

WW II-K

by
Mark E. McCann

Mark E. McCann
www.Markemccann.com
Mark@markemccann.com

FADE IN:

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

A short montage of the monuments: the American flag atop the Iwo Jima Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, the Vietnam Memorial -- all being decorated for Memorial Day.

INT. SCOTT'S ROOM - CLOSE ON A COMPUTER SCREEN

A video game; hardened caricature U.S. Soldiers with behemoth weapons running through a landscape of scorched earth.

EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

Polished boots of a TOMB GUARD reverently pace the twenty-one steps in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

Russian video-game soldiers charge through a ruined city.

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

MAINTENANCE MEN prepare the amphitheater for Memorial Day ceremonies; hanging flags, polishing brass. Overhead, dark clouds begin to move in, followed by a low RUMBLE of THUNDER.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

The video-game soldiers charge into battle, guns blazing. Explosions rock the landscape and blast apart the digital men, who die YELLING and flailing.

Cocky chat messages from the players begin appearing down the left side of the screen: "Owned!", "You got no skills!", "LOL!", "You totally suck!", and "What a Noob!"

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

Arlington GROUNDS KEEPERS dutifully care for the sacred land, the endless rows upon rows of headstones. They cast concerned glances up at the darkening sky.

EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE

A modest home in a D.C. Suburb. A shovel stuck in a pile of dirt and an empty bag of Quikrete. No power tools here.

WALTER THOMAS, an elderly man proudly wearing his V.F.W. hat and pins, raises the American flag on the new pole. He secures it, smiles, and steps back to inspect his work.

WALTER
Scott! Hey, Scott!

INT. SCOTT'S BEDROOM

A typical teen's room; dark and messy, posters on the wall. The only light comes from dual flat-panel computer monitors. Sitting wide-eyed in the bluish glare is SCOTT ANDERSON, 18.

He is engaged in the gory computer game we saw moments ago and wears headphones with a built-in microphone. The teams are two gaming clans: The Psycho Klowns versus The Gen-X Warriors. Scott's character blows away an enemy soldier.

SCOTT
Oh, yeah! Want some of this? You were so owned! I owned you, baby!

Scott's character finds his objective: an enemy flag station atop a bridge. He stops suddenly -- standing between he and it are a whole group of enemy soldiers and a T-90 tank.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Whoa!
(into microphone)
Yo, Big-Gunz!

INT. MICHAEL'S ROOM

Another messy boy's room. MICHAEL, 18 and somewhat mousey, also wears a headset with a microphone and is engaged in the same game. His character sits in a MLRS M270 Rocket Launcher.

MICHAEL
Yeah, BlackCat... go ahead.

INT. SCOTT'S ROOM

Scott has his sites set on the group of enemy soldiers.

SCOTT (O.S.)
I got a target for you. Clear them
out and I can grab a flag.

MICHAEL (O.S.)
Give it to me.

INT. MICHAEL'S ROOM

A target appears on Michael's monitor; "Requesting strike."

MICHAEL
Got it... birds on the way. Cover
your head, Cat!

Michael's character launches a barrage of huge missiles.

EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE

Walter has an open box of landscaping lights and is squinting
at the instructions, befuddled. He turns toward the house.

WALTER
Scott!

A sudden wind blows, making the flag pop. Overhead the dark
clouds roll in on the far horizon, followed by a dull roll of
THUNDER. Walter stands and looks skyward, then heads inside.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED: SCOTT'S ROOM / MICHAEL'S ROOM

On Scott's monitors we see the incoming missiles as they find
their target. Scott whoops for joy as the enemy soldiers are
blasted to pieces, flaming arms and legs flying.

SCOTT
Whoo-hoo!

The kill ticket scrolls: "BIG-GUNZ {G-X.W.} KILLED (M270) MR.
PICKLE {P.K.}" (and the other eight {P.K.} players).

SCOTT (CONT'D)
(laughing)
Dude! You racked up nine freaking
frags on that one!

Michael chuckles, until he suddenly notices a HIND gunship
helicopter rising above a hill in front of his character.

MICHAEL
Uh-oh!

He tries to run but it's too late. The gunship launches its missiles and turns his mobile launcher into scrap metal.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Dang it!

Scott sees the ticker: "LOKI {P.K.} KILLED (HIND) BIG-GUNZ {G-X.W.}." He laughs as his avatar makes a run for the flag.

SCOTT

He followed your smoke trail, man.
Number one rule of combat: attack
and then move... never be where the
enemy last saw you!

Scott's character makes it to the flag.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Got it, baby! Gen-X Warriors rule!

Until he sees that the flag has been rigged with C-4 charges.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Oh, son of a-!

