

"PATTON'S SECRET MISSION"

Written by

Jim Sudmeier

Story by

Peter Domes
Martin Heinlein

Registered: WGAE

Jim Sudmeier

~~50 Village Brook Ln #8~~

~~Natick, MA 01760~~

~~(508) 651-3223~~

~~jsuds@comcast.net~~

FADE IN:

SUPERIMPOSED:

THE FOLLOWING IS A TRUE STORY,
TOLD AS FAITHFULLY AS POSSIBLE TO
RECORDED HISTORIES AND EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS.

EXT. GERMAN PRISON CAMP - DAY

A stream of REFUGEES slogs along the wind-swept, snowy road in front of the Prisoner of War (POW) camp. Artillery THUNDERS in the distance.

SUPERIMPOSED:

OFLAG 64 (Officer's Prison Camp), Szubin, POLAND
January 21, 1945; Temperature -20 deg F.
The Russian Army advances towards Germany.

INSIDE THE BARBED WIRE FENCE

A ragtag cadre of 1,400 American OFFICER POWs stands in formation, bundled in heavy coats and improvised hats, face masks, and leggings.

German GUARDS swing the front gates open and the POWs march out, carrying bedrolls and sacks, some dragging home-made sleds. Prison traffic merges with that of civilians and their overloaded carts, animals, and vehicles.

The POWs stagger under their heavy loads, and shield their faces from the pelting of snow crystals.

Elderly GUARD #1 prods the POWs with his RIFLE BUTT.

GUARD #1
Los Raus! Raus! Beeilt euch!

Overcome with dysentery, a PRISONER frantically unbuttons his pants and squats by the roadside.

ROADSIDE DITCH

A FAMILY butchers its HORSE beside their overturned WAGON.

PASSING TRUCK

WOODEN CRATE bounces off, smashes. MARGARINE STICKS fly out, devoured by the POWs like hungry dogs.

EXT. POLISH BARN - MORNING

The prisoners stand outside, where they smoke, drink coffee, and bang their boots together for warmth.

GUARD #1 with a SUBMACHINE GUN slung over his shoulder climbs the LADDER to the hayloft.

IN THE HAYLOFT

A dozen sick and lame PRISONERS lie in the hay. A German MEDIC inspects a POW's TOES blackened by trenchfoot.

Guard #1 addresses the prisoners from the hayloft door:

GUARD #1

Prisoners unable to march today
come here and sit on the floor,
now. We leave a medic to help you.

The prisoners limp and crawl to the bare wooden floor near the door.

GUARD #1

Everyone else must go outside and
ready to march. If you try to
escape you will be shot. Los alles
raus! Sofort!

Several POWs leave the group and climb down the ladder.

OUTSIDE THE BARN

COL. WATERS, a handsome, blue-eyed, 38-year-old, stands at the head of the column.

SUPERIMPOSED:

Lt. Col. John K. Waters
Son-in-law of Gen. George S. Patton, Jr.

Waters yells the command Cavalry style:

COL. WATERS

Okay, Men. FoorrrWAARRRRD...
HOOOoooo.

IN THE HAYLOFT

Guard #1 walks to the loose hay and fires his submachine gun. BRRRRRRRRRRRR-UP.

Hundreds of dirty, unshaven, and hollow-cheeked American POWs gather at the fence.

The Commandant, elderly GEN. VON GOECKEL, stands in the doorway of his house, which overlooks the camp entrance.

COL. GOODE
FORMATION. FALL IN.

Col. Goode intends to make a grand entrance.

COL. GOODE
FORMATION. TEN-HUT!

They snap to attention. German GUARDS open the iron gates.

COL. GOODE
LEFT FACE! FORWARD, MARCH!...
Waters, count cadence.

COL. WATERS
HUP, TUP, THA-REEP, FO. HUP, TUP,
THA-REEP, FO.

When the column is inside, the Guards CLANG shut the gates.

COL. WATERS
FORMATION, HALT!... RIGHT FACE!...
FALL OUT!

FROM HIS DOORWAY

GEN. VON GOECKEL
(in a hoarse, poison
gas-damaged voice)
Verdamnte, rubbish Americans! More
problems.

EXT. THIRD ARMY HQ - EVENING

SUPERIMPOSED:

Third Army Headquarters, Luxembourg City, LUXEMBOURG
March 24, 1945

A BRONZE BUST of Adolf Hitler rests in the courtyard of the former palace. On the base is stenciled "PROP. OF GEN. PATTON." A WHITE MALE DOG lifts his hind leg and urinates on the bust. URINE drips from Hitler's nose and chin.

SGT. MEEKS, Gen. Patton's tall, black orderly, returns from a walk with WILLIE, the General's all-white bull terrier.

