" a couple hundred times. Get my picture took. Not much to it.

Virginia gets a cigarette. Basilone sits, lights it.

VIRGINIA

I've been in movies since I was ten.
My mother was a film cutter; Dad was a
director, so I just kind of fell into
it. I was no Shirley Temple, but I
worked. For a few years. Then my
mother put me in high school so I could
have a normal life.

(smiles)

Didn't work. Kids kissed up to me or picked fights. Because I was 'the girl who'd been in pictures.'

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503 CONTINUED:

503

BASILONE

And I can't name a one.

She flicks his nose, amused.

VIRGINIA

And you're bigger than a movie star. Johnny Basilone, the most famous soldier in America.

(then)

You have no idea what is coming at you...

Basilone looks at her.

VIRGINIA (cont'd)

The spotlight has burned a lot of guys I know. Better keep your head down. (then)

Enjoy it while it lasts, baby. You deserve it.

She stabs out her cigarette, pecks him on the lips, and hops off to the bathroom. Leaving Basilone to wonder just what it is he deserves...

FADE TO:

504 EXT. USS GENERAL HOWZE - DAY

504

CLOSE on EUGENE SLEDGE. A breeze ruffling his hair, standing in the bow of the *USS General Howze* with BILL LEYDEN (a street tough 19-year-old Irish kid from Brooklyn) and a few other MARINES taking in the view:

LEYDEN

Looks like Noumea.

505 EXT. PAVUVU - BEACH - DAY

505

Coconut trees wave in the breeze. Seems like paradise. A steel dock juts out waiting for them. Men unload a supply ship.

SUPER: Pavuvu, Russell Islands, July 1944

506 OMITTED 506

506A EXT. USS GENERAL HOWZE - DAY

506A

SLEDGE

No, it doesn't. Noumea had mountains, volcanoes. This is flat as Kansas.

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506A CONTINUED:

506A

LEYDEN

Looks more like Noumea than Kansas.

Sledge looks at Leyden, decides it's not worth it. They are joined by ROBERT OSWALT, 18, who, like Sledge, is educated and a bit too refined for the Corps. He has a knowing look on his face.

OSWALT

We're in the Fifth.

SLEDGE

Your guy tell you?

OSWALT

He was right about Pavuvu.

LEYDEN

When do we meet this guy?

OSWALT

That's not gonna happen. Took many weeks of careful cultivation. He might get skittish.

A PA blares out.

PA (V.O.)

NOW ALL HANDS LAY TO DEBARK STATIONS. MAKE ALL PREPARATIONS TO OFFLOAD PERSONNEL AND CARGO.

507 EXT. PAVUVU - PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT - DAY

507

A sign reads: 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines.

Heavily laden with their packs, Sledge, Oswalt, Leyden, and their fellow replacements walk through the encampment -- rows and rows of tents. <u>Some weathered, some newer</u>. GLOUCESTER VETERANS sit outside, painting Gentian Violet on the slow healing sores on their haggard bodies.

They are walking on the half-finished crushed coral road. REPLACEMENT MARINES carry helmets of crushed coral and dump them on the road.

Sledge smiles at the vets but nobody smiles back; it's as if they don't exist.

A breeze moves through the tents, bringing with it flapping tents and a terrible smell. The men cough and cover their noses.

507

507 CONTINUED:

OSWALT

That is one powerful stink. (he jumps)
Jesus!

A RAT scuttles over his feet.

Leyden stares at something. They follow his amazed gaze to see:

A VETERAN (GUNNY SERGEANT HANEY)

Fifty if a day. Stripped to the waist, his sinewy muscular frame covered with sweat, Haney moves like a mechanical killing machine. Thrust and parry. Thrust and parry. None of the veterans give him a second glance.

HANEY

There, fucker. Uh-huh. Yeah. Block. Step. And thrust. Uh-huh. Yeah. Swing. Block. Step. And thrust. Uh-huh.

They hear <u>velling</u> and turn to see a VETERAN arguing with a tree. He paces around it. Gestures at it. Then PUNCHES it.

CRAZY VETERAN

You Goddamn bastard, you! I hate you! I hate you! I FUCKING HATE YOU!

ANOTHER VETERAN - trying to map -- looks up, then calls out:

ANOTHER VETERAN

Atta boy! Give the son of bitch one for me.

Sledge, Oswalt and Leyden all exchange a look.

508 I/E. PAVUVU - PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT - TENT - DAY

508

Sledge, Oswalt and Leyden step inside. There are three men already in the tent, obviously veterans: CORPORAL R.V. BURGIN, MERRIELL "SNAFU" SHELTON, and JAY DE L'EAU.

These vets look better than the vets did in Four on Pavuvu, but they still have hollow eyes. Snafu's boots are cut into sandals, revealing his severely infected feet.

SLEDGE

This K Company? We're supposed to be in Sixty Mortars, second squad.

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508 CONTINUED:

508

The veterans just look at the new arrivals. Then they look at each other.

JAY

These guys are supposed to be in Sixty Mortars, second squad.

SNAFU

Okay. But who are they?

OSWALT

Robert Oswalt.

SLEDGE

Eugene Sledge.

Snafu just stares at them. A beat and Burgin offers his hand.

BURGIN

Burgin. This is second squad.

(to Leyden)

You mortars too?

LEYDEN

Rifleman. Third Platoon. Bill Leyden.

BURGIN

Then we'll ignore you. That's Snafu.

Snafu grunts.

BURGIN (cont'd)

That means hello. Find yourself a bunk.

Sledge looks around, sees one empty cot. Snafu tosses his helmet on it. He's not about to share with a new guy.

SNAFU

Taken.

Nobody knows what to do now. Until:

JAY

Oh, Jesus Christ... Follow me.

Sledge, Oswalt and Leyden follow Jay out.

509 EXT. PAVUVU - PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT - DAY

509

Jay leads Sledge, Oswalt and Leyden through the maze of tents.

JAY

(pointing to mess)

Chow...

(points to bathrooms)

Heads...

Points across to CAPTAIN HALDANE.

JAY (cont'd)

King Company Skipper. Captain Haldane.

Everyone calls him Ack Ack.

SLEDGE

What's your name?

JAY

De L'Eau.

(like he's done a million

times)

Capital D. Small E. Capital L.

Apostrophe. Capital E. Small A.

Small U. De L'Eau. Jay De L'Eau.

SLEDGE

Were you... uh, on Guadacanal?

JAY

Gloucester.

(then, for emphasis)

Capital G. Small L. Small O. Small

U...

Doesn't bother with the rest of it. He gestures at a tent.

JAY (cont'd)

Grab a rack.

Leyden and Oswalt go inside. Sledge hangs back.

SLEDGE

Where would I find How Company of the

First Marines?

JAY

Somewhere over there.

He gives a vague wave. Sledge nods his thanks and drops his gear.

510 EXT. PAVUVU - PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT - 3RD BATTALION - DAY 510

Sledge moves through the tents (some new, some old), looking for signage that isn't there. He looks inside an open tent, surprised to see a VET brewing something in a makeshift still.

SLEDGE

Looking for H Company.

The Vet just closes the flap on his tent.

It's as if he is too shy to ask directions. He moves on.

511 EXT. PAVUVU - PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT - 2ND BATTALION - DAY 511

ROBERT LECKIE walks through a sea of tents. He carries a battered old duffle bag, loaded with something angular and lumpy. Stops outside a nondescript battered tent.

512 INT. PAVUVU - PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT - LECKIE'S TENT - DAY 512

RUNNER and HOOSIER are knocking back some of their own moonshine. CHUCKLER is reading a comic book.

Runner pulls a BLANKET across their still as a figure approaches their door.

It's LECKIE. He enters and holds out his DUFFEL BAG.

LECKIE

Но Но Но.

They look up at Leckie. Damn glad to see him back. But not willing to show it yet. Runner grins at Hoosier.

RUNNER

We know this guy?

HOOSIER

A mug that ugly oughtta ring a bell.

CHUCKLER

Gloucester, maybe?

LECKIE

(grinning)

Fuck you all.

He drops the duffel on his cot. They all get up and greet their buddy. Thump him on the back. Runner pulls the BLANKET BACK to show the STILL and pours some MOONSHINE into a cup and hands it to Leckie.

RUNNER

Welcome back, Cobber.