BOOM! Scott's character is blown high into the air. On the ticker: "KIRJ {P.K.} KILLED (C-4) BLACKCAT {G-X.W.}" Scott slams a fist, thinking he's been wronged. He punches a button that brings up a live web-cam of a chuckling Michael, and talks to his own-web cam mounted between the monitors.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Mining the flag with C-4... who's
the freaking chicken-ass noob who
can't play like a man?

MICHAEL

Ready to go again? You're only
fifteen frags from top spot.

SCOTT

What time is it?

MICHAEL

Uh, four o'clock our time.

SCOTT

Five o'clock here... yeah, I've got
time for one more round.

WALTER (O.S.)

Scott!

Scott groans and his shoulders slump.

MICHAEL
What's the matter?

SCOTT
Old fart alert.

MICHAEL
Your grandfather?

SCOTT
Yeah... mom's at work, so I'm stuck
baby-sitting General Alzheimer's.

MICHAEL
What's he want?

SCOTT
It's either time for a Geritol or
it's time to change the Depends.

Walter sticks his head in the door.

WALTER
Hey, Scott! Come outside and look.
I just put up the new flagpole.

SCOTT
In a little bit, gramps.

Walter enters and makes his way over to the window.

WALTER
It looks wonderful! The sun is
shining through it and there's
enough wind to make her fly.

SCOTT
That's great. I'm sure it looks-

Walter opens the shades and Michael reels from the sunlight.

WALTER
You should be outside anyway. Not
cooped up in this dark hole.

SCOTT
I like this dark hole.

Walter walks back over and Michael sees him on the webcam.

MICHAEL
Hello, Mr. T.

Walter squints at the monitor and sees Michael saluting him with two fingers. Walter seems unsure of this machine.

WALTER
Is he talking to me?

Scott rolls his eyes at Walter's computer illiteracy.

SCOTT
Yes, Gramps... he's talking to you.

WALTER
(still unsure)
He can see me?

SCOTT
(points to web cam)
Yes, he can see you. Welcome to
the world of modern communication.

Walter leans over and, clearly unfamiliar with the technology, tries speaking into the web-cam as though it were a microphone. Michael has to suppress his laughter as he gets a great close-up of the old man's mouth.

WALTER
Um, hello. Where are you?

MICHAEL
Saint Louis, sir.

WALTER
Really? Huh. Well, Scott's coming
outside now. I just put up the new
flag pole and he's going to help me
with the spotlights.

MICHAEL
That's great. I'm sure he can't
wait to get started.

SCOTT
(easing Walter away)
Okay, Walter... before you break
something.

WALTER
Alright, turn that thing off and
come outside.

SCOTT
In a little bit. My clan needs me
right now. We're in a tournament.

WALTER
Your what?

SCOTT
(sighs, irritated)
My clan. It's... like a club.

WALTER
Oh. Well, invite them over too.

SCOTT
That would be kind of hard, gramps,
considering they're spread out all
over the world.

WALTER
You've never actually met them?

SCOTT
Of course not.

WALTER
(scoffs at the notion)
Aw, computers. In my day we spent
our time outside, in groups of real
boys. We played baseball, we
chased the girls, we drove cars-

SCOTT
They had cars back then?

WALTER
Oh, very funny. You should be a
comedian. Now come outside.

SCOTT
Later. I'm really busy.

WALTER
(sighs, dejected)
The whole world out there and you
hide in here.

SCOTT
The whole world is in here, Gramps.
It's called the web.

WALTER
Web schmeb. You should-

Scott looks for any excuse to ditch the old man, and quickly
finds one by looking at his feet.

SCOTT
 Gramps, did you happen to take your
 boots off before you came inside?

Walter looks down to find he's tracked fresh dirt from the
 flagpole across the carpet. He sighs, finally giving up.

WALTER
 Some day, young man. You'll turn
 off that machine and start living
 the life God blessed you with.

He starts to leave the room when the DOORBELL rings.

WALTER (CONT'D)
 Can you get that, Scott? I've got
 to get this mess cleaned up.

Scott sighs as Walter disappears around the corner. Suddenly
 the ambient light slowly dims, prompting Scott to look out
 the window. The clouds have arrived and darken the sky.

SCOTT
 (to Michael)
 Hold on, I'm AFK for a sec'.

MICHAEL
 Roger that.

INT./EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE - FOYER

Scott opens the door and is surprised to find an enigma
 standing there. His polished name plate identifies him as
 SGT. CURTIS WELLBORN. He's nineteen, good looking, all-
 American -- and dressed in a 1944 U.S. Army 101st Airborne
 dress uniform. Scott grins, half amused and half puzzled.