GEN. PATTON

Sarge, why don't you pour a drink
for yourself and pull up a chair?
I feel like celebrating.

SGT. MEEKS

Well, sir... Okay, sir.

While Meeks pours another DRINK, Patton lights a big CIGAR.

Gen. Patton is 59 years old, 6 feet 1 inch tall, and fit at 175 pounds. He has short, receding silver hair, a ruddy, freckled complexion, with white eyebrows. The reading glasses are worn only in private. His smile reveals mottled teeth and too much upper gums. The accent is New England, with a voice incongruously high-pitched, almost squeaky.

GEN. PATTON

You know why I'm celebrating?

SGT. MEEKS

No, sir.

GEN. PATTON

'Cause today I pulled out my pecker
and pissed in the Rhine.

SGT. MEEKS

(laughing)

My, Lordy. That is so fine, sir.

GEN. PATTON

I just made the first assault
crossing of the Rhine in history,
and all the world's Press was
there. Know who I was pissing on?

SGT. MEEKS

No, sir.

GEN. PATTON

Monty. That little British fart
has been dickin' around for a month
to cross the Rhine.

GEN. PATTON (CONT'D)

With hundreds of bombers, thousands
of paratroopers, 70,000 rounds of
artillery -- the biggest Allied
operation since D-Day. And I beat
him by sneaking a division across
in a bunch of rowboats. Know how
many casualties we took?

GEN. PATTON (V.O.)

Get the show on the road. I want
that goddamn bridge.

COL. COHEN

Okay, tanks... Roll it! Out.

ON THE APPROACH

TANK COMMANDER #1

Ready, men?... Here we go!

OVER THE RIVER

A German Me-110 twin-engine FIGHTER-BOMBER SCREAMS in.

TANK COMMANDER #1

Air! Air! 3 o'clock! Open up!

The aircraft dives at the bridge. Tank Commander #1 fires,
his .50 cal machine gun GYRATES wildly. The bombs fall
short. GEYSERS of water mushroom skyward and SPLASH on the
roadway -- suddenly RAKED by German machine gun fire.

TANK COMMANDER #1

Men. Button up and full speed
ahead!

The crew closes the hatches.

INSIDE THE TANK

It is noisy, dark, claustrophobic. The tank races onto the
bridge, greeted by the staccato clank of rebounding enemy
bullets. BA-TA-TA-TING. TING.

Bow Gunner #1 answers with his machine gun. BR-RR-RR-RR-RR.

A PANZERFAUST (German Bazooka) rocket SWOOOSSHHHES past in a
narrow miss. Mortar shells WHUMP all around.

ON THE SIDE OF THE BRIDGE

A young German COMBAT ENGINEER searches frantically for a
defective electrical connection on his demolition charge.

ON THE FAR RIVER BANK

The German SQUAD LEADER sits behind a bush holding the
DETONATOR.

GEN. GAY

General, they're gonna go to Hammelburg like a hot knife through butter. This task force is the cream of the crop.

GEN. PATTON

You're right. And that Baum is one helluva fighter.

Patton begins pacing.

GEN. PATTON

I've been in the doghouse with Ike for so long... It's better now, and I hate to ruin it.

GEN. GAY

Sir, General Eisenhower has always stood up for you.

GEN. PATTON

Really? That speech last week... That's the first nice thing he said about me in two and one-half years.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THIRD ARMY HQ DINING ROOM - EVENING

A formal dinner for 20 people, including four lovely Red Cross girls wearing their formal white-gloved uniforms, in the palatial dining room.

SUPERIMPOSED:

Third Army Headquarters, Luxembourg City, LUXEMBOURG
March 16, 1945

The guest of honor is five-star GEN. EISENHOWER.

SUPERIMPOSED:

Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower
Commander, Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force

Patton rises and RINGS a glass with a spoon.

GEN. PATTON

I propose a toast to our guest of honor, the Supreme Allied Commander, General Eisenhower.

Sherman TANKS suddenly come RUMBLING down the street. The Germans grab PANZERFAUSTS from a stack.

SGT. ZÖLLER

Take cover!

The Cadets disperse while Zöller runs towards the bridge and shouts at two Cadets posted there.

SGT. ZÖLLER

ZÜNDEN! ZÜNDEN! [Blow the
bridge!]

AT THE BRIDGE ENTRANCE

One BRAVE CADET stands with a PANZERFAUST in the path of Keil's oncoming Sherman. The bow machine gunner fires a burst, BR-RR-RR-RR-RR, which knocks the cadet to his knees, mortally wounded.

When the tank approaches to 10 yards, the cadet aims the Panzerfaust and FIRES. The rocket EXPLODES front and center -- a direct hit.

