

SHEEAN

by

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Based on a true story.

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FADE IN:

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - AFT DECK - DAY (1942)

Baby-faced sailor EDWARD "TEDDY" SHEEAN (18) makes his way back to the aft 20mm Oerlikon cannon on the Australian Corvette. Teddy takes one last bite from a ham sandwich. Tosses the crust into the sea.

Walking behind Teddy is the ships captain Lieutenant Commander DAVID RICHARDS (55)

DAVID RICHARDS
Seaman hold on a minute.

Teddy stops and turns to face David Richards. Then stands to attention.

TEDDY
Sir, I was just returning to my station.

DAVID RICHARDS
Well Teddy, we may be at sea. But we don't treat the ocean as our personal garbage can. Next time place your waste in the proper place.

TEDDY
Yes sir.

Teddy becomes nervous.

DAVID RICHARDS
Take it easy, seaman. It's not the worst thing to do. Where are you from?

TEDDY
Sir from Tasmania, Latrobe

DAVID RICHARDS
Okay, you can relax now, no need for the rigid Navy routine. I like to know about the men I command.

David starts walking to the aft Oerlikon cannon. Teddy joins him.

TEDDY
I grew up around that area. How about you sir? What did you do before the War?

DAVID RICHARDS

I Joined the Navy at as soon as I was old enough. Never really known any other life.

TEDDY

Quiet an achievement sir.

DAVID RICHARDS

Yes, I suppose it is.

They arrive at the aft Oerlikon cannon.

TEDDY

I better get back to it sir.

DAVID RICHARDS

Very well, carry on sailor.

David heads back towards the bridge.

At the Oerlikon cannon. Teddy checks the magazine and replaces it with a full one.

Manning the gun is Able Seaman JACK DUCKWORTH (20).

JACK DUCKWORTH

(sarcastically)

Nice stroll with the skipper, did Ya have a nice lunch date?

TEDDY

Shut up, don't go spreading that around the ship.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Cool down, Teddy. The skipper is a good bloke. He does that with everyone.

TEDDY

How much bloody longer do we need to be on station for?

JACK DUCKWORTH

Give it a bloody rest, Teddy, it's damn hot enough. I don't want to hear you bleating on about it all day.

TEDDY

Four days like this, nothin' but a sandwich and a peach slice. Enough to drive a man crazy if ya ask me.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Look, lad, I've been around this Navy a little while and let me tell
(MORE)

JACK DUCKWORTH (CONT'D)
 you, havin' a whinge does nothin'
 for morale.

TEDDY
 Who said anythin' about havin' a
 whinge? Sorry, mate, Navy life is
 not all it's cracked up to be.

JACK DUCKWORTH
 It never is.

The signal for action stations RINGS out across the ship.

High in the distance, 13 small plane shapes can be made out. Six are Japanese "Zero" fighters. The other seven are twin-engine "Betty" bombers.

All of the planes peel off from their formation, and approach the Armidale from all sides of the ship.

All the guns from Armidale open FIRE with a hail of 20mm rounds.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - BRIDGE - DAY

Lieutenant-Commander David Richards watches a torpedo bomber come in.

DAVID RICHARDS
 Wait for it, wait for the torpedo
 to drop.

At the helm is Ordinary Seaman RUSSEL CARO (19).

RUSSEL CARO
 Aye, sir.

DAVID RICHARDS
 All ahead full, smartly.

Operating the ship's engine telegraph is Sub-Lieutenant BUCKLAND (29). He places the ship's engine telegraph into the ahead full position.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
 Aye. All ahead full.

A torpedo bomber lets go a torpedo on the port quarter. It SPLASHES into the sea, speeding toward the Armidale.

DAVID RICHARDS
 HARD OVER TO STARBOARD.

Russel Caro frantically spins the ship's wheel over to starboard. The Armidale turns sharply.

RUSSEL CARO
 Aye. Hard over to starboard.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
They missed us.

DAVID RICHARDS
Rudder amidships.

RUSSEL CARO
Aye. Rudder amidships.

A second torpedo bomber comes in from starboard midships. The bomber lets go its torpedo. Bombs EXPLODE on either side of the Armidale. Sending up huge columns of water.

DAVID RICHARDS
Hard over to Starboard.

RUSSEL CARO
Aye. Hard over to starboard.

The Armidale sharply makes the turn, the torpedo passes by parallel to the Armidale.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - PORT BRIDGE WING - DAY

The crew manning the 20mm Oerlikon cannon have a torpedo bomber in their sights. The huge volume of FIRE from the gun causes the pilot of the bomber to drop his torpedo too late.

The torpedo flies only a metre above the bridge and SPLASHES harmlessly down on the starboard side of the ship.

A Japanese Zero comes in low skimming above the waves. Approaches from the port side aft. Drops a torpedo.

DAVID RICHARDS
Shit that was close. Keep calling out the targets.

The noise from both the bridge wing guns is deafening. A moment later Sub Lt. Buckland sees the torpedo coming in.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
(points)
TORPEDO PORT SIDE.

DAVID RICHARDS
Hard over to port.

RUSSEL CARO
Aye, hard over to port.

DAVID RICHARDS
Where the hell did that come from?
Quickly get that damn wheel over.

The torpedo is getting closer and closer. All of the ship's action stations work frantically to fight off the attacking Japanese.

The torpedo HITS the Armidale on the port side just aft of the mess deck. The ships decks split and fracture apart. Some of the sailors on deck are killed.

A second torpedo HITS the armidale, a bomb EXPLODES on the starboard side aft blowing a huge hole into the hull.

One sailor runs down from the bridge yelling to abandon ship. Men are jumping overboard, grabbing onto what ever floats.

INT. JAPANESE ZERO FIGHTER - DAY

The pilot can see the sailors in the water, he turns the fighter into their direction. The pilot opens FIRE with the machine guns. Killing some of the sailors in the water.

Behind him a second zero fighter finishes of the ones that were missed by the first fighter.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - DECK - DAY

Men scramble to get the ships whaler and life rafts away. One sailor rushes over to the depth charges and sets the depth charge pistols to the safe position.

Another sailor races over to the minesweeping gear and cuts loose the paravane floats into the sea.

INT. JAPANESE ZERO FIGHTER - DAY

Below the pilot looks for more targets to machine gun. Spotting a large gathering of sailors in the sea. The pilot turns the fighter towards them. Tracer FIRE coming up at him.

The pilot looks down his gun sight, applies pressure on the trigger.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - AFT DECK - DAY

Teddy rushes over to help a sailor free a life boat. The hull and decks are raked with machine gun FIRE. Teddy looks at the dead bodies floating in the water.

Teddy looks at the men being machine gunned in the water. Approaching the ships rail, Teddy climbs over.

More men are killed just meters away from teddy. Teddy looks up at all the aircraft in the air. Looking back at the aft Oerlikon cannon.

Teddy climbs back over the ships rail, scrambles his way back to the Oerlikon cannon.

INT. JAPANESE ZERO FIGHTER - DAY

The pilot can see a lone sailor rush back to the aft Oerlikon cannon and open FIRE. Tracer fire rakes the fighter, killing the pilot.

The pilot slumps forward on the control yoke sending the fighter into a steep dive toward the sea. The fighter cartwheels as it CRASHES into the sea.

A second fighter, swoops in at the lone sailor opens FIRE as rounds from his machine guns strafe the Oerlikon cannon.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - AFT DECK - DAY

Teddy continues to pour on the FIRE from the cannon.

EXT. TASMANIA - LATROBE - ROAD - DAY (1939)

Teddy (now 15) rides his push bike down the road. A semi-rural area, with lush green fields and dairy farms.

He turns onto a property and rides up the long path to a weather-beaten fibro home.

SUPER: "THREE YEARS EARLIER"

Resting the push bike against the stairs, Teddy KNOCKS on the front door.

The door is opened by ANGUS HAYS (55), a right-arm amputee from the elbow, with burn scar tissue around the stump.

INT. HAYS HOME - DAY

The home is sparse. With minimal period furniture. Angus shows Teddy into his home.

TEDDY

Hello, Mr. Hays. What can I do for you today?

ANGUS HAYS

Come in, Teddy, you can start by chopping some wood. Then a few odd jobs around the house.

TEDDY

Righto, Mr. Hays. Anything else?

ANGUS HAYS

No, that should do for today. I need to get down to the store for a few things.

TEDDY

I can do that for ya, Mr. Hays.

ANGUS HAYS

No, I can do it. I may only have one arm, but I'm not a complete invalid.

Angus rubs the stump of his right arm as they make their way outside to the backyard.

EXT. HAYS HOME - BACKYARD - DAY

Small logs ready to be cut lie beside a tree stump. An axe's blade is buried in the stump.

Teddy takes the axe and places a log on the stump. Starts chopping the wood.

TEDDY

Does it get itchy much?

ANGUS HAYS

Does what get itchy?

TEDDY

You know? The... um.

Teddy gestures to the amputated arm.

ANGUS HAYS

Sometimes, but that is none of your business.

TEDDY

Sorry, Mr. Hays.

Angus removes a small hip flask from his trouser pocket - takes a sip.

ANGUS HAYS

War, never get involved, boy. The damn Germans, they never learn. Should be wiped from the face of the Earth.

TEDDY

I would go, if my country needed me. So would my brothers.

Teddy chops another log.

ANGUS HAYS

Then you're a damn fool. And so are your brothers. You have no idea what war is.

Angus stops Teddy, and holds his stump up to Teddy. Only an inch from Teddy's face.

ANGUS HAYS

See this, boy? This is what war does to ya. And I was one of the lucky ones.

Teddy stares at the stump.

TEDDY

I'm sorry, Mr. Hays. I meant nothin' by it.

ANGUS HAYS

I can't stop ya, or your brothers for that matter. But remember boy, only dead heroes don't make it back.

TEDDY

I won't forget Mr. Hays.

EXT. SHEEAN FAMILY HOME - BACKYARD - DAY

Teddy along with his father JAMES SHEEAN (59) pull weeds from the garden. Toss them into a bucket.

Teddy's mother MARY (56) waters the garden with a watering can.

Teddy's brothers THOMAS (28) and WILLIAM (24) - smoke cigarettes.

THOMAS

(to William)

How about this Hitler bloke?, Strewth sounds like he is going to be causing lots of trouble.

WILLIAM

The poms can deal with him. No need for us to get involved.

THOMAS

That's what worries me. You know what the bloody poms are like. One in all in.

WILLIAM

Too bloody right mate, never could fight without us doin' most of the bloody work.

MARY

Come now boys, enough of the politics, how about a box?

TEDDY

Yeah, c'mon Willie. ya want to have a go?

MARY

I do wish you boys would give up that filthy habit. Stinking up my garden.

Both William and Thomas put out their cigarettes.

WILLIAM

Okay Teddy you're bloody on.

MARY

I'll get the gloves.

Mary places the watering can to one side, then leaves for the house. A moment later returns with two pairs of worn out boxing gloves.

Mary and James help place the gloves on Teddy and William's hands.

James joins Teddy and William.

JAMES

Okay boys you know the rules, no dirty punches below the belt. A good clean fight.

James referees.

JAMES

And box.

Teddy comes in and shifts to his right. William follows him. Teddy jabs to the face. The punch blocked by William.

William comes in with an upper cut. Teddy deflects it.

The rest of the family take sides, cheering and encouraging them.

MARY

Come on now, Teddy watch his left hook.

Teddy lands a blow on William's jaw. He shakes it off.

THOMAS

Nice one Teddy, give him another.

WILLIAM

That all ya got?

Teddy shows a cheeky smile and lands a blow to the ribs, then an uppercut to the jaw.

TEDDY

How do ya like that one?

WILLIAM

Okay, gonna be like that then. You asked for it.

JAMES

Keep your distance now.

Teddy lands a double combination of blows on William. William hits back. The blows getting more aggressive. More serious.

William and Teddy are trading blow after blow. They embrace. Teddy tosses William off him.

James steps in and breaks it up.

WILLIAM

Watch it Teddy, I'm just gettin' warmed up.

TEDDY

I'm not about to take a backward step, don't care who ya are.

James steps in between them.

JAMES

Enough boys, now shake hands and make up. Good fight boys.

James helps to remove the gloves from Teddy and William they then shake hands. Teddy cracks the cheeky smile again.

TEDDY

Besides I would have kicked your backside anyhow.

INT. SHEEAN FAMILY HOME - LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

Sitting on a lounge chair is James. Beside him is a radio cabinet. Playing Music softly. Mary sits on a couch, knitting a white wool scarf.

SUPER: "1ST SEPTEMBER 1939"

Next to Mary sits William reading a news paper.

The MUSIC from the radio stops.

MARY

James, that could be something important?. Turn it up a little please.

James increases the volume on the radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Here is the Prime Minister of Australia, the Right Honourable R.G. Menzies.

William folds the news paper up, placing it to one side. Mary stops knitting.

ROBERT MENZIES (V.O.)

Fellow Australians, it is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that in consequence of a persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Great Britain has declared war upon her and that, as a result, Australia is also at war.

MARY

No more. I don't want to hear it. It's going to be like the great war all over again. No more I say.

JAMES

Hush, I want to hear what the Prime Minister is saying.

Teddy enters the room.

TEDDY

Dad What's going on? What is Mum upset for?

James does not respond, he only stares at the radio, straining to hear. In the background the address by the Prime Minister continues.

WILLIAM

(to Teddy)

We're going to war.

EXT. TASMANIA - LATROBE - DAIRY FARM - DAY

Teddy rides the push bike past a paddock with dairy cows in it. Teddy rides all the way to the milking shed.

In the shed is CLIFF (60).

SUPER: "MARCH 1941"

CLIFF

You're late boy, that will come out of your pay.

TEDDY

I was at the train station. Me brothers were leaving for the war.

CLIFF

Oh, no time for that now, these cows need to be milked. You can start on that one.

Two cows are connected to a milk pump, a third waits patiently behind it. Teddy takes a seat on a stool and has to manually milk the cow.

TEDDY

This is awful, can I use the pump?

CLIFF

No, it's brand new and I don't want you wreckin' it.

TEDDY

How many more?

CLIFF

Only another thirty or so. Look you're a good kid. I know it can be tough with your brothers going off to the war.

TEDDY

Well they're only going for some basic training and then they will be back. By Christmas... I hope.

CLIFF

By Christmas, they always say by Christmas. What a crock of shit.

TEDDY

I'm goin' to join up as soon as I can. I want to join the Navy. Just like my brother Tom.

CLIFF

Why the Navy? Think you'll be safer in the Navy?

TEDDY

Me best mate thinks so. We are goin' to join up together.

CLIFF

I was in the Navy in the last war. One night a massive shell hit us. My best mate got spatted all over the wall. I only survived 'cause I was on the deck. How much safer do you feel now?

TEDDY

I have to do my bit. I'm not going to just stay here. My brothers will be fighting, so must I.

CLIFF

Good luck to ya kid, ya gonna need it.

EXT. TASMANIA - LATROBE - TOWN CENTRE - NIGHT

Teddy and his girlfriend KATH LAPTHORNE (17) exit the local cinema. They walk hand in hand down the street.

KATH LAPTHORNE

What do you think will happen to us? I might never see you again.

TEDDY

Try not to become too upset my love. I'm not leaving now. Still 'ave two months of training yet.

KATH LAPTHORNE

Where will they send you? I couldn't bear it to be away from you.

TEDDY

I don't know, could be on the other side of the world for all I know.

They stop. Teddy lets go of her hand.

KATH LAPTHORNE

What's wrong? Something you're not telling me.

TEDDY

No, it's nothing.

KATH LAPTHORNE

Tell me, before I have to leave. My dad is picking me up.

TEDDY

We should get married.

KATH LAPTHORNE

We're too Young, can it wait until after the war? Besides we haven't well... you know.

TEDDY

Know what?

KATH LAPTHORNE

(blushing)
Teddy.

TEDDY

Oh... Yes I see what you mean.

KATH LAPTHORNE

I don't want to rush things. Hope you're okay with that?

TEDDY

Yes. Suppose so. Can you come over to my place tomorrow? Can you do that?

A car pulls up beside them, driven by Kath's father. Kath enters the car, rolls down the window.

KATH LAPTHORNE

Sure I'll be there.

TEDDY

Bye.

KATH LAPTHORNE

Bye.

Kath and her father drive away.

EXT. SHEEAN FAMILY HOME - BACKYARD - DAY

Teddy is dressed in his Navy uniform.

Kath is wearing her Jodpurs pants, a white shirt and a cardigan.

TEDDY

Sorry about last night, I was just being silly.

KATH LAPTHORNE

Not at all, but I'm glad you feel about me that way. You know some day.

TEDDY

Yes some day.

James comes out from the house. In his hand is a box brownie camera.

KATH LAPTHORNE

Hello Mr. Sheean, how are you?

JAMES

Fine, look how smart Teddy is all done up to the nines in his uniform.

KATH LAPTHORNE

Yes Teddy does look very nice. Is that a camera Mr. Sheean?

JAMES

Yes it is, amazing what they come up with now days.

KATH LAPTHORNE

Is it your camera?

JAMES

No, I borrowed it from the bloke across the street. It pays to have good relations with your neighbours.

TEDDY

Dad, please.

JAMES

What's wrong boy? The old man an embarrassment? How about a picture of you two?

TEDDY

Sure that would be smashing.

James points to where he wants Teddy and Kath to stand.

JAMES

That's the spot, a little closer now.

Teddy takes a step closer to Kath.

JAMES

Hold it a minute.

James walks up to Teddy and tilts his Navy cap back a little on his head.

TEDDY

Take it easy Dad, I had it the way I like it.

JAMES

That's much better, the cap was covering your eyes. On three. One, two, three.

The picture is taken of Kath and Teddy standing together.

EXT. HOBART - HMAS DERWENT NAVAL BASE - DAY

Teddy and ten other Navy trainees gather around a 20mm Oerlikon cannon. On the ground next to the gun are ten 100-round magazines.

The cannon is fitted with a leather strap, the operator places around their back to provide stability while firing the cannon.

Standing in front of them is Leading Seaman LOUIS (45).

LOUIS

Gather around men, today you will learn about the Oerlikon cannon. And then you will all take turns at firing it down range.

TEDDY

Finally something good for a change.

The comment brings a few sniggers from the other trainees.

LOUIS

One more remark from you Sheean and you'll be scrubbing floors for the rest of the day.

TEDDY

Sorry sir.

LOUIS

Right then, to start off with the barrel on its own weighs in at a whopping one hundred and fifty pounds. The rounds are twenty millimetre.

Louis takes a single round from a magazine and passes it to Teddy. He looks at it and passes it on to the next trainee.

TEDDY

Blighmy hate to get hit by one of those bastards.

LOUIS

As you can see, the rounds are quite large and are designed to inflict maximum damage to the enemy.

TEDDY

When do we get to have a go?

LOUIS

As soon as I'm done. Now pipe down. Each round must be greased before loading into the magazine.

Louis picks up a magazine and demonstrates how to load the magazine onto the Cannon.

LOUIS

I want all of you to take turns in loading and unloading a magazine.

Each of the trainees picks up a magazine and has a turn of loading and unloading a magazine.

Teddy has his turn. He struggles with the procedure.

TEDDY

What is the matter with this thing?

LOUIS

Not good enough, no enemy is going to wait while you figure it out. Do it again.

Teddy finally gets the magazine loaded and unloaded correctly.

TEDDY

Right, much better.

LOUIS

See how much better you do without the smart arse remarks?

Louis shows the correct stance and body position to fire the gun. Placing the leather strap around his back, then leaning against it to take up the slack. COCKS the gun and FIRES a single round down range.

TEDDY

Strewth, look at the kick on it.

LOUIS

Quite so, you will need to use your body weight to control the gun. Lean into it. And pivot from the hips.

Louis FIRES a three-round BURST from the gun.

The trainees cover their ears due to the NOISE.

Louis unstraps himself then steps away from the gun.

LOUIS

Sheean you're next, fire when ready.

Teddy positions himself, straps himself in and FIRES a short BURST down range.

EXT. LATROBE RAILWAY STATION - PLATFORM - DAY

Teddy, dressed in his Navy uniform and a long coat, is Joined by his parents and his brother. Thomas, dressed in his Navy uniform.

A large suit case and duffle bag are beside Teddy.

JAMES

Well son, you look all spiffy in that uniform. Your Mother and I are proud of you, both of you.

TEDDY

Thanks, dad don't go gettin' all mushy on me now.

JAMES

Not a chance now boy.

MARY

Wish your brothers were here to see you off.

JAMES

Yes mother, but duty calls.

Mary takes from her coat pocket a white wool scarf.

MARY

I made this for you. Should keep you warm out on the sea.

TEDDY

Thanks mum, I love it.

Teddy hugs his mother, placing the scarf around his neck and tucking the ends of the scarf under his great coat.

JAMES

How about a picture of Mick and Teddy?

TEDDY

Sure dad.

Thomas and Teddy stand together, Teddy on the right Thomas on the left. Both with their arms behind their backs. James SNAPS a photo.

JAMES

That should be a keeper.

The WHISTLE from a steam Train can be heard. A moment later the train pulls into the station. All of the train cars are full of other soldiers and sailors.

TEDDY

Well this is it.

JAMES

Be safe. We'll miss you.

MARY

Come home to us.

TEDDY

I'll miss you too. So long Tom.

Teddy shakes hands with Tom.

Teddy kisses his mother and hugs her.

JAMES

Here let me help you with them bags.

James picks up the suit case and carries it on board the Train. Then exits the train. Teddy picks up the duffle bag and slings it over his shoulder.

Teddy shakes hands with his father. James pulls Teddy in and hugs him.

A TRAIN GUARD steps out, blows his WHISTLE.

TRAIN GUARD

All aboard.

Teddy boards the train as the train blows its WHISTLE once more. The train pulls away from the station. Teddy looks back at his parents and brother on the platform. Waving goodbye to him. Teddy waves back.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - DECK - DAY

The Armidale sailing in a large race track pattern a few miles out from Sydney heads. The ships company run fire drills.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - BRIDGE - DAY

Standing outside the bridge is David Richards and Sub Lieutenant Buckland. Both men have stop watches. They watch as the crew practice fire drills.

Some of the crew are too slow, others fumble with the equipment. Teddy so far is faultless in his duties.

DAVID RICHARDS

Not good enough, this will not do. Two and a half minutes on that last run.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

The men have been busy with general duties sir.

DAVID RICHARDS

Even so, run it again. I want the men able to do this in their sleep. No excuses.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

Yes sir.

Buckland waves his hand to the men below to re-do the drill. The crew below commence to uncouple the nozzles and roll up the fire hoses.

DAVID RICHARDS

That new chap. What's name? Not one mistake so far.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

Ah.. That would be Edward Sheean sir. However all the men call him Teddy.

DAVID RICHARDS

Teddy, after were done here have him sent to my cabin.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

Yes sir. He not long out of basic. This is still fresh in his mind.

DAVID RICHARDS

How long has he being in for? He really is showing up the more experienced men.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

Three or four months.

A sailor waves up to them.

DAVID RICHARDS

Okay run it again. I want the men ready and hoses deployed in less than one minute.

The men re- run the drill. A moment later David Richards stops his stop watch.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

Made it with five seconds to spare.

DAVID RICHARDS

Much better. But keep the men at it on regular basis. I won't stand for this drop in standards.

Sub Lieutenant waves his arm for another fire drill to start over.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

Yes sir. Shall we start the anti-aircraft drills?

DAVID RICHARDS
Yes start it now.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
But sir the men are still running
the fire drill.

DAVID RICHARDS
Run it, do you think the enemy is
going to patiently wait while we
put fires out?

Sub Lieutenant Buckland enters the bridge and activates the
alarm BELL to signal air attack.

The men involved in the fire drill look up at the bridge.

DAVID RICHARDS
(to the crew below)
DON'T LOOK AT ME. GET TO YOUR
BLOODY ACTION STATIONS.

Some of the crew below break off from the fire drill and man
the four inch gun and the Oerlikon cannon's.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
That drill was much better. Again
Sheean is the stand out. But I
worry you're pushing the men too
hard.

DAVID RICHARDS
Where a warship, we must be ready
to handle any situation that crops
up.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
Yes sir, sir were due for sub watch
tonight.

DAVID RICHARDS
Very well, stow the gear and make
preparation's to return to the
Harbour.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
Aye sir.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE- CAPTAINS QUARTERS - NIGHT

A desk, chair and a bed. Some personal effects adorn the
walls. David Richards sits at his desk, with a personnel file
open. With him is Teddy.

DAVID RICHARDS
Ordinary seaman Sheean, I see
you're not long with us. How do
feel you're going so far?

TEDDY

Sir, okay.

DAVID RICHARDS

You caught my attention today with the drills.

TEDDY

Sorry sir I will do better.

DAVID RICHARDS

On the contrary, no need to be nervous. You out performed many of the men. Even the senior men. Very impressive.

TEDDY

Thank you sir.

DAVID RICHARDS

Keep up the good work Sheean and you will go far.

TEDDY

Thank you sir. Will that be all sir?

DAVID RICHARDS

Yes, you can go now.

Teddy turns and exits the cabin.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - MESS DECK - NIGHT

Teddy is with Russel Caro. They share a table as other members of the ship's company mill about chatting.

RUSSEL CARO

Lad that was impressive work today. Just a word of the wise. Don't get too cocky.

TEDDY

Thanks, I just try to do my best. Still learnin' the ropes around here.

RUSSEL CARO

I found working hard and don't take anything personal works best.

TEDDY

What will I have to do? Besides clean floors and crappers.

RUSSEL CARO

Well as one of the newest men, all of the shit jobs. But just knuckle under.

TEDDY

Getting damn sick of being the dogsbody around here. They must hate me.

RUSSEL CARO

Not so loud, look they don't hate you. You just need to prove ya self to them first.

TEDDY

S'pose so. I'm not a trouble maker. I just wanna do my part.

They both get up and head for the Aft deck.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - AFT DECK - NIGHT

A clear night, the city of Sydney in the background. Other ships and pleasure craft dot the Harbour. On the ships' decks other crew make ready for departure.

Teddy and Russel Caro arrive at the aft deck, Russel Caro leans against the ship's rail as he faces Teddy.

RUSSEL CARO

We are on sub watch, so from now on strict light and noise discipline.

TEDDY

Bloody Jap sub almost killed me.

RUSSEL CARO

Yeah, how so?

TEDDY

I was meant to be on the Kattabul when she was hit by a Jap torpedo. Only I was on leave back home.

RUSSEL CARO

Damn lucky turn of events, fate has put you here.

The engines HUM into life.

-- The Armidale moves out heading toward Sydney Heads.

-- The ship stops at Watsons Bay just south of South Head.

-- The ship's engine idles down.

TEDDY

I hope this is not how I am going to spend the war? Baby-sitting a Harbour.

RUSSEL CARO

Be thankful, you do know so far this has been the worst year for the Navy? So many Ships lost to enemy action.

TEDDY

No, but I want my folks back home to know I did something. I made a difference.

RUSSEL CARO

We all play our part, it may not seem like it. But even the small parts make the bigger picture whole.

TEDDY

Wish I could get a chance to show the others what I'm capable of.

RUSSEL CARO

Be careful what you wish for.

TEDDY

Why?

RUSSEL CARO

We sail for Darwin in the next few days.

EXT. TIMOR - KOEPANG - STREET - DAY

SPENCE (35) and NEIL TREWEEK (30), both dressed in civilian clothes, walk down the street.

The street is busy with local people going about their daily business.

NEIL TREWEEK

No beating around the bush, how bad is it?

SPENCE

We landed with two hundred and thirty-two men and officers. We're down to less than one quarter.

NEIL TREWEEK

My God man, why did you wait so long before reporting this?

SPENCE

We were under constant counter attack, our last radio was shot to fucking bits.

NEIL TREWEEK

You will have to wait until H.Q. Can get you out. Until then what do you need most of?

SPENCE

Ammo, a new radio, medical supplies The men have been at it for months. We need to be relieved.

NEIL TREWEEK

Force H.Q. In Darwin can't relieve you. You will just have to hold on.

SPENCE

Hold on? To what? The men are ill. Dysentery is taking men every other day. Then the Japs kill their share.

NEIL TREWEEK

If we fail then Australia is under direct threat of invasion. We can not fail.

SPENCE

Don't you get it? The men are willing to fight, but how can you expect us to do our bloody jobs, when we are no longer an effective force?

NEIL TREWEEK

Okay, I'll send a report back to H.Q.

SPENCE

Don't take too bloody long. Or there'll be none of us here to relieve.

EXT. DARWIN PORT - NIGHT

The Armidale is at dock side, the ship's company busy with duties. Some clean the weapons, others carry fresh supplies on board.

David Richards walks down the gangway. With him is Sub Lt. Buckland.

DAVID RICHARDS
 Reg, continue the resupply. And
 have Lieutenant Jenkyn report to me
 when I return.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
 Yes sir, as to why?

DAVID RICHARDS
 The last supply run from Milne Bay.
 Did you notice the strong burning
 smell?

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
 Yes I did, I'll have Harry look
 into it. What will the Commodore
 have for us?

DAVID RICHARDS
 Hopefully just another briefing.

An ordinary seaman waits by a vehicle. He salutes as David
 and Sub Lt. Buckland approach. They both return the salute.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
 Will that be all sir?

DAVID RICHARDS
 Yes, I expect to be back in an hour
 or so.

David enters the vehicle and they drive off.

INT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - BASE HQ - NIGHT

The building is blacked out. No light is seen from the
 outside. Black curtains hang from all of the windows.

David Richards walks down a corridor, enters an office.

INT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - BASE HQ - OFFICE - NIGHT

David Richards sits at a desk. With him is Commodore CUTHBERT
 POPE (55)

Cuthbert pours brandy into two glasses. Passes one over to
 David Richards.

CUTHBERT POPE
 To our partners.

DAVID RICHARDS
 To our partners.

Both men CLINK their glasses as the toast is made. Then take
 a sip of brandy.

CUTHBERT POPE

Right, better get straight to it.
Lancer force operating out of Timor
are in a dreadful situation.

DAVID RICHARDS

How so?

CUTHBERT POPE

Well they have been doing some
bloody good work, given Tojo a
bloody nose. But they are beginning
to fall apart.

DAVID RICHARDS

What is the latest intelligence
from Timor?

CUTHBERT POPE

Not good I'm afraid, their losses
are mounting. Hell even the local
people have turned against us.
Ungrateful bastards.

Cuthbert passes over a report. David takes a moment to read
it. David takes another sip of brandy as he reads the report.

DAVID RICHARDS

Sounds rather grim, what is to be
done about it?

CUTHBERT POPE

That is where you come in. You and
two other ships are to set sail for
Timor tomorrow.

DAVID RICHARDS

We're not ready, I have an engine
problem to see to.

Cuthbert opens a desk draw, removes an envelope.

CUTHBERT POPE

You have until the morning to get
it fixed. Here are your orders.

He passes the envelope to David.

DAVID RICHARDS

Are we going alone on this mission?

CUTHBERT POPE

No, you'll be Joined by the Kuru
and Castlemaine. The Castlemaine
will be the lead ship.

DAVID RICHARDS

Can any other ship take our place,
if we're not ready?

CUTHBERT POPE

There are no other ships available.
You must be ready. Can I rely on
you?

DAVID RICHARDS

You can, I'll move Heaven and Earth
to be ready to sail on time.

CUTHBERT POPE

Good, you can catch me up on the
Milne Bay mission another time.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - ENGINE ROOM - NIGHT

David Richards is with Engineer Lieutenant HARRY JENKYN (33).
Harry is covered in grease and dirt. Harry holds an engine
part, cleaning it with a rag.

A second engineer works on an engine block.

HARRY JENKYN

(to other engineer)

Be sure the pistons are correctly
seated, call me when you're done.

DAVID RICHARDS

Lieutenant a moment please.

Harry steps away from the engine.

HARRY JENKYN

Sir.

DAVID RICHARDS

We have orders to set sail to Timor
in eight hours from now. Can we be
ready by then?

HARRY JENKYN

No, several of the engine parts are
burnt out, they need replacing.
That will take at least ten to
twelve hours.

DAVID RICHARDS

Not good enough, we must be ready
to leave on time.

HARRY JENKYN

It's not that simple, these
Corvettes are dreadful in rough
seas. Cutting through the big waves
overworks the engines.

Harry steps over to the engine where the part came from.

DAVID RICHARDS

Tell me what you need to get it done?

HARRY JENKYN

Extra men working on each part, then we might be lucky to leave on time.

DAVID RICHARDS

No might, you must be ready leave. I will get the extra men you need. In the mean time work quickly.

HARRY JENKYN

Aye sir.

David Richards leaves the engine room.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

David Richards takes a seat at the desk. A KNOCK on the door.

DAVID RICHARDS

Enter.

Sub Lt. Buckland enters.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

Sir, you wanted to see me.

DAVID RICHARDS

Yes, I have our orders from Pope. We are to sail for Timor.

David hands over the orders to Sub Lt. Buckland. He takes a moment to read it.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

To Betano, with sixty three Dutch troops plus equipment.

DAVID RICHARDS

And relieve what is left of Lancer force. Then take them and some refugees back to Darwin.

Sub Lt. Buckland takes out a sea chart and looks up the location of Betano, Timor.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

That is well inside Jap territory.

DAVID RICHARDS

Right into the samurai's den.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

It will get rather cosy on board.
We are rather crammed for space as
it is.

DAVID RICHARDS

Indeed so, have the ship's company
make all available space for the
Dutch troops.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

Aye sir, anything else?

DAVID RICHARDS

How long until the Dutch troops
arrive?

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

They will be here within the hour.

DAVID RICHARDS

Board the Dutch troops as soon as
they arrive. We set sail in the
morning.

Sub Lt. Buckland leaves, closing the door behind him.

EXT. DARWIN PORT - DAY

The Armidale, Castlemaine and Kuru depart Darwin in a trail
formation with Castlemaine taking the lead followed by the
Armidale then the Kuru.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - DECK - DAY

On the decks of the Armidale are the DUTCH TROOPS. Some play
card games, others read letters. Some play crap's with dice.
Two troops with a Lewis machine gun, strip it down and clean
the parts.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - BRIDGE - DAY

On the bridge is David Richards, and the Bridge crew.

The signal from Castlemaine's signal lamp is visible. David
Richards raises a pair of binoculars to read it.

DAVID RICHARDS

Leaving friendly waters, as of now
strict noise and light discipline.
Be on lookout for enemy aircraft.

David lowers the binoculars.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

I'll have the men set observation
post.

DAVID RICHARDS

Very well. Make your course three zero, zero degrees speed ten knots.

RUSSEL CARO

Aye to course three zero zero degrees, ten knots.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

(into voice pipe to lower bridge)

Hands to observation positions.

Members of the ship's company fan out around the ship on all sides, in teams of three. They commence to observe the water and sky for any signs of the enemy.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - AFT DECK - DAY

Teddy scans the sky, while Jack Duckworth watches the water. Jack checks his watch.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Half past twelve, been at it for six hours. Nothin' yet.

TEDDY

Too bloody right, hope we get a break soon. Me bloody neck is killing me.

Teddy rubs the back of his neck. Then resumes scanning the sky.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Busting for a piss, I need to use the head.

Jack begins to walk away.

TEDDY

Hang on a minute, I think I see something, I can see a plane. Not sure if it is one of ours.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Gimmy the glasses, I'll have a look.

TEDDY

Seems to be just flyin' around in circles.

Teddy passes over the Binoculars.

JACK DUCKWORTH

It could just be a patrol. Hang on
a sec. Shit, he's a Jap bastard.
Call the skipper.

Teddy picks up a deck phone, and RINGS the bridge.

TEDDY

Skipper we have one, high above,
off the port beam.

A moment later the signal for action stations RINGS out.
Teddy moves up to the 20mm Oerlikon cannon, loads a full
magazine and COCKS the gun.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Steady on mate, he's way too high.
Save the ammo.

TEDDY

Gets any closer and I'll blast the
bastard out of the sky.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - BRIDGE - DAY

The bridge crew continue to observe the Japanese aircraft.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

Shall we evade sir?

DAVID RICHARDS

No, he would've attacked us by now.
Well if they didn't know we were
here before, they sure as hell do
now.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

What shall we do now?

DAVID RICHARDS

We wait, I fear we won't have to
wait very long.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - CREW QUARTERS - DAY

The Quarters are rectangular in shape, two rows of hammocks
on either side.

The hammocks sway in time with the pitching and rolling of
the ship.

Teddy is asleep in one of the hammocks. Beside him is Jack
Duckworth. Several other hammocks are occupied by men
sleeping.

A moment later the ship's bell RINGS out the alarm for enemy
aircraft.

Teddy and the other men all spring out from their hammocks and run to their action stations.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - BRIDGE - DAY

David Richards is out on the port bridge wing searching for the Aircraft. Wireman NOEL (20) enters the bridge and hands a note to David Richards.

The bridge phone RINGS. It is answered by Sub Lt. Buckland.

NOEL

Sir, a message from the
Castlemaine.

DAVID RICHARDS

(reading the note)

Break formation, position ten
cables abreast. Commence zig-
zagging.

NOEL

Shall I send a reply?

DAVID RICHARDS

Yes, moving to position.

Noel leaves the bridge. Sub Lt. Buckland returns the bridge phone to its cradle.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

Sir, all action stations have
reported in.

DAVID RICHARDS

Very well, all ahead full. Commence
zig-zagging when at ten cables
abreast.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

Aye sir.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - AFT DECK - DAY

Teddy and Jack Duckworth man the 20mm Oerlikon cannon. The three planes can be seen clearly above. Two Zero fighters and a Betty bomber.

JACK DUCKWORTH

As soon as they're in range, I'll
blow 'em all to fucking hell.

TEDDY

Just don't miss.

Far off in the distance the Castlemaine is seen. Her Guns have Opened FIRE on the three aircraft. Tracer fire fills the sky.

JACK DUCKWORTH
That's it, good enough for them.
Good enough for me.

Jack Opens FIRE, as does the 20mm Oerlikon cannon on the bridge wing facing the enemy planes. The sky is filled with tracer FIRE. None of the rounds hit their mark.

TEDDY
Jack a little more in front.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Damn bastards are just out of range.

TEDDY
Nothin' is even getting close, the bastards are playing with us.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Shut up, keep the damn ammo coming.

The other Oerlikon's cease FIRE. As does Jack.

TEDDY
Tell me to shut up will ya.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Sorry lad, don't take it personal.

All three planes suddenly turn toward the Castlemaine, level out. The Castlemaine opens FIRE. The Betty bomber drops a bomb. It EXPLODES harmlessly in the water on the starboard side.

The three Aircraft fly toward the Armidale, machine guns blazing as rounds SPLASH into the water.

TEDDY
Shit take cover, they're comin' right for us.

Both Teddy and Jack dive for cover at the ships waist. As rounds strafe the ship. Missing them both.

The Armidale returns FIRE as the three aircraft climb high and fly away.

INT. HMAS KURU - ARAFURA SEA - DAY

A small wooden motor vessel. In command is Lieutenant JOHN GRANT (39) John stands beside the ship's wireman.

JOHN GRANT
Send the following to Darwin. Ships have been shadowed and attacked.

The wireman TAPS out the message via Morse code.

JOHN GRANT
 Consider prospect operation
 doubtful. Request orders.

The message is sent.

INT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - BASE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

The room consist of various work stations, telegraphist stations, and a phone exchange.

In the centre of the room is a large table with a map of Northern Australia and immediate countries. On the Table are various markers.

Staff move the markers around on the table.

In the operations room is Cuthbert pope and Commander LAURANCE TOZER (40) both men are at a telegraphist station.

The Telegraphist passes a note to Cuthbert.

LAURANCE TOZER
 What is it sir? Anything wrong?

CUTHBERT POPE
 Message from the Kuru, the convoy
 has come under enemy fire.

LAURANCE TOZER
 Perhaps we should re-think this
 mission?

CUTHBERT POPE
 I can't call off a mission on one
 minor attack. We must push on.

Laurance turns to the telegraphist.

LAURANCE TOZER
 (to telegraphist)
 Any additional information from the
 last message.

The telegraphist shakes their head in response to the question.

CUTHBERT POPE
 We have to get those men off Timor.

LAURANCE TOZER
 Sir, can we try to get the men off
 from another location. One of the
 islands south.

CUTHBERT POPE

Don't be absurd, how will they get there? What about the refugees? And the wounded soldier?

LAURANCE TOZER

Even if it means loosing three ships to do it. Can you live with that?

Cuthbert snaps a look at Laurance.

CUTHBERT POPE

Risk must be accepted in war. My orders stand.

Cuthbert writes a message on a note, passes it to the telegraphist. The message is sent.

INT. HMAS KURU - BRIDGE - DAY

John Grant enters the bridge. A sailor mans the ship's wheel.

The wireman hands a note to John.

JOHN GRANT

(reading out loud.)

Steer a deceptive course to the north-east. Expect Beaufighters at thirteen hundred hours. Risk must be accepted.

INT. JAPANESE BETTY BOMBER - DAY

Flying high above, the PILOT can see the Australian Ships below.

The pilot looks out his window. A large rain squall has formed off in the distance.

The CO-PILOT looks out his window. The BOMBARDIER takes up his position and looks down the bomb sight.

Through the bomb sight he sees tracer FIRE rise from the Armidale and Castlemaine. The Kuru breaks off and heads for the rain squall.

(All dialogue in Japanese.)

PILOT

There they are just ahead.

CO-PILOT

Yes, I see them. Opening bomb-bay doors now. One is getting away, shall we send a bomber after it?

PILOT
No, focus on the main enemy force.

The co-pilot reaches for the lever to open the bomb-bay doors.

PILOT
(into radio)
This is the lead plane. Take up V formation and follow in on my bomb run.

BOMBARDIER
Steady, to the right. Stop, hold it there.

The bombardier presses a button. The bombs are dropped.

BOMBARDIER
Bombs away.

The Bombs fall toward the Armidale and Castlemaine.

PILOT
Do I need to go around again?

BOMBARDIER
One moment... They missed, come around for another try.

A BURST of MACHINE GUN FIRE tears through the Fuselage of the bomber. A second later an Australian Beaufighter ROARS past the Betty bomber.

The Beaufighter opens FIRE on the Bomber. Rounds SMASH through the canopy killing the Bombardier.

The Bomber banks hard to evade the FIRE coming from the beaufighter.

Two more Beaufighters chime in on the Attack.

PILOT
(into radio)
All BOMBERS, DROP YOUR BOMBS AND RETURN TO BASE.

More MACHINE GUN FIRE BURSTS through the mid section of the bomber. Black SMOKE pours out from one engine.

Multiple EXPLOSIONS are heard from below. The Australian Beaufighters continue to attack the Betty bombers as they fly away.

EXT. TIMOR - BATANO BAY - NIGHT

A light rain falls. From the bushes emerges Spence. With him are several other Australian Soldiers, one who is carried on a stretcher.

Farther back in the bush are 70 local refugees, comprised of men, women and children. They all huddle together. Spence waves over one of his men.

SPENCE

This is the bay, take three other men and light the signal fires. Then have the men take up defensive positions.

The soldier begins to walk away.

SPENCE

And be sure to take the signal lamp.

The soldier calls over three men. They gather up a few dry sticks and light the fires.

EXT. TIMOR - BATANO BAY - NIGHT

The wounded Australian soldier is loaded onto the Whaler by two sailors of the Kuru. Standing by the boat is Spence.

At a distance is a second boat with the last of the refugees. Two sailors row the boat back to the Kuru.

SPENCE

Take care now, I would love to go with you, but me and the rest of the boys can catch the next ride home.

WOUNDED SOLDIER

Sorry you're not comin' with us. Wish I had a ciggie.

SPENCE

I know mate, but perhaps the doc will say it's okay once you're feeling a little better.

WOUNDED SOLDIER

Bloody well hope so, I might have to just have one anyhow.

The two sailors start to row away from the beach. Spence walks back to shore. Returning to the bush.

EXT. TIMOR - BATANO BAY - NIGHT

The Armidale and Castlemaine arrive at the bay. No signal fires are lit.

From the search light of the Castlemaine the challenge signal is flashed. No response is seen.

The two Corvettes slowly move up and down the bay. No sign of the Kuru. No signal fires.

INT. HMAS CASTLEMAINE - BRIDGE - NIGHT

Lieutenant-Commander PHILIP SULLIVAN (45) leaves the bridge and enters the Radio room.

INT. HMAS CASTLEMAINE - RADIO ROOM - NIGHT

The room consists of a desk, a receiving radio set and a transmitting set as well as a sea chart. Sitting at the desk is Signalman STAN (16).

Philip Sullivan enters the room.

PHILIP SULLIVAN

Send this message to Armidale. This is the bay. No fires. No reply to challenge. Consider operation hopeless. Now returning.

STAN

Right away sir.

The message is tapped out via Morse code. A moment later a reply from the Armidale.

PHILIP SULLIVAN

What is her answer?

STAN

Suggest leave now. Move out as far as possible. Avoid detection by enemy.

Philip consults a sea chart and writes down a set of coordinates. He passes the note to Stan.

PHILIP SULLIVAN

Send this, leaving now. And these co-ordinates.

The message is tapped out again via Morse code.

EXT. HMAS CASTLEMAINE - SEARCH LIGHT DECK - NIGHT

On the Deck is lieutenant-commander Philip Sullivan. With him is a signalman. Over to their Starboard side is the Armidale.

Philip checks his watch.

PHILIP SULLIVAN
Send this. Will signal Darwin.
Advise of situation. Let me know of
any further communication.

The signalman flashes out the message.

Philip climbs down the ladder and makes his way to the Radio room.

INT. HMAS CASTLEMAINE - RADIO ROOM - NIGHT

In the room is signaller Stan. When Philip Sullivan enters the room.

PHILIP SULLIVAN
I need to send a message to Darwin.

STAN
Ready sir.

PHILIP SULLIVAN
Patrolled beach for one hour.
Negative reply to challenge.
Negative fires. No sign of kuru.
Have departed.

STAN
Sending it now sir.

INT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - BASE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

At the communications room is Cuthbert Pope and Laurance Tozer. Laurance is speaking with a staffer at the map table.

A telegraphist hands a note to Cuthbert.

CUTHBERT POPE
Laurance, you need to see this.

Laurance excuses himself with the staffer and walks over to Cuthbert.

LAURANCE TOZER
What is it sir?

Cuthbert passes over the note, Laurance reads it.

CUTHBERT POPE
I want them to return to complete
the mission.

LAURANCE TOZER
My advice would be to wait a day or
two. Then arrange an alternate
location for extraction.

CUTHBERT POPE

Too risky, our communications are intercepted by the Japs. We risk giving away Lancer forces location.

LAURANCE TOZER

All the more reason to wait, go quiet for a few days. Then get them out.

CUTHBERT POPE

No, what if the Japs stumble upon them by accident. No they must go back tomorrow night.

Cuthbert walks over to a telegraphist station and has the order issued.

HMAS CASTLEMAINE - RADIO ROOM - NIGHT

Philip Sullivan enters the room.

PHILIP SULLIVAN

Any reply from Darwin?

STAN

Just got it now sir.

PHILIP SULLIVAN

Well no mucking around, let's have it.

STAN

You may be required to repeat operation tonight.

PHILIP SULLIVAN

Send this to the Armidale. Need to rendezvous in four hours. Discuss next move.

The message is sent.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - AFT DECK - DAY

The Armidale moves slowly in a large circle. In the middle of the circle are the Kuru and Castlemaine, who have come alongside each other.

Teddy mans the aft 20mm Oerlikon cannon with Jack Duckworth.

TEDDY

Around and around we go, where she stops no body knows.

JACK DUCKWORTH

You are a funny bastard mate. Damn lucky we found the Kuru.

TEDDY

More like they found us. If I were a Jap? Right now I'll think all me Christmases had come at once.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Don't lose focus now, we don't want to give the damn Japs a gift.

TEDDY

I don't like it out here all exposed. Like a couple of sittin' ducks.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Look it won't be for too long. They have to get them refugees out of here.

TEDDY

Should have left them, we're not a ferry service.

Teddy swings the 20mm Oerlikon to the port side, scanning the sky.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Ya just can't leave 'em in a war zone. Sad day If we Aussies ever treat refugees cruelly.

TEDDY

Wish they would get on with it. Making me nervous.

EXT. HMAS KURU - DECK - DAY

The Kuru and Castlemaine are alongside each other. John Grant arrives at the aft deck. On the aft deck of the Castlemaine is Philip Sullivan.

JOHN GRANT

How are you holding up? That last attack almost had us.

PHILIP SULLIVAN

We're doing okay. Some minor damage on our decks but otherwise okay.

JOHN GRANT

I suggest a transfer to you. While I and the Armidale return to Betano.

PHILIP SULLIVAN

As the lead ship I have the responsibility to lead the mission.

JOHN GRANT

Armidale can't do it, they have the Dutch troops.

PHILIP SULLIVAN

Yes, that would make a very big juicy target for the Japs. That is the way it has to be then.

JOHN GRANT

One other thing. I have my orders to do the job tonight.

PHILIP SULLIVAN

What are you talking about?

JOHN GRANT

Pope wants us to go back in.

PHILIP SULLIVAN

Crazy fool sending us back in like that. Same mission same location.

JOHN GRANT

I don't like it either, but what else can I do?

PHILIP SULLIVAN

Righto, then it's agreed I'll complete the operation with the Armidale.

A BURST of FIRE from the Castlemaine's bridge wing 20mm Oerlikon cannon. Both Philip and John turn to see a lone Japanese Plane coming in low and fast.

The other 20mm Oerlikon cannons open FIRE.

JOHN GRANT

Quickly, get the hell outta here.

PHILIP SULLIVAN

No need to tell me twice.

Both ships quickly part company and spread out. The Japanese plane drops a bomb, which misses its target. The plane climbs fast and high. All of the 20mm Oerlikon cannons cease fire.

INT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - BASE HQ - DAY

Staff move the markers around on the table. Three markers with the names of Armidale, Kuru and Castlemaine are placed just south of Timor.

Cuthbert Pope is in the room. With him is Commander Laurance Tozer.

CUTHBERT POPE

Hello Laurance, I hope you slept well?

LAURANCE TOZER

Not too bad, damn mozzies had a bloody picnic.

CUTHBERT POPE

I'll have the quartermaster send over a mosquito net. Shall we get into it? I have a full day ahead.

Both men turn to the large map table.

LAURANCE TOZER

Well the latest report on Operation Hamburger is all three ships have met moderate opposition. But are holding their own.

CUTHBERT POPE

When was the last communication?

LAURANCE TOZER

Actually just before you arrived a message was coming in. Should be here any second.

Cuthbert points to a location on Timor of the Japanese Air Base.

CUTHBERT POPE

That damn Jap Air base in Timor has got to go. How soon can we hit it again?

LAURANCE TOZER

Not for the next two to three days. The crews are at breaking point. They need to rest.

CUTHBERT POPE

I don't care if they need rest. We all need rest. I need those planes in the air.

LAURANCE TOZER

Sir, it's not just that, the planes are breaking down more. Spare parts are running dangerously low.

CUTHBERT POPE

All I hear from you is excuses. Is it just that? I think you question my decision to send those ships back in.

LAURANCE TOZER

Well since you brought it up. I do.
Same location, same mission. You're
setting them up for an ambush.