SCOTT
 Dude, what are you supposed to
 be... a singing telegram?

Curtis only smiles. He has a gentle, almost angelic quality
 about him. Quite mysterious.

CURTIS
 Hello, Scott.

SCOTT
 Hi. How'd you know my name?

CURTIS
 I have something for you. A
 special delivery.

Curtis holds out a box wrapped in plain brown paper. Scott's name and address is printed on it. Scott looks at it, leery.

SCOTT

I didn't order anything.

CURTIS

You've been selected. You and all your friends.

SCOTT

Look, if you're from the recruiting office, I'm really not interested.

CURTIS

You'll be interested in this. This is unlike any of the games you have ever played. I guarantee it.

Scott's curiosity is suddenly piqued.

SCOTT

A game?

Curtis doesn't reply, and Scott nods as though he's starting to understand. He takes the box and inspects it.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Oh... I get it. This is a promo, right? For some new World War Two game? Yeah. Hey, I like the uniform... nice touch. Cool! So is this a beta or the full retail?

CURTIS

It's unlike anything you've ever experienced.

SCOTT

Got'cha. Hey thanks, man.

CURTIS

Have a good Memorial Day, Scott. It's going to be one you'll never forget. I promise.

SCOTT

Right.

Curtis nods solemnly. Scott starts to close the door, then:

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Oh, do I need to sign for this or tip you or anyth-

But Curtis is no longer there. Scott looks around, wondering how the heck the guy disappeared so fast. THUNDER rolls.

INT. SCOTT'S BEDROOM

Walter sweeps up the dirt while trying to ignore Michael on the web-cam -- who in turn is pretending not to watch Walter. The whole web-cam concept seems quite unnerving to Walter.

Scott walks in and passes Walter without offering to help. He eagerly rips open the package, and inside is a CD-ROM which has an eerie sort of glimmer.

MICHAEL
Hey, he's finally back. How were
the Jehovah's Witnesses?

SCOTT
Man, I just scored a free game!

MICHAEL
What?

Scott finds an official looking letter inside, dated 1943.

SCOTT
Yeah... check this out. To Scott
Edward Anderson. Order to report
for duty. Ha! It's a draft letter!

MICHAEL
Cool.

SCOTT
(reading)
"Greetings: Having been reviewed by
a board, blah-blah-blah, you are
hereby notified that you have now
been selected for service in the
land forces of the United States."

The letter catches Walter's attention and he glances up.

MICHAEL
What kind of game?

SCOTT
Some World War Two shooter.

MICHAEL
From who?

SCOTT

I don't know... but I'm going to find out right now.

Scott inserts the disk and it begins installing.

MICHAEL

No fair, dude... I want one!

Graphic screen-shots come on the screen as the progression bar slowly climbs from 0%. The pictures show the horrors of war: bombed-out buildings, destroyed tanks, explosions, et al. Walter takes a step forward, frowning deeply.

WALTER

What is that, Scott?

SCOTT

It's a game.

Walter swallows hard as he looks repulsed. This is a game?

Michael's DOORBELL rings.

MICHAEL

Hey, I'm, A-F-K for a sec'.

SCOTT

No prob'.

More pictures; men killing men with bullets, bayonets, hand grenades. Scott is enthralled, but Walter grimaces as he leans against his broom; the horrible memories flooding back.

WALTER

War isn't a game, Scott.

Scott sighs, fast becoming irritated by this mosquito.

SCOTT

Okay, gramps, quick reality check here. This is a computer. These are CD-ROMs. When I take this computer, running these CD-ROMs, and connect to the internet, I can find other people all over the world. When we get a group of people together, we form a clan. Then we go out and kick other clan's butts. My clan is the G-X Warriors, who happen to be the best

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - FOYER

Michael answers the door. In the background, storm clouds are moving in over the Saint Louis Arch. Standing at the door is the uniformed Curtis holding the same type of box he gave Scott, but this one is addressed to:

CURTIS
Hello, Michael.

INT. SCOTT'S BEDROOM

Scott continues his little lecture to Walter, holding up the headphones and microphone.

SCOTT
This is a headset with a built-in microphone. Since mom packed us up and moved us halfway across the country to come take care of you, this is now how I talk to my best friend back home. So, when he and I and our clan get together and have fun doing this, it's called playing. Hence, it is a game.

Walter sets the box down, wounded. He turns to leave.

WALTER
You wouldn't think it was playing if you were actually there, Scott.

Walter leaves, and Scott goes back to his beloved computer.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM

THUNDER as Michael rips open the box and dons his headphones.

MICHAEL
Hey, Scott... you won't believe what just landed on my doorstep!
(holds up box for web-cam)
Look familiar?

SCOTT (O.C.)
What? No way!

MICHAEL
Affirmative! Installing right now.

EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE

Rain starts to splatter on a car pulling into the drive.

DIANE gets out, a tired middle-aged mother-of-one who looks as though her day has not been a good one. She carries groceries and curses when she drops a bag.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE - FOYER

Diane struggles with the groceries; quite wet, quite unhappy.

DIANE

Scott! Scott, I need a hand here!

No reply. She growls and drops the soaked bags.

INT. SCOTT'S BEDROOM

Scott eagerly awaits the installation. The screen reads: "50% complete." Diane barges in.

DIANE

Scott!

She comes in and snags the headphones right off his head.

SCOTT

Ow! Mom!

DIANE

Get off that stupid computer for a minute and come help me! There are three bags of groceries in the car -- and a soggy one in the driveway!

SCOTT

Mom, I'm right in the middle of-

DIANE

Now, mister! Where's your grandfather?

SCOTT

I don't know. Probably in his room.

INT. WALTER'S BEDROOM

Walter stands in front of a mirror, looking at his old, sad self. He slowly removes his VFW hat and steps over to an old footlocker.

He opens it, and we find it's filled with dusty war memorabilia: postcards, a Bronze Star, campaign ribbons, etc. Walter tosses the hat in and starts to close the lid.

Then in an apparent bout of frustration, he picks up the box of memorabilia, walks over to a trash can and dumps it all. On top is a worn leather map case with "Lt. W. Thomas" stenciled on the front. A faded photograph peeks out, showing two smiling young paratroopers in dress uniforms.

One of them is a handsome YOUNG WALTER, 2nd lieutenant, 82nd, who has his arm around his buddy -- a buddy who looks very familiar. The names written below confirms our suspicion: "Walter Thomas and Curtis Wellborn, England - 1944."

Hollow echoes of EXPLOSIONS, GUNFIRE and YELLING as images of war haunt Walter's memory; flashes of men shooting, fighting, dying. We see Curtis grab Walter and shield him from incoming bullets, then Young Walter cradling a dead Curtis.

WALTER

I'm so sorry, Curtis. It should have been me.

A tear falls on the photo. Walter tosses the photo into the trash. Then, as an afterthought he grabs the map case.

EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE - BACK YARD

Walter tosses the leather map case on the grill, douses in with lighter fluid and sets it ablaze. Walter watches the growing flames through tear-filled eyes.

DIANE (O.S.)

Dad? Are you out here?

Walter quickly closes the lid, pretends nothing is happening.

WALTER

Yes. Yes, I'm here.

She steps outside, sees him wiping the tears from his face.

DIANE

Are you okay? Why are you crying?

WALTER

I'm not crying... don't be silly.
It's just - smoke. From the grill.

DIANE
 (hugs him)
 Oh, dad. Come on, go wash up and
 I'll start dinner, okay?

Walter nods and shuffles off.

INT. SCOTT'S BEDROOM

The installation on the computer is almost complete.

SCOTT
 Ninety percent, dude. I'll soon be
 seeing you in my sights.

MICHAEL (O.S.)
 Bring it if you got it.

Diane storms in, goes to the computer and promptly yanks the
 power cord from the wall, shutting it down entirely.

SCOTT
 Hey! What the hell?

She yanks the other end of the cord from the computer.

DIANE
 You are supposed to be helping me
 take care of your grandfather!

SCOTT
 I was installing something! You've
 probably crashed my whole computer!

DIANE
Your computer? Did you pay for it?

Scott flinches, obviously not.

DIANE (CONT'D)
 No... you didn't pay for it because
 you don't have a job! Do I make
 you get a job? No! All I ask is
 that you help me take care of your
 grandfather. If you spent half as
 much time him as you do on this
 stupid machine-

SCOTT
 Well, since you packed us up and
 moved us out here, this "stupid
 machine" is the only way I have to
 keep in touch with my friend!

DIANE

Your friend can wait. Right now your grandfather is more important.

SCOTT

Oh, please... gramps and I have zero in common. The man lives in the eighteenth century. For crying out loud, he didn't even have a microwave before we came!

DIANE

He is an old man who needs special attention. He isn't going to be with us much longer, Scott.

SCOTT

So when he finally kicks off can we move back to Saint Louis?

Diane can't believe Scott said that. Scott can't either, but pride keeps him from taking it back.

DIANE

You can move back now. You're eighteen years old, you're not working, and you're not in school. In fact, I'll give you a choice. You can either start helping out with your grandfather... or I'm going to hire a live-in nurse who will. And she can have your room.