In seconds, the U.S. crew bails out. Swarmed by engineer cadets, all crewmen are quickly taken prisoner.

HALFWAY ACROSS THE BRIDGE

Another engineer CADET triggers the demolition charge and escapes to the far side. Seconds later, the bridge BLOWS -- a huge red and yellow volcano expelling giant BLOCKS of concrete from the center span.

IN THE NARROW STREET

The SHERMANS immediately back out -- always awkward since they have no rear-view mirrors.

The 40 GI INFANTRYMEN spread throughout the back streets and alleys.

A GI winds up to break a door down with his rifle butt, when the door opens suddenly, and he falls into the house. Surrounded by cadets, his terrified yells for 'HELP!' are silenced by cold German steel.

A tanker fires his machine gun at the church tower across the river, which fills it full of HOLES, and inadvertently RINGS the bells.

SGT. GRAHAM

(on radio)

Able, target ammo trucks at 11 o'clock. High explosive. 1200 yards. Baker, Charley, target tank destroyers at 1 o'clock. Armor piercing, 1000. Fire at will.

One of the assault guns is commanded by a Texan, TECH-4 CASANOVA. His gunner, PVT. STANLEY, and loader, PVT. WHITE work in close unison.

GUNNER STANLEY

LOAD.

LOADER WHITE

UP.

COMMANDER CASANOVA

FIRE.

KA-POWWW.

GUNNER STANLEY

LOAD.

LOADER WHITE

UP.

COMMANDER CASANOVA

Left two-and-a-half.

GREEEEE-AH goes the electric turret traverse.

COMMANDER CASANOVA

FIRE.

KA-POWWW.

The assault guns fire 10 rounds per minute like this. When the smoke clears, one Hetzer is damaged and limps away.

Another truck carrying Hetzer ammo and fuel BLOWS UP in an orange FIREBALL, which kills two German soldiers and mortally wounds two more.

A lucky Hetzer shot SLAMS into an assault gun, which puts it out of action and mortally wounds TECH-5 FRANK J. KANDEFER.

SWAMPY MEADOW 700 YARDS NORTH OF R27

A Hetzer is SHAKEN by a powerful explosion.

CAPT. BAUM

I was in the family business in New York City.

MAJ. STILLER

What kind of business?

CAPT. BAUM

Clothing... Women's apparel.

MAJ. STILLER

No kidding! What did you do there?

CAPT. BAUM

Sir, you really want to know?...
I'm a pattern maker... I cut
patterns for ladies' blouses.

MAJ. STILLER

Is that how...

(laughs out of
control)

Is that how you got so good at
killin' Krauts?

CAPT. BAUM

No. Street fighting. Being a Jew
in the Bronx. We had to defend our
turf. We never ran from a fight.
Later on, in the ring, I busted
more than a few noses.

Stiller feels vaguely uncomfortable and stops laughing.
Seconds later, despite his best efforts, he bursts out again
in wheezing laughter.

CAPT. BAUM

Now what?

MAJ. STILLER

Maybe we should all learn to cut
paper dolls in basic training.
(laughing)

Do you think that would toughen up
some of these pussy willows?
(more laughter)

CAPT. BAUM

Are you done?... Major, let me tell
you something. No matter what
anyone ever said about me, I
learned self-respect from my dad.
(MORE)

COMMANDER CASANOVA

FIRE.

KA-POWWW.

The BIG GUNS attract a hail of German fire. Casanova's crew is ROCKED by a direct hit. BLOOD pours from Stanley's chest as he lies dying. White exits the hatch and falls dead.

Casanova continues firing solo, and gets off three shots until another German shell SLAMS in. His brain is fried, and he crawls away.

Graham's crew continues to fire. KA-POWWW. KA-POWWW. A magnet for German shelling, they threaten nearby GIs.

GI #2

Stop it, you idiot. Stop firing.

Graham ignores the complaint, and keeps his crew firing like men possessed. KA-POWWW. KA-POWWW.

UNDER A HALF-TRACK

Pvt. Bob Zawada hides. During a lull in the shelling, he sprints for the woods.

He goes about 50 feet when a powerful WHUMP from a mortar shell EXPLODES beneath him. He lands on his shoulder and somersaults back on his feet. Next step, he goes down hard.

He looks down and sees his left leg missing below the knee. With his belt he makes a tourniquet around the bloody stump.

ADVANCING ONTO HILL 427

Come the eight HETZERS, followed by 600 INFANTRYMEN.

UNDER CAPT. BAUM'S JEEP

Baum and Stiller lie on the ground, showered by clods of dirt.

CAPT. BAUM

Here come those goddamn tank
destroyers! ... This time they mean
business! ... Look at the
coordination!