Leckie smiles at the still; takes a slug and winces.

CHUCKLER

You have a good vacation?

LECKIE

Anything to get away from you bastards. (to Runner; re: drink)

Jesus, what's in this?

RUNNER

When it tastes this bad, it's hard to

(re: Leckie's Bag)

Whatcha got?

512

LECKIE

Depends. Tell Santa whether you've been naughty or nice.

CHUCKLER

It's June.

LECKIE

It's the South Pacific. Christmas comes in June.

(reaches into bag)

For Hoosier, 'cause he always says his prayers and makes his bed...

Leckie pulls out a pulp magazine -- "The Shadow" -- and tosses it to Hoosier. Hoosier eyes it, surprised, grateful.

HOOSIER

Well, shit, In-Sanity Claus, thank you.

LECKIE

(shoots Hoosier a look)
For Chuckler, heavier reading.

Leckie pulls out a battered "Superman" comic, tosses it to Chuckler. Leckie looks at Runner.

LECKIE (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Something for Runner's stocking.

Leckie tosses him a paperback: "The Postman Always Rings Twice."

RUNNER

Read it already.

(then)

Where'd you get all these?

Leckie pulls more books out of his bag.

LECKIE

Culled these from the latest batch of choirboys rotating home.

SID PHILLIPS walks into the tent.

PHILLIPS

Great. The drinking lamp is lit.

He tosses a book onto Leckie's "library."

PHILLIPS (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Thanks for the loan.

512 CONTINUED: (2)

512

513

As Phillips gets some booze from Runner, Leckie picks up the book Phillips tossed. He's pissed.

LECKIE

Who the fuck's been handing out my treasures?

PHILLIPS

Just wanted something to read.

LECKIE

Well that shit stops now.

(anger oozing out)

The librarian's back from the Happy Place, so next time, only I check out the books. Is that clear?

PHILLIPS

(bristling)

What the hell's your problem?

LECKIE

(points to his stuff) Nobody touches my shit.

RUNNER

Take it easy, Bob.

Leckie takes his hooch and walks out of the tent.

Runner and Chuckler exchange a look.

513 EXT. PAVUVU - PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT - LECKIE'S TENT - DAY

Phillips follows Leckie, cup in hand.

PHILLIPS

You were on Banika.

LECKIE

The fuck do you care?

Phillips tries to control himself.

PHILLIPS

Did you see Gibson?

LECKIE

Who?

513

PHILLIPS

Gibson. From my squad. They sent him to Banika.

Leckie hesitates. Decides not to tell him. And in so doing, eases off so that the tension between them dissipates.

LECKIE

Didn't see him.

Phillips looks at Leckie, knowing he's probably lying. But he doesn't probe further. He just nods.

SLEDGE (O.S.)

SID! You Ole Greaser!

PHILLIPS' POV

Sledge stands ten feet away. Grinning at Phillips.

PHILLIPS

Eugene. What the hell are you doing here?

Sledge comes up and goes to HUG his old buddy. Phillips lets him for a second, but quickly pushes him away. There's an awkward beat. They shake hands.

SLEDGE

I was hoping to see you. I told your sister before I left. "I bet I see Sid." What're the odds of that, right?

PHILLIPS

How is she?

SLEDGE

Great. Your parents too.

PHILLIPS

That's good.

An awkward pause. Sledge doesn't understand it.

SLEDGE

Sid. I made it. Can you believe it? The last time I saw you, you were shooting Roman candles at me.

Chuckler and Runner come out to see what the ruckus is.

513

513 CONTINUED: (2)

PHILLIPS

Yeah.

Sledge starts to pick up on Phillips' reserve.

SLEDGE

How long you been here?

PHILLIPS

Since Cape Gloucester.

LECKIE

Gotta love the new guys. All full of moxie and spunk. They have no idea. Grinder's gonna chew 'em up.

Hoosier has come out of the tent.

HOOSIER

Grinder gonna chew us up, too.

LECKIE

Exactly. But we know we're going to die and that makes all the difference.

Hoosier starts to sing to the tune of Funiculi, Funicula.

HOOSIER

"Ya-mo, ya mo Leckie's gonna die."
(everyone but Leckie
joins)

"Ya-mo, ya mo Leckie's gonna die."

The men gather around Leckie and sing even louder.

Phillips turns away from Sledge and joins in. Leckie snorts, then gives up and joins in, too. He sings loudest of all.

All the while, Sledge stands awkwardly, listening. Trying to fit in. Knowing he doesn't.

EVERYONE

He's gonna die, he's gonna die, he's gonna DIE/So what the hell's the use/You're gonna die!

514 OMITTED 514

515 EXT. PAVUVU - PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT - DAY

515

Sledge and Phillips work their way through the camp towards the mess tent, surrounded by the Marine life writ large.

PHILLIPS

You think this shitheap stinks now, you should seen it when we first got here. Wall-to-wall rats, crabs, and rotting coconuts. Thank God I'm rotating home.

SLEDGE

I can't believe it. I finally get here and you go home. When?

515

PHILLIPS

When the Marine Corps tells me. What's your unit?

SLEDGE

K-3-5. A mortarman, just like you.

PHILLIPS

Surprised they let you in with that bum ticker in your chest.

SLEDGE

There's nothing wrong with me, Sid. Otherwise I wouldn't be here.

And that is precisely the issue.

PHILLIPS

Why the hell you joined up, Eugene, I can't see.

(then)

It was a stupid ass thing to do.

Phillips wants to say more. He almost does, trying to verbalize the indescribable.

Just then, it begins to rain again. As they run for the cover of a tent awning, DOZENS of NAKED MARINES sprint out of their tents and furiously soap up. Among them is...

GUNNY SERGEANT HANEY

Haney uses a coarse-bristle GI brush to vigorously scrub his genitals like he was polishing shoes. He quotes (from memory) from the Marine Landing Party Manual:

HANEY

Marines in field conditions will make every effort to keep themselves clean, free of disease and/or infection...The health of the Corps is only as strong as the health of the individual Marine...

The rain stops as suddenly as it started, leaving several Marines lathered in soap high and dry. They curse.

But not Haney. He continues to scrub his genitals. He looks up at the sky and implores his God.

515 CONTINUED: (2)

515

HANEY (cont'd)

Don't quit, you Fucker! Not til I've rinsed. You hear me!? GET THAT RAIN BACK HERE!

516 EXT. PAVUVU - PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT - MESS TENT - DAY

516

Phillips has joined Sledge, Leyden, and Oswalt -- the only veteran to sit with the new arrivals. They have bowls of oatmeal in front of them. Sledge, Leyden and Oswalt have barely touched theirs -- they are busy looking at letters and packages from home. A WWI-era .45 COLT REVOLVER lies in front of Sledge. Phillips eats his oatmeal, and, as a matter of course, theirs, too.

PHILLIPS

They get hot chow to you when they can. Sometimes it might only be crud like this, but when you've been on the line and taking fire...

(he pauses)

Well, hot chow is a miracle.

Phillips grabs a half-eaten bowl and keeps eating. Sledge pulls something out of his package -- a can of Gerber baby food.

SLEDGE

Oh, for Heaven sakes...

LEYDEN

Baby food?!

Leyden grabs the package and five more cans roll out. Oswalt starts laughing.

PHILLIPS

You laugh. Might be worth it's weight in gold some day. Get hungry enough, somebody might wanna trade for it.

(picks up revolver)

Do not trade this. Ever. .45 will stop a Jap better than a clip of your carbine. Hit one in the hand and it'll take his whole arm with it. You write a nice thank you note to your father for this.

Snafu appears with SERGEANT MARMET.

SGT. MARMET

Work detail. You three new guys go with Snafu.

Snafu is pissed off.

SNAFU

You heard the Sergeant! Now!

Phillips grins. Sledge and the others gather up their stuff and start out. Phillips shovels oatmeal from their bowls into his, then waves goodbye. They walk out and he keeps eating.

517 EXT. PAVUVU - PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT - DAY

517

Snafu supervises as Sledge, Leyden, and Oswalt are cleaning 55-gallon oil-drums with a couple of half-functioning pressure hoses. They scrub, dump, hose out, scrub some more. The work is hard and seemingly pointless. Nobody puts much effort into it.

SNAFU

You assholes are going to miss cleaning out oil-drums pretty soon. You're gonna be humping up some fucking hill or across a beach, Japs pouring shit-for-fire, pissing your pants, crying boo-hoo and wishing you were back here with nothing asked of you but to scrub oil out of drums.

Sledge, Leyden, and Oswalt wipe sweat from their eyes and look at each other. They have had enough of Snafu.

LEYDEN

How about you grab a brush and give us a hand?

SNAFU

Fuck that. I scrub drums for no man.

SLEDGE

Can we take a break?

SNAFU

Do whatever you want. This ain't my detail.

(off their looks)

I was supposed to dump you all here, then get back to the CP.

OSWALT

Why are you still here?

SNAFU

I like to watch the new guys sweat.

517

At that news, the guys all toss the tools and plop in the shade. Snafu laughs.

CUT TO:

INGRID BERGMAN

On a screen. PULL BACK to reveal...

518 EXT. PAVUVU - PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT - MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 518

Just a theater of rough, uncomfortable coconut logs facing a wood-framed makeshift screen on which "For Whom the Bell Tolls" plays.

Sledge, Phillips, Hoosier, and Chuckler are on a bench. Snafu, Leyden, Burgin and others from K Company sit a few rows up.

Leckie sits at the end of Sledge's log.

ON THE SCREEN

A luminous Ingrid Bergman looks into the pain-filled eyes of Gary Cooper. She glows in living color.

THE MEN

The effect of the movie is odd -- some simply enjoy watching a story, some are almost angry being reminded of a life so far away. Others -- most -- are simply fixated on the otherworldly beauty of Bergman.

CHUCKLER

(to himself)

Dear Christ in Heaven, will you look at her.

CLOSE ON SLEDGE

Watching the movie. He is sitting next to Phillips.

ON THE SCREEN

Bergman confesses to Cooper about being raped.

ON THE MEN

Phillips stares up. Quiet. Almost mournful:

PHILLIPS (O.S.)

Come on, you bastard.

518

Sledge reacts, looks at Phillips.

PHILLIPS (cont'd)
Get those clothes off her <u>now</u>.
Give it to her.

Sledge starts to laugh, but then realizes Phillips is serious. He looks at him, staring up. The old friend he knew is gone forever. He hears Hoosier call out.

HOOSIER

WHAT'RE YOU WAITING FOR! FUCK HER!

Other Marines laugh; yell similar crudities. Sledge is shocked. He catches

LECKIE

Eyeing him with a sardonic knowing look from the end of the log.

LECKIE

We're all big fans of Ingrid Bergman.

Sledge gets up and walks out.

519 OMITTED 519

520 EXT. PAVUVU - PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT - SMALL CAMPFIRE - NIGHT 520

With the movie theater fifty yards in the b.g., Sledge approaches a campfire.

Sitting by it are Captain Haldane, 1ST LIEUTENANT EDWARD "HILLBILLY" JONES and a few other men, including Oswalt. Hillbilly plays a guitar as they sing "Red River Valley," the men harmonizing quite well.

Sledge stands just outside the firelight, listening, feeling homesick but not wanting to intrude. He walks on.

521 EXT. PAVUVU - PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

521

Sledge walks through the sea of tents under the stars. Footsteps hurry up behind him and hands grab him. It's Oswalt.

OSWALT

The movie ain't over.

SLEDGE

I've seen it. I know how it ends.

521

OSWALT

The Brass can really sing.

SLEDGE

Sounded nice.

OSWALT

I just mouthed along. Didn't want to subject them to my caterwaul.

(then)

Didn't get any information out of them.

SLEDGE

You don't have "a guy" here yet.

OSWALT

I will soon enough. I did find out about that Asiatic piece of leather with the bayonet. Sergeant Haney?

(imitates Haney thrusting

and parrying)

Fought in World War One. Won a Silver Star on Gloucester.

(looks up)

Look at that.

Sledge looks up at...

THE STARS

Brilliant against the black velvet of the night sky, framed by the gently swaying fronds of the coconut palms.

SLEDGE

All new stars. Never been south of the Equator. Don't know the constellations.

OSWALT

I see those stars and think...

(then)

What in the world am I doing here...

He offers Sledge a cigarette.

SLEDGE

Thanks. No.

OSWALT

These guys are an odd breed. I try to find out how it was. On Guadalcanal and Cape Gloucester.

(MORE)

521

521 CONTINUED: (2)

OSWALT (cont'd)

They ignore me or change the subject. Or look at me like they wanna gimme one across the chops.

(beat)

Must be good to see your pal.

SLEDGE

He's rotating out.

OSWALT

No kidding? He's going home?

SLEDGE

Yep. Back to Mobile.

OSWALT

Sorry you're losing your buddy.

Sledge doesn't say he thinks he lost Sid a while ago. He just nods, looks up at the stars.

522 EXT. PAVUVU - BEACH - DAY

522

ECU LAND CRABS

In the sand, feeding and mating.

SLEDGE

Is standing, watching them. As always, observing the natural world leaves him feeling at ease.

PHILLIPS (O.C.)

Are those the most butt-ugly creatures you ever saw in your life?

Sledge turns to find Phillips standing there, smoking a cigarette. He offers Sledge a cigarette.

Sledge shakes his head.

Without even thinking about it, Phillips leans down and uses his lighter to start burning the crab. It scurries away.

PHILLIPS (cont'd)

You enjoy the movie last night?

Sledge watches as Phillips turns, and using his lighter, burns another crab. It runs away.

Sledge is stunned by his friend's casual cruelty. He squats and grabs Phillips' arm.

SLEDGE

What are you doing, Sid.

Phillips pulls his arm back. He stands.

PHILLIPS

You start dumping them out of your boots in the morning you won't feel so tender-hearted.

Phillips picks up some coral pieces and bits of shells and chucks them into the ocean, one by one. Sledge does the same. He eyes the emblem on Phillips' collar.

Trying to make conversation, but feeling the gulf between them. Both men know that some things have to be said. Neither wants to go there.

SLEDGE

Lost mine on the *Polk*. Or somebody took it. Maybe one of the swabbies wanted a souvenir.

Phillips fingers his good luck Globe and Anchor. And thinks for beat.

PHILLIPS

Some guys think they're good luck. I don't know...

(undoes his)

You can have this one. I got a couple.

At last, a bridge over the gulf. Sledge takes the emblem.

SLEDGE

Thank you.

(beat)

Sid?

(then)

What's it like?

Sid knows exactly what he means. But how to answer?

Sledge waits. Phillips thinks, puzzling it out, and then a thought comes to him. He is serious as can be.

PHILLIPS

I slept with a woman in Melbourne.

Sledge is surprised.

522 CONTINUED: (2)

522

PHILLIPS (cont'd)

I'm not bragging. Everyone was doing it. It was... Well, imagine...

(holds up one hand)

...that's at one end, right? And way down there...

(the other hand)

...as far as you can go the other way, that's what the rest of it's like.

(a long moment)

And that... you could never imagine.

Phillips looks at Sledge. He knows there's no further point in trying to explain the unexplainable.

SLEDGE

Okay.

Phillips tosses another shell.

PHILLIPS

You'll be alright.

There is nothing left to say.

522A EXT. PAVUVU - PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT - RIFLE RANGE - DAY

522A

Sledge lies there, blasting away at the target with his rifle, trying to vent his complicated feelings there.

HANEY

Cease Fire! Cease Fire on the Firing Line!

Everyone stops. One new SECOND LIEUTENANT carelessly turns around from his position, his pistol still in his hand. Haney is on him like a snake. He scoops up a handful of sand and throws it in face and snatches his gun away.

HANEY (cont'd)

You goddamn stupid shavetail bastard! You keep that fuckin' muzzle pointed downrange or I will shove that fucking piece up your sorry fucking ass!

Everyone freezes to see an officer chewed out. Red-faced, the Lieutenant looks over at Haldane to back him up but Haldane gives him a stone-faced stare.

HALDANE

Don't look at me, Lieutenant. The Gunny's right.

522A

The embarrassed Lieutenant quietly holsters his firearm.

HANEY

Next relay! Stand by on the firing line!

