TROTTER:

HIBBERT:

TROTTER:

HIBBERT:
Here we go.
Yeah. Done you again, Hibbert.

HIBBERT:
Language.
One last kiss.
I might never see you again.
(SPEAKING FRENCH)
Hibbert. Time to parade.
(both speaking French)
Stanhope.
It's time.

TROTTER:

(WHISTLES) That's for you, son.
Merci.
(CHUCKLES)
Au revoir, mademoiselle.
Bonne chance, monsieur.
Merci.
(CHICKENS CLUCKING)
(DOG BARKING IN DISTANCE)

SERGEANT MAJOR:
All present and correct, sir.
Thank you, Sergeant Major.
Sir.
Company, by the centre!
Quick march!
Left right, left right,
left right, left!
Left right, left right,
left right, left!
Left right, left right,
left right, left!
Left right, left right,
left right, left...
We're here because we're here because
We're here because we're here
We're here because we're here because
We're here because we're here
We're here because we're here because
We're here because we're here
We're here because we're here because
We're here because we're here
We're here because we're here

OFFICER 1:
Out you get.
(INDISTINCT CHATTER)
Transport office over there, sir.
Sir.
Lieutenant?
Second Lieutenant Raleigh, sir.
You're to report
to the officers' quarters,
down the bottom on the right.
And do you know
where I could find the General?
Yes, he's in the stable block,
but that's all off limits to you,
Lieutenant.
Sir.
(INDISTINCT CONVERSATIONS)

CORPORAL:

SERGEANT MAJOR:
By the left! Quick march!
Left right, left right,
left right, left...
Yes, sir?
Is this the General's office?
It is, sir. Now's not a good time, sir.
Could you tell him his nephew's here
to say hello?
Yes, sir.
Follow me, sir.
Righto.
(TELEPHONE RINGING)
GENERAL:
Sir.

GENERAL:
Sir?
What is it you're after?
An old school friend is out here, sir, and when I'm posted to my unit, I wondered if it'd be possible for it to be his battalion, sir?
Anyone I know?
I don't think so.
A scholarship boy. Stanhope.
MC at Vimy Ridge.
Captain Stanhope?
Yes.
We used to spend a lot of time together.
He's been out here almost three years.
You don't want to join them, not now of all times.
I do, sir.
They may have a hell of a time of it.
That's just what I'm hoping for, sir.
Here you are, sir.
I shouldn't make exceptions just because I happen to be your uncle.
No, sir.
How are your father's crocuses?
Not up to much.
I told him he'd set them too deep.

(Telephone ringing)
Had some grub?
Yes, on the boat over, sir.
Well, then...
Evacuation, Lieutenant?
Just saving what we can, sir.

(Mud squelching)
Mr Osborne, go and find Captain Hardy.

OSBORNE:
Number Nine Platoon, to the right.
Come on.
Come on, lads. Quickly.
Come on. Keep coming.
Straight down to the right.
Keep going, boys.
Enter Platoon, to the right.
Keep it moving. Come on.
(SIGHS)
Sir.
Sir.
Hardy!
Hardy.
All your fellas here then, Osborne?
Stanhope's just sorting out the mess
you've left these trenches in.
I wouldn't want to be
his second in command,
sober old thing like you.
If I wanted your sympathy, Hardy,
I'd ask for it.
You already have it, chum.

SOLDIER:

HARDY:
is expected any day now.
We're off in the nick of time.
Well, it's been expected
for more than a month.
Well, but there's more Boche transport
coming up than usual.
More trains puffing in
with reinforcements.
We'll hear it again tonight,
I shouldn't wonder.
How many days are you here for?
Six.
Then you'll get it right in the neck.
Thank you so much. I'll tell Stanhope.
How is the old soak?
Best company commander of the lot.
He's a hard drinker.
Let's get this over with.
We need to check every inch
of this sector before nightfall.
Yes, sir.
We won't last five minutes
if the Germans attack.
Good work, men. Let's get as much
of this sorted as soon as we can.
(WHISPERS) Be careful.
Sir.

HARDY:
the line, left and right.
The Germans are just 60 yards
away from the sap.
It's been stalemate
for well over a year.
Splintered trees on the right?
What's left of the larch wood.
Well...
Heap of bricks?

OSBORNE:

HARDY:
I had two fellas hit
by a sniper out there.
Commanding officer
and his number two in here.
Servants and signalmen through here.

MASON:
Just bring the kettle and everything
and put that over here with the jugs.
Hello, Mason.
Ah, just brewing up, sir.

HARDY:
Other officers in here.
What arrangements
do you make for the men?

HARDY:
Sergeant Major sees to all that.

MASON:
Right.
Hundred and fifteen rifle grenades. 
Shouldn't use 'em. They're a bit rusty. 
Five hundred Mills bombs or thereabouts. 
What about the rest? 
There is no rest. 
We're taking it all with us.

SOLDIER: 
to go back down behind the line, sir.