Diane turns to leave. Scott fumes.

SCOTT

Can I have my power cord back?

DIANE

Not until after dinner. Maybe that will give you time to think.

EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The storm clouds have gathered in force. Lightning streaks the sky behind Walter's flag. THUNDER rolls.

INT. WALTER'S DINING ROOM

A lone candle burns on the tabletop. Walter and Scott both pick at their meal, neither one very pleased. The silence is deafening. Diane sits between them. The lights flicker.

DIANE

Looks like a good storm tonight. I don't remember seeing anything on TV about it... did you, Scott?

Scott only shakes his head 'no.'

DIANE (CONT'D)

Your new flag looks wonderful, pop.

Walter mutters a "thank you," offers nothing more.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Scott, how about you and granddad hop the Metro into town tomorrow. They're having ceremonies at the monuments and I'm sure your grandfather would like to attend.

Scott bites his lip. Walter doesn't seem too eager either.

WALTER

I'm sure it will be crowded, Diane.

Diane lays her silverware down, clenches her hands together. Walter and Scott stare at their plates.

DIANE

Guys, I don't know what to do here. I don't understand this big divide between the two of you.

A moment, then finally they both begin pouring it out.

SCOTT

Nobody asked me if I wanted to come here. We just packed up and left. I have no friends here. I didn't even get to graduate with my class... they're mailing me my diploma!

WALTER

Everybody thinks I'm some helpless invalid who has to be cared for like a baby. I'm a grown man, and I'm being treated like a burden in my own home!

Diane holds up her hands and they cease fire. She covers her face, completely unprepared to deal with this.

SCOTT

You said no computer until after dinner. It's after dinner.

She sighs, then takes out the cord and lays it on the table.

DIANE

Ask your grandfather if you can be excused.

Scott only snags the cord and walks away. Walter sighs.

WALTER

What am I doing wrong, Diane?

DIANE

Nothing, pop.

WALTER

I try to connect with him, but he just pushes me further away. What's it going to take? Please, I'd like to know.

INT. SCOTT'S BEDROOM

Scott holds up the CD-ROM -- it still has a eerie reflection about it. Lightning outside as he places it in the computer. He puts on his headphones and powers up the web cam.

SCOTT

Michael... Yo, Michael, you there?

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM

Michael adjusts his headphones and web cam.

MICHAEL

Yo, Scott! Where you been, man?

INT. SCOTT'S BEDROOM

The CD continues installing: 95%. Wind stirs the curtains.

SCOTT

A little technical difficulty. Have you checked your butt lately?

MICHAEL (O.S.)

My butt?

SCOTT

Yeah, it's about to be kicked.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Whatever. Bring it if you got it.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM

Walter stares into the candle flame.

WALTER
He's always on the computer,
playing those horrible games.

INT. SCOTT'S BEDROOM

Again, the graphic screen-shots show on the monitor.

WALTER (V.O.)
Men killing each other, maiming...

EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE

The storm is overhead. Lightning bolts arc through the sky.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM

Diane wraps an arm around Walter to comfort him.

WALTER
Does he not understand that some
people went through it for real?
Except in real life, if someone
gets killed you don't just start up
another game.

INT. SCOTT'S BEDROOM

The monitor shows "INSTALLATION COMPLETE." THUNDER overhead.
WIND outside. Scott grins, eager to get started. Lightning
strikes outside and reflects in his eyes.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM

The candle flame reflects in Walter's tearing eyes.

WALTER
In real life if you lead men into
battle, they die. Like Curtis
died. Like the men in my squad...

DIANE
Pop, don't...

WALTER

No, Diane! Out of all of them, I'm
the only one who made through. I'm
the only one who came back home!
I'm... the only... one...

He succumbs to crying. Diane comforts him as best she can.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM

A storm is blowing outside here, too. Michael has to shut the window because the wind is blasting the curtains.

INT. SCOTT'S BEDROOM

Scott moves the curser to the WW II-K icon and double-clicks. The computer displays: "DOWNLOADING." Lightning flashes.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM

Walter and Diane look up as the lights flicker.

INT. SCOTT'S BEDROOM

The lightning burst fills the room and THUNDER rattles the walls. Wind HOWLS. An eerie red glow starts to grow on the web cam lens, looking like an angry eye glaring at Scott.

SCOTT

What the-?

The glow intensifies, almost blinding. He YELLS, but his scream is cut off as the power goes out, plunging the room into darkness. The red light of the web cam slowly fades.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM

The lights are out here as well. Walter grabs the candle.

WALTER

I'll get the flashlights.