523-523A OMITTED

523-523A

- 524 EXT. PAVUVU PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT PHILLIPS' TENT DAY 524 Sledge stops outside Phillips' tent and sticks his head in.
- 525 INT. PAVUVU PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT PHILLIPS' TENT DAY 525 Empty. Bare cots. A few rats rummage about.
- 526 EXT. PAVUVU PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT LECKIE'S TENT DAY 526

 Sledge walks up. Hoosier is sunning himself outside, clad only in a towel barely covering his crotch. He looks up.

SLEDGE

You seen Phillips?

HOOSIER

I believe the angels just shipped out.

Sledge is stunned. Hoosier softens a bit.

HOOSIER (cont'd)

Nobody gets much notice 'round here. (then)

You might catch him at the dock.

Sledge takes off in a panic. Hoosier watches him go.

527 EXT. PAVUVU - BEACH - DAY

527

Sledge sprints past the motor pool and out of the trees. He runs up to the steel dock that juts out from the beach. An LST is tied up to his left. A SHERMAN TANK clanks down out of the opening onto the dock. He looks out at

A TROOP TRANSPORT

A mile out to sea, its wake curving back to us.

SLEDGE

Looks after the ship. HOLD on Sledge for a long beat -- forlorn and utterly alone amid twenty thousand Marines.

24.

528 OMITTED

528

CUT TO:

"BARRACKS BALLADS" BY RUDYARD KIPLING

LECKIE (V.O.) (PRE-LAP)

Something takes your fancy, lemme know. Most of these jokers can't read.

529 INT. PAVUVU - PLANTATION ENCAMPMENT - LECKIE'S TENT - NIGHT 529

Magic hour. By the light of a lantern, made from gasolinesoaked sand in a tin can with a tent cord as a wick, Leckie brews a pot of coffee. Runner lies on a cot, drunk and unconscious.

Sledge is visiting Leckie's Library, Kipling in hand.

He opens the front cover and sees the inscription he wrote for Sid Phillips, two-and-a-half years before.

LECKIE

When finished, please return it to the Pacific Library of Congress.

SLEDGE

(making conversation)

We get to sit under a coconut tree and read. The guys in the other war get to sit around in cafes, sipping champagne.

LECKIE

There's another war?

SLEDGE

We invaded Europe. They landed last month in France.

LECKIE

Unless you've got a brother over there, most guys don't give a shit.

SLEDGE

My brother landed in Italy. Tank battalion.

LECKIE

Then you get to give a shit.

Leckie hands him a cup of coffee. Offers some Jungle Juice.

529

SLEDGE

Just coffee, thanks.

Leckie shrugs like Sledge is an insane person he has to deal with.

Sledge takes a sip of coffee. Picks up a Bible from the library and thumbs through it.

LECKIE

Oh. That explains it.

Sledge just shoots him a look -- what explains what? Leckie nods at the Bible.

LECKIE (cont'd)

You're a believer.

SLEDGE

Yes...

LECKIE

Why?

Sledge has never been so directly challenged before on his faith.

SLEDGE

I find wisdom. Meaning. Comfort.

LECKIE

Larry, Moe and Curly.

(then)

Okay. Question: God created everything, right? The Heavens. The seven seas. The Marine Corps.

(Runner)

Sleeping beauty there.

SLEDGE

He did.

LECKIE

Land crabs. Rats. Mosquitoes.

SLEDGE

(trying for a joke)
Mosquitoes are a little tough to
understand but...

529 CONTINUED: (2)

529

LECKIE

That means He made Japs, too. The yellow slants who tried to kill me on many occasions. Japs come out of the Garden of Eden, too?

SLEDGE

What we do is up to us. He gives us a choice.

LECKIE

Free Will. Right. 'Cept He's God, of course, so He knows what we're gonna do before we do it. "Predestination!" So the whole game is fixed by the Will of Gramps on His throne while we're down here for what? His entertainment? That makes God a chump, or a sadist, and either way I got no use for Him.

SLEDGE

Then don't believe.

LECKIE

Thank you! Tell you what, though. Since I'm not on speaking terms with Him, next time you're having a chat with the old geezer, could you ask Him to maybe sink a few Jap transports and have 'em all fall on their bayonets so I can get the fuck out of here and go home?

(mocking Sledge's accent)
Sure would appreciate it.

The two of them look at each other. Leckie nods at the Bible.

LECKIE (cont'd)

Go ahead and keep it. Don't know why I have it in the first place.

SLEDGE

No thanks.

He takes out a small pocket edition of the New Testament.

SLEDGE (cont'd)

I have my own.

Sledge and Leckie lock eyes. Sledge may be a boot, but for the first time, we - and Leckie - can see the quiet steel in him. Sledge takes the Kipling and leaves.

529 CONTINUED: (3)

529

Leckie takes another hit of Jungle Juice. Glances down at the Bible. Picks it up like he's going to chuck it out of his tent. Hesitates. Puts it back into the box.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON SLEDGE

Asleep in his bunk. A HAND reaches in and shakes him. Sledge is immediately awake. As Sledge gets out of his bunk, we PULL BACK to reveal we are...

530 INT. TROOPSHIP (LST) - SHIP'S HOLD - DAY

530

Sledge and his company are crammed into a tight space aboard ship with all their combat gear.

Captain Haldane stands in the center of the cabin. There is the sound of a Naval bombardment, growing in intensity.

HALDANE

Follow the man in front of you and get off the beach. Get to the tree line and clear your weapons of sand. You Mortarmen have four HE rounds set to fire. You Marines ready?

MARINES

Aye, Aye!

The new guys yelled that the loudest.

HALDANE

Good luck and God bless.

Haldane walks out. Sledge and Oswalt share a look. The sounds of the bombardment grow louder still. Sledge and Oswalt quickly go over each other's gear for the hundredth time -- pulling straps, yanking on packs. Set. They nod.

Then Sledge checks his carbine. His ammo bag. Hesitates a moment, then pulls out...

THE GLOBE AND ANCHOR EMBLEM

The one Sid gave him. He pins it on his shirt collar.

LEYDEN

How's my pack?

Leyden turns his back to Sledge. Sledge gives Leyden's pack a yank, checks it out.

SLEDGE

Good.

Leyden turns back to face Sledge.

LEYDEN

Let's get it done, Eugene.

Sledge nods.

531-532 OMITTED 531-532

533 INT. TROOPSHIP (LST) - SHIP'S HOLD - DAY

533

28.

Sledge, laden down with his pack, carbine and ammo bag, follows his squad and others into a massive cargo space to see...

A LINE OF AMTRACS

Idling, their tailpipes spewing plumes of acrid diesel fumes. The engines are so loud the bombardment can no longer be heard.

SLEDGE

Stands behind Snafu, Burgin, Oswalt, and Jay with his bazooka, as they waddle toward an Amtrac with the number thirteen painted on the side. Sqt. Marmet is with them.

The sound is deafening.

Haldane shakes each man's hand as he boards the Amtrac.

Sledge shakes Haldane's hand, moves on, follows Snafu into...

534 INT. TROOPSHIP (LST) - SHIP'S HOLD - AMTRACS - DAY 534

The men are crowded together. All struggling to keep calm. Snafu offers Sledge a cigarette. They have to yell to be heard.

SLEDGE

I DON'T SMOKE.

SNAFU

(sardonic look)

YEAH?

The sound of the bombardment surges, louder than the engines. Sledge feels the rumble in his gut.

Snafu, standing next to Sledge, suddenly vomits, spilling a cascade of brown and yellow onto the deck.

With a SCREECH, the LST's bow doors begin to open.

HILLBILLY

HERE WE GO, BOYS!

Their faces are illuminated by the strong light that washes over them. Reflexively, Sledge's mouth opens agape as he sees...

THE LST BOW DOORS - SLEDGE'S POV

Opening like the jaws of some enormous beast. And in through those doors comes the blinding, overexposed WHITE FLASH of daylight and the immense roar of artillery and planes and bombs. The white sky resolves itself into a view of hell. A cauldron of flame, smoke and white phosphorous obscures the beachhead.

THE FIRST AMTRACS

Clank out of the bow and into the water. Columns of smoke and ORANGE-RED flashes punctuate the view of the beach behind them.

SLEDGE

Is rocked as his Amtrac chugs forward. He is finally getting his wish. Eugene Sledge is going to war.

His face is a grimace of anxiety and excitement as the Amtrac clanks down through the open bow and into the water.

535 EXT. OFF PELELIU BEACH - SLEDGE'S AMTRAC - DAY

535

29.