HARDY:

SOLDIER:

OSBORNE: 
And risk facing his drunken wrath? 
Not likely. 
Cheerio. 
(EXHALES)

SOLDIER 2:

OSBORNE:

MASON: 
Coming through. 
(CHUCKLES) Oh, dear. 
Now, right. 
Let's see if we can't get some light 
going down here for you, sir.

SOLDIER: 
Out you get. Follow me. 
First time, sir? 
Yes, it is. 
(JARVIS CHUCKLES)

JARVIS: 
It's poison, sir. 
It's the gas. 
See, look. 
All of it dead. 
Sorry about the smell, sir. 
Trench belonged to the French
before they deserted.  
Didn't bury the bodies, but used them to shore up the trench walls. Poor buggers.  
New officer for C Company, sir.  
Thank you, Jarvis.  
Follow me, sir.  
Keep your head down, sir.  
This bit's not fixed yet.  
Mind your backs, lads.  
Officer coming through.  
Here we are, sir.  
Thank you, Sergeant Major.  
Mmm.  
Battalion Headquarters told me to report here, sir.  
Sorry. What?  
Oh, I was...  
I was told to report here, sir.  
Whisky?  
Yes. Just a small one. Thank you.

**OSBORNE:**  
When.  
Thank you.  
Here we are.  
(RALEIGH COUGHS)  
(EXHALES)  
Here's to the next six days, sir.  
Osborne... The name's Osborne.  
You need only call me "sir" in front of the men.  
The other officers, they call me Uncle.  
Raleigh. James.  
Jimmy.  
Ever been up the line before, Jimmy?  
No. No. Uh...  
Only just left Barford.  
Barford? Really? Our company commander lives at Barford. You know him?  
I do. Yes, uh, Captain Stanhope.  
He was my house monitor, three years above.  
He used to come and stay with me and my sister Margaret in the holidays.
Really?
Well, you'll find him changed, I expect.
He's led this company
through all sorts of rotten times.
Big strain on the man.
(KNOCK AT DOOR)
Yes?

MASON:
Yes, do, Mason. This is Mr Raleigh.
He's just joined the company.
Good evening, sir.
Hello.
What are you tempting us
with tonight, Mason?
Uh, soup, cutlets and pineapple.
Oh, pineapple? Splendid.
Mmm.
What kind of cutlets?
Oh, you got me there, sir. I shouldn't
like to commit myself too deep.
Ration meat?
Uh, ordinary ration meat, yes, sir.
But new shape.
Oh.
Smells like liver
without the smooth, wet look.
Thank you, Mason.
Very good, sir.
New boy?
Ought to have stayed at school,
poor sod.
He's keen.
(SCOFFS)
Show me a kid out here that hasn't been.
I'm keen. Keen on going home.
Yeah, well, you won't be, you pillock,
except on a stretcher.
So get off your arse
and wipe these plates.
Fuck.
(KNOCKS ON DOOR)

OSBORNE:
I've had an unpleasant surprise, sir.
Yes?
The pineapples.
What about them?
They're apricots.
There wasn't a label on the tin?
(SIGHS) The captain'll ring my neck, sir.
Well, haven't you anything else?
Well, there's the pink blancmange, but it's not anywhere near stiff, sir.
Well, we'll just have to chance it with the apricots.
Very good, sir.
My stuff, should I unpack here?
No, no, no. You're through there.
Take a light with you, Jimmy.
Thank you.
It's dark.
Nice meeting you, Jimmy.
And you, sir.
Uncle.
(SIGHS)
When you've cleared up here, Watson, move on further down the line.
Then get some kip.
Thank you, sir.
Foul trenches. Rusty bombs.
Damp rifle grenades.
The whole place is a disgrace!
This dugout smells like a cesspit.
Mason!
Just bringing the soup, sir.
Damn the soup! Bring some whisky!
Stanhope.
Bloody Captain Hardy. Oh, if I see him, I'll give him a piece of my mind.
Stanhope.
Hello, Stanhope.
I was told to report to your company, sir.
Well, you said I should come and find you if I ever join up.
Sir. Evening.
There's been a terrible tragedy, Trotter.
Mason's tinned pineapples, you see, they turn out to be apricots.

**TROTTER:**
Pineapple chunks are too bleedin' sickly.

**MASON:**

**OSBORNE:**
Come along, Uncle. You sit here and... Raleigh, you better sit there.
Not now.
Budge over.
Trotter.
Raleigh. How do you do?
You haven't been in the army five minutes, have you?

**RALEIGH:**
I had eight weeks' training at Salisbury Plain.
And I was in the Corps at school.
Mason, what sort of a soup is this? Yellow soup, sir.
Mmm, it has a very deep yellow flavour.
Pepper, Mason. (SLURPS)
I'm sorry, sir.
When the, uh, mess box was packed, the pepper was omitted.
Why wasn't it packed, Mason?
Oh, come on, we need pepper.
It was missed, sir.
Do you wanna go back upstairs in the trench?
Turner!
Sir.
Run over to A Company and ask Captain Willis, with my compliments, if he can lend me a little pepper.
Sir.
A screw of pepper,  
that's what you ask for.  
War's bad enough with pepper.  
Without it, bleedin' awful.  
Hmm.  
Go on. Eat your soup.  
(WHISTLES)  
(WHISPERS) Hey,  
I wouldn't go down that way, chum.