INT. SCOTT'S BEDROOM

Darkness and silence, broken by receding lightning and THUNDER. The computer comes on and begins to boot up. From the glow of the monitor, we find Scott is no longer there.

EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE

The whole neighborhood has lost power, but grids slowly begin snapping on block by block. The storm is calming, fading to occasional distant lightning bursts and THUNDER.

EXT. SKIES OVER FRANCE - 1944 - NIGHT

Darkness, broken by sporadic lightning flashes and THUNDER. No, not lightning and thunder -- flak bursts! The sound of many large PROP PLANES is heard as a swarm of Allied aircraft trudge their way through the mayhem.

Some planes are HIT and begin spiraling downward in balls of flame, MEN SCREAMING as they try to bail out. Other planes barely manage to dump their human cargo, PARATROOPERS falling en masse into the darkness. Hundreds of chutes fill the sky.

We close in on one who is SCREAMING and flailing. The flashes briefly illuminate his terrified face -- it's Scott! His cries are cut short by his chute filling and yanking him hard. As he glides through the night sky we find he is dressed in World War II era paratrooper gear, 2nd lieutenant.

Scott looks down and sees fields and hedgerows rapidly approaching. SMALL-ARMS FIRE with tracers suddenly erupts from the farm houses below! He SCREAMS at the near-misses.

The tracers start to zero in on Scott so he starts pulling side to side, getting the parachute to rock like a pendulum. The tracers miss him by inches. They hit his chute, however, and burn little red-glowing holes. The holes start growing larger, accelerating his fall to the ground below.

EXT. FIELD

Scott thumps to the ground in a hyperventilating heap. In the distance are sounds of sporadic GUN FIRE. He sits up, and finds he's in a field surrounded by hedgerows. Occasional muzzle flashes dot the countryside, and a CHURCH BELL sounds in the far distance. He looks at himself in panicked disbelief; the uniform, the parachute.

SCOTT

What the...?

Something above catches his attention, and he looks up to see PARATROOPER #1 gliding down. The soldier lands perfectly, a real pro. He's 101st with a spade (506th) on his helmet. He immediately sheds his chute and readies his gear.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Hey! Hey you!

Paratrooper #1 abruptly crouches and aims his rifle at Scott.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
What the hell is happening?

PARATROOPER #1
(loud whisper)
Flash.

SCOTT
What?

PARATROOPER #1
(louder whisper)
Flash!

SCOTT
I don't know what that means. Can
you help-

Paratrooper #1 FIRES his rifle, hitting scott's equipment.
Scott immediately starts backpedaling.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Holy sh-

Paratrooper #1 FIRES again, missing only by inches. Scott
gets to his feet and starts running -- almost comically
because he's still strapped in his chute! It drags along the
ground and he struggles to free himself. He manages to shed
all his gear before clawing up a hedgerow and diving over.

EXT. HEDGEROW

Scott comes tumbling over the other side -- and promptly
finds himself facing the large barrel of a pistol.

INT. SCOTT'S BEDROOM

Diane comes in carrying a flashlight.

DIANE
Scott, can you come help your
grandfather with the-

The chair is empty, save for the headphones.

DIANE (CONT'D)
Scott?

She notices that the computer is on, and that a World War II game is on one of the monitors in stunning graphics.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Naturally. The rest of the house without power, but he still gets the stupid computer to work.

(shakes head and sighs)

I'm going to kill that boy.

She leaves, and ON THE SCREEN we see many more paratroopers parachuting in, with German Soldiers waiting for them below.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Two GERMAN SOLDIERS man a machine gun at an outpost. A GERMAN CORPORAL comes running toward them, pauses only long enough to tell them the news.

GERMAN CORPORAL

The invasion has begun!

EXT. GERMAN FIELD HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

German Corporal rushes through a squad of Soldiers anxiously milling about. SERGEANT KLUGE steps out to meet him.

GERMAN SOLDIER

American paratroopers! Thousands!
The invasion has begun!

SERGEANT KLUGE

Where?

GERMAN SOLDIER

In the fields and hedgerows!
Coming down everywhere!

From the shadows steps an impressive German officer cleaning his pistol: Colonel FRIEDRICH SPEIDEL, 25, hard core.

SERGEANT KLUGE

Prepare the men to fall back and
fortify the town, sir?

Friedrich looks at him contemptuously as he finishes assembling the pistol, then points it right in Kluge's face.

FRIEDRICH

Are we wolves or are we rabbits?

He pulls the trigger -- CLICK! Kluge is naturally nervous about this, but Friedrich only nods his approval about the weapon's functionality. He chambers a round and holsters it.