CLOSE ON SLEDGE

Eyes wide open. The adrenaline is burning through him. Sweat pouring down his forehead. It is terrifying... and the most thrilling moment of his young life.

He stands and peers over the gunwale.

SLEDGE'S POV

His Amtrac wallows in the surf. He sees their goal -- a shoreline, shrouded in flames, smoke and dust.

SUPER: Peleliu, the Palau Islands. September 15, 1944.

CLOSE ON SLEDGE

The Amtrac idles. Sledge can't swallow. The sound of the bombardment grows so intense, we can no longer differentiate between individual salvos.

His nerves get the better of him. He has to grab the gunwale to keep his knees from buckling.

SLEDGE'S POV

The first wave of Amtracs heads in.

AMTRAC DRIVER (O.C.)

HOLD ON!

THE DRIVER

Guns their Amtrac for "Orange Beach," their landing target.

SLEDGE

can't take his eyes off of

THE FIRST WAVE OF AMTRACS - SLEDGE'S POV

Approaching Orange Beach. The ocean erupts with Japanese fire. Mortars. Machine guns. Artillery.

Behind it, the American Naval bombardment plasters the obscured airfield and ridges. A huge pawl of smoke hangs over the island.

AN AMTRAC - SLEDGE'S POV

Two hundred yards ahead of Sledge's takes a direct hit from a Japanese shell. Flames, pieces of metal, and bodies are catapulted into the air.

SLEDGE

Ducks down below the gunwales and begins to recite the Lord's Prayer, fast, over and over. He turns to see Burgin staring at him impassively from the rear of the Amtrac.

Snafu rocks back and forth. Back and forth. His eyes closed, his lips moving. Hillbilly looks grim.

It's a revelation to Sledge: the Vets are as frightened as he is.

Another VETERAN MARINE looks at Sledge and SMILES reassuringly. He has an Anchor and Globe pin on his lapel.

Sledge quickly rises up and casts a glance toward...

535 CONTINUED: (2)

535

THE BEACH - SLEDGE'S POV

Only fifty yards away. The shore is already littered with burning Amtracs. Shells shriek in. Tracers snap past. Dead bodies roll in the surf, which is punctuated with the spray of geysers. The gruesome panorama moves inexorably closer...

SLEDGE

Can't take his eyes off the unbelievable horror. But then some machine gun fire HITS his side of the Amtrac (the fire emanates from a BUNKER on the beach to his left). He ducks down as the bullets drum against the side of the Amtrac.

ECU OF SLEDGE

He grips his gear tightly. His eyes bright and brittle. His mouth dry. He is more frightened than he ever imagined.

There's the sound of metal grating against sand as the Amtrac grinds up onto the shore. It turns ninety degrees to the North and stops, its engine still running.

This is it. Sledge takes a ragged breath. Every instinct screams at him to stay where he is.

SLEDGE'S POV

The men jump over the side. Oswalt right in front of Sledge.

SLEDGE

Hefts his carbine and ammo bag and swings one leg over the side. Just as he's on the edge of the Amtrac, horribly exposed...

JAPANESE MACHINE GUN TRACER BULLETS

Whip past (from the same bunker that fired on them earlier, further up the beach to his left), millimeters from his face, in a whir of blue death.

SLEDGE

Snaps his head back, loses his balance, and falls...

536 EXT. PELELIU - BEACH - DAY

536

...onto the sand on the ocean side of the Amtrac. Sledge lies motionless for a moment, a heap on the beach. Stunned.

536

536 CONTINUED:

A HAND

Reaches for Sledge's shoulder.

CORPORAL BURGIN

Stands over him. Hauls Sledge up.

BURGIN

LET'S GO!

Sledge nods, his mind scrambled. Stumbling, he follows Burgin, Oswalt and Snafu toward the low scrub foliage beyond the beach.

SLEDGE'S POV

His world is a nightmare of flashes, violent explosions, and snapping bullets. Much of what he sees is a blur and then suddenly, an event will leap out with an odd detached fascination.

He looks at the bunker to his left (north) pouring machine gun fire out onto the next Amtrac.

Sledge catches sight of a DEAD AFRICAN AMERICAN dressed in Marine dungarees rolling in the surf. There are no visible wounds; he looks serene, asleep.

WIDER

And then the sight is gone as Snafu runs in a crouch beside him.

SNAFU

WE GOT NIGGERS HERE?

He looks back at the beach as the THIRD WAVE lands.

AN ARMORED LVT-4

Explodes from a direct hit. Twisted metal and body parts fly through the air. TWO MARINES manage to stumble out of the smoking wreckage, their clothes smouldering. They made it. Then a rain of machine gun fire cuts them in two.

SLEDGE

A desperate feeling of anger, frustration, and pity grips him.

SLEDGE

Jesus, God...

536

Sledge is distracted by a stream of RED TRACERS that rip past them inland. We follow the stream back, over the surf, out to find...

537 EXT. OFF PELELIU BEACH - LECKIE'S AMTRAC - DAY

537

LECKIE

Is firing a .30 caliber machine gun from the right hand gun on the front of his Amtrac. His face numb.

Bullets stream toward him from the Japanese Bunker. They hammer off the front of the Amtrac, then stitch up.

Leckie turns his head down and to the left. Just in time to see

THE SECOND GUNNER ON THE AMTRAC

Get hit by the Japanese bullets, which tear off his arm.

Blood sprays out and behind.

LECKIE

Hunkers down. His face numb.

He jerks forward as the Amtrac grinds up on the sand. As bullets drum into the outside walls of the armored LVT-4,

Leckie climbs out (on the south side of the Amtrac, which doesn't turn when it stops) and...

538 EXT. PELELIU - BEACH - DAY

538

...flops into the sand next to Hoosier. He carries a Thompson machine gun. Shielded from direct fire by the Amtrac, he looks around him. Stupefied by the cacophony of violence. All he can say is:

LECKIE

FUCK!

HOOSIER

WE GOTTA GET OFF THIS BEACH!

Leckie nods. But they don't move. They are frozen with fear.

HOOSIER (cont'd)

LECKIE! WE GOTTA MOVE! WE GOTTA GET UP IN THAT SCRUB!

LECKIE

I KNOW!

But he still doesn't move.

HOOSIER

NOW!

LECKIE

LEAVE ME ALONE!

And then the Amtrac clanks away, leaving them totally exposed. Machine gun fire rips over their head from the bunker.

HOOSIER

LET'S GO!

He gets up and grabs Leckie's collar. Leckie gets up and follows his friend up the beach.

They head inland, running in a crouch. The bunker looms in the b.g.

It suddenly EXPLODES as a high velocity shell slams into it.

539 EXT. PELELIU - BEACH - DAY

539

Sledge tears his eyes away from the slaughter and hurries to catch up with Burgin, Oswalt, Leyden and Marmet up ahead. Bullets crack just above his head. Tracer fire snaps past. More mortar fire explodes. Geysers of sand spray skyward. Shrapnel whines and moans past him.

Sledge stumbles at the edge of the beach and the blasted zone of coral and trees. He looks up as

THE SAME VETERAN MARINE we saw in the Amtrac stops. He and Sledge make eye contact for a beat, both grateful for a familiar face. The Marine takes reaches his hand out for Sledge to take so he can help pull him up when...

A JAPANESE SHELL

shrieks in. The explosion blows the Marine into a pink cloud of human debris.

SLEDGE

Covers his face from the blast. He is showered with sand, ash and human viscera.

539

He disgustedly wipes the blood and viscera off his face and chest. His hand feels something. He looks down at his goop-covered hand to see

THE VAPORIZED MARINE'S EGA PIN

Pinned to a smoldering shirt collar. It's all that's left of the man.

So much for luck.

SLEDGE

throws the EGA Pin away. Panicked, he crawls behind Oswalt and Leyden and flops into...

540 EXT. PELELIU - TANK TRAP - DAY

540

The trench zigzags roughly parallel to the beach. Four feet deep and four feet wide at the top, the trench provides a modicum of cover. Snafu and Burgin are already there with Hillbilly, huddled down out of the line of fire. Japanese ordnance rips over their heads.

SLEDGE'S POV

In the sand at the bottom of the trench by his feet is a DEAD SNAKE. Its brightly colored mouth gapes at Sledge with vacant eyes. Above the snake at the lip of the trench...

