Dig!

by

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Class of 2010

A thesis submitted to the
faculty of Wesleyan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts
with Departmental Honors in Film Studies

Middletown, Connecticut April, 2010
EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

GET DOWN!

Artillery shells are coming down in every direction. The Germans are bombarding.

Soldiers hurry to get out of dodge, taking cover for their lives. Some manage to avoid incoming shells while others are not so lucky.

Many of the men hug the walls of the trench, hoping the wall of earth and sandbags perched atop it will cover them from shells and flying debris.

Shells fall in all directions, destroying the walls of the trench and the duckboards at the floor of the trench, sending mud and dirt flying everywhere and killing anyone near the blast.

One soldier moving along the trench manages to accurately judge the trajectory of an incoming shell and move out of the way just before it lands, only to be hit by another shell immediately after.

The front line is in chaos. Bodies are strewn everywhere, men are huddled against the walls, medical officers fight to reach the wounded men, and stretcher-bearers attempt to transport the wounded out of harm's way.

Along the parapet, the SNIPERS sit, perched on the fire step, rifles steady should the enemy begin an assault, praying the shells do not come near them.

The artillery begins to slow down, making it easier for the men to gauge if a shell is heading in their direction.

One soldier, PFC ADRIAN GIRARD, stumbles along the trench holding his head, wounded from a flying piece of debris. He comes over to the parapet to one of the snipers.

ADRIAN
Are they coming? Hey Phil, are they coming?

He sees, Phil is dead. He grabs Phil's rifle to look out into No Man's Land. He can't see anything through all of the smoke.

Another SOLDIER comes over to Adrian.

SOLDIER
Are they coming, Adrian?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ADRIAN

I don't know. I can't see anything.

An incoming shell forces them to take cover. As they do, they become able to discern particular noises out of all the chaos.

They hear GUNS FIRING, the SCREECHING OF SHELLS, BOOTS SLUSHING through the waterlogged trench, the SHOUTS of "Medic! Medic!" coming from all directions. They also hear, out in No Man's Land, the sound of SCREAMING.

SOLDIER

What's that?

Adrian doesn't hear it.

SOLDIER

Listen --

As the shells die down it becomes more audible: the SCREAMS of a wounded soldier. In English. He's one of theirs.

ADRIAN

Who was on post this morning?

SOLDIER

Uhh -- Gonnell.

Adrian suppresses the urge to place blame on Gonnell for being out there and tries to locate him through the smoke.

SOLDIER

Can you get a good look?

ADRIAN

I have no idea where he is.

The two look over the parapet to try to find Gonnell. They only get a few seconds before a shell lands nearby and sends clumps of dirt flying at them, forcing them to take cover.

ADRIAN

Did you see him?

SOLDIER

I think so.

ADRIAN

Is he visible?

SOLDIER

I don't know.

(CONTINUED)
They peer over the top one more time to locate the source of the SCREAMING.

ADRIAN
There. I got him.

A SNIPER stands on the parapet a few feet away.

SNIPER
You want me to shoot him?

ADRIAN
Don't shoot him.

SNIPER
We have to shut him up somehow.

ADRIAN
Don't shoot him.

SOLDIER
He better stop screaming, otherwise the other snipers are gonna get him. He's as good as dead out there, Adrian.

Adrian weighs his options.

SOLDIER
Didn't his wife just have a kid too?

ADRIAN
Crap.

Adrian hops up to the top of the parapet.

SOLDIER
What are you doing?

Adrian looks for the best way through the barbed wire and rolls up and over the trench.

SOLDIER
Are you crazy? You're gonna get the both of you killed!

Adrian is already gone. He's crawled underneath the barbed wire in front of the trench.

The soldier watches for a moment before taking cover.
EXT. NO MAN'S LAND - CONTINUOUS

Adrian crawls through the barbed wire, occasionally getting snagged. He finally makes it into the clear and reaches the middle of "Death Valley", as it is known.

He maneuvers his way through the debris, the tank traps and other impediments while also steering clear of the myriad of sinkholes created by all of the shells. He moves in the direction of Gonnell's voice, trying to locate him.

GONNELL (O.S.)
Somebody help me!

Adrian finally manages to reach Gonnell. The only problem -- Gonnell is stuck on the opposite side of a very large sinkhole. One too large to navigate around.

Gonnell has barbed wire wrapped around one of his legs and has been shot multiple times. He sees Adrian:

GONNELL
Adrian! Adrian, get me out of here!

ADRIAN
Gonnell, quiet.

GONNELL
My leg -- I think it's broken.

ADRIAN
You're making yourself a target! Be quiet!

Gonnell tries to move his leg and SCREAMS in agony.

ADRIAN
I said shut up, will ya! The snipers are gonna hear you!

GONNELL
Oh, God. Adrian, help me, please!

ADRIAN
Damnit, Gonnell --

Gonnell continues to scream.

ADRIAN
Gonnell -- Gonnell --

GONNELL
Oh, God, I don't wanna die out here!

(CONTINUED)
Gonnell stops screaming and looks over at Adrian:

**ADRIAN**

Listen to me, Francis, I'm going to get you out of here. Alright?

Gonnell looks down at the wound in his abdomen.

**ADRIAN**

I know you're wounded. It's going to be fine. Just do as I say, and I'm going to get you out of here. Okay?

**GONNELL**

Hurry. Please.

Adrian looks around the area and inside the sinkhole.

**ADRIAN**

All right, Francis, I need you to climb into the sinkhole. All right? Just go into the sinkhole, and I'm gonna come and get you out. Okay, Francis?

**GONNELL**

Okay.

Gonnell -- Francis -- rolls himself over. He GROWS from the immense pain and forces himself toward the edge of the sinkhole, clawing at the dirt and pulling himself forward. His broken leg drags behind him, the barbed wire cutting into it with every drag.

**ADRIAN**

That's good. Just keep moving. We're gonna get you back.

Using every ounce of strength he can muster, Gonnell manages to heave himself over the side and into the sinkhole.

**ADRIAN**

Great job. You're doing great, Francis. Now I'm gonna come in and get you.

As soon as Adrian moves, German snipers begin shooting at him. He ducks behind some debris until they stop.

Inside the sinkhole, Gonnell is unable to gain full traction on the mud. He begins sliding toward the bottom of the crevice.
CONTINUED:

**GONNELL**

Adrian --

Gonnell cannot work up the strength to pull himself back up, an almost impossible task for an injured man due to the instability of the earth around him. He slowly slides toward the bottom of the sinkhole.

**GONNELL**

Adrian! Help!

At the bottom of the sinkhole is a giant pool of mud, at least a foot deep.

Adrian sees Gonnell sliding, but cannot move because of the incoming sniper fire.

**GONNELL**

Adrian!

Adrian watches Gonnell sink perilously closer to the mud, knowing he will drown if he reaches it. Gonnell reaches out a hand for anyone to come and take it.

Adrian tries to move toward the sinkhole, but more bullets come his way as soon as he makes himself visible.

Gonnell reaches the bottom and begins sinking into the mud.

**GONNELL**

Adrian! Adrian!

Adrian gets frustrated that he can't do anything.

Gonnell's voice starts to gurgle. He can't stay afloat.

Adrian still cannot move because of the sniper fire.

Finally Adrian makes his move. He crosses himself, praying not to get shot, and throws himself toward the sinkhole and rolls inside.

He quickly grabs footing on the other side and prevents himself from sinking. He then takes a deep breath, making sure he's still alive, and moves toward Gonnell's hand, which is still (barely) protruding from the mud.

He grabs Gonnell's hand and pulls him to his side of the sinkhole. He finally manages to get Gonnell to safety, only to see -- Gonnell is dead, floating lifeless in the mud.

FADE OUT.
EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Title Card: "Northern France - Spring 1918".

Shouts of "Stand Down!" come down the line and the men (those able to), who had been standing at attention in case the Germans attacked, finally relax.

The bombardment has ended and the men begin to gather their bearings. Of the bodies that line the floor of the trench, we can tell which are alive by whether or not they get up.

The men move around, looking for lost belongings (shoes, helmets, weapons, etc.) and checking to see who made it and who did not.

One soldier, Pvt. JOEY, walks along the parapet, moving aside the bodies on the floor of the trench. He accidentally moves a body that is alive. The man GROANS.

   JOEY
   Sorry. Just looking for something.

Joey searches for the lost item, and finally finds it.

   JOEY
   A-ha! There you are.

Underneath one of the bodies, he finds a satchel. He puts it over his shoulder and turns toward the German line, giving them a "thanks for nothing" salute.

   JOEY
   Yeah, good morning to you's too. Just what I need to start my day, more rebuilding.

He walks up the line, helping up some of the wounded men.

   JOEY
   Don't worry, it's not that serious. It'll get you that furlough you've been wanting.

He pulls out a man who had been stuck underneath the body of another man.

   JOEY
   There you go, Sanchez. Don't think just cause you're hurt don't mean you don't owe me for them sausages.

He sees a man with an injured arm and hands him a cloth from the floor of the trench to wrap around the wound.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOEY
There you go, Charlie. Missed you by that much. And here I thought you were the unluckiest guy in the company. Come to think of it, you should stop by the poker game later. I could use that kinda luck.

Joey walks up the trench, looking for anyone still alive. He sees, coming around a traverse up ahead, a RUNNER, JACKSON. He hurries over to catch him before he goes away.

JOEY
Hey. Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey. Hold on a second, Jackson.

Jackson barely stops, clearly not in the mood for this.

JACKSON
Oh, no, no, no. Not now, Joey, I have rounds to do. I gotta find Major--

JOEY
Yeah, yeah, I know. Benson. That's what I wanna talk to you about. You think maybe there's gonna be any jobs coming up this afternoon?

JACKSON
I can think of a few off the top of my head.

JOEY
Very funny. You're a comedian, you are. Fly-by jokes. Tell 'em and run.

JACKSON
Joey, I don't have time for--

JOEY
All right, all right. Look, the type of jobs I'm talking about are, you know, more like, special jobs. I'm all for fixing up the trench and all, but -- I'm looking for something more like a, bottle of French wine, kind of job.

Jackson is interested.

JOEY
You know what I'm talking about?

JACKSON
'88?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOEY
Well, uh, a wine's a wine, you know?
Especially with the blockades--

Jackson gives him an "I'm doing you the favor" look.

JOEY
All right. '88. You got it.

They shake hands, making the transaction official.

JOEY
What's the job?

JACKSON
(smiling)
Bringing in the rookies.

JOEY
You no good snake -- I oughta --
(stopping himself)
-- on second thought, I'll take what I
can get. Thanks a lot.

JACKSON
(reminding him)
'88.

Jackson leaves.

JOEY
Extortion. Damn runners.

EXT. RESERVE TRENCH - DAY

Joey waits at the back of the reserve trench for the
"rookies," the replacements, to arrive. He makes deals
with the soldiers who pass by.

JOEY
Hey, Jimmy, you still in the market for
those socks?
(pulls the socks out of his
satchel and tosses them to
the man)
There you go. Don't worry about it. Keep
the extra rations coming.
(as another passes)
Hey, Frankie, you need any more -- all
right, let me know.

A transport truck pulls up to the trench at ground level.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

The REPLACEMENTS hop down into the trench and line up along the back. They are clean-cut young men, probably all under the age of twenty and scared out of their minds.

**JOEY**

(getting into "scare mode")
Abandon hope all ye that enter here.

He waits for them all to line up before he begins.

**JOEY**

Take a good look at those uniforms. Those are the cleanest they're gonna be for a long time. I'm Private Joey. You may refer to me as 'Sir'. Now, the first thing to know about these trenches -- experience outweighs rank. I've been in these trenches since we built them, therefore, I am your superior officer. This is not for ego, this is to keep you alive. I've been here longer, I know how to stay alive better than you do. The second rule -- you are not in the army anymore. There are no rules here. You stay alive. You listen to what your superior tells you. But make no mistake about it, you are in hell. Treat the situation accordingly. Now, follow me, let me show you to the master bedroom.

**EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY**

The men are separating the injured from the dead. A MEDICAL OFFICER, flanked by several aides, walks up the trench, checking to see which men are dead and which aren't.

**MEDICAL OFFICER**

Not dead --

The men pick up the "not dead" man and carry him to be treated for his wounds.

**MEDICAL OFFICER**

Dead -- dead --

The "dead" men are taken and placed in a row to be checked for ID tags.

**MEDICAL OFFICER**

Dead --

He checks the next body for a pulse.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MEDICAL OFFICER

Dead --

The man pronounced dead a second ago GROANS.

MEDICAL OFFICER

Not dead.

He continues on through the traverse, the section of the line dug at an angle (as such: \_/\) to protect from incoming fire, over to the next section of the line.

Through the traverse walks SECOND LIEUTENANT ECKERT. He walks the line, making sure the men perform their duties. He passes through where the medical officer just came from, over to the opposite traverse.

At the traverse, two PRIVATES, SANDERS and MORRELL, rest against the back side. They are sweating profusely, having just re-dug part of the trench themselves. They straighten up when they see Eckert.

ECKERT

Make sure you get it as deep as it can go without hitting water.

MORRELL

Yes, sir.

ECKERT

And make sure you get the duckboards down before they bring in the sandbags.

SANDERS

Yes, sir.

Eckert continues past. Sanders complains under his breath:

SANDERS

Make sure we get the duckboards down. Can't give us ten minutes to put bandages around the wounds. What I wouldn't give to see him do a day's work.

MORRELL

Who, the Lieutenant? Do work? That'll be the day. Don't let the uniform fool you. He's Grade-A General material. He can order you around like it's nobody's business. You know once he busted me for --

Up the communication trench at the back of the traverse comes Joey, the replacements in tow, continuing his tour.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOEY
-- do this for safety reasons. Do not linger in communication trenches. You don't want to hold up a guy who's been running sandbags all day. Now here's the front line --

They walk past the traverse, where Morrell is finishing his story about Eckert.

MORRELL
-- and all I did was go and take a leak for two minutes. A week of wire duty Eckert makes me do. You believe that? In a just world people get what's rightfully coming to them.
   (putting down his shovel)
I'm gonna go get some boards. Before he makes me go run the sandbags too.

Morrell walks back through the communication trench, passing Joey as he finishes talking to the replacements.

JOEY
-- split you up into groups. These few of you head to the back and help with the sandbags. You five over here in the middle go to the supply station, you're gonna be runners. And the rest of you, head up the trench until someone grabs you to help rebuild. Get used to it, you're going to be doing lots of it. And for God's sakes, keep your heads down.

The men head off to their assignments. Joey looks over at the row of bodies waiting to be checked for their ID tags. He calls to the back of the line of replacements.

JOEY
Yo!

The first person to turn around is a fresh faced KID, who looks no older than 18.

JOEY
Yeah, you. Come over here.

The kid comes over.

JOEY
What's your name?
   (as he starts to answer)
Yeah, all right, whatever.
   (MORE)
CONTINUED:

JOEY (CONT'D)
And knock it off with the sir business, I was just trying to make a point. Look, you're new, so you haven't yet picked up the disdain for digging. And fortunately you're slow on your feet, so you've been saved from it for a little bit longer.

KID
I beg your pardon?

JOEY
I bet you do. You don't look a day out of high school. Instead of digging ditches and putting up sandbags, I'm doing you a favor and giving you prime duty here. All you need to do is help me out. And it won't even cost you nothing. Are you up for it, or should I find another one?

KID
What do I do?

JOEY
Just hold this.

Joey takes off his satchel and hands it to the kid.

JOEY
And I don't wanna catch you peaking in there neither.

He goes over to the line of bodies. The kid hesitates when he sees them.

JOEY
What's the matter? Ain't never seen a body before?

KID
Not an entire row of them.

JOEY
Whatever you do, don't vomit. My luck, I get the one that throws up all over me.

Joey takes the ID tag off the first body and puts it in his pocket. He goes back and begins rifling through the man's pockets for any items he might be able to trade.

The kid watches as he does this, and holds out the satchel as Joey puts the items inside of it.

Joey does the same for the second body, even going so far as to take off the man's boots.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

**KID**
What are you doing?

**JOEY**
I'm identifying the casualties. Someone has to go through and get ID tags.

**KID**
And the boots? Is that part of the job?

**JOEY**
Grow up.

**KID**
What does the commanding officer think about this?

**JOEY**
Rule number one, kid -- people die. You have to make the most of it in these situations. Don't give me that look.

He continues looking for items as he takes the ID tags off the bodies.

**KID**
So if the CO came and saw you right now, he wouldn't say anything?

**JOEY**
Major Benson knows the deal. He doesn't necessarily condone it, but he knows nobody wants to see a good pair of boots go to waste. Especially when yours are falling apart and you're a step away from trench foot.

Joey freezes when he gets to the next body.

**KID**
I can't imagine he would allow something like that to happen right in front of him and not say anything. There has to be some sort of decency for the dead.

Joey turns back to the kid.

**JOEY**
Well, here's your chance to ask him, kid. Meet Major Benson.

He shows the kid the ID tag he took off the last body. It reads: "Major Richard Benson".

(CONTINUED)
JOEY

Give me that.

Joey takes his satchel from the kid and puts it on.

JOEY

Keep taking tags. Don't do anything until someone comes back.

He leaves. The kid watches him go and looks at the row of bodies. The idea of taking ID tags doesn't seem all that appealing to him.

He looks around the trench, seeing the men working to rebuild. Some dig, others bring sandbags, piling them up like bricks and hitting them flat with spades. SENTRYES sit on the fire step, occasionally looking over the parapet. The snipers stand atop the parapet, waiting for targets.

The kid takes a deep breath and goes to the bodies. He looks at Major Benson before moving to the next one. He quietly removes the man's tags, nothing more, and puts them away.

He does this for the next few bodies, coming at last to the end of the row.

He sees one final BODY, sitting upright against the wall of the trench, a helmet pulled over its face. It does not appear to be injured, but also does not appear to be alive.

The kid reaches out to take its ID tag when a HAND reaches up and grabs him. It pushes his arm away and lifts up the helmet.

The SOLDIER, who is very much alive, looks up at the kid with a mean-looking scowl, clearly not amused with the kid's actions.

SOLDIER

What are you doing?

KID

I, uhh, thought -- just following orders, sir.

SOLDIER

Well, go follow them somewhere else, so I can get some sleep.

The soldier puts his helmet back over his face. The kid hurries away.
EXT. RESERVE TRENCH - ALLIED TRENCH - AFTERNOON

Eckert walks along the trench and stops at a dugout dug into the side. He ducks inside, behind the wall of sandbags.

Now alone, he takes off his helmet and puts his fingers to his temples, trying to overcome a terrible headache. After a moment, he straightens up, puts his helmet back on, fixes his uniform and descends the stairs in front of him.

INT. DUGOUT - ALLED TRENCH - AFTERNOON

Downstairs, a group of OFFICERS are sitting around a table. All of them are pristinely dressed. Eckert has a brief moment of self-consciousness about the cleanliness of his uniform as he stands at attention.

An older COLONEL stands up. He favors his right leg, which looks like it's been the victim of some shrapnel in its youth.

HAIG
At ease, son.
(as Eckert eases)
You know who I am, of course.

ECKERT
Yes, sir, Colonel Haig, sir.

HAIG
Good. Then we can skip the pleasantries.

Haig sits down.

HAIG
You've done an admirable job here as Second Lieutenant. From all accounts, your performance has been impeccable.

ECKERT
With all due respect, sir, I thought we were going to skip the pleasantries.

HAIG
Yes, good point. I mention it because, as you know, Major Benson met with an untimely accident this morning. And we would be remiss if we didn't consider one of our brightest officers to fill the position.

Haig watches Eckert to gauge his reaction.

(CONTINUED)
HAIG
You understand, of course, that we cannot officially make you a Captain at this time. However, we are promoting you to First Lieutenant, and pending a satisfactory performance, of which I have no doubt, you will become a Captain.

ECKERT
Thank you, sir.

HAIG
You are also aware, of course, of our track record with officers in this section of the trench?

ECKERT
Yes, sir.

If Haig was looking for any hesitation or fear on Eckert's part, he isn't getting it.

HAIG
In the thirteen months since we've been in these trenches, we have had, and lost, twenty-six different officers. This does not cause you any concern, Lieutenant?

ECKERT
Sir, I am satisfied with whatever course of action you see as the correct one.

Haig turns to the man in the back, a GENERAL, who nods.

HAIG
Splendid. Congratulations, Lieutenant. Would you care to sit down?

Eckert sits down as the men get to planning.

HAIG
Now then, on to the reason we are all here. Major Gordon, if you will.

Haig sits down as MAJOR GORDON, a British officer, stands.

GORDON
Gentleman, I hope the tea is to your liking. I had it shipped directly from England. Best tea in Her Majesty’s empire.

He takes a sip of his tea with great delight.

(CONTINUED)
Continued:

GORDON
Now then, onto the war business. I think we can all agree that we are past the days of a good defense and a strong will overcoming the enemy. As we've painfully learned these past months, we cannot defeat an enemy by superior morale alone if our plan is merely to stand still and have a run at them every once in a while. We must take serious action. Reginald --

His AIDE opens up a map on the table.

GORDON
Namely, tunneling. I know that word will not be taken seriously in this room, and that is precisely why I say it. Until now, tunneling has been no more than a formality, just something to let the Generals know we've been trying everything we can.

(turning to the General)
I beg your pardon, sir. But I'd wager a bet that not one of you in this room has ever expected a tunnel to be finished, let alone detonated. Am I right, chaps?

He gives the men a moment to appreciate that.

GORDON
With the odds unmistakably against tunnel completion, be it by bombardment, countermine efforts by the Germans, or quite simply poor planning, it's understandable why none of us would want to waste valuable resources for such an uncertain outcome. However, a full-scale tunneling operation is not only the most treacherous option we have, it is also the most likely to succeed.

He uses the map to demonstrate his point.

GORDON
Twenty-one separate tunnels dug all along the front, each at a specific location designed to weaken the enemy's artillery, front line defenses and support options. Every tunnel they discover, we begin two more. We dig so many tunnels that it is impossible for the Germans to keep track of all of them. Then, when the time comes, we detonate, and bob's your uncle.
CONTINUED:

One of the other OFFICERS at the table speaks up.

OFFICER
You're saying once we detonate these tunnels, we launch a full-scale attack on the front lines?

HAIG
It's not as preposterous as it sounds. As long as we dig deep enough that they can't hear us and start digging themselves, we give ourselves a fighting chance.

GORDON
There is another incentive as well. We have what appears to be a very harsh winter ahead of us. With the German blockades, who knows how many supplies we will be able to get through. Securing a German position could help us open a supply road that would get us through the winter.

HAIG
What do you think, Lieutenant Eckert?

ECKERT
Well, sir, speaking from experience, I agree with Major Gordon that something must be attempted. The monotony of constantly rebuilding the trench takes its toll on the men. Tunneling may be what we need to boost morale. And if there is the possibility of opening up extra supply roads, I think it is a chance we have to take.

Everyone turns to the General in back to see what he thinks.

GENERAL
We'll tunnel. Continue, Major.

GORDON
Very well, sir. Thank you.

(using the map again)
There will be twenty-one tunnels in all. Each area of the trench will be responsible for between three and five tunnels.

He opens up a map with blueprints of the tunnels. 

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

GORDON
In the East, Colonel Neville's 19th Irish, 3rd Australian, and 1st New Zealand divisions, will have five tunnels. In the West, my 25th, 16th and 30th divisions, will have four tunnels. In the Center will be Colonel Haig's American boys in 40th, 29th and 8th divisions. They will also have four tunnels. The Northern edge will have five tunnels, dug by the 23rd, 47th and 41st French divisions, commanding officer to be determined. And the three remaining tunnels will be dug here, led by our newly appointed Lieutenant Eckert. We wish you Americans better luck in the coming year. Cheers.

Colonel Haig stands up on his wounded leg.

HAIG
Gentleman, we may not make history with such a plan, but we shall certainly change the geography.

INT. MESS HALL - ALLIED TRENCH - AFTERNOON

The men eat dinner. Many of them are winding down after a long day of work. Joey is walking around, still making deals. He hands the shoes he took from the dead soldier to one of the men.

JOEY
Here's those boots I promised you. Same size as Petey Johnson, right?

The kid Joey called aside earlier sits at a table with other replacements, most of whom are discussing the duties they had to perform during the day. The kid doesn't really pay attention. He minds his own business and eats his meal.

Two of Eckert's AIDES, corporals, enter the room and stand at attention.

AIDES
Everybody, Stand To!

Everyone quickly stops eating and stands to attention. Lieutenant Eckert enters the room.

ECKERT
At ease.

(CONTINUED)
Everyone sits back down. Eckert surveys the room to gauge morale.

**ECKERT**
Now, as you all know, Major Benson was killed this morning --

**JOEY**
(whispering to his table)
That's the third officer this month. At this rate, I'll be an officer by Christmas.

**ECKERT**
-- as such I will be taking over as commanding officer. I hope you will all treat me with the same respect --

The kid notices that some of the men are upset at the news.

**ECKERT**
-- I also regret to inform you that due to the high casualty rate of this morning's bombardment, we will be asking each and every one of you to do your part in rebuilding the trench and getting everything back in order. Corporal Pike will read each of the duties for tonight. Have a good evening, gentlemen.

Eckert leaves. Corporal Pike, one of the aides, steps forward with a list in his hand.

**PIKE**
Wire team -- Davis, Shepherd, Daley, Rittleman, Palmieri. Sentries -- Graff, Spencer, Steinman, Miller, Brown, Leonard. Post -- O'Riley, Smith, Hanson --

The kid, Hanson, snaps his head up at the mention of his name.

**PIKE**
-- Czerwinskei, Mason, Sutherland. That's it. 'Stand to' in fifteen minutes. Have a good evening, gentlemen.

Pike salutes the men and leaves. Hanson looks around his table, wondering who to ask. He walks over to Joey's table, where Joey is trying to barter for an item back.

**JOEY**
Come on, give me a break. You don't even need the second blanket.
CONTINUED:

SANDERS
Yeah, but I like knowing it's there. It's like a warm -- blanket -- ha!

JOEY
But I got a deal all lined up for it. No wire duty for a month. Look, I'll give you double what you paid for it. And I'll throw in a flask of whiskey next time you're on sentry and I'll do your next post.

SANDERS
Tempting, but I'm going to have to say no. A man needs a warm bed to sleep in.

JOEY
Come on! This is practically extortion--

HANSON
Hey, Private -- Joey --

JOEY
Not now, I got business to take care of.

SANDERS
You know, Joey, it seems like you have some important business to attend to here first. Don't let me keep you from it.

JOEY
The only business I have here is with you, Sanders. I don't know who this guy--
(turning to Hanson)
Why do you keep standing there? Can't you see I'm trying to--
(as Sanders gets up to leave)
Hey, come on, Sanders, I ain't finished yet -- I was about to offer you -- aghh!

Sanders is gone. Joey turns to Hanson.

JOEY
You just cost me the deal of a lifetime, kid. You better have something deathly important to tell me. What do you want?

HANSON
What's post?

JOEY
Post? It's post. You go out in the sap head and you listen for enemy activity.

(continues)
Joey goes back to his food, expecting Hanson to leave.

HANSON
Would they give that to someone their first night?

JOEY
(turning back to Hanson)
Not unless they want another body on their hands. Last guy out his first night -- killed two of his own men with one shot. That was a doozy. Good luck with that.

HANSON
My name got called. I think it was a--

JOEY
If they had you on the list, there's nothing you can do. You're on the list, you go. That's that. You got a problem, you take it up with the staff sergeant.

HANSON
Who's the staff sergeant?

JOEY
Didn't anybody tell you anything? It's Sergeant Foley, over there in the back.

Joey points out Foley before quickly heading for the door.

JOEY
Hey, Davis, you still owe me for those socks -- you got a blanket?

Hanson turns to where Joey pointed. He sees Sergeant Foley sitting against the back wall and recognizes him -- the man he thought was a dead body earlier.

He remembers Foley's scowl, which is noticeable even while he sleeps. Instead of going over to him, Hanson stays put and doesn't say anything.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLED TRENCH - EVENING

Hanson stands at the entrance to the sap head, waiting for the call to go on duty. The rest of the men stand along the line, waiting for order to 'stand to'.

JOEY
I got money the kid don't make it. Anyone interested?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MORRELL
I'll take that bet.

JOEY
What bet won't you take?

Hanson looks up the sap head at the long stretch of trench in front of him. He hears the order, "Stand To!" given behind him. He turns to see the rest of the men at attention, guns ready, bayonets fixed, in case of attack.

Hanson takes a deep breath and enters the sap head. He makes his way out to his post, thirty long yards in front of the trench.

EXT. SAP HEAD - ALLIED TRENCH - NIGHT

It is the dead of night. Hanson is awake, cold, and frightened.

He sits on the fire step, listening to the myriad of noises that come from No Man's Land. He waits patiently, his hand on his weapon, in case of an ambush.

He begins to hear CRAWLING out in No Man's Land. He tenses, and waits to see if it is an enemy or ally.

He waits to see where the noise is coming from.

And waits.

And waits.

Finally, the noise stops, and no one comes.

INT. DUGOUT - ALLIED TRENCH - MORNING

It is one half-hour before dawn. The men are sleeping when a man enters the dugout and shouts "Stand To!"

The men get up and immediately begin making their way out to the line.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - MORNING

The men are at the front line, halfheartedly standing at attention. Most yawn and rock back and forth in the cold morning air.

A few STRAY SHOTS are heard, but nothing major happens.
EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - LATER

One half-hour later, the sun is creeping through the horizon. It is dawn. The order "Stand down" is given.

The men break rank and begin to stretch and wander about before leaving to get rations. A few men, including Joey, wait behind. They watch the sap head, waiting to see if Hanson will return.

After a minute, Hanson comes back into the trench. There is a silent assent of appreciation among the men -- he made it. Joey shakes his head over losing the bet.

MORRELL
That'll cost you.

INT. MESS HALL - ALLIED TRENCH - LATER

The men eat lunch. Hanson sits alone this time. He's barely touched his food. Joey comes over.

JOEY
Hey, kid. Good job on post last night. I'm sorry if I was a little short with you yesterday. You know, business -- what's your name again?

HANSON
Hanson.

Joey takes a moment to realize he never really cared what Hanson's name was before now.

A couple of other men come over to congratulate Hanson.

JOEY
You're famous, Hanson.

HANSON
It wasn't as easy as it looks.

JOEY
It never is, kid.

Foley comes over and takes a long look at Hanson.

FOLEY
Good job.

He walks away without another word, leaving Hanson confused.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOEY
Don't mind Foley, he's like that.

Jackson comes in and walks amongst the tables, assigning duties to everyone.

JACKSON
Harrison, shovel. Briggs, shovel. Joey --
(seeing Joey with Hanson)
-- sentry. And take Hanson with you.

He gives Joey a nod and moves on. Joey pats his shoulder.

JOEY
Thanks, bud.
(turning to Hanson)
See that? One day, you made your bones.
Come on, I wanna show you something.
(as they get up to leave)
I'm actually kinda glad we met. Now I have someone to talk to.

They walk outside.

EXT. COMMUNICATION TRENCH - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

Hanson and Joey walk toward the front line. Joey pulls an apple out of his satchel and gives it to Hanson.

JOEY
I saw you didn't eat anything in there.
Take it. It'll take the edge off.

Hanson eats the apple as they make their way to the line.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Hanson and Joey come up to the line.

JOEY
Did you seriously go out there cold?

HANSON
I guess.

JOEY
Man, I gotta hand it to you. Sitting out there with nothing to calm your nerves.
Actually, hang on a second --

Joey reaches into his satchel and pulls out a flask.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOEY
Here. It's on me. For next time. Best way to calm the nerves -- whiskey.
(as Hanson takes the flask)
It's empty, but I'll get you something eventually. Usually they ration it to us, but, with the blockades, everything's hard to come by. Come on over here. I want you to meet someone.

Hanson and Joey walk up to the parapet, where a sniper, RED, sits atop the fire step, looking out into No Man's Land.

Red has two noticeable scars, one on his left cheek and one through the center of his right hand.

JOEY
Red, this Hanson. Went out on post his first night. Hanson, Red here is sort of the unofficial staff sergeant around here, seeing as how Sergeant Foley is -- well, you know -- Sergeant Foley.

Red turns and hops off the fire step. Hanson extends his hand and Red shakes it. Instead of saying anything, Red gives Hanson his rifle and starts walking toward the communication trench.

HANSON
What am I supposed to do with this?

RED
(simply)
Shoot.

Red leaves. Hanson turns back to Joey, confused.

JOEY
Red don't talk much, but he's the best damn shot we got.

HANSON
I don't know how to shoot, though.

JOEY
They gave you basic training, didn't they?

HANSON
They also taught me multiplication tables in school.

JOEY
Just go up on the step and give it a go.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

Hanson hands Joey his apple and positions himself on the fire step. He shifts around a bit and is SHOT at.

JOEY
Don't do that. Keep still and they can't spot you.

Hanson readies himself again.

JOEY
Still and relaxed.

Hanson looks out into No Man's Land. Suddenly TWO SHOTS ARE FIRED. Hanson looks over in the direction they came from.

He sees a white flag waving from the German trench. THREE GERMAN SOLDIERS roll up and over into No Man's Land.

HANSON
Hey, I got a white flag. Three guys coming out. What do I do?

Joey takes the rifle and hands Hanson his apple back. He looks out into No Man's Land.

JOEY
Oh, that's just Gerry and the boys.

Joey hops off of the fire step and yells up the trench.

JOEY
Hey, Harry!

He fires TWO SHOTS into the air before taking Hanson's apple and throwing it out into No Man's Land.

HANSON
Hey!

JOEY
Don't worry, kid. I'll make it up to you in five minutes.

He gives Hanson the rifle back and gathers belongings from his satchel.

Red comes back, holding a rag full of items against his chest. He meets Joey and HARRY, another sniper, who comes over, also holding goods.

The three divvy up the goods and one at a time begin rolling up and over into No Man's Land.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Red, before he goes, motions for Hanson to watch them with his rifle. He rolls up and over.

Hanson picks up the rifle, stands on the fire step and looks out into No Man's Land.

He sees -- Joey, Red and Harry, standing in the middle of No Man's Land, talking with the three GERMAN SOLDIERS. They talk for several minutes before exchanging items, shaking hands and returning to their respective trenches.

Hanson puts down the rifle as Joey, Red and Harry come back. They roll down into the trench, holding chocolate, sausage, cheese, and other trench luxuries.

Red and Harry leave to put their belongings away, followed by Joey, who already put his in his satchel.

**HANSON**

Was that --

**JOEY**

Here, kid, give me your flask.

Hanson hands his flask to Joey, who fills it full from a bottle in his satchel.

**JOEY**

Napoleon brandy. Don't drink it all too fast. This is real high class stuff. They got it from raiding a town a couple weeks back. I'm gonna be saving the rest of this for a special occasion.

He puts the bottle back into his satchel.

**JOEY**

Yeah, we beat them pretty bad this week, on account of Red got two officers. But they got us on rats, though.

**HANSON**

Beat them on what?

**JOEY**

A game we got going. Originally started with the snipers. Each week, they tally up the amount of points they get from shooting people -- soldiers are five, non coms are ten, officers fifteen, and snipers are twenty-five. Though getting a sniper almost never happens. Red's the only one's ever done it. That gets a prize in itself. We also count rats, a point a piece. (MORE)
CONTINUED:

JOEY (CONT'D)
At the end of each week, we send out totals in undetonated rifle grenades. We did that while you were sleeping.

Red comes back. He takes his rifle and resumes his place back on the parapet.

HANSON
Why do you this?

JOEY
What else are we gonna do?

INT. DUGOUT - ALLED TRENCH - DAY

Several SOLDIERS look over various maps and documents as they plan the tunneling operation.

One of them is ARTHUR, a French tunnel engineer. He's about fifty and only wears half a uniform, as he spends most of his time underground. Instead of a overcoat, he wears a stained white undershirt.

SOLDIER
Based on the locations of these maps, I'd say the strong points are here, here and here. One company's gonna have to dig two. What do you think, Arthur?

ARTHUR
(pointing on the map)
This one, it will be easy. It is quiet over there. We can finish that tunnel very easily.

SOLDIER
These other two look problematic. For the artillery, you're gonna have to go real deep to avoid collapse. And for the support one, you're gonna need to flank it in case they find it.

ARTHUR
Pas de problème. I figure we dig in the clay. About twenty-five meters down.

SOLDIER # 2
Twenty-five meters? How deep is that? Eighty feet? That's crazy. It'll take at least six months to get across!

ARTHUR
No one said it would be easy. But don't worry, they will all get done.
EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

The tunnels begin to be dug. The men pay little attention as Arthur begins the first tunnel.

At the back wall, Joey talks with Adrian, who is upset over losing Gonnell.

JOEY
You can't just sit around sulking all the time, Adrian. People die. You get over it.

ADRIAN
I told him I'd get him back.

JOEY
What else could you do? He got stuck out there. You're lucky you didn't die too.

ADRIAN
I should have.

JOEY
Come on! That's crazy talk, Adrian!

ADRIAN
I told him I would get him out of there. I could have. I told him to climb into the sinkhole. He was crying for me to help him. Screaming. And I told him--

A SHOT rings out. Adrian flinches. Joey turns to the parapet.

RED
Rat.

Joey makes a tally of the rat in his book and turns back to Adrian, who is looking at the ground, embarrassed for having flinched.

JOEY
Don't worry, Adrian. We'll get you straightened out.

INT. MESS HALL - ALLIED TRENCH - EVENING

Hanson sits with Joey as they eat dinner. Hanson eats his dinner, while Joey talks, nursing some cuts on his hands.

JOEY
The things I do for a blanket --

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He readjusts the bandages so they don't get caught on the wood of the table.

**JOEY**

It wasn't even new. At least I'm looking better than Sanders. He got caught napping yesterday -- Eckert gave him post duty for a week. Serves him right for not giving me back that blanket. That's a good thing to remember though, kid -- never get on Eckert's bad side. Or his good side. 'Cause then you get on everyone else's bad side.

(taking another bite)

Everyone here hates Eckert. You see their faces when he said he was taking over? He's the last guy you want in charge. A real stickler for regulations. The Protestant work ethic. You'd never think he fought a day in his life unless you knew better. Jeez, Hanson, you don't talk much, do you?

The two corporals come in, along with Arthur.

**PIKE**

Everyone, stand to.

(as everyone stands)

As you were.

The men sit. Arthur begins addressing them.

**ARTHUR**

Bonjour, gentlemen. As you may have heard, there will be some tunnels being dug in this area of the trench. Most of you do not care about this, I understand, but it is my duty to inform you that as of a few days ago, these tunnels are the top priority of the men in charge. There will be twenty-one tunnels dug along all areas of the front in preparation for a full-scale assault of German lines. This means you must dig too. This area of the trench has been assigned three tunnels. This company will be responsible for two of them. I have been transferred to the company in order to help with the digging and to teach all of you how to dig.

(as an aside)

I hear this company needs help the most.

The men laugh.
CONTINUED:

JOEY
Hey, Arthur, isn't it nice they listened to you and finally let you dig for real?

ARTHUR
The first time an American has ever listened to a Frenchman, I assure you. There will be mandatory lessons on tunneling for all of you. It will become another duty, like rebuilding, your favorite. Everyone will help work on the tunnels. Those that wish to be full-time tunnelers, come see me. Okay. That is it. Have a good meal, gentlemen.

INT. MESS HALL—ALLIED TRENCH—LATER

The men finish eating. Joey is making deals with the soldiers, while Hanson looks around the room. He sees Arthur, sitting alone at his table.

HANSON
Not one person's gone over there to talk to him.

JOEY
Who, Arthur? Arthur's been here forever. Ever since we started in the trenches, he's been trying to get the generals to let him plan a big tunneling operation. He's been bouncing around for months trying to find a CO that'll let him dig something. He's a good guy, though. Dug more tunnels than anyone.

HANSON
And no one wants to help him dig? It can't be that bad. Especially if we're planning this operation. It has to be better than just rebuilding all the time.

JOEY
Yeah, if you believe it. The generals change their minds every week. They try something because it worked for the Germans and think they can do it too. It's probably just Eckert thinking he can give us more work. Trust me. This tunneling business won't last for more than a week. Who's next?

The next soldier in line sits down to barter items.

(CONTINUED)
Hanson gets up and goes over to Arthur's table.

ARTHUR
Bonjour.

HANSON
I was thinking about maybe being a tunneler.

ARTHUR
Pourquoi? Why?

HANSON
I don't know. I think it would be a good thing to do -- help out, defeat the enemy.

ARTHUR
What is your name?

HANSON
Hanson.

ARTHUR
Bonjour Private Hanson. Pleased to meet you. Please. Sit down.

Hanson sits down. Arthur speaks more quietly to him now.

ARTHUR
Now, tell me, really why do you want to tunnel? I am not another officer. I am not looking for a particular answer. I only want to know why you would like to tunnel. That is my only concern.

HANSON
(honestly)
Because I think it's the best way for me not to get shot.

ARTHUR
There you are. I admire your honesty. You do not believe tunneling is just as dangerous as being on the front line?

HANSON
I can be killed the same way at home working in a coal mine. I'll take the chance below ground instead of above.

ARTHUR
Very well. If you are serious about tunneling, then I will show you.
INT. DUGOUT - ALLED TRENCH - NIGHT

Arthur is giving the platoon a lesson on digging tunnels. He has a small scale model on the desk in which he has created a mini tunnel and reinforced it with wooden planks.

\textbf{ARTHUR}
Always reinforce. You do not reinforce -- vous êtes dans beaucoup d'ennui -- you have just dug your own grave.

He pulls out a plank and the tunnel collapses. Hanson pays close attention to what Arthur says, while the rest of the men only half-listen and fool around.

\textbf{ARTHUR}
You must also listen for counterminers. We are going very low, so it will be hard for them to find us, but still you must always still listen. How to do this --

Arthur impales a stick into the wood and bites it.

\textbf{ARTHUR}
-- you bite a stick. You feel vibrations, you know they are digging a counter tunnel. The other way -- you take an oil drum, fill it with water --

He puts his ear into an oil drum sitting on the desk.

\textbf{ARTHUR}
Voila. Most of you have water in your ears anyway.

The men laugh. Arthur looks over at Foley, who is in the corner with his helmet over his face, napping.

\textbf{ARTHUR}
Sergeant Foley, you might consider listening to the demonstration. Provide a good example for your men.

Foley pops his helmet up.

\textbf{FOLEY}
I might indeed.

He lets his helmet fall over his face.

Arthur ignores him and continues.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ARTHUR
Now then, the most important lesson -- les creusers de tunnels faux -- or as you call them, dummy tunnels.

Foley scoffs at this from the corner.

ARTHUR
For every tunnel we dig, we dig at least two dummy tunnels. Very simple. The Germans find a tunnel, they blow it up. However, to do this they must also destroy their tunnel as well. The more dummy tunnels we have, the better the odds they will not find the real tunnel. Okay, that is enough for today's class. Next time we talk about the storming of the Bastille.

The men, now free, get up and leave. Some hanging around to talk to Arthur, including Hanson and Joey.

MORRELL
Hey Arthur, how many tunnels you dug in your life?

ARTHUR
I've dug a lot of tunnels. After a while you don't keep count.

Joey comes over.

JOEY
Hey, Arthur. Tell them the one about the POW camp.
   (nudging Hanson)
Listen to this one.

ARTHUR
All right. Earlier in the war, before we came to start digging our own graves, as it were, I was captured by a German platoon. They had taken a town overnight, and without knowing, we walked through it in broad daylight. It is a miracle we were not shot! They took us to a camp and put us with other men that have been captured as well. French, American, many men are in the camp with us. The German soldiers, apparently they have heard of me. They tell me, "You are famous tunnel digger," and I say, "Who, me?"

Arthur chuckles at his little funny.
CONTINUED:

ARTHUR
So they say, "You will teach us how to dig tunnels." Now I am not stupid, I say yes when there is a gun to my head. So I show them. I bring them with me and I dig and dig. I make them help me. I show them everything I know. We dig so much that when we resurface, we just so happen to dig right into the rest of my regiment.

The men laugh.

JOEY
It's better when you say you had them help you dig your own escape tunnel.

ARTHUR
No, I was very lucky that time. You never joke about a tunnel. Every time you dig a tunnel, one small mistake, even no mistake sometimes, and -- (mimics a collapse) -- you are finished.

HANSON
How many tunnels have you lost?

ARTHUR
I've lost many, many tunnels. It can get difficult -- all of the work you put into them. But, c'est la vie. That's life.

FOLEY
But losing a tunnel ain't like losing a man. Is it?

Everyone turns and looks at Foley.

ARTHUR
No, it is not, Sergeant Foley. But if you lose a tunnel, you can always begin a new one.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Hanson approaches Foley, who is napping at the back of the trench.

HANSON
Sergeant Foley --

Foley doesn't answer.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

**HANSON**
Sergeant Foley --

Hanson reaches to wake Foley up. Before he can:

**FOLEY**
Don't you dare try that again.
(lifts up his helmet)
What do you want?

**HANSON**
I'm going to be helping Arthur in the tunnels. He's teaching me how to dig.

**FOLEY**
And how is that any of my concern?

**HANSON**
We're required to tell our staff sergeants so they can rearrange the duty schedules.

**FOLEY**
That's what you came over to bother me about? Tunnels? Leave me alone, and go tell someone else.
(letting his helmet drop)
Tunnels.

**HANSON**
But sir --

Foley doesn't answer. Hanson gives an exasperated sigh.

From the parapet comes a WHISTLE. Hanson looks over. Red, perched on the fire step with his rifle, gives Hanson the okay.

**EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - LATER**

There is a lull in the day and the men begin to grow restless. They sit at their patrols, looking for ways to pass the time.

Sanders walks over to Morrell and whispers into his ear. Morrell smiles devilishly and walks over to the parapet, where a REPLACEMENT is standing guard.

Morrell grabs the replacement's cap and keeps it out of his reach as he tries to grab for it.

**SANDERS**
Hurry up, kid. You better not let a CO see you in uniform violation.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

The replacement tackles Morrell to the ground and the two begin wrestling, trying to pin the other to the ground.

The rest of the men gather around. This is the most excitement they've seen all day.

The cap is lost in the shuffle as the men bounce off the walls, knocking sandbags over the top of the trench and rustling up dirt and dust.

Eventually, the replacement manages to throw Morrell to the ground and retrieve his hat. The men applaud and cheer him.

**MORRELL**
(standing)
Nice job, kid. That's the first time a replacement's ever beaten me.

He pats the replacement on the back for his effort. His smile disappears when he notices that, over by the traverse, Lieutenant Eckert had been watching the entire time.

The rest of the men notice Eckert and immediately make themselves scarce. Eckert walks up to the replacement.

**ECKERT**
Care to tell me what is going on?

**MORRELL**
We were just messing--

**ECKERT**
I wasn't speaking to you, Private, I was speaking to him.
(turning to the replacement)
What's your name, son?

**REPLACEMENT**
Davis, sir.

**ECKERT**
Well, Davis, explain yourself.

**REPLACEMENT**
Well, sir, we uhh--

**ECKERT**
You knocked over some sandbags. I've noticed. Now tell me why you knocked over some sandbags.

**MORRELL**
That was just--

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

**ECKERT**
I believe I asked Private Davis. I do not appreciate the constant interruption. You don't want to get me angry now, do you?

Morrell immediately shuts up.

**REPLACEMENT**
Sir, it was just an accident.

**ECKERT**
You realize that if any sniper decided to take aim over this area of the trench he'd have a clear shot at any number of our men?
(talking over Morrell as he tries to talk again)
Moreover, it is regrettable that even our more experienced officers are not mature enough to lead by example and must subject the rest of the company to unnecessary death.

Morrell says quiet in embarrassment.

**ECKERT**
Now son, I know you feel the need to prove yourself to these men, but you did endanger us all with your actions just then. You will not be punished, but you will need to go and replace the sandbag. Let this serve as a lesson to you.

The replacement starts walking to the communication trench.

**ECKERT**
The original sandbag.

The replacement stops and looks over the top of the parapet. He knows what that entails.

**MORRELL**
Sir, that's a death sentence! It's worse than--

**ECKERT**
Private Morrell, I've told you three times already to keep your mouth shut! Now you've earned yourself latrine duty. I suggest you leave quickly before I decide to double it.

Morrell stares incredulously at Eckert, but leaves, not wanting to test Eckert's resolve.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ECKERT
(to the replacement)
That wasn't a request, son.

The replacement walks to the parapet like a man walking to the electric chair. Just as he's about to hop up and over:

FOLEY (O.C.)
Stop.

The replacement stops. Everyone looks over to the back of the trench, where Foley had been napping unnoticed.

ECKERT
You have something to say, Sergeant?

FOLEY
Lots. But right now I'm telling that man to disobey that order.

ECKERT
Unfortunately you are not the ranking officer in this trench, despite your attitude to the contrary.
(to the replacement)
I don't see you moving, Private.

FOLEY
(to the replacement)
Stay right where you are.
(to Eckert)
You're sending a man off to death for a sandbag. If he knew what was good for him, he'll stay right there.

ECKERT
He stays put and he gets a court martial.

FOLEY
A court martial is better than a coffin.

ECKERT
Sergeant Foley, I am a Lieutenant in the United--

FOLEY
You're no Lieutenant. You're a lousy, no good--

ECKERT
Sergeant Foley--

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

**FOLEY**
-- nothing better than a--

**ECKERT**
-- you have no right to question--

**FOLEY**
-- never could think for yourself--

**ECKERT**
-- and when I order someone to go fix something--

**FOLEY**
-- sending a man to die--

**ECKERT**
-- they will GO FIX IT!

Everyone quiets. Foley and Eckert stare each other down. Everyone else looks at the replacement to see what he is going to do.

The replacement weighs his options before finally turning toward the parapet.

Everyone watches as the replacement goes up and over, holding their gazes to see what happens.

For a long moment, nothing happens. Maybe he'll make it after all.

Finally a SHOT rings out from No Man's Land. The replacement doesn't return.

Everyone takes a moment to process what has happened and mourn the loss of a life before returning to their duties.

Foley sits back against the wall, knowingly.

**ECKERT**
Somebody go get a sandbag.

As Eckert leaves, he passes Foley, who gives him a look that oozes with 'I told you so'.

**FOLEY**
Nice job, Lieutenant.

Eckert walks away without another word.
INT. DUMMY TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Arthur teaches Hanson how to dig. On-the-job training.
Arthur digs away at the earth while Hanson holds his tools
and reinforces what has already been dug.

ARTHUR
You want to keep everything even, in case
you accidentally dig too much. You don't
want a collapse. Hand me that axe.

He breaks up some hard dirt with the axe.

ARTHUR
Now start reinforcing like I showed you.
(as Hanson starts to
reinforce)
Never be fooled. Dummy tunnels are just
as important as regular tunnels. Plus it
is easier to learn on them. Not as much
risk. Soon I will not need to come down
here with you.

HANSON
How are the other tunnels coming?

ARTHUR
Comme Ci, Comme Ça. They are coming along.
Some easier than others. Tunnel twenty-one --
that, is another story.

HANSON
Why twenty-one?

ARTHUR
Pourquoi vingt-et-un? Because it will
undoubtedly be the last to be finished.
Some tunnels do not want to be dug.

HANSON
(after a moment)
Arthur --

ARTHUR
Oui?

HANSON
Earlier, with Sergeant Foley and
Lieutenant Eckert --

ARTHUR
Oui.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANSON
Why does Lieutenant Eckert allow him to act like that? Openly disobeying orders?

ARTHUR
Because he must. Why do I dig? Because I must. Because when I join the army they hand me a shovel and say, "you -- dig". We all do as we must. It helps that we are both good at what we do.

HANSON
But Sergeant Foley, he just seems so--

ARTHUR
Lieutenant -- pardonnez-moi -- Sergeant Foley -- he is a good man. He has endured much death. One day he will come around.

HANSON
Hasn't everyone here experienced death? What makes Foley so special? And to openly disobey Lieutenant Eckert's orders--

ARTHUR
Sergeant Foley--

Suddenly, an EXPLOSION is heard from up above.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Arthur and Hanson climb up out of the tunnel. A crowd has gathered around the entrance to tunnel twenty-one, where a SENTRY is being pulled out by several of the men.

ARTHUR
What happened?

SENTRY
Franklin -- accidentally popped the pin on a grenade. The whole thing collapsed.

ARTHUR
Tunnel twenty-one. Va te faire --

He hops down into the tunnel to survey the damage.

ARTHUR
Keep digging.

HANSON
With who?
INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Hanson is digging, being "helped" by Foley. Foley sits with his eyes closed, not actually helping at all.

HANSON
You know, you could help a little.

Foley growls and shifts positions.

HANSON
Can I ask you a question?

FOLEY
No.

HANSON
Do you hate everyone? Or do you just not care? Because if I were a staff sergeant, I might at least pretend to have an interest in my men -- have some common courtesy.

FOLEY
(finally lifting his helmet)
Is there a reason you keep talking?

HANSON
Why must you ignore everything?

FOLEY
If you're going to keep yammering on, say something interesting.

HANSON
Something interesting --

FOLEY
Yeah, something interesting.

HANSON
How about a story? You want to hear a story, Sergeant?

FOLEY
Sure, tell me a story. I could use something to put me to sleep.

HANSON
Okay, here's a story -- a boy grows up in a small town. He's seventeen, and wants nothing more than to marry his high-school sweetheart.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANSON (CONT'D)
But his family is full of military men. His grandfather fought in the Civil War. His father in the Spanish American War. He isn't considered a man unless he carries on the family tradition. So instead of getting married, he goes to the recruitment office. Now a lot of men, when they don't want to fight, they lie. They tell the officer they have some sort of illness, anything in order to get turned away. Not this boy. He tells the truth. He walks right into the office and says he's perfectly healthy. And when the sergeant asks him how old he is, he says, "I'm seventeen," knowing full well the army couldn't take him until he was eighteen. Just enough time to go back home and elope. You see, his girlfriend's parents have a job for him out west, and if only he could raise the money, they could make it out there and start a life and be happy together. All he needed to do was be turned away. So, after telling the truth, that he's seventeen, the Sergeant takes a look at him and says, "Son, you better go outside and come back and tell me different." The boy goes outside, comes back in -- "I'm nineteen," he says. "Fantastic, the Sergeant says, "you're in."

He begins to reinforce the part of the tunnel he just dug.

HANSON
So he joins the army. Gets sent to France. The trenches. And all he wants to do is survive so he can get back home to his girl. He's been taught to depend on his fellow officers in order to stay alive. So he tries to ask his staff sergeant for advice, but all he does is sleep all day and ignore him. What's he to think, when his superior officer just sits there and waits for his men to die? This story doesn't have an ending. What do you think, Sergeant? I thought it could have been better delivered myself.

Foley sits there, letting the story linger for a moment, before quietly saying:

FOLEY
Focus on digging, so you don't get us both killed.
EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Red sits on the parapet with his rifle, waiting for a target to shoot at.

Adrian sits at the back wall, looking at one of Gonnell's religious medals, crusted over with mud. Joey comes over.

JOEY
Okay, Adrian, I've been giving this a lot of thought--

He takes the religious medal and looks at it before tossing it aside, thinking it to be a piece of garbage.

JOEY
Look, Adrian -- you're having problems shooting at other men. So all you gotta do to get back in the swing of things is take a couple of shots at some rats. We need extra snipers anyway. It's perfect.

Adrian stands up and goes to the parapet. Red hands him his rifle and leans against the back wall to watch. Adrian sets up and aims out into No Man's Land.

JOEY
There you go. There's a nice one.

Adrian takes aim at the rat -- prepares to shoot -- and can't do it. He lowers his rifle. Joey sighs. Red comes over to the parapet to get his rifle. He gives Adrian a pat on the back and Adrian sits back down.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - NIGHT

Eckert walks along the trenches, making sure everyone is doing their duty. The ground is wet and muddy. It has been raining.

Jackson runs past. He stops to salute Eckert.

JACKSON
Evening, Lieutenant.

ECKERT
How's the trench looking?

JACKSON
Aside from the rain, everything's in good shape.
CONTINUED:

**ECKERT**
Excellent. Has there been any improvement on the postal situation? Have any letters arrived?

**JACKSON**
No, sir. We haven't been able to break the blockades. There hasn't been anything in weeks.

**ECKERT**
All right. That'll be all, Private.

**JACKSON**
Good night, sir.

Jackson continues on his way. Eckert walks over to a SNIPER at the parapet.

**ECKERT**
How's the front looking?

**SNIPER**
It's quiet, sir.

**ECKERT**
Good.

Eckert turns to leave when he is suddenly overcome by a headache. He leans against the wall of the trench for support.

**SNIPER**
You okay, sir?

The sniper comes down to help him. Eckert shakes him off.

**ECKERT**
I'm fine, I'm fine.

Eckert regains his composure, and accidentally steps on the sniper's foot. The sniper ignores it and steps back on the parapet.

**ECKERT**
Sorry about that.

**SNIPER**
About what, sir?

**ECKERT**
I stepped on -- stand at attention, Private.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SNIPER

What, sir?

ECKERT

Stand to.

The sniper steps off the parapet and stands at attention. Eckert picks up the sniper's rifle.

ECKERT

I apologize for this.

Eckert SLAMS the rifle into the man's foot. The man doesn't react. His foot was numb.

The man realizes he's been caught.

ECKERT

How long have you had it?

SNIPER

-- a few days.

ECKERT

Why didn't you tell anyone?

SNIPER

I want to fight, sir. We're already low on men as it is.

ECKERT

Trench foot is a serious issue, soldier. A few more days and you might have lost that foot. Now go to the infirmary and get it taken care of.

SNIPER

But sir, I'm scheduled for reserve in--

ECKERT

No arguments, Private. That's an order.

SNIPER

Yes, sir.

The sniper leaves. Eckert, fighting another headache calls over to a SENTRY.

ECKERT

Take over for him until he gets back.

The sentry picks up the man's rifle and positions himself on the parapet.
INT. MESS HALL - ALLIED TRENCH - NIGHT

Hanson and Arthur discuss the tunnels as they eat dinner.

ARTHUR
Part of the tunnel has been saved. Mon dieu. This tunnel will be the death of me. The only one not on schedule. Of course this must be the most important tunnel.

HANSON
Tunnel twenty-one, taking out the artillery guns -- it would be funny if it weren't true. What are we gonna do with it? Dig somewhere else?

ARTHUR
No. I must take over it full time.

HANSON
What about the other tunnel?

ARTHUR
I believe you have just become head tunneler of that one. It seems as though my prediction has come through after all.

Before Hanson can thank Arthur or even think about what the responsibility of being head tunneler actually entails, Foley stands up in front of the men.

FOLEY
All right, everybody, listen up. I don't want to have to repeat myself.

Everybody quiets down immediately.

FOLEY
We're going on a raid tonight. Standard procedure -- prisoners if we're lucky, documents, maps, weapons, anything you can get your hands on. Keep a revolver for emergencies only. Nothing noisy. Volunteers?

SANDERS
I'll go.

MORRELL
Yeah.

Red nods. Other soldiers also agree to go.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

**FOLEY**

Adrian?

Adrian thinks about it for a second.

**ADRIAN**

No, I don't think so, Sergeant.

**FOLEY**

You'll be on post then.

**ADRIAN**

Okay, Sergeant.

**FOLEY**

Joey? Scout?

**JOEY**

I'm in, Sarge.

**FOLEY**

We need one more.

**HANSON**

I'll do it.

Foley ignores Hanson. Another man quickly agrees to join.

**FOLEY**

Good. All right, we leave at midnight.

Foley begins to leave the room. Hanson walks up to him.

**HANSON**

Why can't I be on the team?

**FOLEY**

The team was filled.

Foley walks toward the door.

**HANSON**

That's unfair.

**FOLEY**

(turning)

Unfair, huh? I think, Private Hanson, that you would be an ideal choice to help Adrian out on post tonight -- watch us as we go on our raid.

Foley leaves. Hanson wonders what he did to deserve that.
EXT. SAP HEAD — ALLIED TRENCH — LATER

The raiding party gets ready to leave. The team consists of seven men, along with Hanson and Adrian standing post.

The team blackens their faces with dirt and arms themselves with clubs, bayonets, hatchets, and other close combat weapons.

**FOLEY**
Remember, no noise.

Joey puts on a pair of brass knuckles before climbing up on the fire step and going up and over.

**JOEY**
(to Hanson and Adrian)
Don't shoot us when we get back.

Joey starts crawling forward and the rest of the men begin to hop up and over.

Hanson and Adrian watch them crawl off into the darkness.

EXT. SAP HEAD — ALLIED TRENCH — LATER

Hanson and Adrian wait for the team.

**HANSON**
How long does it usually take?

**ADRIAN**
It varies. Some days they have extra guys on sentry and they come right back. Other days they'll get a good twenty minutes in the trench before they have to turn back. One time we didn't get back until morning.

**HANSON**
Is it dangerous?

**ADRIAN**
Could be. Usually the first sign of danger, you hop right out and come back.

**HANSON**
I can't believe Foley wouldn't let me go.

**ADRIAN**
Oh, don't mind Foley, he always does stuff like that.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANSON
I'm going to ask him about it. There has to be a reason.

ADRIAN
Good luck with that.

HANSON
What makes him so special? He's not scary, he's just mean. Why doesn't anyone call him out for what he is?

ADRIAN
What is it you think he is?

EXT. SAP HEAD - ALLIED TRENCH - LATER

Hanson and Adrian are still waiting.

HANSON
Did you know him well? Is that why you can't --

ADRIAN
No, nothing like that. I mean, I knew him, but not any more than I know you. It's just, since he died -- I can't bring myself to shoot the enemy when I can't even help my friends.

HANSON
Have you tried?

ADRIAN
A few times. I start shaking and I get all sweaty and nervous. And then all I see is Gon nell, grabbing those medals around his neck and screaming for me to help him. You think you're prepared for everything until you see a man drown because he doesn't have the strength to pull himself out of the muck.

HANSON
Maybe you should try digging. It's not such a bad job. And if something does happen, a gun isn't going to help you.

ADRIAN
Yeah, maybe.
EXT. SAP HEAD - ALLIED TRENCH - LATER

It is much later. The team has still not yet returned. Hanson and Adrian are growing tired.

Then, SHOTS are fired. A lot of shots. Grenades go off, there is the SCURRYING of feet, GROANING, and CURSING.

Hanson and Adrian wait patiently, wondering if friend or enemy will meet them.

Suddenly, a body rolls over the top.

Adrian is unable draw his gun. Hanson hesitates, but does not shoot. It's Foley. Hanson goes over to talk to him --

**FOLEY**

Get out of the way.

He pushes Hanson aside and lifts up his arms to help bring in a wounded man.

Hanson puts down his gun and goes over to help bring the man in. The man has a piece of metal stuck in his leg.

Two more men are brought in. They have been shot, but are not badly wounded. Hanson and Adrian help bring them down as the rest of the men return. Joey hops down into the trench last.

**JOEY**

Damn that was close. The Gerries almost got us.

Hanson looks around for Foley, but he has already disappeared.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - THE NEXT DAY

Hanson enters the front line, looking for Foley. He goes over to Red, who is shooting rats out in No Man's Land.

**HANSON**

Hey, Red. You seen Sergeant Foley?

Red shakes his head. Hanson goes over to Joey, who is trying to snap Adrian out of his funk.

**JOEY**

Will you shoot me if I give you my pistol? I'll even let you get me in the arm, so they don't have to take me off duty.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANSON
Hey guys, have you seen Sgt. Foley around?

JOEY
No. No one's seen him all day. He does that. Probably out sleeping in a foxhole or something. Hey, listen, Hanson -- will you tell Adrian it's a good idea--

A SHOT rings out. The sentry Eckert put in place of the injured sniper falls victim to another sniper's bullet.

JOEY
Ah, jeez. There goes my brandy.

INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Hanson is digging and reinforcing all by himself. Foley comes down into the tunnel and sets himself up for a nap.

HANSON
Glad you can make it.

Foley ignores him.

HANSON
Where were you?

FOLEY
Busy.

Foley lowers his helmet over his eyes.

HANSON
How come I wasn't allowed on the team?

Foley ignores him once again.

HANSON
Do you think I'm not capable?

FOLEY
Don't you have better things to do?
Pretend I'm not here.

HANSON
That's easy to do. It'll be like every other day when I pretend you're my staff sergeant.

FOLEY
Will you shut up and dig?
INT. ECKERT'S OFFICE - DUGOUT - ALLED TRENCH - NIGHT

Eckert is dictating the tunnels' progress to Jackson for his superior officers. He's holding his head, trying to overcome a headache.

**ECKERT**
Tunnels nineteen and twenty are fully on schedule, with tunnel nineteen expected to be finished by the end of the month. Tunnel twenty-one, however, continues to be troublesome, with numerous collapses and discoveries by German counterminers. Despite any setbacks, we have the utmost confidence that tunnel twenty-one will be completed in time for the planned assault. And have them send them over a bottle of cognac. That's what Gordon likes to drink.

**JACKSON**
Will do, sir. Should I send Joey down now?

**ECKERT**
Yes.

Jackson leaves. Soon after, Joey comes down the stairs.

**JOEY**
You wanted to see me, sir?

**ECKERT**
Yes. I was wondering if by chance -- seeing as how you're the man to see about certain things -- certain items --

**JOEY**
Oh, sir, that's just something the guys throw around. Gossip, really. I don't actually--

**ECKERT**
I'm not here to reprimand you, Private. On the contrary, I was going to ask if you had any way of sending correspondence between lines, seeing as how you find a way to manage everything else.

**JOEY**
Everything else is easy, sir. With the blockades, letters are impossible to get through. You can't send secrets in whiskey, sir.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

**ECKERT**
Right. That will be all then, Private.

**JOEY**
Any particular reason you ask, sir?

**ECKERT**
Well, we've been having trouble receiving correspondence from the other divisions. I was hoping there might be another way to find out how they're doing.

**JOEY**
Oh, for the attack and all.

**ECKERT**
Right.

**INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - MORNING**

Arthur enters tunnel twenty-one. He whistles, prepared for another day's work on the problematic tunnel.

As he moves through the completed portions of the tunnel, he makes sure all of the reinforcements are strong.

He gets to the end, only to discover several mines planted. The Germans found the tunnel.

**ARTHUR**
Fils de pute.

The mines DETONATE.

**INT. MESS HALL - ALLIED TRENCH - LATER**

The men eat a solemn dinner, upset over Arthur's death. Eckert enters.

**ECKERT**
I know you're all upset. We lost a good man today. But we must not let that blind us from the mission at hand. We have a job to do, and anger will not help us in our endeavors. We must honor Arthur by doing what he did best -- dig.

**JOEY**
(whispering)
Arthur's not even cold yet and he's making us do work. You believe this guy?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

**ECKERT**
We're going to need a new head engineer to work on the tunnels full time. This will be your only duty to fulfill. Any other work you would do otherwise will be put on hold until the mission is completed. Who's interested?

Everyone looks around. No one seems thrilled to do it. Hanson considers agreeing to do it, which Joey notices.

**JOEY**
(whispering)
Hanson, are you crazy? That's a death sentence!

**ECKERT**
Is there no one here that will honor a fallen soldier?

Another round of silence. No one wants the job. Until:

**RED**
I'll do it.

**JOEY**
Jesus, Red! How are we supposed to beat the Gerries without our best sniper?

**HANSON**
I'll do it.

**JOEY**
What?!

**ECKERT**
Both of you will do it?

**HANSON**
I'll take over when he's on the line.

**POLEY**
(from the back)
No.

**ECKERT**
No?

**HANSON**
Why not?

**POLEY**
Absolutely not.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ECKERT
You object to this?

JOEY
Thank God somebody does.

HANSON
He objects to everything I do! He doesn't trust me with anything.

Eckert surveys the two men.

ECKERT
Sergeant Foley, do you have a reason why this man cannot work?

FOLEY
It is my decision as staff sergeant. That's all the reason I need.

ECKERT
Not right now it isn't. Private Hanson, do you feel you are capable of assuming the duties of co-head engineer?

HANSON
Yes I do, sir.

ECKERT
Now Foley, I'm going to give you one more chance. Is there any good reason why Hanson cannot perform this duty?

Foley glares at Eckert without answering.

ECKERT
Very well. It's all yours, Hanson.

FOLEY
You're an idiot.

ECKERT
And Sergeant, from now on you're personally responsible for helping Private Hanson with his duties. Any order he does not agree with comes to me for final decision. If you do not comply with these orders, I will personally see that Major Gordon knows it is you who ruined his operation.

He turns to Hanson as he leaves.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

**ECKERT**

Congratulations, son. You have the distinct honor of finally getting Sergeant Foley to assume his job title.

He begins walking away.

**FOLEY**

Hey Lieutenant, how's your wife?

Eckert stops in his tracks.

For the briefest of moments, nothing happens. Eckert then continues, leaving without another word.

---

**INT. TUNNEL – ALLIED TRENCH – DAY**

Hanson is digging with Foley, angrily breaking up pieces of earth. Foley tries to figure out how to reinforce, but can't manage to keep the area from collapsing.

**FOLEY**

How do you keep these damn pieces of wood from falling?

Hanson ignores Foley.

**FOLEY**

Hey, Hanson!

Hanson still won't answer.

**FOLEY**

Look, I did it for your own good. Don't give me that wounded child look.

**HANSON**

If you were more of a leader and not such a louse then maybe your opinion would mean something.

**FOLEY**

What's that supposed to mean?

**HANSON**

You're a Sergeant, for God's sake! You're in a position to help people. To guide the younger men through this so they don't get themselves killed. And all you can think about is some sort of grudge you have against higher authorities like Eckert. You're not half the leader Arthur was.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

**FOLEY**
Arthur spent all the war underground. He didn't know anything about real war.

**HANSON**
And I suppose you do?

**FOLEY**
You're damn right I do!

**HANSON**
Then tell me -- what's real war like?

Foley starts to speak, but doesn't answer.

**EXT. SAP HEAD - ALLIED TRENCH - NIGHT**

The men are preparing for another raid. Foley and the team blacken their faces and prepare their weapons.

**FOLEY**
No prisoners this time.

Hanson comes over and begins preparing to leave as well.

**FOLEY**
Where do you think you're going?

**HANSON**
I'm going with you. Or else we can take it up with Lieutenant Eckert.

Foley looks at Hanson angrily, then growls and walks away.

The men crawl up and over.

**EXT. NO MAN'S LAND - CONTINUOUS**

The men quietly crawl toward the German trench. They stop several yards from the sap head and listen.

After a few moments they hear the sound of sleeping men.

**EXT. SAP HEAD - GERMAN TRENCH - CONTINUOUS**

The GERMAN GUARD sleeps soundly on the fire step.

The team quietly enters the sap head from the sides. Red kills the guard with his knife and the men move stealthily toward the front line.
EXT. FRONT LINE - GERMAN TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

Joey peers around the entrance to the sap head, looking for sentries. One SENTRY sits on the fire step, occasionally peering out into No Man's Land.

At Joey's signal, Sanders moves up and hits the sentry with a club, knocking him out.

He kills the sentry as the rest of the team enters the trench. He rifles through the sentry's pockets for any documents he may be carrying.

The team moves quietly along the front line, led by Joey, killing any German they can find and checking their pockets.

As they reach the next traverse, Foley turns to give orders to the men. As he does, a GERMAN SOLDIER walks through the traverse.

The man freezes as soon as he sees the team, struck dumb by the sight of men with blackened faces. Before the man can reach for his gun, he is SHOT twice.

Foley turns around to see where the shots came from and sees Hanson with his pistol out.

"Was das war?" A SHOUT is heard from another part of the trench.

Foley quickly searches the dead soldier's pockets, pulling out what appears to be a map. He hands it to Joey to put in his satchel and quickly hurries toward the sap head with the rest of the team.

The German SHOUTS get closer. They realize they won't be able to make it back in time.

FOLEY

Everybody over.

The team hops up and rolls into No Man's Land from where they are, and end up in a tangle of barbed wire.

The men quickly move through the wire, cutting themselves, but not stopping to feel the pain. Joey slices his leg on the wire and YELLS.

JOEY

My leg's stuck!

Foley waits behind and tries to help Joey out.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

From the trench, they hear the Germans finding the soldier Hanson shot. SHOTS begin to be fired into No Man's Land.

Hanson waits behind for Foley and Joey.

**FOLEY**

Go back. I'll take care of Joey.

(as Hanson hesitates)

I said go!

The men keep moving. Foley helps Joey out of the wire and they begin crawling slowly.

The hear the Germans raise ALARM in trench, calling for help.

Joey's leg is torn open and he cannot move very fast. Foley stands up, picks Joey up and helps him across No Man's Land.

Many SHOTS begin to be fired. The Germans are mobilizing.

**FOLEY**

We have to hurry. They're going to shoot up flairs. They'll be able to see us.

Foley brings Joey toward a shell hole big enough for the two of them. They throw themselves inside.

Foley looks out over the edge as flairs shoot up into the sky. Joey nurses his wounded leg.

**FOLEY**

The sap head's about thirty yards behind us. If we hold tight, we should be able to make it back by morning.

**INT. ECKERT'S OFFICE - DUGOUT - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY**

Eckert sits at his desk, writing. Jackson comes down.

**JACKSON**

Sir, Colonel Haig wants to see you.

**ECKERT**

All right, send him down.

**JACKSON**

No, sir, I mean he wants to see you. At his house. He's invited you to dinner. I think it has something to do with the troops in the south.

Eckert stops writing, feeling another headache coming on.
EXT. COLONEL HAIG'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Eckert arrives at the Colonel's house, a quaint little farmhouse on the outskirts of an Ally-occupied town.

The GUARDS outside let Eckert pass and he enters the house.

INT. COLONEL HAIG'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Eckert walks to the dining room, where Colonel Haig sits.

    HAIG
    Ah, Eckert, good of you to come. Sit down.
    (as Eckert sits)
    Forgive me for not standing. The leg's been bad lately.

    ECKERT
    Not a problem, sir.

The food is immediately brought in by housekeepers. A veritable feast is laid out before the two men.

    HAIG
    I suspect you haven't had a decent meal in a while, Lieutenant.

    ECKERT
    Sir, I don't think I know what the word decent means anymore.

    HAIG
    If you don't mind, I'd prefer to keep the business until after the meal.

    ECKERT
    With all due respect, sir, I'd prefer to get right down to it.

    HAIG
    Your distaste for pleasantries. Very well.
    (filling his plate)
    We've received word from our troops in the south. They're being surrounded by German infantry and are unable to move. Within a month they will be surrounded, and if nothing changes, they will be overrun by winter.

    ECKERT
    Sir, I don't understand.

(CONTINUED)
HAIG
Yes you do. You knew what I was going to tell you before you came over here. But I'll say it anyway. We've changed the time of the assault to the end of the month. Each section must have their tunnels completed in thirty days. After that we proceed as planned, in the hopes that the Germans will be forced to pull troops from the south for support and ease up on our boys. I know you've had some problems with one of your tunnels, but you know as well as anyone, this operation has been carefully planned, and we don't have the time to go back and recalculate for one missed tunnel. Our men down south don't have the time. So I'm asking you, personally, to do whatever you have to do to get it finished on time.

Eckert sits quietly for a moment, digesting the information he has just been given.

ECKERT
What am I supposed to tell my men, sir?

HAIG
I don't follow.

ECKERT
My men, sir, are upset. They're tired, they're angry, and they're overworked. All they want is to see some progress, instead of just delaying death. And I'm tired too. Tired of having to go out there every day, hated by every last man for making them do what they don't want to do, telling them what I'm ordering them to do is right, even though we all know it isn't. And now I have to go back and tell my men that after months of work they didn't want to do, it wasn't good enough. I have to tell them to work faster and harder on the tunnels, when what they really care about is whether or not a bullet or sneak attack or a shell is going to get them every second of every day. And yet you expect me to sit here and have a meal with you, and pretend as if all of that is nonexistent. Well, sir, after news like that, I don't have much of an appetite.

They sit in silence for a few seconds.
HAIG
I don't think it will matter to your men whether or not you ate dinner.

ECKERT
It will to me, sir.

HAIG
You know, you're absolutely right, Lieutenant. We all need to say what we feel sometimes. And we don't always agree with the decisions of our superiors. But let me tell you something -- if you aren't under any stress from your superiors or hated by your men at any point in time -- you aren't doing your job.

(as Eckert takes that in)
Have you heard from your wife?

ECKERT
We can't break through the blockades. The Germans aren't letting any mail into or out of the country.

HAIG
My condolences. Was she all right, the last you heard?

ECKERT
I'd rather not discuss my personal life, sir.

Haig nods. Eckert stands.

ECKERT
I'll have the tunnels ready in thirty days, Colonel. Good evening.

INT. DUGOUT - ALLED TRENCH - NIGHT

The men play poker. Joey, Adrian, Hanson, Sanders and Morrell sit around the table, having a good time. Joey has his leg bandaged and resting atop a chair.

JOEY
I raise you ten cigarettes.

Adrian folds. So does Sanders.

SANDERS
C'mon Joey, you know I can't afford that.
CONTINUED:

HANSON
(tossing in his cards)
I don't even smoke.

Joey takes the pot, which includes Sanders' extra blanket.

JOEY
Ha ha. Just raking it in. Thanks for the blanket, Sanders. I may be able to make that deal yet.

HANSON
I don't understand how you can keep betting like that. What happens when one of us gets a big hand?

JOEY
I'll let you know when one of you's gets a big hand.

Joey shuffles up and deals as everyone antes. They look at their cards.

ADRIAN
I'm in.

MORRELL
Me too. I'll raise a buck.

SANDERS
I'll call.

HANSON
Me too.

JOEY
I'm gonna give you guys a chance. I'll only call you. How many you want?

ADRIAN
Two.

MORRELL
I'm good.

JOEY
Ooh, feeling confident.

SANDERS
I'll take three.

HANSON
One.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Joey deals himself two.

**JOEY**
All right, I'm betting three bucks.

**MORRELL**
I call. You ain't getting me.

**ADRIAN**
Fold. Can't do it.

**SANDERS**
I don't think they're good enough to call the bluff. I'm out.

**JOEY**
-- and Hanson folds.

**HANSON**
Hanson hasn't made up his mind yet, thank you very much.

**JOEY**
Come on, kid. We know what you got. You play when you get good cards and you fold when you don't.

**HANSON**
You play your way, I'll play mine.

Hanson folds. The men flip over their cards. Joey wins.

**JOEY**
Keep it coming. More money for the coffer.

**HANSON**
I need to go check on Red.

**JOEY**
Tell him I said to get out of the tunnel and up on the parapet. I need him to get me another sniper. I want my brandy back.

(as Hanson leaves)
Who's taking over for Hanson? Anyone? Hey, Sergeant Foley --

Foley, who is sleeping in the corner, pops his helmet up.

**JOEY**
Hey Sergeant, come on in the game. Last I heard, you was one hell of a poker player.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

FOLEY
Last I heard, you weren't.

The men at the table "ooh" and "aah" at the challenge.

JOEY
How 'bout I bet you an extra box of cigars that I'll get you broke by the end of the night?

FOLEY
You're on.

INT. DUGOUT - ALLED TRENCH - LATER

Foley has at least twice as many chips as Joey. A lot of them are in the pot, almost all of Joey's. Only Foley and Joey are still in the hand. At least a dozen men stand around, watching.

SANDERS
How many?

JOEY
Two.

He looks at Foley.

FOLEY
None.

Everyone tenses up to see what will happen.

SANDERS
All right, flip 'em.

Foley flips over his: three of a kind. Everyone waits to see Joey's hand.

Joey takes off his cap and tosses it on the table. He mucks his hand.

JOEY
You win, Sergeant.

Foley takes down the chips, cracking a smile as he does.

MORRELL
Wait, Sergeant, was that a smile I saw?

FOLEY
What?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ADRIAN
I saw it too.

FOLEY
I don't know what you're talking about. Deal the next hand.

SANDERS
Why Sergeant -- I do believe you have a soft spot in there somewhere after all.

FOLEY
Yeah, it's at the end of my fist. Care to see it?

Joey deals the next hand as Hanson comes back in.

JOEY
Sorry, Hanson. Look like you lost your seat.

FOLEY
I'm showing these boys how a real man plays cards.

HANSON
(surprised)
Go right ahead, Sergeant.

The men look at their cards.

FOLEY
I bet the rest of your chips, Joey.

MORRELL
God, I wish I had enough to see this.

He folds. Adrian does too. Sanders puts in his chips.

SANDERS
I'm in. I'll see this.

JOEY
How many cards you want, Wild Bill?

FOLEY
One.

JOEY
How 'bout you, Cochise?

SANDERS
Three.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOEY
And I'll take two. What's your bet?

FOLEY
I don't know -- what can you call?

JOEY
I ain't bettin' no cigars, if that's what you're thinking. How about this?

Joey takes the crucifix off of his neck and puts it in the pot.

JOEY
My confirmation present. My mother ain't gonna be too happy, but it'll net you a pretty penny anywhere you try to sell it.

Adrian sees the crucifix and involuntarily knocks over all his chips. He starts sweating and shaking uncontrollably.

SANDERS
Hey, Adrian, you all right?

ADRIAN
Oh, God!

HANSON
(quickly standing)
Come on, Adrian, let's go outside. Morrell, get him outside.

MORRELL
Yeah.

Morrell quickly stands and walks Adrian outside.

SANDERS
What did you do?

JOEY
I don't know! One minute, we're playing cards, the next, he's going crazy.

HANSON
Gonnell had religious medals around his neck when he died.

SANDERS
Oh, no. Joey --

JOEY
How was I supposed to know he had medals?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Nobody answers. Everyone sits in silence, feeling bad about Adrian's condition. After a moment:

**JOEY**
Well -- I guess we might as well keep playing.

**FOLEY**
Keep playing? What's wrong with you? Can't you see the man is upset? Don't you have the decency to respect a man when he's dealing with the death of someone?
(standing up angrily)
None of you know what it's like to lose a man. You have no right to judge him.

Foley goes back to the corner and resumes his original position. The rest of the men begin to disperse.

**INT. DUGOUT – ALLED TRENCH – LATER**

The dugout has quieted, and the men are going to bed. Joey and Hanson clear off the table after the game.

**HANSON**
What was with Sergeant Foley? Why did he flip out like that?

**JOEY**
It's Sergeant Foley. Does he ever need a reason?

**HANSON**
But he actually defended Adrian. I've never seen Foley even acknowledge someone, let alone defend them.

**JOEY**
Leave it alone. It's a touchy subject. He don't like to talk about it much.

**HANSON**
He doesn't like to talk about anything.

**JOEY**
This is different.

**HANSON**
I don't see why.

Joey looks over at Foley, who is in the corner, sleeping.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

JOEY
All right, fine. I'll tell you, but you gotta keep your mouth shut. I'm serious. Ain't more than ten men in the entire company that know this. You promise?

HANSON
All right.

JOEY
Back at the start of the war, Foley was a Lieutenant in the 88th battalion up north.

HANSON
Lieutenant? But--

JOEY
I'll get to it, just let me finish. He was a Lieutenant up there in the 88th. This was back before we was digging trenches. His platoon was camped outside of a town near Ypres. He got the order from his CO to attack it. Now, he knows how strong the Germans are set up in this town, so he tells his CO he wants to wait until they can get more men to arrive. But the CO tells him to go anyway. One of those 'victory by morale' deals, to look good for the generals. Foley knows the mission is suicide, but he does it anyway. Orders is orders. Of course, once they go, it's a massacre. The entire platoon gets wiped out. Every last man is either killed or badly wounded. When they finally pulled out of there, only six of them managed to survive. Two of them got sent home because they could never be in fighting shape again. The ones that came back and got treated like heroes. They promoted Foley for bravery, tell him he's a great soldier and all that. But he tells his CO he refuses the promotion. Tells them to go stick it. And where. He demands to be demoted to the lowest rank of the men in his platoon. But the generals, you know, they don't want to lose such a good officer. So they make him a sergeant instead. They figure it gives him some responsibility, and maybe he'll come around one day and take his job back.

They walk over to their cots to get ready for bed. Hanson has a look of revelation on his face.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOEY
You're telling me. And that ain't the best part. You see, the other men in the unit, they were promoted too. And most of the men, they're loyal, and they're just as mad as Foley is. So they refuse the promotion too. But, one of them actually did take the promotion. One of Foley's staff sergeants. They promoted him to second lieutenant. He figured the best way to honor dead soldiers is to keep fighting and thought by taking the promotion he could help keep a few more from getting killed. But, you know, Foley, he don't think like that, so he gets angry. Real angry.

HANSON
Eckert.

JOEY
They transferred the two of them over here together. They figured it would help Foley come around. Not exactly what they had in mind.

Hanson takes in all he's just heard.

JOEY
I'm gonna go out and check on the snipers. I'll see you later.

Joey walks toward the door. As he does, he passes by Foley, still sleeping with his helmet over his head.

FOLEY
It was the 89th battalion. And shut up, will ya, so I can get some sleep.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - THE NEXT DAY

Hanson comes up from the tunnel after his shift is over. He is helped up by Red.

HANSON
One of the reinforcement beams is a little loose about halfway through. I left a marker for you.

Red nods and climbs down into the tunnel.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Hanson pulls out a rag and wipes the sweat from his brow. He turns to leave and is met by Foley, who had been standing right behind him.

Foley lights a cigar, still not saying anything.

**HANSON**
What can I do for you, Sergeant?

**FOLEY**
I want you to come with me.

**HANSON**
Come with you? Where?

**FOLEY**
Are you coming or not?

**EXT. RESERVE TRENCH - LATER**

Foley and Hanson reach the back of the trench. Foley rolls up and over.

**HANSON**
What are you doing?

**FOLEY**
Look, you can either come and shut up, or stay there and ask questions. Which is it?

**EXT. TOWN - DAY**

Foley and Hanson walk through the Ally-occupied town, as various transports, supply and medical vehicles go past. Hanson is nervous that they are where they shouldn't be.

**FOLEY**
Just walk like you belong here and no one will question you.

**EXT. FIELD - DAY**

About a half mile past the town, the two stop at a tree.

**FOLEY**
Wait here. Make yourself comfortable.

Foley walks out of sight, leaving Hanson alone by the tree. Hanson, not sure what to do, sits against the tree and waits.
EXT. FIELD - LATER

Hanson, wondering where Foley is, gets up and walks in the direction Foley walked earlier.

He stops behind another tree and looks out from behind it. He sees: Foley, in the field with a SMALL BOY, throwing a ball back and forth and chatting.

After a moment, the catch stops. Foley hands the boy an envelope and gives him instructions. He also gives him a bar of chocolate, which the boy takes and begins eating.

Hanson goes back to the tree where Foley left him.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

Hanson sits against the tree. Foley returns.

FOLEY

Let's go.

Foley picks up his weapon and the two start toward the town. They walk in silence until:

FOLEY

His parents were killed in an air raid. I found him begging for food. He can move through German lines easily. Plus he's a pretty good kid.

The two walk back to the trench in silence.

INT. DUGOUT - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Hanson and Red go over the plans to the tunnels.

HANSON

We're going to need another tunneler.

Red, looking at the map, nods in agreement.

HANSON

We can finish that one easily enough, but not twenty-one. Not just the two of us.

Red points out some areas of the map.

HANSON

I'll take care of the extra dummies.

(CONTINUED)
Continued:

Adrian comes over.

**ADRIAN**
Hey guys. I uhh, I heard you were looking for someone to dig. I'll do it. I'll dig.

**HANSON**
You sure you want to do this, Adrian?

**ADRIAN**
I don't really know what I'm doing, but I figure, either it'll get me or I'll help get a lot of Germans. Either way, it's the least I can do for Gonnell.

Red pats Adrian on the back.

**HANSON**
We'd be happy to have you, Adrian.

**INT. DUGOUT - ALLED TRENCH - DAY**

A BOMBARDMENT rages outside. The men wait inside the dugout for it to stop. Eckert enters.

**ECKERT**
Why is nobody digging?

**HANSON**
Too dangerous, sir. The vibrations may make the tunnels collapse and kill us all.

**ECKERT**
But we have a schedule to keep.

**HANSON**
But sir--

**ECKERT**
Private Hanson, we were all aware of the risks involved when we began this mission. Whether on the front line or in a tunnel, death is a chance every soldier must take. We have a mission to carry out.

**FOLEY**
Does your stupidity know no bounds? What happens if they attack us? You think we can spare men in the tunnels?

**ECKERT**
We must.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

**FOLEY**
You'd condemn more men to death?

**ECKERT**
I'd uphold the rules and regulations of the United States Army.

**FOLEY**
To hell with your army. Any of my men I find in the tunnels before the shelling stops will have to answer to me.

Eckert ignores Foley and turns to Hanson and Red.

**ECKERT**
You two are head engineers. I leave it to you to decide the best course of action.

Eckert leaves. Hanson thinks about his options. He stands and begins gathering his things.

**FOLEY**
Where do you think you're going?

**HANSON**
I'm going to dig. You fixing to argue with me?

Foley almost does but decides not to.

**HANSON**
He's right. We have to keep going. The only one behind schedule is twenty-one. We can make up the time on the rest. This way, we only lose three men instead of ten.

Adrian starts gathering his things as well.

**ADRIAN**
I'll go with you, Hanson. I wouldn't be of much use during an attack anyway.

**HANSON**
(turning to Foley)
You coming or not?

**INT. TUNNEL – ALLIED TRENCH – LATER**

Hanson digs along with Foley and Adrian as the BOMBARDMENT goes on overhead. They nervously continue, hoping the tunnel does not collapse on top of them.
INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - LATER

The bombardment stops. Hanson, Foley and Adrian listen above. They hear the vibrations of movement.

FOLEY
It's an attack. They're coming over.

INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - LATER

Hanson, Foley and Adrian wait in the tunnel as the attack wages on above their heads.

Eventually, the movement stops. There is silence up above. The three look at each other and begin to make their way above ground.

INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - LATER

The three reach the entrance to the tunnel and stop. They listen for any sounds of movement up above.

ADRIAN
You think we held?

FOLEY
I can't tell. Can't hear anything.

INT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

The entire trench is shrouded in a fog of smoke from all the shelling.

Foley sticks his head up from underground. Not seeing anyone, he climbs out onto the line.

Hanson and Adrian climb out of the tunnel as well and the three make their way along the trench.

The trench seems empty. There is no one among the fog. The three quietly move along the trench, wondering if they will be met by their own men or by Germans.

They continue moving, until they see a FIGURE standing in the fog. Foley quietly sneaks up behind the man and sticks his gun into the man's ribs. The man turns around:

JOEY
What the hell are you doing?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

The men exhale. The line has been held.

**FOLEY**
Joey, what the hell is going on?

**JOEY**
The Gerries tried to ambush. They attacked a ways down the line and managed to hold onto a piece that was blown out for a while. But we got 'em. They're bringing the wounded out now.

The men lower their weapons.

**JOEY**
You guys wanna help, or you wanna try scaring me completely to death this time?

**INT. FIELD - DAY**

Hanson and Foley reach the tree. Hanson sits down.

**HANSON**
You fixing to make this a regular thing?

Foley ignores him, puts down his weapon, and walks off.

**HANSON**
Extra sleep it is.

He puts his helmet over his face and goes to sleep.

**INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY**

Adrian is digging alone in tunnel twenty-one. He chisels away at the dirt when suddenly a wall of earth comes down, revealing on the other side: an ENEMY TUNNELER.

Adrian and the tunneler freeze upon seeing one another.

They LUNGE at each other and begin wrestling in the limited space of the tunnel, unable to use any weapons.

The tunneler tries to stab Adrian with his chisel, but can't extend his arm enough to have any force behind it. It is thrown aside as the two try to kill each other with their bare hands.

After a long struggle, Adrian is able to get his hands around the throat of the enemy tunneler and begins squeezing the life out of him.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

The tunneler struggles with all his might, but cannot get Adrian off of him and suffocates.

Adrian finally lets go of the man's throat after he is sure the man is dead. He takes a long moment to realize what he's done, before taking relieved breaths.

ADRIAN

I did it.

He rests his head against the tunnel and tries to regulate his breathing.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

The men stand around as tunnel twenty-one is destroyed. They sit around, dejected.

JOEY

Four days 'til deadline, and we lose the most important tunnel.
(pats Adrian on the back)
It's not your fault, Adrian. You did good.

Eckert enters the line. Nobody bothers to salute.

ECKERT

What happened?

ADRIAN

We had to destroy twenty-one. The Germans found it.

ECKERT

How did they find it?

JOEY

Adrian ran into a counterminer. He had to kill him with his bare hands.

ECKERT

I commend you for your bravery, Private. Who was the engineer on duty?

No one answers. No one knows. Eckert turns to the parapet.

ECKERT

Red?

Red shakes his head.
CONTINUED:

ECKERT
Hanson? Where's Hanson?

JOEY
Hanson got off this morning, sir.

ECKERT
Well then, who the hell was on duty?

Adrian finally comes out and says it.

ADRIAN
It was Sergeant Foley, sir.

Eckert realizes he should have known better.

ECKERT
Where is Sergeant Foley?

ADRIAN
Don't know, sir.

ECKERT
What do you mean --
(calming himself down)
Has anybody seen Sergeant Foley today?
(as everyone looks around)
Has no one seen their staff sergeant?

No one answers.

ECKERT
Very well then. Until he is found, we're all going to wait right here.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - LATER

Foley and Hanson return. Foley's peaceful expression returns to his usual scowl once he sees what is waiting for him.

ECKERT
Where were you?

FOLEY
Busy.

ECKERT
I said where were you, Sergeant?

FOLEY
What's it to you?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

**ECKERT**
Considering it was your responsibility to be with Adrian this morning when he ran into an enemy tunner who forced us to lose tunnel twenty-one four days before deadline, I'd say it's quite a lot to me.

Foley tries to play it off.

**FOLEY**
You're looking for someone to blame, and it sure as hell isn't going to be me. You and I both know it didn't mean a damn if I was down there or not!

**ECKERT**
One of these days, Foley you're going to have to grow up and accept responsibility--

**FOLEY**
It isn't my fault you can't lead your men--

**ECKERT**
You're too busy focusing on people who died years ago, holding a grudge, when--

**FOLEY**
It's not my fault you married a damn German woman!

Eckert LUNGEs at Foley and TACKLES him to the ground. The two begin fist fighting, swinging at each other as hard as they can.

The men rush over to pull the two apart. After some struggle, they manage to keep the two away from each other.

**ECKERT**
I've put up with your behavior for a long time, but now you've gone too far!

**FOLEY**
Go ahead, court martial me!

**ECKERT**
I won't give you the satisfaction.

The two try to get at one another but are held back by the men. Jackson arrives. He stops when he sees the scuffle.

**JACKSON**
Sir?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Eckert calms himself down.

**ECKERT**
What is it, Jackson?

**JACKSON**
News from up the line, sir.

**ECKERT**
Go ahead.

**JACKSON**
Word is the Germans are throwing a party later to celebrate the impending victory in the south. They're trying to break morale over here by making it loud.

Everyone now feels worse now than they did a minute ago.

**JACKSON**
Is everything all right, sir?

**JOEY**
We lost the tunnel.

Jackson thinks about this, then takes off his helmet and leans against the side of the trench, exhaling.

**JOEY**
You're telling me, Jackson.

**FOLEY**
What now? You're supposed to be the one in charge. You don't have a tunnel, you don't have an offensive. What are you gonna do? Make us work double?

**ECKERT**
No. I'm going to throw a party.

Wait, what? Everyone looks up at Eckert.

**FOLEY**
What?

**ECKERT**
If we can't get the tunnels done in time, we can't go forward with the offensive. We can't get the Germans away from the south, and we can't stop them from celebrating their victory. All we have then is to show that we can throw a better party than they can.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Everyone looks around. Has Eckert lost it?

**SANDERS**
Are you serious, sir?

**ECKERT**
Everyone gets the night off. No one works. Enjoy yourselves.

He leaves. Everyone looks around, wondering what to make of it.

**JOEY**
Well, you heard the man. I guess let's have a party.

*INT. DUGOUT - ALLIED TRENCH - NIGHT*

The men sit around a table, drinking and playing poker. The mood is somber. Not one really seems to be in the mood for a party.

**JOEY**
Call.

Everyone stares off into space, not paying any attention to the game. Joey halfheartedly tries to keep everyone interested.

**JOEY**
Hanson, you in?
(no answer)
Hanson --

**HANSON**
(snapping out of it)
Huh?

Hanson deals cards to everyone, even though there are only three people in the hand.

**JOEY**
I only wanted two.

Joey looks at his cards. Hanson bets without even looking at his. Sanders just gets up and leaves.

**JOEY**
This game is cracked.

Joey tosses his cards on the table and sits quietly with the men.
INT. ECKERT'S OFFICE - DUGOUT - ALLED TRENCH - NIGHT

Eckert drinks alone at his desk. He looks over the maps and battle plans for the assault, using them as a coaster. He takes a drink and puts his head down on the papers.

Foley comes in and sits down at the table with him. He pours Eckert another drink and takes a swig from the bottle.

ECKERT
All of the work. All of the orders. All of the time and effort. The 'yes, sirs', being firm in front of the men. What has it amounted to?
    (picks up his glass)
A glass of whiskey. That's all it ever amounts to.
    (draining the glass)
You go by the book as a private, you're just doing your job. You do it as a lieutenant, you're an stickler for the rules who doesn't know what it's like to be in the thick of it.

He goes to take a drink, but realizes the glass is empty.

ECKERT
I'm no leader. I was never any good at this. You were the one that should have had this job. They always liked you better anyway. You'd have gotten the tunnels finished in time. I should have turned it down the second you did. I should have listened to you all along. And I'm sorry I hit you.

Foley takes another swig from the bottle.

ECKERT
They're going to make me a captain.
    (staring at his glass)
The worst part of it is, I still can't get through to my wife.

Foley remains silent, remembering what he said earlier.

ECKERT
To hell with it. Tunnels or no tunnels, we did our duty.

He puts his head down on the table. Foley takes a long look at Eckert before standing and leaving.
INT. DUGOUT - ALLED TRENCH - NIGHT

The men are still sitting sullenly around the room. Hanson comes over to the poker table with Red. They present Joey with his bottle of Napoleon brandy.

HANSON
Red got a sniper last week. We were gonna give it to you when we finished the tunnels, but uhh --

JOEY
Yeah -- thanks.

Joey takes the bottle and puts it down. He smiles an empty smile. It's a bittersweet reward.

MORRELL
You gonna open it?

JOEY
This ain't no special occasion.

Everyone looks up at him, surprised he still won't open it.

JOEY
Who wants to celebrate a bottle of brandy when everything's gone to cinders?

ADRIAN
Jesus, Joey.

Everyone goes back to being silent.

HANSON
We still have the cigars. You can always smoke those. So they don't go to waste.

MORRELL
(after a moment)
Yeah, all right.

ADRIAN
Why not?

Hanson goes over to his cot and gets the cigars.

SANDERS
You coming with us, kid?

HANSON
No, I don't --

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

**SANDERS**
I didn't ask if you were smoking, I asked if you were coming with us.

**HANSON**
All right, all right. I'll go.

**SANDERS**
That's the spirit, kid. We may just make a man outta you yet.

**MORRELL**
Joey, you got any matches?

**JOEY**
Yeah, I got 'em somewhere.

Joey checks his satchel. He pulls out a matchbook and hands it to Sanders.

As he does, a piece of paper falls out of one of the satchel's pockets and to the floor. Joey doesn't notice and goes outside with the men to smoke the cigars.

After they're gone, Red sees the paper on the floor and picks it up. He examines it and realizes it's a map.

He opens it up on the table and reads it. He finds something that catches his eye and pulls out another map from his pocket and lays it out across the table.

He compares the two and a realization dawns upon him. He tries to get everyone's attention.

He WHISTLES, but no one comes back inside. He beats on the table, but no one hears that either. Finally:

**RED**
Hey!

The men poke their heads inside the door, surprised to hear Red shout.

**RED**
Come look at this.

**MORRELL**
What is it, Red?

The men come in and look at the map.

**HANSON**
What's this?
CONTINUED:

Red points to Joey.

**JOEY**

Me?

He points to Joey's pocket.

**JOEY**

Oh, must've been one of the maps we took from the raid.

**MORRELL**

And you waited this long to say anything about it?

Red smacks Joey on the back of the head.

**JOEY**

Jeez, all right! What do you want from me?

Red points out what he saw on the map to Hanson.

**HANSON**

It's possible.

**SANDERS**

What's possible?

**HANSON**

We don't need to take out the artillery.

**JOEY**

What?

**HANSON**

We extend one of the dummy tunnels. Instead of taking out the guns, we take out the men. Blast radius should take out at least two support lines, plus give us a position we can hold. We'd be able to bring up supplies and use that as a base instead of risking bringing them across No Man's Land. The guns won't come anywhere near us because they'll be afraid of taking out more men.

**ADRIAN**

What about the tunnel? Would we be able to finish it in time?

Red and Hanson exchange a look.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HANSON
Well -- with round-the-clock work, and I mean round-the-clock, heavy work -- we might be able to get it close enough, give or take a few feet.

Before the men can get excited:

HANSON
But we're taking a real chance here. Working that fast, we wouldn't have time to reinforce that well. Plus, we'd be digging shallow compared to the other tunnel. With the artillery strikes -- who knows if we even get all the way across. But it's a chance I'm willing to take. Who's in?

RED
I'm in.

ADRIAN
Me too.

SANDERS
Yeah, I'll do it.

MORRELL
Hell, anything for you guys.

JOEY
You ain't got to tell me twice.

HANSON
We're going to need maximum efficiency. No more than four hour shifts per man. You work as hard as you can for as long as you can. We may just finish these tunnels yet.

MONTAGE OF THE MEN WORKING TO FINISH THE TUNNEL:

A) Teams of men (alternating between Red, Hanson, Adrian and Foley as primary diggers, along with Joey, Sanders and Morrell as primary helpers) work rapidly on the tunnel.

B) The men finish their shift and come up from the tunnel, where they are immediately met by the men on the next shift who go right down into the tunnel.
EXT. FRONT LINE – ALLIED TRENCH – DAY

Hanson comes up from the tunnel, where Joey is waiting.

HANSON
We need more support beams.

JOEY
You got it. How far are we?

HANSON
Thirty-five feet.

INT. ECKERT’S OFFICE – DUGOUT – ALLIED TRENCH – NIGHT

Hanson shows Eckert and Jackson the battle plans.

HANSON
We take out the communication trenches. They wouldn’t be able to bring up any reinforcements and we could use the area as a supply base instead of bringing everything across No Man’s Land.

ECKERT
Inform Colonel Haig of the changes immediately.

JACKSON
Yes, sir.

Jackson leaves.

ECKERT
Very good, Private. Did you come up with this all by yourself?

HANSON
No, sir. Red was the one who found it.

ECKERT
You’re just the one doing all the talking.

HANSON
Exactly, sir.

ECKERT
You’ll be promoted to Corporal for this.

HANSON
Let’s finish the tunnel first, Lieutenant.
EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Joey, Sanders and Morrell wait on the front line. Red sits atop the parapet with his rifle.

MORRELL
How far are we?

JOEY
Fifty feet.

MORRELL
Damn. Two days. We might actually make it across.

JOEY
Don't jinx it. Who knows what's gonna happen with the luck we got.

Suddenly, a RIFLE GRENADE lands in the trench. It does not detonate.

JOEY
Oh, crap.

MORRELL
What?

JOEY
Red --

Red turns and looks at the grenade. He and Joey exchange looks.

JOEY
Did we shoot anything this week?

Red shakes his head.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - LATER

Joey, Red and Harry are at the line, divvying up items in preparation for meeting the German snipers out in No Man's Land.

JOEY
You think they know?

HARRY
We'll find out if we don't make it back.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOEY
They have to know something's up. Red's barely been on the perch all week.

HARRY
It was a slow week. What can we do? Not go out? Then they'll know something's up for sure.

JOEY
I'm bringing my knife, in case we have to fight it out up there.

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND - LATER

Joey, Red and Harry nervously stand in the middle of No Man's Land. They watch as the three German snipers make their way toward them.

JOEY
Anything seem funny about the way they're walking to you?

HARRY
No. And quit looking like you're gonna wet your pants.

JOEY
Excuse me for worrying about my well-being. Why's that one on the end smiling?

They meet the Germans in the middle of No Man's Land.

GERMAN SNIPER # 1
Afternoon, gentlemen.

JOEY
Hey, guys.

They stand in silence.

GERMAN SNIPER # 2
Slow week?

JOEY
Yeah, slow week.

HARRY
You know how it is. Before winter, they make you get everything prepared.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

**GERMAN SNIPER # 3**

Oh, yeah. It's the worst.