FRIEDRICH (CONT'D)

War is the only time a soldier is allowed to do his job, Herr Kluge, enjoy it while you can. Prepare the outposts to move. We'll kill off the stragglers before they can rally. Tomorrow we'll fall back to the town... tonight we hunt.

EXT. HEDGEROW - NIGHT

Scott swallows as he looks down the gun. It's held by RYAN, 20 and a chiseled athlete; also dressed like a paratrooper.

SCOTT

I- I don't know what "flash" means.

RYAN

What?

SCOTT

Are you going to shoot me?

RYAN

(lowering pistol)

Not as long as you don't shoot me. Do you have any idea what the hell is going on here?

SCOTT

I don't even know where "here" is.

Suddenly GUNSHOTS erupt from the other side of the hedgerow, followed by German men SHOUTING.

More SHOTS, which we find are being fired up into the sky. Ryan and Scott look up to see a Paratrooper gliding down to earth, FIRING his weapon. Scott watches the vertical fire-fight until the man glides out of sight on the other side.

Ryan and Scott look at each other, then quietly crawl up the hedgerow to peek over. They're just about there when they hear GUNSHOTS, followed by a MAN'S DEATH YELL.

EXT. FIELD

Four German Soldiers jog over to the Paratrooper's body and three begin searching it.

The other notices Scott's chute -- which points in the direction Scott ran when he shed it! The German Soldier begins following the trail of the discarded gear, right towards Scott and Ryan.

Ryan holds up his pistol, then looks at Scott: "Do you have a weapon?" Scott's gear is scattered on the ground, yards away. He searches himself, and all he can find is a jump knife. Ryan sighs and rolls his eyes, "Wonderful."

The tension escalates as German Soldier slowly draws near. He's within mere feet, when a noise from overhead makes all six people look up. It's a SCREAM; a girly-girl scream of panic so pathetic that even the Germans seem bemused.

Coming down in a flailing, screaming, heap of blubbering jelly is BOBBY; 18 and so pudgy he could be a poster child for Krispy Kreme. He lands nearby in an ungraceful heap and continues to scream, even when he inhales.

The German Soldiers all point their weapons at him, but are almost too taken aback to shoot; "What the hell is this?!" their faces say. Their confusion soon turns to amusement.

GERMAN SOLDIER #1

A pig has fallen from the sky.

GERMAN SOLDIER #2

No, he sounds more like a donkey.

GERMAN SOLDIER #1

Yah... a sick donkey.

German Soldier #2 walks over to Bobby, who has gotten to his hands and knees and looks up through coke-bottle glasses.

GERMAN SOLDIER #2

I will put this poor donkey out of its misery.

German Soldier #2 points his rifle at Bobby's head.

GERMAN SOLDIER #1

Goodbye, sick donkey! Soon you will feel all better.

BANG! Soldier #2 flies backward, leaving the other three confused as hell -- until they see muzzle flashes on the far side of the field, coming from a handful of paratroopers.

GERMAN SOLDIER #2

Americans!

The three Germans drop to the ground and begin FIRING back.

Ryan sees that the distracted Germans have their backs to them. He points to the dead paratrooper lying nearby -- and the gun lying there. Scott nods and begins creeping down.

Bobby begins crawling away from the fire-fight on all fours, but his chute gets snagged. German Soldier #1 notices and FIRES at him, kicking up dirt inches from his face.

Scott also notices, and he's faced with a dilemma. The weapon to his left, the Germans in the middle, Bobby to his right; go for the weapon or help the boy? Ryan waves him off.

RYAN
(quietly)
No! Forget him! Get the gun!

Scott starts for the gun, then looks over to Bobby, who's clawing at the dirt. German Soldier #1 works the bolt on his rifle, chambers another round and takes aim at Bobby.

Scott grabs the closest object he can find, a pouch with "S. Anderson" stenciled on it. He throws it at German Soldier #1 and hits him in the face just as he FIRES, making him miss.

Scott takes off at a dead run toward Bobby. German Soldier #1 struggles with the pouch a moment because the strap gets tangled around his weapon, then he sees Scott.

GERMAN SOLDIER #1
Behind us!

The Germans turn and see Scott and begin FIRING. Ryan FIRES a shot to distract the them, and they quickly figure out:

GERMAN SOLDIER #2
We are surrounded! Fall back!

The Germans begin backing away, FIRING as they go. Scott's pouch still dangles from German Soldier #1's rifle.

Scott makes it to Bobby and uses the knife to cut him out of his chute. He pulls Bobby to his feet and they begin running toward the hedgerow, diving headfirst into the bushes.

EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Diane looks worried as she searches the back yard with a flashlight. Inside, the power kicks back on.

DIANE
Scott?

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Diane enters as Walter comes from the garage.

WALTER
One of the breakers tripped.

DIANE
Dad, I can't find Scott.

WALTER
I'm sure he's around here
somewhere.

DIANE
No, he's not.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Scott, Ryan and Bobby come running along a hedgerow, all panting and exhausted. Bobby looks like he might cry.

BOBBY
This is all a bad dream, right? I
fell asleep at my computer!

SCOTT
Anybody behind us?

Ryan looks around. No sign of pursuers.

RYAN
No. It's clear.

BOBBY
I'm being punished... that's what
it is. I'm being punished for all
that porn I downloaded!

RYAN
Will you shut up? You're giving me
a headache.

SCOTT
So how long do we keep running?

Ryan looks around and sees a distant farm house and barn.

RYAN
Let's try and make it to that barn.

BOBBY

Does anyone have a cell phone? I
need to call my mom to come get me!

Ryan looks at Scott contemptuously.

RYAN

Good choice - the gun or the idiot.

They pick up and make a dash towards the barn.

EXT. BARN

They make it to the doors and then quickly slip inside.

INT. BARN

Ryan, Scott and Bobby all sneak into the darkness, then
collapse against the wall to catch their breath.

SCOTT

Made it...

Scott suddenly finds a rifle barrel pressed under his chin.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Walter looks worried as he watches Diane. She's getting
upset as she scatters the contents of her purse on a table.

DIANE

Where are my stupid car keys?

WALTER

Diane, just settle down. Maybe he
went out for a walk or something.

DIANE

Dad, when was the last time Scott
went for a walk?

Walter considers that, but he still doesn't seem convinced.
Diane pauses, looks racked with guilt and finally admits:

DIANE (CONT'D)

We had an argument. I told him...
he could either start helping out
or he could move out.

WALTER

Oh, dear.

She finally finds her keys and starts for the door.

DIANE

I'm going to drive around and see if I can find him. Will you be okay here for a few minutes?

WALTER

I'm not an invalid, Diane.

DIANE

I know you're not.

He nods, and she kisses him before leaving. Walter watches out the window until her car pulls away.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Someone turns up a lantern and Scott finds the rifle is held by JOHN GAGE; 19 and a wild-eyed youth with a rebel flag tattoo and a southern drawl.

A rifle pointed at Ryan is held by TONY BATTAGLIA; 19 with a thick Brooklyn accent.

Behind them, holding only the lantern, is ADAM STILLER, 18 and a skateboarder type. All three are wearing paratrooper uniforms, though Adam's bares a medic insignia.

JOHN

Do we shoot 'em?

TONY

I dunno... they look like they're supposed to be on our side.

JOHN

Y'all speak English?

RYAN

I speak better English than you, you hillbilly red-neck. Now get the damn gun out of my face!

JOHN

Yep... he's American.

They gradually relax, but eye each other warily as they swig from their canteens. Tony squats, wincing at his shoulder, which has been grazed by a bullet. Adam resumes bandaging it.

TONY

Ow!

ADAM

Sorry. I don't know why they made me a medic... I can't even put on a decent Band-Aid.

SCOTT

Who are you guys?

TONY

I'm Tony. Larry the Cable Guy there is John. This is Adam.

SCOTT

Scott.

BOBBY

Bobby.

Ryan doesn't look like he wants to give his name. Finally:

RYAN

Ryan.

JOHN

Wait... you play ball for Iowa State, don't you? Pitcher, right?

(Ryan reluctantly nods)

Yeah! You struck out three of our guys straight in a conference game. You got a good arm.

Ryan shrugs. Scott still looks at the newcomers, reserved.

SCOTT

So you guys are real? You're not part of... this.

John limps over, sits leaning against the wall.

JOHN

Man, all I know is I'm sitting at home about to play a brand new game on my computer, when suddenly I'm falling through the sky like a clay pigeon at a NRA shooting match.

Scott looks up with a spark of realization.

SCOTT

What game?

JOHN
Some World-
(realizing)
World War Two game.

TONY
Delivered by a guy in uniform?

JOHN
Yeah... with some letter saying I
done been drafted.

BOBBY
Yeah! Yeah! Me too!

Scott notices the black and olive arm patch on Adam's uniform and grabs the lantern for a closer look: "G-X-W."

SCOTT
(tying to make connection)
G-X-W. Where do I know that?

BOBBY
(offers)
Gen-X Warriors?

All the boys recognize it and find they have the same patch.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
That's my gaming clan.

ADAM
Yeah, mine too.

John and Tony also nod, but Ryan is stone faced.

SCOTT
All of us.

TONY
Oh, wow... Welcome to World War
Two, boys.