CUTHBERT POPE

How dare you even for one second
suggest I would do such a thing.
What do you have me for? Some kind
of callous monster?

LAURANCE TOZER

That is not what I was suggesting
at all. I'm not against taking risk
in war. What I'm against is sending
men on a suicide mission.

A messenger arrives with a note in hand, passes the note to
Cuthbert. He reads it. The messenger stands to one side and
waits.

Cuthbert hands the note to Laurance, he reads it and hands
the note back to Cuthbert.

LAURANCE TOZER

Perhaps we should bring them all
back and try again in a few days?

CUTHBERT POPE

Then we will loose all of lancer
force. Relieving those men is the
whole purpose of this mission.

LAURANCE TOZER

I'm well aware of the purpose of
the mission.

CUTHBERT POPE

Do you? Sometimes I don't think you
really do.

Cuthbert flips the note over and writes his reply. He hands
the note to the messenger who leaves.

LAURANCE TOZER

Sir, what are your orders?

CUTHBERT POPE

I approved of the plan and told
Sullivan they will have air cover
for the Armidale. If that is
alright with you?

EXT. JAPANESE AIR BASE TIMOR - NIGHT

The base consist of a single dirt airstrip with fighters and
bombers parked on the edges. Various supplies, ground crew,
and several tents.

Armed soldiers patrol the outer edges of the airstrip.

A zero fighter has it's engine covers removed, two ground crew are working to repair the engine.

Two Japanese pilots enter a tent.

INT. JAPANESE AIR BASE TIMOR - TENT - NIGHT

In the tent is the BASE COMMANDER (35) the two pilots enter, stand to attention and salute. The salute is returned. On a table is a map of the area.

BASE COMMANDER

Two attacks and we have not sunk
the Australian ships yet.

PILOT # 1

They are more resilient than we
thought.

BASE COMMANDER

I will not tolerate excuses, do not
fail me again.

PILOT # 1

The Australians are defending their
homeland. We would expect stiff
resistance.

BASE COMMANDER

Or your weakness to fully commit to
battle is our problem.

PILOT # 1

Our men are ready to die for the
glory of Japan and the emperor.

BASE COMMANDER

I will not accept anything less
than total victory.

PILOT # 1

We are ready to give you total
victory.

BASE COMMANDER

Then I have devised a plan to end
this once and for all.

The men lean in over the map as the base commander begins to explain his plan.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - AFT DECK - DAY

Heavy rain falls.

Jack Duckworth has opened FIRE with the 20mm Oerlikon cannon at five Japanese Betty bombers. Teddy stands by the gun with a fresh magazine in hand.

JACK DUCKWORTH
You're doing great, Ted. Keep them
cans coming.

TEDDY
Ready?

JACK DUCKWORTH
Yep, do it now.

Teddy replaces the empty magazine with a full one. Tosses the empty magazine onto the deck. Two other empty magazines are already on the deck.

Jack COCKS the Cannon and resumes FIRING.

All of the ship's 20mm Oerlikon cannon Open FIRE. An EXPLOSION from a bomb off the port bow sends a column of water into the air.

TEDDY
Damn that was close, running low on
ammo.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Get to the locker, gather up
whatever you can carry.

Teddy leaves for the Ammo locker, gathers up four more ammo cans. Returns to the 20mm Oerlikon cannon.

One of the bombers is hit. It wobbles and loses height rapidly before levelling off. Then flying off.

TEDDY
Four more, you got one?

JACK DUCKWORTH
You damn well bet I did. Got 'em
alright.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - RADIO ROOM - DAY

Noel mans the radio when David Richards enters.

DAVID RICHARDS
Send this. Emergency. Enemy air
attack. Aircraft bombing. And give
our position.

NOEL
Aye sir.

DAVID RICHARDS
I'll be on the bridge. I'll be back
shortly.

NOEL
Aye sir.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - AFT DECK - DAY

Teddy and Jack continue. Two of the Betty bombers leave the area. Three remain. They continue to bomb the Armidale.

TEDDY
Yeah, two are pissing off, don't
have the stomach for it.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Never mind them, still three of 'em
left.

Teddy loads a fresh magazine into the 20mm Oerlikon cannon. The sky is filled with tracer FIRE.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - RADIO ROOM - DAY

Noel is TAPPING out a message when David Richards enters the room.

DAVID RICHARDS
Any response from Darwin?

NOEL
Expect three Beaufighters E.T.A. Oh
three thirty Zulu.

A moment later the three Betty bombers leave the area.

NOEL
They're gone now sir.

DAVID RICHARDS
Send this to Darwin. Attack ceased.
Absolutely essential adequate air
protection provided continuously.
Large enemy formations being used.

NOEL
Aye sir.

The message is transmitted.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - AFT DECK - DAY

Jack and Teddy along with all of the ships' guns cease fire. - Teddy secures the Oerlikon cannon, and clears away the shell casings on the deck.

TEDDY

Don't they ever run out of those things?

JACK DUCKWORTH

Apparently not.

TEDDY

They are never going to stop coming are they?

JACK DUCKWORTH

Not on your life. Would you? I just don't like this mission my gut is telling me we should call it quits.

TEDDY

That is not our place to speak out like that. What can you do about it?

JACK DUCKWORTH

See the skipper, put my view across. He's a reasonable bloke.

TEDDY

Don't do it, we have our orders. The brass know what they are doin'.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Do they? They don't always get it right. Might take someone like me to steer em right.

TEDDY

I don't think the skipper or the Navy will pull up stumps based on the gut feeling of one sailor.

JACK DUCKWORTH

All I can do is try. All they can do is say no.

TEDDY

Okay, but don't say I didn't warn Ya.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - MID SHIP DECK - DAY

Jack Duckworth is with David Richards - David takes out a pipe and lights the tobacco. Drawing in a couple of deep puffs.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Sir, mind if I have a word?

DAVID RICHARDS

Sure, what is on your mind?

JACK DUCKWORTH
Mind if I speak freely?

DAVID RICHARDS
Go on.

JACK DUCKWORTH
It's about this mission. I and a few of the men have grave concerns over our chances of making it out alive.

DAVID RICHARDS
Oh, we do have our orders. I have my superiors just like you do. What are your concerns exactly?

JACK DUCKWORTH
The bloody Japs are all over us like fly's to shit sir. They are never going to stop until every last one of us is dead.

DAVID RICHARDS
So you think we should just give up and go home.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Well I wouldn't put it that way sir. Just that how do we know the blokes were supposed to be gettin' aren't already dead.

David takes a puff on the pipe

DAVID RICHARDS
I see, so we should just assume they are? So we should just let the Japs have their way.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Of course not sir. I want to save those men just as much as the next bloke.

DAVID RICHARDS
What is it then? If you're not up to the job say so. I can always have you re-assigned to other duties.

JACK DUCKWORTH
I can do my job. I have a real bad feeling about this one sir.

DAVID RICHARDS
We concede defeat here. Where does it stop? In Darwin? On the streets
(MORE)

DAVID RICHARDS (CONT'D)
and towns? In the cities? Or do we
wait until they raise the Jap flag
over Parliament House.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Why us? Why three small ships?
Against everything they have that
fly's or floats.

DAVID RICHARDS
If you can find a way to get the
brass to commit more ships, then
let me know.

JACK DUCKWORTH
I just thought I would raise mine
and the men's concerns with you.

DAVID RICHARDS
And you have. Look Jack you're
afraid. We all are, we have a job
to do. Let's do it so others don't
have to.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Okay sir. I just hope you're right.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - MESS DECK - DAY

Jack is with Teddy and three other sailors at a table. Teddy
has a plate of eggs, bacon, sausages. - Teddy opens a bottle
of tomato sauce and applies a generous helping.

Jack has a cup of coffee.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Like a little bit of egg and bacon
with your sauce.

TEDDY
Knock it off. Told Ya so the
skipper would chew you out.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Not at all mate. I said my piece we
came to an agreement.

TEDDY
Well what do Ya reckon now? Going
to hell in a hand-basket are we?

JACK DUCKWORTH
No change in the orders. He didn't
see it my way.

Jack takes a sip of his coffee.

TEDDY

The old man has gone troppo.
Suicide mission for sure.

Teddy cuts up a sausage and some egg takes a mouth full.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Keep it down, gonna scare the rest
of the crew.

TEDDY

What else can we do? The brass have
got it wrong on this one, no doubt
about it.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Nothin' we can do. It's in the lap
of the Gods now mate.

INT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - BASE HEADQUARTERS - OFFICE - DAY

Cuthbert Pope and Laurance Tozer stand at opposite ends of
the office.

LAURANCE TOZER

Sir, the Armidale is requesting
continuous air cover.

CUTHBERT POPE

Then give it to them. What is the
problem?

LAURANCE TOZER

We simply don't have the men or
planes to do that.

CUTHBERT POPE

I already told them they would have
it.

LAURANCE TOZER

Why? Would you do that without
consulting with me? I can't conjure
up men and planes out of thin air.

A KNOCK on the door. Laurance opens the door and is handed a
document from a staff member. The staff member closes the
door.

CUTHBERT POPE

What is that?

LAURANCE TOZER

A report that shows exactly how
many planes we have and available
crews.

CUTHBERT POPE

Okay, what is the point of this?

LAURANCE TOZER

I wanted to show you, since my word is never enough.

Laurance reads the report.

CUTHBERT POPE

No need for the dramatics. I said they will have the air cover, and by God they will have it.

LAURANCE TOZER

Not with twelve bombers. Four of which are out of service for repairs. You're promising something we don't have.

CUTHBERT POPE

Okay. Then pull other planes off and re-task them.

LAURANCE TOZER

Then we leave Darwin and this base vulnerable to attack.

CUTHBERT POPE

So you want me to leave the Armidale without air cover. Cover I already said they would have.

LAURANCE TOZER

What other choice do we have. Sorry sir but you have to reverse the order.

CUTHBERT POPE

And look incompetent. No the order stands.

LAURANCE TOZER

Look if you want to go off on some crazy one man show then count me out.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - BRIDGE - DAY

David Richards returns a sextant to it's case. Turning to a sea chart marks the ships position on it.

Picking up a pair of binoculars in one hand. He makes his way over to the port bridge wing. Searching the sky. Checks his watch.

Moving over to the starboard bridge wing, David repeats the process. Then moves back into the bridge.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
Something wrong sir?

DAVID RICHARDS
Yes, very wrong, the air cover Pope
promised has not shown up. Where
the hell can they be?

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
Shall I signal Darwin?

DAVID RICHARDS
No, no use now. We are for all
intense purposes on our own.

Sub Lt. Buckland looks out a window of the ship.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
Sir I see some planes, lots of
them. Getting closer.

DAVID RICHARDS
That could be them now. I better
check.

David Richards checks from a bridge wing. He hurries back to
the bridge.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
Is it them?

DAVID RICHARDS
Sound action stations. They're
bloody Japs. I counted at least
thirteen, maybe more.

The alarm bells RING for action stations.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
My God, we're in for one hell of a
fight.

DAVID RICHARDS
I don't like our chances with this
one. Get the Dutch troops below to
the mess deck.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
Aye sir.

Sub Lt. Buckland turns to a voice pipe.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
(into voice pipe)
All Dutch troops proceed to mess
deck at once.

DAVID RICHARDS
I need to signal Darwin.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - RADIO ROOM - DAY

Noel mans the radio, when David Richards enters.

DAVID RICHARDS
Get this to Darwin urgently. Enemy
aircraft bombing. No fighters
arrived.

NOEL
Aye sir.

DAVID RICHARDS
And give our position.

NOEL
Aye sir.

The message is TAPPED out. As this is done the sound of an
EXPLODING bomb in the water can be heard.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - BRIDGE - DAY

David Richards enters the bridge looks back down toward the
aft end of the ship. Machine gun FIRE from the Japanese
strafes the decks.

Two sailors running for cover are gunned down and killed.

DAVID RICHARDS
Get two of the Dutch troops with
their Lewis machine guns on deck.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
Aye sir.

Sub Lt. Buckland turns to the voice pipe beside him.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
(into voice pipe)
We need two dutch soldiers with
Lewis guns on port and starboard
decks.

DAVID RICHARDS
Secure all hatches, and bulkhead
doors.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
Aye sir.

A moment later two Dutch troops carrying Lewis machine guns
and ammo boxes arrive, placing themselves on deck and
commence to open FIRE on the Japanese.

David Richards returns to the radio room.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - RADIO ROOM - DAY

David Richards enters the room, Noel is at his station.

DAVID RICHARDS

Send this. Nine bombers. Four fighters. Absolutely no fighter support.

NOEL

Aye sir, sir are we going to--

DAVID RICHARDS

Just send it.

INT. JAPANESE ZERO FIGHTER - DAY

The pilot of the Zero swoops down. He levels the plane out. Machine gun FIRE from the Armidale pours in around him. Approaching the Armidale from the port side.

The pilot takes aim and drops His torpedo into the water. The torpedo speeds toward the Armidale. The pilot banks hard to one side and climbs high.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - MESS DECK - DAY

In the Mess deck are the Dutch Troops, they huddle together. The noise of battle can be heard coming from outside. The ship rocks from side to side with each EXPLOSION.