Now BAUM'S FACE betrays self-doubt and fear. Like a bolt from the blue, he has lost control of the battlefield and his men. Suddenly, he is irrelevant.

The Jewish Pvt. Solotoff had previously gotten rid of his dog tags, but he forgets that in his wallet he has a MEZUZAH. Eckert soon discovers it and waves it in his face.

MAJ. ECKERT

Jew! You goddamned Jew! Take off your clothes!

Solotoff alone is forced to strip, and stands naked in the snow. On removing his pants, the BANDAGES come off both Solotoff's calves, reopening his shrapnel wounds.

MAJ. ECKERT

Look at you, Jewish subhuman!

PVT. SOLOTOFF

Herr Major, Judaism is my religion.
I am an American soldier.

At this remark, Eckert PUNCHES Solotoff in the face. Solotoff nearly passes out but manages to stay on his feet.

PVT. SOLOTOFF

Herr Major. Please, I'm freezing,
and I need medical attention.

MAJ. ECKERT

Medical attention is for American soldiers, not for goddamned Jews.

PVT. SOLOTOFF

Herr Major, I am an American soldier.

POWW. Another hard SMASH in the face. Solotoff's head begins to puff, and blood streams from his mouth and ears.

MAJ. ECKERT

Have you heard what happens to Jews in Germany?

PVT. SOLOTOFF

Ja, Herr Major. I've heard rumors.

MAJ. ECKERT

And do you believe those rumors?

PVT. SOLOTOFF

Herr Major, I have no reason not to.

GEN. PATTON

I'm gonna kill the sons of bitches
that did that to you. Now, get
your stuff. You're coming with me.

Stiller exits.

GEN. PATTON

Colonel, I've heard that some men
think I raided Hammelburg just to
free Col. Waters. That's a damned
lie. The raid was a strategic
diversion to speed up our victory.

COL. GOODE

Yes, sir. I understand.

GEN. PATTON

I've got your food shipments on the
way, but I want you to get sworn
statements from all participants
that they will never discuss the
Hammelburg raid with anyone. Is
that understood?

COL. GOODE

Yes sir.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BOSTON - AFTERNOON

A screaming MOB of more than a million people lines the
route of General Patton's motorcade. Many throw flowers and
some weep for joy at the first trip home of the great war
hero after the victorious end of World War II in Europe.

SUPERIMPOSED:

Boston, MA, USA; June 7, 1945

Escorted by dozens of Boston Police MOTORCYCLES, the SEDANS
carry brass, politicians, and Patton family members.
Confetti rains from high-rise buildings.

Gen. Patton stands, ramrod stiff, in the rear of a black
Packard touring car. He wears a gleaming HELMET, and
alternately waves, salutes, smiles, and grimaces.

EXT. OUTDOOR CONCERT STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The HATCH SHELL, an outdoor concert stage adjacent to the
Charles River, is bedecked from top to bottom with American
FLAGS AND BUNTING. Four-engine BOMBERS drone overhead.

MOMENTS LATER

The 4-engine Army transport climbs into the sky.

SUPERIMPOSED (SCREEN 1):

Of the 313 Members of Task Force Baum, 26 were killed and 65 wounded. 15 escaped and the rest taken prisoner. 6 more were believed killed launching the raid. The number of POWs killed as a result of the raid is estimated at 20 to 40.

SUPERIMPOSED (SCREEN 2):

"I can say this, that throughout the campaign in Europe I know of no error I made except that of failing to send a Combat Command (3,000 men and 150 tanks) to Hammelburg."

Gen. George S. Patton, Jr. Sept., 1945

THE END

SHOT: PATTON'S 8 FOOT TALL BRONZE STATUE TODAY OVERLOOKING THE HATCH SHELL IN THE SNOW.

EPILOGUE:

1) Gen. George S. Patton, Jr. died on Dec. 21, 1945 from complications of a broken neck and paralysis suffered in a freak low-speed car crash in Germany. He is buried in the U.S. military cemetery in Hamm, Luxembourg.

2) Lt. Col. John K. Waters recovered from his wounds and became a 4-star General. He served as Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Army, Pacific (1964-66), and died in 1989.

3) 2nd Lt. Bill Nutto retired as a petroleum engineer and ~~general practice lawyer, and is now living in TX.~~

4) 1st Lt. Bob Thompson is a retired petroleum engineer. In a return to Hammelburg Camp in 1970, he dug up the earth in the old riding stable, but was unable to find the diamonds.

5) Major Abraham J. Baum went back to the business of women's blouses. He became a world-class, deep-sea trophy fisherman. ~~He is retired and living in CA.~~

deceased {

FADE OUT: