

HASHBURNER

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ON BLACK:

"You just drive down that road until you get blown up."

General George Patton's response when asked,

"How do you locate the enemy?"

Seriously, Patton said this.

FADE IN

EXT. NORMANDY HEDGEROWS - DAY

A U.S. Army jeep, careens through an endless maze of narrow hedgerows. Two soldiers, like rag dolls, cling on with each turn.

SUPER:

JULY 9th, 1944 NORMANDY, FRANCE - FOUR WEEKS AFTER D-DAY

INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY

The rain has stopped. The sky is dark. The occasional LIGHTENING FLASH reveals thousands of small irregular fields.

EXT. COMMAND POST TENT - DAY

PRIVATE EDDIE POWERS (20s), unfiltered and curious, abruptly parks his jeep. Jumps out. Too focused to notice that his passenger slammed into the dashboard.

CAPTAIN GRANT (30s), a no-nonsense, by-the-book officer, blocks Powers' path.

GRANT

What's going on, Powers?

POWERS

Why don't you ask my scout, Captain?

A SOLDIER'S ARM pushes the LIMP PASSENGER back into his seat. Reveals a gory entry wound to the face.

Powers struggles to get free of Grant.

GRANT

Whoa, Private. Tell me what happened.

POWERS

I'm not talking to you. You're an order taker. I need to talk to the guy who's getting these officers killed.

Powers breaks loose. Charges towards the Command Post (CP) entrance with Grant close behind.

INT. COMMAND POST TENT - CONTINUOUS

A large barracks tent, side flaps tied up, to let in more light. Keeps the battalion's command staff dry, through the unpredictable weather of Northern France.

MAJOR GEORGE PRICE (late 40s), loves to command. Uses his authoritative presence with great skill. A hand grenade clipped to each lapel of his field jacket. Stands behind a table in front of a wall of maps with MASTER SERGEANT AMES (30s), a career warrior, who chose the army over his family's farm.

Two staffers work on make-shift tables.

Powers bolts in, with Grant following.

POWERS

Excuse me, I need to speak with the officer in charge.

A light plane's ODD SOUNDING ENGINE is heard at low altitude.

Price raises his hand. Everyone knows to listen.

PRICE

Am I the only one who can tell that's an enemy artillery spotter plane? That plane, is the reason we're getting shelled every night.

The small plane LEISURELY FLIES AWAY into the distance.

PRICE

No anti-aircraft fire. Unbelievable.
(to Grant)
What is this?

GRANT

Sir, this is the man I got to drive your scouts. He refused to follow orders under his Sergeant.

POWERS

That's not true. I followed my orders.

Price holds up his hand, again. Speaks with a new attitude. Closer to the superiority of his rank.

PRICE

Private, you have sixty seconds to explain yourself.

Price finds the WATCH on his wrist.

PRICE

Fifty-five seconds, fifty-four, fifty-three...

POWERS

My Mess Sergeant ordered me to wake up one of our guys and get him into the kitchen. That's exactly what I did.

Always ready to carry out the Major's orders, LIEUTENANT DEUZY (20s), sits nearby, next to his radio.

PRICE

Lieutenant, radio the Military Police and have them send me five MPs with M-1 rifles... immediately.

POWERS

What for?

PRICE

That's your firing squad.
(eyes back to his watch)
Thirty-three, thirty-two...

POWERS

Hold on. Your Captain told me not to engage the enemy and I didn't. I've driven two scouts into that bullshit terrain and both were killed before they pulled out their field glasses.

PRICE

Is that it, Private?

Powers digs deeper.

POWERS

I didn't sign up for this. I'm a cook. I don't belong here. You and your Captain are going to get me killed.

DEUZY

Major, your firing squad is coming.

Powers head snaps at Deuzy.

EXT. SURGICAL TEAM AREA - DAY

Brooklyn, in her surgical mask, assists the surgeons. Her EYES NOTICE POWERS, exiting his jeep, through the open walkway between the tents.

SHE WATCHES Powers head to a grass airfield.

EXT. AIRPLANE - DAY

The door of a small plane is open. PRICE SITS IN THE BACK with his bandaged amputated leg and crutches. The plane has no pilot. The engine is off.

POWERS

Good morning, sir. What's this?

Powers holds up his Sergeant stripes.

PRICE

Your promotion.

POWERS

There's got to be something else?
Anything but a promotion, sir.

PRICE

I've never met anyone like you,
Powers. I wanted to show my
appreciation for getting me out of
there. This is the best way to do it.
Besides, you owe me.

POWERS

I owe you? How do I owe you, Major?

PRICE

You came back. That's not what I
ordered you to do. You know how I feel
about that, Sergeant. Just say thank
you and we'll call it even.

Powers takes a moment to think.

POWERS

You know Major. You did threaten me
with a firing squad, sir.

PRICE

I needed to get your attention.
Powers, take those stripes and lead
with them. You may not be career Army,
(MORE)

PRICE (CONT'D)

but we need men like you to win this war.

POWERS

I'll try, Major. I'll try.
Thank you, sir.

PRICE

Good enough. Where's that pilot?

Douglas, approaches the plane with a bandage above his eye.

DOUGLAS

We're set to go, Major.

Powers backs away as Douglas takes his seat.

DOUGLAS

Morning, Private. How are you doing?

POWERS

Well today, it's Sergeant, sir.

Powers shows his Sergeant stripes. Price gives Powers, a THUMBS UP from his seat.

DOUGLAS

Congratulations, Eddie. We had a heck of a time the other night, didn't we?

POWERS

We did. I forgot to thank you.

DOUGLAS

For what? Almost shooting you?

POWERS

(smiles)

No, for taking out that spotlight. It needed to happen, sir.

DOUGLAS

You're welcome. Take care, Sergeant.

Douglas closes the door. Powers backs away from the plane. A mechanic pulls the prop. The engine turns over.

Price and Powers wait for something from each other. Eventually, Price slowly raises his rigid right hand. Rests its finger-tips on the corner of his forehead.

Powers is dumbfounded. He has never seen an officer salute an enlisted man. Powers tries to figure it out.

Price continues to hold his salute. Waits for a response.

Gradually, Powers' eyes begin to well up.

Price patiently remains committed to his salute.

Powers throws back his shoulders. Stands tall and breaks out his best military salute since joining the army. The two men embrace each other through their mutual salute.

With a slight smile, Price brings down his hand as the plane begins to move.

Powers remains at attention. Reluctant to let go, he continues to salute the plane as it taxis for take-off.

EXT. JEEP - DAY

Powers walks to his jeep. Gets in and peers over the hood.

Brooklyn steps quickly towards Powers like she's glad to see him. Carries the coffee pot and stove in each hand.

Powers hesitantly gets out to greet her.

POWERS

Is your brother going to make it?

BROOKLYN

Yes, thank God.

Powers takes the coffee pot and stove from her. Places them in the back of the jeep.

Powers shows his Sergeant stripes. With a grin, Brooklyn takes one in each hand. Gives Powers a meaningful hug.

Powers helps her into the passenger side. The two drive away, happy to be together.

For the first time, in a long time, there is a sense of hope.

SUPER:

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| AMERICAN CASUALTIES ON D-DAY, JUNE 6, 1944 | 4,276 |
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|---|--------|
| AMERICAN CASUALTIES FIGHTING IN THE HEDGEROWS | 55,724 |
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THIS FILM IS DEDICATED TO ALL VETERANS, AROUND THE WORLD,
WHOSE UNBELIEVABLE WAR EXPERIENCES ARE RARELY TOLD AND MOSTLY
FORGOTTEN.

FADE OUT

THE END