Then AN EXPLOSION as the torpedo STRIKES the Armidale killing most of the Dutch Troops huddled together.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - RADIO ROOM - DAY

Noel is thrown to the floor. A huge piece of Metal SMASHES through the bulkhead, ripping both radio sets to bits before lodging into the opposite bulkhead.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - AFT DECK - DAY

Teddy and Jack Duckworth both rise to their feet. Sailors around them scramble to take cover. Some men lie dead on the deck.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Fuck we're hit. We have to get outta here.

TEDDY

We can't give up now, we need to fight on.

The Armidale begins to list to port.

JACK DUCKWORTH
We're going over, where is the damn
order to abandon?

TEDDY
Get it together Jack. Get back on
the gun.

Jack returns to the Gun, COCKS it and resumes FIRING.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - BRIDGE - DAY

Noel rushes into the bridge.

DAVID RICHARDS
Get back to your station. I need to
signal Darwin.

NOEL
I can't do that, bloody sets are
gone, smashed to bits.

DAVID RICHARDS
Then get below, see what help they
need.

NOEL
Aye sir.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE- ENGINE ROOM - DAY

Noel arrives when he is meet by Harry Jenkyn. Harry is
rushing to stop water leaks when a high pressure pipe BURST.

A high pressure jet of water erupts from the pipe.

HARRY JENKYN
Damn it, get a clamp on that
fucking pipe.

NOEL
A what? What are you talking about?

Harry points to a curved sheet of metal with a flange which
has four holes in it.

HARRY JENKYN
Come on now hurry man.

Noel picks up the clamp. Standing in front of the jet of
water, noel holds up the collar in front of the jet.

Noel commences to walk in against the enormous water
pressure. Only to stumble to the floor.

NOEL
Can't bloody well do it. You have
to give me a hand.

HARRY JENKYN

You're gonna have to do it on Ya
own. Someone has to bolt it shut.

Noel try's again, pushing as hard as he can against the jet
of water. Reaching the burst section of pipe.

The water level rising above ankle level.

Noel forces the clamp around the pipe.

Harry moves in from the side of Noel with four bolts and nuts
and a spanner.

Placing a bolt in each hole and securing with a nut and
finally tighten's with the spanner.

HARRY JENKYN

Two more mate just hold a little
bit longer.

The clamp now secure the jet of water now stopped.

HARRY JENKYN

Well done lad. I'm okay now down
here. Head back up.

NOEL

Sure thing mate.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - BRIDGE - DAY

The bridge phone RINGS. It's answered by Sub Lt. Buckland.

DAVID RICHARDS

Reg how far are we listing by?

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

So far twenty degrees. At forty-
five we go over.

DAVID RICHARDS

Damage reports from all stations.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

Mess deck is flooding, we need to
check for survivors.

Sub Lt. Buckland returns the bridge phone to its cradle.

DAVID RICHARDS

No time for that, seal it off.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND

But sir men are still in there.

DAVID RICHARDS

SEAL IT OFF.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - ENGINE ROOM - DAY

The Engine room and Boiler room are separated by a narrow passage between them. In the engine room is Harry Jenkyn. With him is stoker RAY (21)

A second torpedo STRIKES the Armidale between the two rooms sending both men to the floor and Shrapnel flying through the air.

Ray is hit in the legs and Harry in the upper part of his body. Both men, stunned by the blast, rise gingerly to their feet.

HARRY JENKYN

Damn that was bloody close, we have to get off the ship.

RAY

Ya head is bleedin'. We can try the aft end.

Harry raises a hand to his forehead, takes a look at his blood covered fingers.

HARRY JENKYN

Thought I had something, can't see much. You're gonna have to help me out.

They both head toward the aft end of the ship. While doing that a Bomb EXPLODES very close to the ship on the starboard side blowing a large hole in the ship.

Harry and Ray are Knocked over again from the explosion. They help each other up.

The Armidale lists sharply to port. A loud GROANING, TWISTING and TEARING of metal is heard.

RAY

What the hell now?

HARRY JENKYN

She has broken her back. Nothing can save her now.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - DAY

The Armidale is rocked by the EXPLOSION. The ship's rigging STRAINS and SNAPS. Causing the main mast to CRASH onto the bridge of the ship.

The ship's funnel CRASHES down CRUSHING a sailor under it.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - BRIDGE - DAY

Russel Caro is knocked to the floor. David Richards helps Russel Caro back up to his feet.

RUSSEL CARO
She's breaking apart, we have to
abandon.

DAVID RICHARDS
That's it, all hands abandon ship.
Say again, all hands abandon ship.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
I will go below, make sure everyone
gets out.

Sub Lt. Buckland leaves the bridge. Making his way below deck.

Leading Signaller ARTHUR (24) leaves his station in the asdic cabin and runs to the voice pipes on the bridge.

ARTHUR
(into all voice pipes)
Abandon ship, from the captain
abandon ship.

The Armidale is now listing severely over to port almost to the point of being on her side.

The crew from the Bridge exit for the aft deck. As they do none notice that Russel Caro is tangled up in the ship's rigging.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - BELOW DECKS - DAY

Sub Lieutenant Buckland moves along checking every space and room where crew would be. As he does so water is quickly rising.

Sub Lieutenant Buckland opens a door to a room and finds a sailor frozen with fear.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
(to sailor)
You have to get out. The skipper
has ordered abandon ship.

The sailor white with fear, eyes wide open. Does nothing says nothing only shakes his head.

SUB LT. BUCKLAND
Get off the ship. Did you hear me?

Sub Lieutenant Buckland moves in and forcibly removes the sailor from the room and to the nearest stairway out.

The sailor exits the area. Sub Lieutenant Buckland continues his search below decks.

Overhead a high pressure steam pipe BURST sending a bolt straight into the head of Sub Lieutenant Buckland. He drops to the floor unconscious.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - AFT DECK - DAY

Russel Caro frantically tries to free himself, but can't do it. Russel Caro resigns himself to his fate. Waits for death to come.

Arthur returns and helps Russel Caro free by cutting the rigging with his seaman's knife. Russel Caro makes it to the ships side and jumps into the water.

Arthur moves down toward the aft end of the ship.

ARTHUR
ABANDON SHIP, FROM THE CAPTAIN,
ABANDON SHIP.

Arthur makes it to the ship's rail, climbs over the rail and jumps into the water.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - MID SHIP DECK - DAY

Men are jumping over board as the ship slowly sinks. Some are drawn in by the ship's screws and cut to pieces. Others swim away.

Arthur swims around helping struggling sailors by passing anything that will float to them.

The surviving Dutch troops, some armed with holstered pistols, jump into the sea.

Able Seaman JIM PELLET (23) grabs a tomahawk and cuts through the jammed falls of the motorboat so it can be lowered into the water.

Jim is joined by Teddy.

TEDDY
Here let me give ya a hand with that.

JIM PELLET
Thanks mate, where is Jack?

TEDDY
I don't know, lost him awhile back.

JIM PELLET
Keep at it Teddy, I'll be back in a minute.

Jim leaves for the mess deck.

INT. HMAS ARMIDALE - MESS DECK - DAY

At the mess deck on a bench is a lemonade bottle. Jim fills the bottle with fresh water, then returns to the aft deck.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - AFT DECK - DAY

Teddy still struggles with the falls of the motor boat. Jim returns.

JIM PELLET
Teddy get off the ship.

TEDDY
They just keep mowing them down.
It's bloody murder.

JIM PELLET
GET IN THE DAMN WATER BOY! There's
nothin' you can do about it.

Teddy approaches the rail stops, looks at the men in the water being shot at in the water. Turns back and clammers his way back to the aft 20mm Oerlikon cannon.

TEDDY
Someone has to do something!

Jim Pellet cuts through the last of the motor boat falls and sends the boat CRASHING into the sea. Jim jumps into the sea, climbs into the motor boat.

EXT. ARAFURA SEA - DAY

Men in the water huddle together in groups of five to ten. Above them the Japanese fighters continue to machine-gun the men in the water.

Most of the men have their life Vest on. They duck-dive to evade the bullets. Some surface too early and are killed when they surface.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - PORT WAIST - DAY

Ray and Harry Jenkyn take cover crouching below the ship's waist.

RAY
Okay Harry as soon as I give the
word we both go over.

HARRY JENKYN
Righto then.

Ray peeks above the Gunwale. Just as he does a bomb EXPLODES nearby. Ray turns back to check on Harry.

RAY

Harry, Harry.

Ray looks to his left then right. Harry is gone. Ray jumps into the water.

EXT. HMAS ARMIDALE - AFT DECK - DAY

Teddy scrambles over dead bodies and the fallen ship's mast and rigging to reach the 20mm Oerlikon cannon.

Teddy straps himself into the gun. At that moment the ship drops below him. He steadies himself. Takes aim and opens FIRE.

A Japanese Zero is HIT, it cartwheels into the water and sinks. A second Zero fighter opens FIRE at Teddy HITTING him in the chest and back.

Teddy, in shock from blood loss. Continues to FIRE the gun. Two more planes are badly damaged.

Teddy has lost the use of his legs. He slumps down to the deck on his belly, blood pouring out from his wounds.

Teddy somehow finds the strength to continue to FIRE the 20mm Oerlikon cannon, water lapping around him.

Teddy continues to FIRE the gun even as the ship sinks below the waves. Tracer FIRE is seen coming up from below the waves.

The Armidale broken in two halves, finally sinks. The Japanese fighters finally stop the attack and fly away from the Area.

EXT. ARAFURA SEA - DAY

A wide debris field is all that is left behind. An Oil slick has formed. Oil oozes up from under the sea. Dead bodies floating on the surface, as well as body parts. Many of the surviving men are wounded.

Men cling onto empty Oil drums and pieces of drift wood.

Floating on the surface is one carley float, three denton rafts, drift wood.

Men clamber aboard the carley floats or denton rafts. Others into the motorboat.

The ship's whaler, riddled with bullet holes, floats up to the surface upside down.

DAVID RICHARDS

Reg where are you? Reg are you there?

No reply is heard.

ARTHUR

Sir he's gone, he never made it off the ship.

DAVID RICHARDS

Help me gather the men in. Get the wounded into the motor boat.

In the motor boat are two dead dutch troops. Arthur drags them both out of the motor boat.

ARTHUR

Aye sir, how many do you think made it?

DAVID RICHARDS

No Idea, I will do a roll call as soon as I can.

ARTHUR

Does anyone know we're out here? What happened to us?

DAVID RICHARDS

I JUST DON'T KNOW OKAY... We can worry about that later.

The two paravane floats and drift wood float by.

ARTHUR

Look at it, such a waste.

DAVID RICHARDS

Gather that wood up and the floats, we can make a raft from it.

INT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - BASE HQ - NIGHT

In the communications room is Cuthbert Pope and Laurance Tozer. They are at a radio telegraph set. A telegraphist waits for a reply from a message.

CUTHBERT POPE

How long since my message to the Armidale?

LAURANCE TOZER

Three hours now. No one would go this long without responding.

CUTHBERT POPE

Could they have sunk?

LAURANCE TOZER

Given the level of enemy activity
in the area a very real
possibility.

CUTHBERT POPE

Try calling the Castlemaine or
Kuru, they might know something.

The Telegraphist TAPS out a message to the Castlemaine.

LAURANCE TOZER

It could take some time for a
reply.

CUTHBERT POPE

Send up some planes, commence a
search starting from the Armidale's
last reported position.

EXT. ARAFURA SEA - DAY

The surviving men have made a raft from drift wood, rope and
the two paravane floats.

Two shark fins break the surface, slowly moving in and around
the raft.

One of the men LIEUTENANT PALMER (30) SLAPS at the water to
scare off the sharks, it does not work.

Other men on the motor boat and carley floats also try to
scare the sharks, but to no avail.

David Richards gestures to the men to gather around him.

DAVID RICHARDS

Gather in, get in closer. That's
it. Get in close.

David waving to the other men to get closer to him.

ARTHUR

What is it skipper? What is all the
point of this?

DAVID RICHARDS

We're in one hell of a dire
situation here. Focus on staying
alive.

ARTHUR

What hope have we got? Damn sharks
may as well finish us off.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Look, drop it okay. Let the skipper
speak.

DAVID RICHARDS

The way I see it, we can wait here for help. But we never got a distress call to Darwin.

NOEL

We should stay here. Wait for rescue.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Don't you listen? No one knows we're fucking here. So keep Ya stupid mouth shut.

DAVID RICHARDS

Jack, enough! We have three options. One. Timor is seventy miles to our north.

NOEL

I don't think so. None of us want to go back.

DAVID RICHARDS

Then we have two choices. Two hundred and fifty miles to Bathurst island. Or three hundred miles to Darwin.

A lone shark appears. It raises its nose out of the water. The shark flicks its tail and swims away.

NOEL

Just keep swimmin' buddy. You're not getting a piece of me.

DAVID RICHARDS

With the amount of wounded we have, I propose that myself, and the strongest of the men leave for Darwin, we split the supplies we have.

JACK DUCKWORTH

I'm all for it, we have to make an attempt for land. How about the rest of you fellas?

The other men all nod in agreement.

DAVID RICHARDS

Right it's settled then, I will take the Motor boat. With me will be, George, Richard, Les, James, Arthur, Tom, Dave, Jack, Cleland, Ron, Max, Charlie, Morley, Roy, Eric, and Rob.

The men called climb onto the Motor Boat.

JACK DUCKWORTH
And the wounded man Fred.

DAVID RICHARDS
And we better take four of the
Dutch blokes as well.

David waves over four Dutch soldiers. They all climb onto the Motor Boat. The motor boat is over loaded with men, it only just stays afloat.

JACK DUCKWORTH
That's it then, twenty two men.

DAVID RICHARDS
The rest of you try to stay as one
group. Try to stay as close as
possible to here. This is where
they will come looking for you.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Shall we leave now?

ARTHUR
So long boys.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Food for them sir?

DAVID RICHARDS
Jack what is the food situation?

JACK DUCKWORTH
We have one case of bully beef, two
tins of fruit, one tin of condensed
milk. Also one tin of carrots.

DAVID RICHARDS
Leave the bulk of the food here, we
will take one tin of beef, water,
fruit and carrots.

ERIC
Who? Will be in charge of the men
left here?

DAVID RICHARDS
Lieutenant Palmer will lead you.

LT. PALMER
You can count on me skipper.

The men divide the food as instructed.

Some of the men try to start the motor. It fails to start.
Others pass over the bulk of the food and water.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Goodbye and good luck.

DAVID RICHARDS
I will send help for you as soon as
I can. Till then good luck and God
speed.

The men in the Motor Boat take out the oars and row away from
the rest of the men.

INT. BEAUFIGHTER - COCKPIT - DAY

In the cockpit is Flying Officer KEARNEY (30) and Sergeant
BUCK (22). At the gunners position. They speak via headset
intercom.

They fly over a vast empty ocean below them.

KEARNEY
Anything from your position?

BUCK (V.O.)
Nothing yet. So hard to make
anything out.

KEARNEY
I can't believe they're gone
without a trace. No debris field,
no Oil slick, nothing.

BUCK (V.O.)
Makes no sense. Should we get a
little lower? Get a closer look.

KEARNEY
I don't think that would make much
difference.

BUCK (V.O.)
We have to give it a try, it all
looks the same from this high up.

KEARNEY
Too low we narrow our field of
view, too high all detail is lost.
We're at the right height.

BUCK (V.O.)
We better turn around for one more
pass.

KEARNEY
That will have to be our last pass,
we're low on fuel.

EXT. ARAFURA SEA - MOTOR BOAT - NIGHT

The men take turns, some in the boat, others in the water, clinging onto the side.

The men in the boat row, others bail out water. Fred lies motionless. Unable to be roused.

A sea snake swims by the boat.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Skipper, we have a problem.

DAVID RICHARDS
What is it?

JACK DUCKWORTH
Fred has died. Must have gone
awhile ago, no one noticed until
now.

DAVID RICHARDS
Drop him overboard, we need the
space.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Sir how can you say that? He's a
great bloke.

DAVID RICHARDS
They're all great blokes, we lost a
lot of great men.

JACK DUCKWORTH
Men like Teddy, not even bloody
nineteen. Damn bravest man I will
ever see.

ARTHUR
Got that right, he saved my life,
he save so many lives. Paid for it
with his own.

JACK DUCKWORTH
He should be properly awarded for
what he did.

DAVID RICHARDS
You don't have to worry about that.
I'll see that he gets the proper
recognition.

JACK DUCKWORTH
How about a few words for Fred?

David holds his hands in prayer as do the other men.

DAVID RICHARDS

Dear Lord as we commend our friend
Fred to the sea, we ask that you
graciously take him into your
hands. We ask that you Provide Fred
with eternal rest. Amen.

ALL

Amen.

Fred is gently lowered into the water.

Eric removes the housing from the motorboat engine.

JACK DUCKWORTH

What are you doing?

ERIC

I think I can get the motor running
again.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Leave it alone, you will make it
worse.

ERIC

No, I worked at my uncles mechanic
shop before the war.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Well okay. Don't stuff it up.

EXT. ARAFURA SEA - RAFT - DAY

The men left behind by Richards gather together. Some on the
makeshift raft. Others on the carley float or denton raft.

Russel Caro is on the carley float with him is Ray and Lt.
Palmer

Ray conducts a count of the men.

RAY

Twenty six, twenty seven. Twenty
seven men Lieutenant.

LT. PALMER

Two more taken by sharks. Picking
us off one by one.

RAY

We have to get the men out of the
water some how.

RUSSEL CARO

In this debris field gives me an
idea. The whaler.

LT. PALMER

Not going to work, Japs shot the hell out of it.

RAY

So we just give up? Let nature take it's course.

LT. PALMER

No, we keep thinking.

EXT. ARAFURA SEA - MOTOR BOAT - DAY

The Dutch troops huddle together. Some of the Australians are in the water.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Skipper, I can't stop thinkin' about Teddy. Is that such a bad thing?

DAVID RICHARDS

Not at all, believe me it will help. Now and many years to come.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Poor bloke, what on earth possessed him to do that?

Eric sits up a little to hear better.

DAVID RICHARDS

Only Teddy and God know the answer to that one.

JACK DUCKWORTH

I remember one time Teddy told me a story about how he and several others while on basic were in a street parade.

ERIC

Do you have to go on? Let the fella rest in peace.

DAVID RICHARDS

Go on I would love to here the story.

JACK DUCKWORTH

The ocean liner Queen Mary was in town. And Teddy had to tow a cannon down the street.

DAVID RICHARDS

Not the same one captured during the boxer rebellion?

JACK DUCKWORTH

The very one. So old man Louis couldn't keep up. Anyhow the lads got away, they thought they had it made.

ERIC

Yeah what happened next?

JACK DUCKWORTH

They were about to piss off to the local for few beers. When the bloomin' cannon starts rolling down the hill.

ERIC

Serves em right for pullin' a stunt like that.

JACK DUCKWORTH

So here they all are running down the hill after the bloody cannon. Damn thing only stopped after it hit a bush.

All the men burst out laughing.

ERIC

Too bloody right, that sure sound like somethin' Teddy would do.

DAVID RICHARDS

What a cracker story. Okay time to switch places with the Dutch men.

The men in the water try to climb into the motor boat, but are pushed and kicked by the Dutch soldiers.

JACK DUCKWORTH

What the hell is wrong with you blokes? Get in the damn water.

One of the dutch soldiers gestures no.

DAVID RICHARDS

Get them in the Bloody water.

Jack grabs hold of one of the armed Dutch troops to pull him into the sea.

The Dutch troop kicks Jack away. Draws his pistol and aims it at Jack.

JACK DUCKWORTH

You arrogant bastard, you point that thing at me. After we saved your life.

DAVID RICHARDS

Don't antagonise him. Everybody
calm down.

The Dutch troop points the pistol at David Richards. David
half raises both his hands.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Skipper, what do you want us to do?

DAVID RICHARDS

Nothing, they can stay where they
are.

ERIC

Skipper this is absurd. What bloody
right do they have to special
treatment?

DAVID RICHARDS

They have the guns, I'm not about
to lose anymore men.

David gestures for the Dutch troops to stay in the raft. The
Dutch troop lowers his pistol then holsters the gun.

JACK DUCKWORTH

What are we to do with them
skipper?

ARTHUR

I know what I would like to do with
'em. Leave 'em here to fend for
themselves.

JACK DUCKWORTH

I'll agree to that.

DAVID RICHARDS

No, look leave it for now. I'll see
if I can come up with a solution.

David scans the sea around him finding a denton raft drifting
behind them.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Should have left them with the
others.

DAVID RICHARDS

Jack, if you can swim out grab that
denton raft? Tow it back. Give it
to the dutch boys.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Ah... sure it's not too far.

Jack swims out.

A MOMENT LATER

Jack returns with the denton raft.

DAVID RICHARDS

Righto put them in it and tie it to
the motor boat.

INT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - BASE HQ - DAY

In the communications room is flying officer Kearney,
Cuthbert Pope and Laurance Tozer. All three look over the
large map table.

CUTHBERT POPE

Glad you could join us, any news?

KEARNEY

Nothing I'm afraid, my last flight,
not a sign.

CUTHBERT POPE

We need to widen the search to the
west and east. Can we spare the
aircraft?

KEARNEY

No, we lost one on the way back to
Darwin. The other crews are at the
point of exhaustion.

CUTHBERT POPE

Damn it, did the crew make it?

KEARNEY

Yeah a cat landed and picked them
up.

LAURANCE TOZER

We have no other ships available to
search. It has to be the
Beaufighters.

KEARNEY

You keep putting us up like this
and I guarantee you you'll lose
more men, more planes as they drop
out of the sky from exhaustion.

CUTHBERT POPE

We're not giving up on those men.
Not yet anyway.

KEARNEY

Anyway?

LAURANCE TOZER

Eventually, if we can't find anyone
or any sign they're alive we'll
have no choice but to call it off.

EXT. ARAFURA SEA - MOTOR BOAT - DAY

The men in the boat struggle to sleep. Men nod off only to
wake seconds later. David Richards takes a bearing from a
button compass.

At the boat engine is Eric and Jack Duckworth.

ERIC

That should do it, crank the engine
and see if we can get it goin'.

Jack CRANKS the engine. It SPLUTTERS. Again he CRANKS it.
Again it SPLUTTERS. He CRANKS the engine again. It Only
SPLUTTERS.

ERIC

Damn bastard won't start. Perhaps
we missed something?

JACK DUCKWORTH

Give it another go.

Jack CRANKS the engine. Only the crank handle SNAPS off.

ERIC

That's fucking done it now.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Rope, we need a piece of rope.

One of the men fishes around in the water inside the boat.
Finds a length of rope passing it over to Eric.

Eric wraps the rope around the flywheel and pulls as hard as
he can.

The engine SPLUTTERS and begins to PUTT, PUTT into life.
Finally it starts. A CHEER goes up from all of the men.

The slight increase in speed causes the sea to flow faster
over the sides and through the large split in the bow of the
boat.

ERIC

That's done it.

DAVID RICHARDS

Well done lads, plug up that hole.
And put extra men on bailing duty.

Eric tears up his shirt, stuffing it into the hole in the
bow. Two other men do the same.

ERIC

That will hold it for now. Which way skipper?

DAVID RICHARDS

We need to go toward the south east, that way.

David points in the direction of south east.

INT. BEAUFIGHTER - COCKPIT - DAY

At the controls are Kearney and Buck. Buck scans the sea from his gunners position. They speak via headset intercom.

BUCK (V.O.)

How much time do you think they have?

KEARNEY

A day or two more. Almost four days, no one can survive that.

BUCK (V.O.)

Sounds like you've given up on them already. I don't care how long it takes, we should keep looking.

KEARNEY

I would love nothing more than to do that.

BUCK (V.O.)

But?

Kearney banks the plane into a slow wide left turn, offering a vast panorama of endless ocean and sky.

EXT. ARAFURA SEA - MOTOR BOAT - DAY

All the men are in some form of pain. All have sunburnt skin, puffed-up and cracked skin. Blood oozing from the cracks. Lips cracked and blistered. Oil in their hair dried and gone hard.

Sea water only stings them when it flows over the skin. Drift wood from the Armidale trails around them.

DAVID RICHARDS

Hold this course as much as you can lads. We must be getting close now.

Two of the pieces of drift wood come apart from the raft.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Damn things breakin' apart skipper.

DAVID RICHARDS

Re-tie it with whatever we have. It will just have to do.

Jack re-ties the raft.

ARTHUR

No use in tryin' skipper, what hope is there?

DAVID RICHARDS

Is that the kind of attitude Teddy would have?

ARTHUR

No, he's not here to save us now.

DAVID RICHARDS

No, but you're here because of him we all are.

ARTHUR

I just want it to end. Go home to my misses and kids.

DAVID RICHARDS

Just think about getting home to your family.

ARTHUR

How on Earth do you know it works?

DAVID RICHARDS

It works for me. We only have each other to rely on.

The engine of the motorboat stops working.

ARTHUR

Sorry skipper. Eric you better check that out.

Eric inspects the engine.

DAVID RICHARDS

What is it?

ERIC

No petrol, ran dry.

DAVID RICHARDS

Well that's it then back to rowing.

ERIC

Not so fast skipper.

Eric removes the carburetter and empties the contents into the fuel tank.

DAVID RICHARDS
What on earth are you doing man?

ERIC
Run it as a diesel, that will buy
us a few more hours.

EXT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - AIRSTRIP - NIGHT

Standing on the edge of the airstrip is Cuthbert Pope. He watches as a Beaufighter comes in for a landing.

When it stops and the door opens Cuthbert walks up to meet with Kearney and Buck.

CUTHBERT POPE
Well anything?

KEARNEY
Not a thing at all, it's like they
just vanished.