A WHITE POST

Is stuck in the sand, Japanese writing on it. Enemy territory.

SLEDGE

Takes out one of his two canteens and takes a long pull as he hunkers down.

BURGIN EASY ON THE WATER!

Hillbilly stands up, looks back, bullets cracking past his head. He ducks back down.

HILLBILLY

WHERE THE HELL IS LOVE COMPANY?

Another LIEUTENANT jumps into the trench next to Hillbilly.

LIEUTENANT

IS THIS 3/7?!

540

HILLBILLY

NO! 3/5!

LIEUTENANT WHERE THE HELL'S THE SEVENTH?!

HILLBILLY

YOU'RE ON ORANGE BEACH 3! 3/7'S SUPPOSED TO BE ON OUR RIGHT FLANK!

LIEUTENANT

GODDAMN COCKSUCKING SON OF A BITCH!

The Lieutenant climbs out of the trench, crouch-running off.

Snafu shakes out a cigarette with palsied hands. Sledge grabs it and sticks it in his own mouth. Snafu stares at him, grins, then lights it.

Sledge pulls in a deep draught of smoke. His hands shake.

Haldane slides over the edge and into the trench. A SHERMAN TANK clanks by in the b.g. (to the north) and is hit by artillery. The turret blows off. They all duck as hot shards of jagged steel whine in all directions.

HALDANE

FIND ME SOMEBODY WITH A RADIO!

A mortar whispers in and explodes near the tank trap. Sledge and the others hunker down, reluctant to move. Another mortar lands nearby.

HALDANE (cont'd)

THEY GOT US BRACKETED! WE GOTTA MOVE!

Haldane and Hillbilly climb out of the tank trap. Burgin and Snafu are next. Oswalt and Leyden follow. Sledge starts to move, then another mortar hits, closer, spraying him with dirt and coral chunks. Sledge hugs the wall of the tank trap.

SLEDGE

Please God, please God...

The ripping of incoming shells grows in intensity. The explosions almost continuous.

CLOSE ON SLEDGE

He closes his eyes to the horror, clenching his teeth.

540

HALDANE (O.C.)

SLEDGE!

Sledge opens his eyes to see

HALDANE

Crouching by the edge of the tank trap. He gestures inland.

HALDANE (cont'd)

MOVE INLAND! JOIN YOUR SQUAD!

Sledge nods. As Haldane runs on to exhort others, Sledge gets out of the tank trap as...

541 EXT. SCRUBLAND BY AIRFIELD - SHELL CRATER - DAY

541

...Leckie and Hoosier run toward a crater of a sixteen-inch naval shell, up in the scrub, east of White Beach.

Leckie jumps into the deep hole first, just as a mortar EXPLODES ten feet away in front of him--

--and whining shrapnel rips <u>over</u> Leckie -- close enough for him to feel the wind of it -- and thuds into Hoosier's upper thigh with a fine spray of blood as he flops down into the crater.

Hoosier screams.

Leckie stares in shock at Hoosier. Blood begins to soak his friend's dungarees. For a moment, Leckie can't say anything. Hoosier looks down, then up at Leckie, his eyes in shock.

HOUSTER

Shit...

LECKIE

CORPSMAN!

But no one hears him in the din of combat. He crawls over to Hoosier. Leckie is frightened.

LECKIE (cont'd)

CORPSMAN!

He fumbles with his pack, looking for his medical kit. He has to yell above the shriek of artillery and the constant chatter of small arms fire.

LECKIE (cont'd)

IT AIN'T SHIT, BILL...YOU'LL BE FINE...

With fumbling fingers he opens his medical kit.

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541

LECKIE (cont'd)

CORPSMAN!

Hoosier closes his eyes. He withdraws into himself. Leckie starts to panic. He fumbles as he puts the bandage over the bloody pulsing wound (it is NOT arterial). He still has to yell.

LECKIE (cont'd)

BILL!

Leckie can't staunch the blood as...

CHESTY PULLER

Runs by in a crouch, followed by TWO CAPTAINS. He bellows at some MEN behind him.

PULLER

GO! LET'S GO! WE'VE GOT AN AIRFIELD TO TAKE!

When Puller's gone, Hoosier smiles. Eyes still closed. Leckie tries to staunch the blood.

LECKIE

GODDAMNIT!

(calls out again)

CORPSMAN! DOC!

The SHELLING suddenly increases.

Hoosier sinks deeper into himself. His mind shutting down so he can deal with the violation of his body and the pain.

*

541 CONTINUED: (3)

541

A CORPSMAN arrives and slides down into the shell hole. He quickly replaces Leckie's hands with his own, expertly applying pressure and wrapping the bandage tight. Leckie watches.

Hoosier opens his eyes and says something to Leckie. But Leckie can't hear.

ECU LECKIE AND HOOSIER

Leckie leans down.

With a great effort, Hoosier says:

HOOSIER

Get out of here.

Hoosier starts to lose consciousness.

LECKIE

BILL!

But Hoosier is already glassy-eyed. The corpsman treats him as the shelling around Leckie increases.

Leckie watches. Helpless.

A CHAPLAIN runs up. The corpsman looks up at him.

CORPSMAN

HELP ME CARRY HIM BACK!

The chaplain slides in. They grab Hoosier and drag him out, back to the beach.

Leckie watches them. Then he's alone in the shell hole.

542 EXT. SCRUBLAND BY AIRFIELD - DAY

542

Sledge's squad moves slowly through the brush in the 110 degree heat.

Burgin, Oswalt, Snafu, Leyden. Haldane leads them with Hillbilly.

They come upon

HANEY

*

*

hunkered down with FOUR OTHER K Company men, including Jay De L'Eau, toting his bazooka.

As BULLETS shred the trees above them, Sledge watches

(CONTINUED)

542

*

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*

HALDANE AND HILLBILLY - SLEDGE'S POV

crouch-walk up to Haney. They are only ten feet away.

Haldane hiss-whispers back at Haney.

HALDANE

Gunny! Keep'm here. I wanna find Second Platoon! Hillbilly, with me!

Bring a runner!

Haldane slaps a private on the back to accompany him. Hillbilly and two other privates crouch-walk up and follow Haldane as he disappears into the brush.

CLOSE ON SLEDGE

as he hunkers down. He looks at Snafu, who is on edge. Burgin looks at him and nods. Keeping an eye on Sledge.

BURGIN

You okay, Sledge?

Sledge nods.

De L'eau looks ashen.

All their faces are cold and white. The sweat evaporated from their bodies, their dungarees sopping wet from sweat. All close to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

As they listen, nerves stretched to the breaking point...

...A YOUNG PRIVATE breaks through the brush behind them. The men turn, startled, their guns ready, and the boy blanches at how close he just came to getting killed by his own troops.

YOUNG PRIVATE

K Company?

HANEY

Part of it.

YOUNG PRIVATE Where's your commanding officer?

HANEY

(gesturing) We went that way.

(CONTINUED)

40.

542 CONTINUED: (2)

542

This throws the Private for a loop.

YOUNG PRIVATE

You're... You're supposed to... hook up with the rest of the battalion near the Southern edge of the airfield. In the brush line.

HANEY

Got it.

YOUNG PRIVATE

You guys got any water?

HANEY

(hissing; on edge)

No, we ain't got any fuckin' water!

Sledge and Oswalt exchange a look -- seeing Haney on edge is unnerving.

YOUNG PRIVATE

Southern edge of the airfield!

The Private takes off back the way he came.

Sledge reaches for his canteen. He shakes it. Empty.

HANEY

(a hair calmer)

Everybody. Take another salt pill.

Sledge and the others get out salt tablets.

HILLBILLY

Appears from the other side of the brush which is closer to the airfield where Haldane and the others went.

HILLBILLY

Gunny! Bring'em up here. Let's go.

They slowly start to follow Hillbilly through the brush.

543 OMITTED 543

544 EXT. SCRUBLAND BY EDGE OF AIRFIELD - DAY

544

Sledge's squad appears on a winding trail. They emerge out of the scrub. Hillbilly motions for them to halt. Burgin repeats it, then motions them back into the thin cover of the scrub. Everyone crouches down, peers forward. Sledge looks out through the scrub branches. He sees...

THE AIRFIELD - SLEDGE'S POV

Or as much of it as the smoke, flames, dust and shimmering heat will allow. His view to the right is obscured by some scrub that sticks out a bit. But to the left, he takes in the coral runways...with BLASTED PLANES on them and...

A TWO-STORY POWER STATION

A hundred yards to the north. Beyond the power station there are some bombed out buildings. Japanese barracks, perhaps. There is too much ejecta and smoke for him to see the ridges beyond the airfield.

Sledge suddenly notices...

STRANGE-LOOKING VEHICLES

Moving behind the bombed barracks, a hundred yards past the power station, amid swirling clouds of dust.

SLEDGE

Look how far those Amtracs got.

Snafu tries to focus on the movement through the haze.

SNAFU

Son of a bitch! Those're Jap tanks!

THREE JAPANESE TANKS - SLEDGE'S POV

Followed by THIRTY JAPANESE SOLDIERS, come out from behind the barracks. They are two hundred yards away from Sledge and his friends, coming straight toward them.

TWO JAPANESE TANKS - SLEDGE'S POV

Veer off and disappear behind the power station, twenty of the Japanese soldiers go with them.

THE THIRD TANK - SLEDGE'S POV

Continues straight for them. Ten Japanese soldiers are running behind it.

544

BACK TO SLEDGE AND THE OTHERS

Leyden and the other riflemen begin firing their rifles and carbines at the distant soldiers.

Hillbilly rushes up to Burgin.

HILLBILLY

Gimme some H.E. on those sons of bitches!

BURGIN

(to Snafu and Sledge)
You heard the Lieutenant, let's go!

SLEDGE, SNAFU, OSWALT

Quickly set up their 60mm mortar. Sledge starts to break out the ammo, while Snafu and Oswalt ready the tube and baseplate.

BURGIN (cont'd)

Right twenty. Two Fifty. Three rounds HE!

Snafu makes adjustments while Sledge tries to remove a high-explosive shell from its canister with his fingers shaking. Snafu tries to yell, but it comes out a hoarse whisper.

SNAFU

Right twenty. Two fifty! Three rounds HE!

Sledge fumbles with his range card as Snafu finishes aiming the tube with Oswalt's help.

SNAFU (cont'd)

HURRY UP!

SLEDGE

Two fifty. Charge two!

Sledge hurriedly discards the spare increments that he's pulled off the base of the round.

SNAFU

HALF TUBE!

SLEDGE

HANGING!

SNAFU

FIRE!

544

Sledge drops it into the tube. The mortar erupts with a satisfying WHUMP!

THE MORTAR SHELL - SLEDGE'S POV

Arcs out and lands fifty yards short of the Japanese tank. The dirt and coral spray out...

...but the lone TANK rumbles through the dirt. A hundred yards away and closing, rumbling directly toward us, six soldiers still jogging behind it. One is hit and goes down.

The tank moves past the power station...and rumbles closer. The SECOND ROUND whistles over the tank and explodes twenty yards behind it. Two of the Japanese Soldiers go down.

The THIRD MORTAR SHELL whistles closer to the tank. The mortar goes past and hits...

THE POWER STATION - SLEDGE'S POV

Behind the tank. Too far.

BACK TO SLEDGE AND THE MORTAR SQUAD

Hillbilly yells back at Burgin, Sledge, Snafu and Oswalt.

HILLBILLY

DROP TWO FIVE! THREE ROUNDS HE!

BURGIN

DROP TWO FIVE! THREE ROUNDS HE!

Snafu and Oswalt adjust the tube.

SNAFU

HALF LOAD!

SLEDGE

HANGING!

SNAFU

FIRE!

Sledge drops another round into the tube. It thunks out...

THE TANK - SLEDGE'S POV

The mortar lands behind it, killing the remaining Japanese.

BACK TO SLEDGE AND THE OTHER MARINES

544

Sledge drops the second round. As he then drops the third he looks out:

THE TANK - SLEDGE'S POV

The tank's machine gun rakes the scrub to the tank's right (Sledge's left). It is only SEVENTY YARDS AWAY. The SECOND ROUND lands behind it. Then the THIRD even further behind.

Then Sledge sees, hanging in netting from the side of the tank...

A JAPANESE SOLDIER

Who starts firing directly at us.

BURGIN

Raises his carbine and fires at the soldier in the netting. The soldier collapses; his rifle drops. But then...

THE TANK - SLEDGE'S POV

Alerted to their presence, swings its ugly snout towards Sledge's position. It moves closer...closer...

It FIRES. The round screams over...

SLEDGE

And the others. They are naked. No cover. They scramble away from their mortar and crawl toward the brush when... WHAM!

THE JAPANESE TANK

Grinds to a halt, hit in the treads.

SLEDGE

Turns to see ...

THE SNOUT OF A SHERMAN TANK

Poking through the scrub between him and the Japanese tank. It FIRES again.

THE JAPANESE TANK

Is hit in the side. A second...and then it erupts in flames.

544

BACK TO MORTAR SQUAD

Sledge, Snafu and Oswalt look out at the Japanese tank, smoking forty yards away. Smoke roils across the rest of the airfield to their left, obscuring it and the ridges beyond.

Hillbilly crouch-runs up.

HILLBILLY

Fall back fifty and dig in!

Burgin, Sledge, Snafu and Oswalt crawl back to their mortar. They hurriedly break it down. Then crouch-jog back into the scrub away from the airfield.

545-550 OMITTED 545-550

551 EXT. SCRUBLAND BY AIRFIELD - LECKIE'S 2ND SHELL CRATER - DAY 551

Leckie crawls out into the open and slides down into an enormous crater, produced by the Naval bombardment. A couple of MARINES are already in there. One, with his back to us, has BLONDE HAIR. Like Chuckler's. Leckie moves toward him, his voice hopeful.

LECKIE

Chuckler?

The Marine turns. Not Chuckler.

LECKIE (cont'd)

You seen Chuckler or Runner?

BLONDE MARINE

Who?

LECKIE

Juergens or Conley? H-2-1?

BLONDE MARINE

Never heard of them.

Leckie, feeling bereft, joins the other Marines at the lip of the crater. He sees what they see.

THE TWO-STORY CONCRETE POWER STATION

That Sledge's mortar hit. Smoke pours out of a hole in its southwest corner -- the one closest to us. It is fifty yards away and cuts off a fair amount of their view of the airfield, which is obscured anyway by dust, smoke and flames.

A hundred yards to the left of the power station we see the Japanese barracks.

Between Leckie and the power station we see FOUR DEAD JAPANESE SOLDIERS. One is smoldering, his skin burnt black.

LECKIE'S POV

To his right. We see the BURNING TANK that almost killed Sledge maybe a hundred yards to the south.

WIDER

Leckie stares out at the burning tank. Expressionless.

LECKIE

Nobody seen Chuckler?

No one answers. The blonde Marine shrugs. The others turn away.

CLOSE ON LECKIE

Leckie moves back down below the rim of the crater. He's exhausted, morally, physically and spiritually. He reaches down and checks his Tommy gun. His reserves of adrenaline are almost all gone. He looks like he's been squeezed dry.

He takes out his canteen but it's empty again. He grimaces.

RUNNER

Crawls by the crater. He is surprised to see Leckie and slithers into the hole. Like Leckie, his voice is hoarse and cracked. He looks bad - white as alabaster, his tongue thick.

RUNNER

Hey, Lucky. (no response)
Bob.

Leckie slowly looks at him.

RUNNER (cont'd)

You okay?

LECKIE

Thirsty.

(then)

Hoosier got hit by the beach.

551

Leckie's cracked lips are bleeding. He wipes his mouth and sucks the blood from his fingers. At least it's wet and salty.

LECKIE (cont'd)

I liked Hoosier...

Runner nods. Both resigned to the horror of the day.

552 EXT. SCRUBLAND BY EDGE OF AIRFIELD - DAY

552

Sledge, Oswalt and Snafu make a "foxhole"/gun pit by stacking clumps of coral in an arc facing the airfield.

A DEAD JAPANESE SOLDIER lies twenty feet in front of their position. Sledge eyes him from time to time. He can make out the still smoldering tank to his left. And behind it, the power station they hit in the distance. The runways and the Japanese administration building are visible straight ahead, but the right side of the airfield is cut off by scrub, greasy black smoke and dust.

Burgin comes by, his voice a raspy rattle.

BURGIN

You people got any water?

Sledge shakes his head. Burgin hands Sledge and Snafu tablets out of his K rations.

BURGIN (cont'd)

Dextrose. Let it sit on your tongue.

They take them. As Burgin moves on, Sledge sucks on the dextrose pill, desperate for any moisture. He reaches down and takes off his right boundocker. He turns the boot upside down. His own sweat pours out. Snafu watches him, incredulous.

SNAFU

You gone Asiatic?

SLEDGE

My feet hurt.

Snafu grabs the boot, hisses at Sledge.

SNAFU

What are you gonna do in your stockin' feet when the fucking Japs bust through the line? Put your fucking foot back into that fucking boot!

Sledge puts the boot back on.

48.

552

552 CONTINUED:

SNAFU (cont'd)

Hope they pull that same Banzai shit they pulled on Gloucester. Shit, we could see 'em, and hear 'em and kill 'em.

(almost to himself)
Man, I wish they would just let loose
with a Banzai charge. Tell us where
the fuck they are...

553 EXT. AIRFIELD - BY POWER STATION - DAY

553

Leckie and Runner move cautiously towards the smoldering concrete building. Other Marines have begun scavenging souvenirs, or, in the case of one lucky fellow, a Japanese canteen full of water. He holds the canteen up and sloshes the water loudly.

MARINE

Jackpot!

Leckie ignores him. He's not so much scavenging as reassuring himself he's still alive. He steps on something and lurches back. He glances down on the ground. It's...

A HUMAN HAND (LEFT HAND)

Unattached, severed cleanly at the wrist.

LECKIE

Starts to turn away. Stops. Looks closer.

THE HAND

Is almost closed, capable, solitary. There is something shiny in between the curled fingers and the palm.

LECKIE

Is fascinated. He's drawn to it, despite his revulsion.

He kneels down and stares at the hand. The hand is part of that holy trinity which makes us human: head and hand and heart. The obscenity of this solitary flesh is all the war's brutal savagery and utter waste combined.

Leckie takes the muzzle of his Tommy gun and prods the fingers.

We see that it wears a simple gold WEDDING BAND.

And we see what the hand was gripping in its last milliseconds of vitality.

CLOSE ON THE HAND

The half-closed fist grips a STICK OF GUM. The shiny wrapper gleams in the sunlight.

CLOSE ON LECKIE

He stares down and wonders at the mundane last moments of the hand's owners. It is almost too much for him to bear.

RUNNER (O.C.)

Lucky. Let's go.

RUNNER

Puts his hand on Leckie's shoulder. Leckie nods, then rises unsteadily, and makes his way back with Runner toward the scrub.

554 EXT. SCRUBLAND BY EDGE OF AIRFIELD - SUNSET

554

49.

Sledge, Oswalt and Snafu are laying down in their six-inch-deep "foxhole." Snafu opening a K-Ration can with his Kabar. Again, the right side of the airfield is cut off by a small, jutting copse of scrub to their right.

Haldane comes up, crouches down beside them. Like the good Marine officer he is, he asks after them and their needs.

HALDANE

You got enough ammo?

SNAFU

Sure thing, Skipper.

HALDANE

Need anything?

SNAFU

(raises K ration)

Cold beer to wash this shit down.

Haldane smiles. For just a second he relishes the thought of what cold beer tasted like. A thousand years ago.

HALDANE

Amen to that.

(back to business)

Perimeter's out thirty yards from your hole. LP's out beyond that.

(MORE)

554

554 CONTINUED:

HALDANE (cont'd)

Password is "Lilliputian." One of you awake at all times.

Haldane moves on.

SNAFU

"Lilliputian?"

SLEDGE

(shrugs)

Hard for a Jap to say?

(beat)

Hard for me to say.

He was hoping for a grin from Snafu, gets nothing. Snafu has the K-Ration opened. He hands the can to Sledge. A peace offering.

SNAFU

Trade you.

Sledge pulls out one of his, hands it to Snafu. Snafu goes to work on the new can with his Kabar.

SNAFU (cont'd)

I swear to Christ, all I need is my Kabar and a street map of Tokyo. A few hundred headless Japs and this war is over.

He gets the ration open and digs in. The three Marines chew their food - a meal in the middle of hell.

SNAFU (cont'd)

Hey, look at that...

He sets down his tin, and with his Kabar knife, he moves out of the hole. Oswalt and Sledge watching him.

Snafu stops at the body of the dead Japanese soldier (from sc. 552) and opens its mouth.

SNAFU (cont'd)

We're rich, boys.

As Sledge and Oswalt watch in horror...

Snafu saws at the lower jaw of the corpse with his knife. Sledge can't understand what Snafu is doing...not until Snafu uses the thick handle of his Kabar to pound away at the gum line. There is a sickening crunch as the corpse's teeth give way.

554

Sledge flinches. Snafu notes the flinch, shrugs.

SNAFU (cont'd)

Jap's got a shitload of gold in his teeth. Just going to the grave otherwise.

In the dying light, Snafu examines the gold teeth imbedded in bloody human tissue with satisfaction, and then works the teeth out and pockets them.

SNAFU (cont'd)

Gold is, what? Thirty bucks an ounce?

Snafu moves back into the foxhole, wipes his Kabar clean and sheathes it, then checks his .45. To Sledge:

SNAFU (cont'd)

You got first watch; wake me up in four hours. Anything moves, kill it.

Snafu rolls over onto his side and closes his eyes.

Sledge stares at the bloody knife.

At the bloody toothless corpse.

At Snafu curled up, eyes closed.

Then he looks at Oswalt, who is as horrified as he is.

555 EXT. SCRUBLAND BY AIRFIELD - LECKIE'S 2ND SHELL CRATER - NIGHT 555

Leckie's foxhole, like Sledge's, is a shallow pit ringed with stacked coral. In the light of periodic WHITE STAR SHELLS, Leckie checks his weapons. Beside him, Runner is hunkered down, trying to get some sleep. Leckie can hear another nearby Marine quietly praying to himself in Hebrew.

Leckie stares out into the night. His face slack. Artillery and gunfire continue throughout.

556 EXT. SCRUBLAND BY EDGE OF AIRFIELD - NIGHT

556

Sledge wipes the sweat out of his face.

American flares continue to fall, their pendulum movement making the shadows on the ground dance and weave, adding another hallucinogenic quality to the scene.

Oswalt moves up next to him. Their heads almost together, staring out with fear into the night. Oswalt whispers:

556

OSWALT

Look at the ridges.

THE PELELIU AIRFIELD - SLEDGE'S POV

The flat expanse of the crushed coral aprons and runway, lit by the surreal light of the falling flares. Smoldering fires burn in the distance on all sides. The airfield looks vast.

Sledge looks up above the airfield to...

THE UMURBROGOL HILLS

A ridgeline, silhouetted against the deep blue night sky. Blue Japanese tracer fire arcs out of various spots on the ridge.

SLEDGE AND OSWALT

Continue to stare out. Oswalt whispers.

OSWALT (cont'd)

You ever been to the Grand Canyon?

SLEDGE

No.

OSWALT

My dad went when he was a boy. Was always going on about it when I was little. I'd ask him about it. He said you had to see it to understand. Finally took me when I was ten. We got there late at night, to these cabins, couldn't see a thing on account of the dark. Next morning we got up and went outside. Ten yards from where we slept — the fucking Grand Canyon.

(then)

A mile down. Colors you never seen before. My dad was right. Pictures don't show it. You have to be there looking down into it.

SNAFU (O.C.)

(hiss whisper)

Shut the fuck up, you idiots.

Sledge and Oswalt share a sheepish look. But now Sledge knows what Sid was trying to tell him. He has seen the elephant.

Suddenly, the sporadic firing stops. It is ominously still.

556

A WHITE FLARE ignites high in the sky and starts to fall.

Sledge looks again at the airfield, illuminated by the swaying harsh light.

Vast, flat and empty.

Waiting.

SLEDGE

No cover out there.

(then)

No cover at all.

SNAFU (O.C.)

I said shut the fuck up.

CLOSE ON SLEDGE

As he looks out at what awaits them in the morning. We PUSH IN on his dirt-streaked, exhausted and frightened face.

Another white flare illuminates the night, his face, the hell of Peleliu...

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE FIVE