They exchange items. Joey watches the second sniper. He has a strange, almost malevolent smile on his face, as if he knows everything and is enjoying making them suffer.

**GERMAN SNIPER # 1**

Very good week for us. We won on both soldiers and rats.

**JOEY**

Yeah.

**GERMAN SNIPER # 1**

It is not often the great Red gets beaten.

Red shrugs.

**HARRY**

Yeah, don't count on it happening that often.

They exchange laughs.

**GERMAN SNIPER # 3**

Do you have our sausage from last week?

Red nudges Joey, who didn’t hear what was said, as he was staring at the second sniper to see if he knows anything.

**JOEY**

Huh? Oh, yeah, right. The sausage. Let me get that for you.

Joey pulls out the sausage and hands it over. He motions with his body to end the conversation so they can go back to the trench.

**GERMAN SNIPER # 1**

How are you enjoying that brandy?

**JOEY**

Oh, uh -- it's pretty good stuff.

**GERMAN SNIPER # 1**

Very hard to come by.

**JOEY**

Is it?

Joey looks for a way to get back to the trench.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOEY
Well, uhh, we're gonna need to--

GERMAN SNIPER # 2
Your uniforms are quite dirty.

Joey feels a cold chill go up his spine. He quickly catches himself before giving anything away.

JOEY
Yeah, uhh -- what do you know about that?

Even Harry starts to feel like they know something.

HARRY
Yeah, you know --

RED
(simply)
Digging.

Joey and Harry look at Red, wondering what he's doing.

There is a moment of silence that feels like an hour.

Finally:

GERMAN SNIPER # 1
Yes, it is hard maintaining the trench, isn't it?

HARRY
(mentally exhaling)
You said it.

GERMAN SNIPER # 1
Well, better luck next week.

JOEY
Yeah, here's hoping.

They each shake hands and make their way back to their respective trenches.

The men take several steps, praying they don't hear the sound of gunshots behind them.

After a moment, they realize the shots aren't coming. They finally exhale.

JOEY
Somebody call a doctor when we get back.
I'm gonna have a heart attack.
EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Hanson stands on the parapet, looking over into No Man's Land. Foley comes up from reserve.

FOLEY
You digging?

HANSON
No. Red's finishing up his shift. Then Adrian's going down.

FOLEY
Good. Let's go.

HANSON
Where?

FOLEY
I'm taking you to see Henri.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

Hanson and Foley reach the tree where Foley left Hanson last time. Hanson puts his weapon down and sits against the tree.

FOLEY
What are you doing?

HANSON
Sitting against the tree. I thought you were going to meet Henri.

FOLEY
I said I was taking you to see Henri. Let's go.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

Hanson and Foley wait in the field. After a moment, they see Henri, the young boy Foley meets with, coming up from the horizon. He makes his way over to the men.

FOLEY
Afternoon, Henri. This here is Hanson. He's a good man.

HANSON
Bonjour.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HENRI

Bonjour.

FOLEY

Did you bring your ball?

HENRI

Oui.

FOLEY

Well give it here, then. Let's see if you still have that cannon for an arm.

Henri tosses the ball to Foley. The three begin a game of catch. None of them speak, they just toss the ball back and forth to each other.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

The sun is beginning to set. Foley catches the ball from Henri and ends the game of catch.

FOLEY

All right, Henri. We're gonna need to head back.

Henri takes the ball and hands Foley an envelope. Hanson takes the envelope and pulls a bar of chocolate out of his pocket.

FOLEY

Thank you, Henri.

He pulls out another bar of chocolate.

FOLEY

And here's another one for you.

Henri takes the chocolate and hugs Foley. Foley doesn't really know what to do. After a second, he hugs back.

Henri breaks the hug and waves to Hanson.

HANSON

Nice meeting you, Henri.

FOLEY

(to Hanson)

Come on, let's go.

Foley and Hanson begin heading back to the trench.
INT. DUGOUT - ALLED TRENCH - NIGHT

The men sit around as the BOMBARDMENT begins outside. The room is tense. It is twelve hours until the assault.

INT. DUGOUT - ALLED TRENCH - LATER

Eight hours until the assault. The men sleep, or at least try to. Most lie awake, thinking of the day ahead of them.

INT. ECKERT'S OFFICE - DUGOUT - ALLED TRENCH - THE NEXT DAY

Two hours to go. Foley enters Eckert's office. Eckert isn't there. Foley wonders where he could be and leaves.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

The BOMBARDMENT rages on overhead. Hanson is on the front line with Sanders and Red. Foley comes up.

FOLEY
How's it looking?

HANSON
It's gonna be down to the wire. With some luck, we'll get within five feet.

FOLEY
Has Eckert been around here lately?

HANSON
No. You know, that's strange -- Adrian said he was looking for him this morning and couldn't find him. Jackson said he hasn't seen him in two days.

Foley thinks about where Eckert could be before realizing:

FOLEY
Who's down there?

HANSON
Adrian and Joey. Why?

Foley hops down into the tunnel.

HANSON
What's going on?
INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Foley crawls through the tunnel and finds Adrian and Joey sitting against the side while Eckert, stripped of his uniform and dressed like a tunneler, digs.

JOEY
Sorry, Sarge, he ordered us not to say anything.

FOLEY
It's all right. You two go up. I'll handle him.
   (when they hesitate)
   Go. Now.

Joey and Adrian leave. Foley goes over to Eckert, who is digging away like a madman.

FOLEY
Eckert --

Eckert doesn't pay any attention.

FOLEY
Eckert, you're digging too fast. You're gonna collapse the whole tunnel.

Eckert ignores Foley and keeps digging.

FOLEY
Did you hear what I said? There's a bombardment going on. You're gonna kill us both!

Eckert pays him no mind.

FOLEY
Lieutenant!

Now Eckert stops. He turns to Foley.

FOLEY
What they hell are you doing? We've got an assault in less than two hours and you're down here.

Eckert starts to reinforce the tunnel. Foley grabs the plank from his hand.

FOLEY
Give me this damn thing.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Eckert ignores him and grabs another plank.

**FOLEY**
Damn it -- you're only doing this because you think you need to make it up to me.

Eckert continues to pay Foley no mind.

Foley goes to reach into his pocket but stops. He thinks about what to say and finally allows himself to say:

**FOLEY**
You -- you were right to take the promotion.

Eckert finally stops and listens to Foley.

**FOLEY**
You deserved it for being able to live with yourself afterwards. You could always separate yourself from them. That's what you need to be a leader. You can't be their leader and their friend at the same time. I should have died out there with my friends. You -- were always the one to lead. And you're the only one that can keep these men from getting killed. Now get your ass out of this tunnel and go lead the damn assault.

Eckert takes a long look at Foley and nods. He puts down his shovel and leaves the tunnel.

**INT. MESS HALL - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY**

The men eat their last meal before the assault. Everyone is silent. The only sound that can be heard is the BOMBARDMENT outside.

**INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY**

The tunnel is finished. Red, Foley, Hanson and Adrian are inside. Hanson carves Arthur's name into one of the supports with Joey's knife. Joey looks above them.

**JOEY**
Can you believe it? Thirty feet separating us from the Germans right now.

**ADRIAN**
Not for long.
I/E. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

An assembly line of soldiers pass all of the explosives down into the tunnel.

The explosives make their way all the way through the tunnel to the end, where Foley and Hanson place them under German lines.

INT. DUGOUT - ALLIED TRENCH

The men get their weapons ready and check their packs in preparation for the assault.

They begin heading out to the front line.

INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

The last of the explosives are set.

FOLEY
How long do we have?

JOEY
About thirty minutes.

FOLEY
We need to wait until the shelling stops. If it collapses, we'll have to set them off by hand.

ADRIAN
All right, we're heading back up. Good luck, guys.

SANDERS
We'll be back with the fuse in a few minutes.

Everyone leaves except for Hanson, Red, Foley and Joey.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

The men begin lining up along the front line.

A wire team goes out to cut up the barbed wire so the men can move without impediment across No Man's Land.
INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Foley, Hanson, Red and Joey wait for the bombardment to stop.

**FOLEY**
Red -- they'll need you up there to give cover.

Red nods. He grabs Foley's shoulder as a goodbye and leaves.

**FOLEY**
(to Hanson)
You too.

**HANSON**
Why me?

**FOLEY**
Just go back up.

**HANSON**
No. I'm not going. I dug this tunnel, and I'm not leaving.

Foley GRABS Hanson by the collar.

**FOLEY**
Listen kid. I know you want to prove yourself, but I'm telling you that you don't need to. You proved yourself your first night when you went out on post. You think I'm trying to keep you from doing your duty. What I'm trying to do is keep you alive, so that maybe I'll have one less death on my conscience. I don't want to see another good man die on my watch.

He takes an envelope out of his pocket, the one Henri gave him.

**FOLEY**
I need you to go back up and bring this to Eckert. Tell him it's for his headaches.

**HANSON**
What?

**FOLEY**
Just go! Now!

Hanson takes the envelope and hurries out of the tunnel.
INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

Hanson crawls out of the tunnel. As he does, he notices a support starting to give way.

He hesitates, as if to try to fix it, but remembers Foley's orders, and continues crawling back to the surface.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Hanson comes up from the tunnel. There are three long rows of soldiers standing at the front line as the BOMBARDMENT goes on overhead.

Sanders and Morrell bring the fuse to the explosives toward the tunnel entrance.

Hanson rushes past them, toward Eckert's office.

SANDERS
Hey Hanson, where you going?

INT. ECKERT'S OFFICE - DUGOUT - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Eckert finishes putting on his uniform. He has another one of his headaches.

Hanson comes down the steps, out of breath from all the running and crawling.

HANSON
Sir --

ECKERT
Something wrong, Private?

HANSON
Foley, sir -- he asked me to bring you this -- he said it was for your headaches -- I have to go see about a support --

Hanson hurries out of the room, leaving Eckert confused.

Eckert opens up the envelope and pulls out a letter.

EXT. COMMUNICATION TRENCH - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Hanson rushes back toward the front line.
INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Sanders brings the fuse along to the end of tunnel, where Foley and Joey are waiting.

SANDERS
Come on, hurry up and get this connected.
We have less than fifteen minutes.

INT. ECKERT'S OFFICE - DUGOUT - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Eckert reads the letter.

ECKERT'S WIFE (V.O.)
Dearest John, I hope this letter finds you safe and in good spirits. I have safely made it through German lines and am now residing in France until the war's end. A young boy came to see me the other day. His name is Henri, and he is a friend of your Sergeant Foley's. He brought me your letters that have not made it through the blockades. Henri has no family, so I have taken him in, because I know it's what you would have done. I dream of the day when you will return to my arms and I keep you in my thoughts always. I will be waiting faithfully for you when the war ends. Love, forever and always, your Rebecca.

Eckert puts down the letter, his headache now gone. He leaves his office, with the strength to lead the assault.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

The bombardment stops. Ten minutes until detonation.

The men are lined up in three long rows, awaiting the call to charge. Hanson hurries onto the line and finds Adrian.

HANSON
Adrian. We have to go back down.

ADRIAN
What's the matter?

HANSON
One of the supports is loose.

The two hurry down into the tunnel.
INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - DAY

Foley and the men finish setting up the explosives.

JOEY
Come on, let's go back up.

They start to leave. They crawl out of the tunnel one at a time -- Joey first, then Sanders, and finally Foley -- when suddenly the line stops.

FOLEY
What's the matter? Why are we stopped?

Foley looks over the shoulders of the other men to see -- the tunnel has caved in. They are trapped.

INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

At the same moment, on the other side of the tunnel, Hanson and Adrian reach the area with the broken support to discover that the tunnel has caved in.

HANSON
No -- no, no, no --

Hanson tries digging his way through the collapse, but Adrian pulls him away.

ADRIAN
No, Hanson. We have to go.

Hanson claws at the dirt with all his might.

ADRIAN
Hanson, it's no use! We can't help them -- Hanson!

Hanson stops and looks at Adrian, who points to the floor of the tunnel, where the fuse is laying.

Hanson follows the fuse with his eyes. It continues all the way under the wall of earth.

ADRIAN
The whole tunnel's gonna blow. We have to go back up. We can't help them.

Hanson reluctantly goes with Adrian back up to the surface.
INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

On the other side of the tunnel, Hanson, Joey, and Sanders sit, coming to terms with their fate.

Sanders picks up the fuse to the explosives.

SANDERS
I did my job. Look at the thanks I get.

FOLEY
Ain't that how it always goes?

Foley lights himself a cigar and sits back, totally at peace with himself.

JOEY
(sighing)
Well, if this is how I'm going --

He pulls the Napoleon brandy out of his satchel.

JOEY
Ain't gonna be a more special time than this.

He pulls out three small glasses and pours a drink for each of them.

JOEY
Here you go, gents. Drink up.

The three drink and await the explosion.

JOEY
At least I'm gonna die the way I always figured -- with twenty thousand pounds of explosives.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

The snipers are on the perches, including Red. They get ready to provide cover fire for the men.

INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

Hanson and Adrian race to get out of the tunnel before it explodes.
EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers fix bayonets and prepare to go up and over.

EXT. COMMUNICATION TRENCH - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

Eckert stands just off the front line, along with Jackson, who watches the time. He looks up at Eckert.

JACKSON
It's time, sir.

ECKERT
Prepare the detonation.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

The men await the detonation. The first line steps up to the parapet, between the snipers, and prepares to go up and over.

INT. TUNNEL - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

Hanson and Adrian get to the tunnel entrance and begin climbing the ladder to the surface.

EXT. COMMUNICATION TRENCH - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

Jackson looks at his watch.

JACKSON
5 -- 4 -- 3 -- 2 -- 1 --

Eckert watches the German lines patiently.

EXT. GERMAN TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

MINES explode all along the German lines.

EXT. FRONT LINE - GERMAN TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

At the front line, the Germans stand at attention in case of attack.

Suddenly, the ground begins shaking violently beneath their feet, like a small earthquake.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

The men wonder what is going on, trying to stay on their feet.

The ground begins to crack into thousands of fissures, and, as the pressure can no longer be contained, BURSTS OPEN, sending tons of earth hurling into the sky, hundreds of feet into the air.

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

The men watch as the earth flies into the sky and comes back down to the ground. Some of it comes flying into the trench and the men have to duck to avoid it.

EXT. COMMUNICATION TRENCH - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

Eckert stands, watching.

ECKERT
All right men, attack!

EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

The snipers begin firing as the first row of men go up and over into No Man's Land.

Once they get into No Man's Land, they stand and begin running toward German lines.

After the first row is up, the second row begins going up and over. After them, the third.

EXT. FRONT LINE - GERMAN TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

The men rush the German trench and begin obliterating the Germans lines.

It appears as though they will take the line with ease, which only makes the men more eager to fight.

EXT. COMMUNICATION TRENCH - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

Eckert watches the assault and sees it will be successful.

ECKERT
Thank you, Foley.
EXT. FRONT LINE - ALLIED TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

Adrian and Hanson crawl out of the tunnel and see the men going up and over.

ADRIAN
It worked! We did it!

HANSON
Come on, let's go.

Hanson and Adrian get up and go up and over as well.

THE END.