**TURNER:**

**WATSON:**

bloody head blown off.  
(TURNER BREATHING HEAVILY)  
(GROANING)  
(LAUGHTER)  
Jammy tosser!  
What's this?  
Meat, sir.  
Yeah, what sort?  
Well, sort of a cutlet.  
There's cutlets  
and there's cutlets, Mason.  
Oh, yeah. Uh, this one's a cutlet.  
Trotter goes back on duty  
directly he's had supper.  
Oh, no.  
Now, in fact.  
I haven't had me apricots yet.  
They won't spoil.

**TROTTER:**

like a war for upsetting meals.  
I'm always on call when me grub's up.  
Because you never stop eating.  
Trotter's relieving  
the other platoon commander, Hibbert.  
You best go with him, to learn.  
Go and fetch your stuff.  
(CLEARS THROAT) Yes, sir.  
Cigarette?

**TROTTER:**
RALEIGH:
Tuck your respirator under your chin
like a serviette.
Here you go. And you won't be needing
that stick, son.
Just in case we have to run fast.
(TROTTER SNAPS FINGERS)
Mason, don't let anyone
touch my apricots.

MASON:

OSBORNE:

TROTTER:
Mr Trotter.
Got the wind up him, that one.
You have to put them
in separate pockets.
Green ones, business as usual.
Red ones to signal an alarm.
I set the wrong one off once.
Nearly cost us the war!
Go on. Have a go.
Can I?
Yeah. Yeah, go on.
(GUN CLICKS)
So just... Just up there?
Whoo!
(TROTTER CHUCKLES)
Come on.

RALEIGH:
Optimum range?
That's just over a mile, Mr Trotter.
Is that them?

TROTTER:
(IMITATES GUNFIRE)
Bit of sniping on our left.
One or two rifle grenades
coming over on our right.
Thanks. That's good to know.
Hot soup and a good chop will put that right.
Thank you. No appetite.
Pain right inside my eye.
(CHUCKLES)
You're back on duty at 11:00.
I'll get Mason to call you.
Right.

**STANHOPE:**
There's no proof of neuralgia.

**OSBORNE:**
I may have let Warren get away with that, but no more.
No man of mine is going sick before the attack.
Shh!
Bloody little funk!
Shh!
Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.
Keep your head down.
This is the sap.
Brings you to within just yards of Jerry.
Come on.
(TROTTER WHISTLES)

**TROTTER:**
Now, then...
It's awfully quiet, apart from that rumble in the distance.
Troop trains.
Germans?
Them and us.
All waiting for it to happen.
And what about after it happens?
Come on.
Let's get back.
Have a nice cup of tea.
Raleigh tells me he was at school with you.
Ah.
Margaret.
Oh, Raleigh's sister.
She is beautiful.
Is she waiting for you?
She thinks I'm a wonderful chap, commanding a company.
I daren't even go back on leave.
I don't want her to see how shot I am.
I can't bear being fully conscious all the time.
Well, when the war's over and the strain's gone, you'll chuck all of this muck in.
He's gonna tell her I reek of whisky all day long.
Oh, God. Now, why would he?
How many battalions are there in France, Uncle?
Huh?
Fifty divisions?
Hundred and fifty brigades.
Four hundred and fifty battalions.
That's 1,800 companies.
All right.
Why this one?
That's it. Come on.
Why now?
Come on. Come to bed.
Come on. There you go.
(GROANS)
Come on.
(EXHALES)
All right.
There. There we are.
(GROANS)
You go to sleep.
Go to sleep yourself.
(CHUCKLES)
I'll have you woken at 4:00, all right?
Tuck me in, Uncle.
There we are.
What? What?
Kiss me.
(CHUCKLES) Oh, stop it!
(LAUGHS)
Your hands are cold.
(BLOWS)
Bless you.
(MUMBLES)
Just sleep.
Sleep.
(SIGHS)
(BOTH LAUGHING)
Good night, lad.
Good night, Mr Trotter.
(BOTTLE THUDS)
(EXPLOSIONS)
(EXHALES)
(EXHALES)
(WHISPERS) All good, men.
(CHUCKLES) Knockity knees, Evans.
It's me elbows now, sir.
Just need a bit of greasing.
Anyone seen a skylark?

**SOLDIER:**

crapping on the French.
Sir.
Yeah.
CO wants to see you, sir.
What, now?
Yes, now, sir.
Tell Mr Raleigh to step up,
Sergeant Major.
Yes, sir.
(TELEPHONE RINGING)

**OFFICER:**

I'll put you through.
Good morning, Stanhope.
Sir.
Take a pew.
(TELEPHONE RINGING)
D Company's German deserter.
He says the attack's coming the 21st.
Thursday. Day after tomorrow.
Once it does come, we can't expect
much support from behind.
No reinforcements, sir?
You're to stay where you are for as long as you can. Slow them down. As long as we can, sir? Our orders are to stay put. Let them come to us. And that's it, sir? That's it. Cheerio, Stanhope. Cheerio, sir. Send in Captain Willis, will you? Sir. Captain Willis. Stand down!

**SERGEANT MAJOR:**

**TROTTER:**
Bread, sir. Thank you. Pass the jam, please, Raleigh.

**OSBORNE:**
Mmm.

**MASON:**
Glad we polished off the raspberry. All the pips were getting stuck behind me plate. That's me. I'm done. Cheery soul.
Mmm.
You know, I feel like
I've been here ages
and we've still another five days to go.
It's funny to think of the Boche
being so close.

OSBORNE:
width of a rugby field.
What, do you play?
No.
Well, I used to.
Mostly reffing at school
these last few years.
You were a schoolmaster?
I don't mind schoolmasters.
(INDISTINCT CHATTER)
I used to play for the Harlequins.
No!
Mmm. And England on one occasion.
You played for England?
Shh. It was a long time ago.
Don't breeze about it.
Don't any of the others know?
Doesn't really make
much difference out here.
Well, I should write a letter
to my sister.
(HIBBERT TREMBLING)
(INDISTINCT CHATTER)
This coming Thursday.
The 21st?
Mmm-hmm.
My birthday's on the 22nd.
I'm sure the Boche
have taken that into account.
Well, all me parcels will be delayed.
That's if anyone
still loves you, Trotter.
Sergeant Major's got the men
preparing the wire.
When they've done all along the front,
I want them putting a belt
down both sides.
Both sides?
If this attack comes,
I'm not going to trust A and B Companies
to hold their ground on either flank.
Right.
When's it expected?
Thursday.
Huh.
It's odd.
I'm glad it's coming, at last.
Sick of waiting.
We'll get no help from behind.
We're not to budge.
I see.
Yes?
Perhaps you'd like some sardines, sir?
I should loathe it.
Very good.
Day after tomorrow.
Fuck.

OSBORNE:
(CROCKERY CLATTERS)
Mason?
Bit early, but it's damn cold.
See any shows
when you were last on leave?
Uh, well, wish I had now.
Spent all of my time in the garden
working on the rockery.
Your wife must have been thrilled.
Well, Joan and I and the boys
pretended there wasn't a war on.
It was great.
I'm going to inspect my rifles now.
Where shall we put letters?
Oh, just put it on the table
for the quartermaster.
Leave it open.
I have to censor all letters.
It's the rule.
Give me that letter.
It's private.
Do you understand an order?
Now go and inspect your rifles.
Sir.

OSBORNE:
I'll join you.
For God's sake, Stanhope.
Osborne, I'm commanding this company.
You cannot read his letters!
Well, then you read it.
I don't want to.
Oh, it's nothing.
It just describes how he got here.
No place names. All the usual stuff.
Read it.
All right.
"I was taken along some trenches
and reported to C Company.
"A nice officer greeted me.
Older. Second in command.
"And then there he was,
Captain Stanhope, MC.
"Tired because he works so hard,
"because of all the responsibility."
That's enough.
"The other officers told me
all about him,
"the finest officer
in the whole battalion."
Would you like me to seal this now?
Excuse me, sir. CO needs
to see you at HQ, sir. Right away.
I can smell the whisky on you, Stanhope.
You need to steady on.
Will that be all, sir?
The brigadier's been to see me.
He wants us to make a raid,
to find out how many
have come into the line opposite.
When?
Tonight.
That's absurd.
It is.
Which is what I told the brigadier.
So he's agreed to
tomorrow afternoon instead.
Afternoon?
A surprise daylight raid
under a smokescreen.
Two officers. Ten men.
Tonight we'll mortar some holes
in the Boche wire
and cut some holes in our own.
Harrison from trench and mortars
is coming for dinner at 8:00. Join us.
Very well, sir.
I want one officer to direct the raid
and one to make the dash in
to collar some Boche.
Do you want me to go with them, sir?
No, I can't let you go.
Well, whom do you suggest, sir?
Osborne. He's level-headed.
He can direct the raid.
Who else?
Well, Trotter can't cut a dash. Hibbert?
I don't think so.
Why not send a good sergeant, sir?
The men expect officers to lead a raid.
How about that youngster
sent up to you last night?
He's a bit new to it all.
All to the good. His nerves are steady.
He's only just arrived, sir.
Well, who else is there?
Do you like fish?
Fish, sir?
We're having some fish
sent up fresh from railhead for supper.
Carry on.

OSBORNE:
about the wood, Mr Raleigh.
Just the bolt, magazine and barrel.
Take over.

RALEIGH:
(GUN CLICKS)
Clean as a whistle, Private.
Marvelous.
I'm afraid I can't stick it any longer.
Rotten, isn't it? I've got it like hell.
Really?
Had it for weeks.
(STAMMERING) Well, I'm sorry,
but I need to go down.
I need to go to the hospital, I need
to get some sort of treatment.
You're staying here.
I'm going to see the doctor.
He'll only send you back.
Save yourself the walk.
But I have a right to go sick.
If the men can, why can't I?
You're going to stay here
and you're gonna see it through
with the rest of us.
The pain's driving me mad.
You can't stop me.
Get off!
(HIBBERT GROANS)

STANHOPE:

(HIBBERT GRUNTS)

Stay!
I could have you shot for desertion,
but I'd rather spare you that disgrace.
You wouldn't dare.
Oh, really?
I'll give you half a minute to find out.
Twenty seconds.
Ten.
Five.
(SOBBING)
All right.
Okay. All right.
Shh.
(GROANS SOFTLY)
I am never going up those steps.
The men looking at me.
Knowing.
I'd rather die here.
Please.
I know how you feel.
How can you know?
Because I feel exactly the same.
Every little noise up there
makes me feel sick.
I loathe it.
Sometimes I wish I could just get
into bed and pretend I'm paralyzed.
Just lie there until I die.
What does it matter?
They have sent us here to die.
Suppose you are knocked out?
You won't have
to bear this hell any more.
But don't you think it's worth
standing in with men like Osborne?
Trotter?
They all feel like we do.
They do.
But they stick at it.
It's the only thing a decent man can do.
You won't tell anyone
how much of a funk I am, will you?
(CHUCKLES)
I won't if you won't.
Good man.
Have 10 minutes. We'll go in together.
We'll hold each other's hand.
(CHUCKLES)
Jump every time a rat squeaks.
(BOOTH LAUGHING)
I mean to come through this, Hibbert,
don't you?
Yes, sir.
(KNOCK AT DOOR)
Sir, can I make you some nice, hot tea?
(SIGHS) Can you guarantee it's nice?
Well, to be honest, uh,
it is a little oniony, sir.
Ah.
All right, Mason, two cups of onion tea
and bread and jam.
Coming right up, sir.
(SIGHS)
Excuse me.
We've got to make a raid, Uncle.
Tomorrow afternoon under a smokescreen.
Two officers, ten men.
Who's going?
You.
Ah.
And Raleigh.
Why Raleigh?
You to direct. Raleigh to dash in.
Ah.
You want me to tell him?
I'll tell him.
Tomorrow?
Mmm-hmm.
What time?

5:

5:

**TROTTER:**
We've got to make a raid
tomorrow afternoon.
What, all of us?
No, just me, Raleigh and 10 of the boys.
Raleigh?
Excuse me, sir.
But he only just got here.
And you, too?
Me, too.
What a nuisance.
Yes, that's what I thought.
Mr Hibbert.
Ready?
Ready.
Good man.
(OPERA ON GRAMOPHONE)

**COLONEL:**
Yes.
Osborne took it on the chin.
Raleigh thought it was exciting.
Good fellow.
I know this is hard on the men, Stanhope, so I pulled a few strings with the quartermaster. And I've thrown in a few goodies of my own. Thank you, sir. Well, it's the least I could do. (DISTANT EXPLOSION) (HORSES NEIGHING) Bang on time. Don't you need to see for yourself that they've done the job, Harrison? Delegation, Stanhope. They always hit their coordinates. Well, nine times out of ten. (DISTANT EXPLOSIONS CONTINUE)

**COLONEL:**
Gentlemen, to C Company.

**ALL:**

**STANHOPE:**

**JARVIS:**
the Colonel coming through.

**SOLDIER:**

**JARVIS:**
(BANGING)
Good morning, Jarvis.
Morning, sir.
Watch your backs, lads.

MAISON:
(EXHALES)
All right, Jarvis?
Cup of tea?
Yes, please.
(JARVIS SIGHS)
Well, Bert,
you know what to do.
(LAUGHTER)
This waiting's like being summoned
to the headmaster.
Yeah.
I didn't think
I'd have that feeling again.
(TUTS)

STANHOPE:
holes in different places, sir.

COLONEL:
hours to blow that one.
We must make a surprise raid
farther up the line. After dark.
Yes, I suggested that,
but the brigadier was adamant
that present arrangements would stand.
Damn it! The Germans will have
a dozen machine guns
trained on our bloody great gaping hole!
Now, listen here, Stanhope.
My report's to be at Headquarters

by 7:
If we wait till dark it'll be too late.

Why 7:
Some conference with Army Service Corps.

Dinner at 8:
HQ need as much information as possible,
as early as possible. That's why we can't wait until after dark. Can't we? Those are the orders. It's only 60 yards or so. Hmm.
The smoke ought to cover you nicely. If I could cancel it, Stanhope, I would. Of course you would, sir.

OSBORNE:
Mmm.

OSBORNE:
"When you read this, I don't imagine that for one moment "you'll feel bitter or resentful." Morning, Wilkins. Sir. "But you will find no comfort in the thought "that I went down fighting for my country. "You are too clear-headed for that, my darling." Peters. Sir.

OSBORNE:
Sir. "There is a job to be done. "It ought never to have arisen, but that is not the point." Hello, lads. Sir. "I have had so very much out of life, "but all these youngsters do not realise how unlucky they are, "so new are they to their very existence." (SIGHS)

SERGEANT MAJOR:
White.
Peters.
Smith.
Watson.
Wiggins.
Taylor.
Draycott.
Stafford.
And Hawkins.
(SIGHs)

SOLDIER:

SOLDIER 2:

COLONEL:

OSBORNE:

COLONEL:
drop exactly on the hour.
You'll give the word to go
when the smoke is thick enough.
Will do, sir.
Men had their rum, Uncle?
Sergeant Major is seeing to it now, sir.
Would you like to speak to the men, sir?
Don't you think they'd rather
be left alone?
I think they'd appreciate
a word or two from you, sir.
If you think they would.
Good luck, Osborne.
Thank you, sir.
I'm sure you'll put up a good show.
And you, Raleigh.
Sir.
Just go in like blazes, grab hold
of the first Boche you see
and bundle him across.
Yes, sir.
Bring us a spare if you see one handy.
A great deal depends
on you bringing in a German.
You never know,  
it may win us the war.

**OSBORNE:**

**STANHOPE:**  
The ring is for Johnny.  
The watch should go to Richard.  
And this is for Joan.  
You're coming back.  
Take it.  
What should I do without you?  
Please.  
I'll see you up by the sap  
before the off.  
Oh, damn you, Colonel.

**OSBORNE:**  
Time for one small pipe.  
Oh, and thank you, Mason.  
Best for them not to see our rank.  
Right. Yes.  
And you might want  
to turn out your pockets, too.  
Like some rum in your coffee?  
Well, it might make us a bit muzzy.  
Yes.  
Well, we'll have it  
when we get back, to celebrate.  
Good idea.  
I wish we could start now.  
Seven minutes yet. All right...  
Take a last look at this map.  
All right. It's very simple.  
When the smoke's thick enough,  
we're gonna run across  
to this point here.  
You'll jump into the trench,  
grab the first German you see.  
I'll blow my whistle  
and we'll run back like the blazes.  
The whole thing'll be over  
in under three minutes.  
As quick as that?
Quick as that.
Now, let's forget about it
for the next six minutes.
I don't think I can.
Well, you must.
Is your coffee sweet enough?
Yes.
These smoke bombs,
do they make much of a row...
Do you prefer coffee to tea?
For breakfast.
I wonder what the Boche are doing out...
Personally, I prefer cocoa
for breakfast.
I'm sorry.
Why shouldn't I prefer cocoa?
No, I keep talking...
It's all right.
Will they retaliate in any way?
Bound to.
Shelling?
"The time has come," the walrus said,
"to talk of many things,
"of shoes and ships and sealing wax,
of cabbages and kings."
"And why the sea is boiling hot..."
Yes.
"And whether pigs have wings."
Good. Black pigs or white pigs?
Black pigs.
Why?
They run all over the New Forest.
You know the New Forest?
My home's there. Allum Green.
It's just outside Lyndhurst.
I know Lyndhurst.
I used to walk through the forest
with my rucksack and sandwiches.
I like it better than any place I know.
Stanhope and my sister and I would
spend days and days walking the forest.
You should come stay with us sometime.
Yes, I should like that very much.
I'll show you places
that nobody knows about, where the forest gets much darker and thicker, cooler.
You know, where I live in Sussex, there's a Roman road called Stane Street and it runs straight as a line, all the way from the coast to London. And near my house, the old road runs over Bignor Hill. The new road's been cut around the base of the hill. The old road hasn't been used for donkey's years, and it's all overgrown with grass and bushes and trees growing right in the middle of it. Oh, I just took all of that off because I didn't wanna run the risk of losing it. All right, we'd better get ready. Yes.

**OSBORNE:**
I'll just take my revolver. I feel so much better with this in my hand, don't you? Mmm, something to hold on to. Loaded all right? Yes.
I do hate leaving it with a nice glow on top. Three minutes. We'd better go.
Listen, Raleigh.
I'm so glad it's you and me together. So am I. We'll put up a good show. Yes, we will.

**MASON:**

**OSBORNE:**
(SIGHS)
Good luck, Mr Raleigh, sir.
Thank you, Mason.
OSBORNE: Hello, lads.

OSBORNE: At least the weather held.

OSBORNE: Good luck, sir.
Eyes to the right.
Better than pissing yourself over there, sir, if you'll pardon the French.
Right.
(ALL URINATING)
(CHUCKLES SOFTLY)
Time to go.
Right.
Bring us back a helmet, Mr Raleigh.
With a German inside.
(CHUCKLES)
Show 'em what C Company are made of.
Do you proud, sir.
Stay low.
Eyes forward. Don't look back.
And bumps-a-daisy, sir.
Precisely.
Down, get down.
I'll save you some chocolate.
Very kind of you, sir.
Just keep your head down.
(VOMITS)

OSBORNE:
Look at me.
(BREATHING HEAVILY)
(BLOWS)
(PANTING)
All right, chaps.
Right! Come on!
(OSBORNE SHOUTING ORDERS)
Keep going! Keep going!
Keep your heads!
(GROANS)

OSBORNE:
Come on! Catch up!
(GUNFIRE)
Here you are, sir.
(GROANS)

OSBORNE:
Keep your heads!
Come on! Get in there!
Come on! Come on!
Pull him out!
(INDISTINCT SHOUTING AND GUNFIRE)
Get him up!
(GROANS)
(BLOWS WHISTLE)

OSBORNE:
Raleigh, go!
Come on!
(MEN SHOUTING)
Come on!

SERGEANT MAJOR:
Here they come.
Be ready!

SERGEANT MAJOR:

STANHOPE:
(GERMAN SOLDIER GROANING)
Watson, sir!
Watson!
Evans, sir.
Stevens!
That's three.
(EXPLOSION)
Go! Go, go! Go, go!
Anyone else?
Not yet, sir.
Come on. Come on.
Sergeant Major! Anyone?

SERGEANT MAJOR:
I can't see. Smoke's too thick, sir!

COLONEL:

GERMAN SOLDIER:

COLONEL:
Give him back his other things.
(DISTANT EXPLOSIONS)
(FOOTSTEPS APPROACH)
COLONEL:
20th Wrttembergisches.
The regiment came
into the line last night.
They're packing them in here now.
The brigadier will be pleased.
How nice that the brigadier
will be pleased.
How many made it back?
How many did you expect to make it back?
Four men, one officer
made it safely back.

COLONEL:
done very well, Raleigh.
You deserve a Military Cross for this.
Carry on.
Must you sit on his bed?
(POCKETWATCH TICKING)
(FRENCH MUSIC ON GRAMOPHONE)

HIBBERT:
up a couple of tarts
and took them out to dinner.
Here we go.
Must have drank enough bubbly
to sink a battleship.

STANHOPE:
It's "float a battleship".
Float a battleship, and then I took them
for a spin out to Maidenhead.

TROTTER:
Danced for a bit at Skindles.
Drank a lot of port and muck and dammit
if I didn't lose my way on the way back
and get us stranded from anywhere.
And the two little tarts started cursing
so I said, "Shut up
"or I'll chuck you out in the road
and leave you there."
Drove off doing 60. I didn't have
any trouble from them after that.
Good little girls.
You're the kind of man, Hibbert,
who makes girls hard to please.

(COUGHs)
Don't you think
you've had enough Champagne?
You wouldn't know good Champagne
if it was spat in your face.

**Mason:**
Tuck into that.
(INDISTINCT CHATTER)
Will you join us, sir?
Here you are.
Thank you.
You did well, sir.
Fought hard, sir.
So did you.
Did you see how much that lad struggled?
No.
Don't know what hit him, poor sod.
(Evans) Your foot.
(LAUGHTER)
Tastes all right, doesn't it?
What's in it?
Horse.
(LAUGHS) I'm joking.
(LAUGHTER)
Jumped right down the hole,
grabbed him. I slipped up.
Yeah, he did and then I...
Grabbed him.
Kicked him up the rear end a few times.

**Hibbert:**
Taking her for a spin.
I'd prefer a picture of Southport Pier.
You don't understand anything about art.
Mason! Whisky!

**Trotter:**
Hmm?
Well, on top of the Champagne?
HIBBERT:
I have to tell you, sir, after this one,
there's no more whisky left.
We brought six.
Five have gone, sir.

TROTTER:
Right you are, sir.
I'd better go and relieve young Raleigh.
He hasn't had any supper.
I think he prefers it up there
with the men.
What, he said that?
Not in so many words.
Oh, he's just the sort of lad I'd have
liked, if we could have had kids.
Plucky.
Oh, shut up!
Did I ever tell you
about the girl I met in Soho?

STANHOPE:
What?
I said, "Go to bed."
A nice way to end a jolly evening.
Clear out.
I'm not sure I'm the one
who needs to go to bed.

STANHOPE:
What do you mean?
Get out of here!
I have every right to be in this room.
Clear out of my sight!
Get out!
Get out of my sight.
(MUSIC STOPS)

STANHOPE:
Gets on my nerves.
Doesn't his repulsive little mind
make you sick?
Must be nice to be you, Trotter.
You never get sick to death of anything.
If only you knew.
No, you're always the same.
No imagination.

**TROTTER:**
You realise you're my second in command now, don't you?
I won't let you down, skipper.
Mason.
Sir.
Clear this filth.

**MASON:**
And bring Mr Raleigh's dinner.

**MASON:**
Here you go, son.
And lay a place for Mr Raleigh.
Good lad.
Captain Stanhope wants to see you.
Go on. I'll take that.
Good luck.

**STANHOPE:**

**Dinner was at 8:**
We've kept it warm.

**RALEIGH:**
But I had something to eat out there.
Do you think they want an officer prowling around, sucking up to them?
Why did they share their rations, then?
So you know my men better than I do?
Sit down.
I'm all right, thanks.
Sit down!
Thank you, Mason.
You insulted Trotter and Hibbert by not coming down.
My officers work together.
I'll have no damn prigs!
I am sorry.
I'll speak to them.
What are you staring at?
Anything funny about me?
I'm sorry if I annoyed you
by joining this company.
What on earth are you talking about?
Eat your dinner before it gets cold.
I'm not hungry.
Sit down and eat it like a man!
How can I when Osborne
is lying out there?
You bloody little swine!
You think you're the only man who cares?
No, but you were drinking Champagne.
The one man I could trust!
The one man I could talk to man-to-man!
Who understood everything!
How can you...
You think there's no limit
to what a man can bear?
(SOBS)
(GRUNTS)
(STANHOPE SOBBING)
Get out. Get out. Get out.
(SNIFFLES)
(STANHOPE EXHALES)
(SOBBING)
Cup of tea.
 Lovely.
Right, Bert. That's us.
Sir.
I've got you a nice, hot
cup of tea, sir.
(GROANS)
It's quiet enough now.
But you never know, do you?
That's the stuff for troops.
A good cup of tea.
I've cut four packets
of Sam Bridges, sir.
Mmm-hmm.
Half bully beef, half sardine.
No pt de foie gras, Mason?
Milkman hasn't come yet, sir.
Thank you, Mason.
Clear up your kitchen a bit.
Then join Mr Trotter.

**MASON:**
Sir.

(DISTANT EXPLOSION)
Right, that's me.
I'm done.
Cheerio, skipper.
Cheerio.
Right.
Cheerio, Stanhope.
Cheerio, Raleigh. I'll be up in a tick.
Cheerio, sir.
Turner.
Sir.
Hammond.
Hibbert.
Hibbert!
Come on.
There's no hurry.
The longer you stay here,
the harder it'll be to go up.
It's no good going up until I feel fit.
Drink this.
Then you need to go up.
(DISTANT EXPLOSION)
All set, sir.
I'll pop down again at 10:00.
Get the spuds peeled.
All right, Mason.
Mr Hibbert will lead the way.
Sir.
Cheerio, sir.
Cheerio, Mason.
(CLIMBING STEPS)
(EXHALES)
(MUMBLING INAUDIBLY)
All right?
Sir.
Get ready.
Good.
(CHUCKLING) Hey? Come on.
Stand tall! Stand tall!
Hold the line! Hold the line!

**TROTTER:**
Keep down!

**SERGEANT MAJOR:**
Hold the line! Hold the line!
Frontmen, stay down! Stay down!

**TROTTER:**
(WHIMPERS)
Is everyone all right?
(SCREAMING AND GROANING)
(SCREAMING)
(GROANS)
Sir! Mr Raleigh's been hit, sir!
Right...
We need to get him inside!
His back's struck! We need a stretcher!
Help me get him up!
(GRUNTING)
Come on!

**SOLDIER:**
Stretcher bearer!
(EXPLOSION)
(COUGHING)
All right.
All right. You can go.
We need to get him down the line!
Can't with those shells falling, sir!
We must!
We can't, sir!
We've hemmed ourselves in!
Fetch the stretcher bearers!
Sir.
Stretcher bearers!
It's all right, it's all right.
(EXPLOSIONS)
Soon wear off.
(CHUCKLES)
You caught a Blighty one, Jimmy.
Home again.
(GROANS)
I can't be sent home
just for a knock in the back.
It's like in rugger.
"Get up and dust yourself off, boy."
(GASPS)
It's bound to hurt a bit, Jimmy.
(GROANS)
There's... There's something
pressing down on my legs.
It's just the shock.
I can't... I can't...
I can't be down here,
when everyone else is... Is fighting.
It's not your fault.
It's not your fault.
(EXPLOSIONS)
(RUBBLE SCATTERING)
Don't... Don't wait for me
if you need to go.
It's quite all right, Jimmy.
It's all right.
Can you stay?
Of course I can.
I'm here.
I'm... I'm so...
Shh.
So cold.
(SPITS)
Here... Here we go.
Is that better?
Jimmy?
Jimmy...

**TURNER:**
can you come at once, sir?
Sir!
All right, Turner. I'm coming.
(COUGHING)
(MUFFLED SCREAMS)

WOMAN:

RALEIGH:
I am at the front at last.
"I was taken along some trenches
and reported to C Company.
"A nice officer greeted me.
He was quite old. Second in command.
"And then there he was,
Captain Stanhope, MC.
"Tired because he works so hard,
because of all the responsibility.
"Then I went on duty on the front line,
"where the officers told me
all about him.
"The finest officer
in the whole battalion
"and the men simply adore him.
"I'm proud to think
that he is my friend.
"Your ever loving brother, Jimmy."
(SPEAKING GERMAN)