BUCK
One more day I'm sure we can find
them.

CUTHBERT POPE
No, sorry but I have to call it
off.

BUCK
Sir, one more day, what harm can
one more day do?

KEARNEY
I have to agree, one last flight.

CUTHBERT POPE
My mind is made up, I need you for
other operations.

KEARNEY
Perhaps, if we had more planes,
didn't a squadron of Hudsons
arrive? Please sir one last day.

BUCK
We'll go out on our own if we have
to.

CUTHBERT POPE
You'll do no such thing.

BUCK
Well give us tomorrow then.

Cuthbert takes a moment to consider the request.

CUTHBERT POPE

Okay, you and the Hudsons have one day to find something, anything.

EXT. ARAFURA SEA - RAFT - DAY

Men on the raft construct a makeshift mast from a boat hook, using clothing for a sail.

In the water around them is drift wood, and debris from the Armidale.

Floating just below the surface is the whaler from the Armidale.

LT. PALMER

That's it men use what rope we have to secure that mast.

NOEL

Not much of a sail but it will do. How much longer do you think lieutenant?

LT. PALMER

At this rate, and assuming we hold our course three maybe four days.

One of the men, BOOL (23), looks around at all of the drift wood and debris.

BOOL

Sir, Take a look at all this floating around us. We could take the whaler and use it too.

NOEL

Are you daft man? Look at it riddled with holes, damn thing has a massive split in the stern.

BOOL

Why don't we make some kind of a raft or something. Get the whaler on top.

NOEL

It'll never work. The sun has driven you mad.

LT. PALMER

Now hang on a minute, I think he's onto something. With what's left of the rope lash the drift wood together into some kind of floating dry dock.

NOEL

Skipper, we are all in a dreadful state, we're barely holding on as it is.

BOOL

It's worth a try, free up some space, we can divide the men up between the carley float, the raft and denton rafts.

LT. PALMER

May as well give it a shot. Gather in all of the drift wood. Gather up the last of the rope.

NOEL

And what is left of the canvas cover.

Noel and Bool enter the water. They both turn over the whaler right way up.

Other men tie the driftwood together and form a square-shaped raft. Three more men enter the water straining to lower one end of the raft into the water.

LT. PALMER

That's it men keep it lowered now. You other men on my order push it up. One, two, three, heave.

Men in the water strain as the whaler is pushed partly onto the raft.

NOEL

One or two more goes then we have it.

LT. PALMER

One, two, three, HEAVE. One more lads HEAVE.

One of the men slips off the raft, the whaler slides off back into the water.

NOEL

It's no use skipper. Too bloody hard.

LT. PALMER

No, we don't give up just because things are hard. Teddy never gave up. Start over.

The men reset and push as hard as they can.

The whaler sits half way on the raft.

LT. PALMER
One last big push men. HEAVE.

The whaler GRINDS its way fully onto the raft.

NOEL
You little beauty the world's first
floating dry dock constructed while
at sea.

LT. PALMER
Cover that slit in the stern with
the canvas. Use the screws from the
fittings to tack it down.

NOEL
She won't stay afloat for long.

BOOL
Our life vest inflate them. Pop 'em
under the raft.

LT. PALMER
Bloody brilliant, come on then you
heard the man. Start huffin' an
puffin'.

The men begin to inflate their life Vest.

LT. PALMER
Stuff the other holes with
clothing. Start bailing out the
whaler, great job men.

INT. BEAUFIGHTER - COCKPIT - DAY

At the controls are Flying Officer Kearney and sergeant Buck
at his gunner position. They speak via headset intercom.

BUCK (V.O.)
I'm sure I saw something. Just off
to the right.

Both men scan the water below them. The sea is rough with
high swells.

KEARNEY
There! I see them, looks like
they're on a raft of some kind.

BUCK (V.O.)
Yeah, I see them too. I'll mark
their location on a chart.

KEARNEY
I'll put a call into Darwin. Get a
cat out here.

BUCK (V.O.)
I don't think they can land in seas
like this.

KEARNEY
We have to give it a go. It might
settle down by the time they get
here.

INT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - BASE HQ - NIGHT

A MESSENGER is running down a long corridor with note in hand. He stops at the office of Cuthbert Pope. An Urgent KNOCK on the door.

The door opens.

MESSENGER
Sir, you have to come quick to the
operations room.

CUTHBERT POPE
Why? What is going on? Explain
yourself.

The messenger hands over the note. Cuthbert reads it.

MESSENGER
Sir?

CUTHBERT POPE
Quickly now, get Tozer to meet me
in the ops room urgently.

MESSENGER
Yes sir.

The messenger walks away.

CUTHBERT POPE
Run boy, hurry now.

The messenger starts running. Cuthbert breaks into a jog.

INT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - OFFICER QUARTERS - NIGHT

The messenger outside a door of the quarters.- He KNOCKS on the door. No response. The messenger KNOCKS on the door again harder.

A moment later.

The door is opened by Laurance Tozer who is dressed in his Pyjamas.

LAURANCE TOZER
What is it? What can't wait until
the morning?

MESSENGER

Sorry to wake you sir. But the commodore needs to see you in the ops room urgently.

LAURANCE TOZER

Did he say why?

MESSENGER

It is about the Armidale. They found some survivor's.

LAURANCE TOZER

My God. How many?

MESSENGER

I don't know sir. But the commodore just said to get you.

LAURANCE TOZER

Thanks, you can go.

The messengers leaves.

INT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - BASE HQ - OPERATIONS ROOM - NIGHT

Cuthbert Pope and Laurance Tozer arrive at the room at the same time. Laurance Tozer dressed in pyjamas and a robe and slippers.

They both stop at the large map table.

CUTHBERT POPE

Where are they?

A staffer places a marker on the table to indicate the location of the raft.

LAURANCE TOZER

That is about six hours sailing time.

CUTHBERT POPE

What planes are in the area now?

LAURANCE TOZER

None, they are all back now.

CUTHBERT POPE

Damn it I want a cat in the air, pick them up now.

LAURANCE TOZER

All flights are grounded until first light.

CUTHBERT POPE

Get the Kalgoorlie out to the area at once. Have a cat take off at first light.

LAURANCE TOZER

Right, I'll make the arrangements now.

EXT. ARAFURA SEA - MOTOR BOAT - DAY

Every man is on the verge of complete exhaustion. The men are startled when a flying fish leaps out of the sea straight into the motor boat.

ARTHUR

What the hell? Hey fellas take a look at this a damn fish landed in the boat.

DAVID RICHARDS

Don't let it get away. Who has a knife?

JACK DUCKWORTH

I do. Look at it nice and juicy.

Jack passes his knife over to Arthur. The fish is cut into small pieces and distributed amongst the men.

Each man savours the tiny morsel of fish.

DAVID RICHARDS

Ask and the lord shall provide.

EXT. ARAFURA SEA - RAFT - DAY

Lieutenant Palmer along with Jim Pellett lower a body of a Dutch soldier into the sea.

JIM PELLETT

No sign of a shark bite. What do Ya reckon got 'im.

LT. PALMER

Probably a sea snake. I think we need to split the men up.

BOOL

What for? Our chances of survival are better together.

LT. PALMER

I don't think so. If it's not sharks, or bloody sea snakes. Then it's men dieing with half their guts missing.

RAY

The Lieutenant's right split the men into two. Some on the whaler. The rest on the raft.

LT. PALMER

Increase our chances of a rescue. We know where the patrol zones are.

BOOL

You base that on the assumption the skipper made it. We don't know that. I say no stick together.

LT. PALMER

What do you think then bumble?

BOOL

Split the men up. We have to assume the skipper never made it.

LT. PALMER

Okay then. We put about a dozen or so on a raft. The rest stay with me on the whaler.

EXT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - AIRSTRIP - DAY

As the sun rises in the East.

A black catalina plane rolls down the runway. Lifting off it climbs into the air, then levels off.

INT. CATALINA - COCKPIT - DAY

At the controls is flying officer YOUNG (24) and sergeant DAVIS (22). At the waist gunners position is AC2. BOBBY (18)

FO. YOUNG

Check the maps, we have to be sure of the location. We can't waste a moment of daylight.

SGT. DAVIS

I have, but I can do it again. I want to find 'em too, but getting snippy about it doesn't help.

FO. YOUNG

Sorry you're right. I'm sure we can find them.

SGT. DAVIS

Forget it. I better check in with Bobby.

SGT. Davis switches on the intercom.

FO. YOUNG
Hope he brought the camera?

SGT. DAVIS
(into intercom)
Bobby have you got the camera?

AC2. BOBBY (V.O.)
Sure have, I made a package with a note attached should we find them.

SGT. DAVIS
Great work. We will make at least two passes to get a proper fix on their location.

AC2. BOBBY (V.O.)
Copy that, I can drop the supplies first take a picture on the second.

SGT. DAVIS
Sounds like a plan to me. Just don't drop it on their heads, I think they have gone through enough.

AC2. BOBBY (V.O.)
No I won't. I'm a pretty good shot.

INT. HMAS KALGOOLIE - BRIDGE - DAY

In command of the Australian Corvette is HAROLD LITCHFIELD (45) he study's a sea chart. Measuring out distance to a location with a divider.

HAROLD LITCHFIELD
Steer to course three four zero degrees. Slow to one third.

A Sailor at the helm turns the wheel to the new course. An officer at the ship's engine telegraph moves the handle to the slow one third position.

INT. CATALINA - COCKPIT - DAY

The catalina is flying low over the ocean as it approaches a raft with 12 Sailors on it.

FO. YOUNG
We're coming up on them now. Get Bobby ready with that package.

SGT. DAVIS
(into intercom)
Bob you ready back there? Got one shot at this.

FO. YOUNG
Okay ten seconds.

INT. CATALINA - RIGHT WAIST GUNNER - DAY

Bobby with the package in hand holds it out the window. The catalina banks slightly to one side.

SGT. DAVIS (V.O.)
Three, two, one. Drop it now.

Bobby lets go of the package. It plummets into the sea only a few metres from the raft.

AC2. BOBBY
Good drop, I can see a man swimming out now.

INT. CATALINA - COCKPIT - DAY

FO. Young banks the plane into a turn for a second pass. Over the raft.

FO. YOUNG
Get the location on this pass.

SGT. DAVIS
Okay got it. I can send it right away to Darwin.

FO. YOUNG
Yep, do it. Get the camera ready.

INT. CATALINA - RIGHT WAIST GUNNER - DAY

Bobby has a box brownie camera ready, as the plane makes a banking turn Bobby SNAPS a photo of the men on the raft.

The men are seen standing and waving as the picture is taken.

The plane levels out and leaves the area.

AC2. BOBBY
(into intercom)
Is that it? Are you sure we can't land?

FO. YOUNG (V.O.)
Positive, the sea state is too rough. Don't worry we have their location. We will be back first thing tomorrow.

INT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - BASE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Cuthbert Pope and Laurance Tozer are in the operations room at a telegraphist station. The telegraphist transmits a message to the Kalgoorlie.

LAURANCE TOZER
Have the Kalgoorlie send her
current location.

CUTHBERT POPE
Also check with the cat crews any
further news.

LAURANCE TOZER
I think we need to make the men on
the raft a priority.

CUTHBERT POPE
Why? Do you think that?

LAURANCE TOZER
The other men are in reasonable
good shape on a carley float and
motor boat.

CUTHBERT POPE
What has that got to do with
anything?

LAURANCE TOZER
That raft could break apart at any
moment, especially in a rough sea
state.

CUTHBERT POPE
I can't agree to that we have to go
for the other men first. We know
where they are and have a better
chance of rescue.

LAURANCE TOZER
So their lives are less valuable,
more expendable.

CUTHBERT POPE
Don't lecture me on life and death
decisions. I sent those men out. I
am the one who ordered them to
their deaths.

LAURANCE TOZER
A burden we must all bear.

CUTHBERT POPE
No only I.

INT. CATALINA - COCKPIT - DAY

At the controls is FO. Young and SGT. Davis. With waist
gunner Bobby.

FO. Young has the plane in a slow wide turn over the area
where the picture was taken the day before.

FO. YOUNG

Check the map again. Are you sure this is the right location?

SGT. DAVIS

I'm telling you this is the location. I have checked it three times now.

FO. YOUNG

Did you work out the location correctly? You could have made a mistake.

SGT. DAVIS

No, I did not. I know how to navigate and read maps.

FO. YOUNG

Tell me how a raft full of men just vanishes into thin air. It makes no sense.

SGT. DAVIS

They could have been picked up by a ship. Or the Japs got them. God knows.

Over the intercom Bobby calls FO. Young.

AC2. BOBBY (V.O.)

Skipper, I think SGT. Davis is right. My maps show the same as yours. We can't both be wrong. Maybe a rouge wave swamped them?

SGT. DAVIS

That is possible. Tired exhausted men. It would not take much to give up in that situation.

AC2. BOBBY

What if we continued out a little further to the south. Followed the sea currents.

SGT. DAVIS

Sounds like a plan to me.

FO. YOUNG

Worth a shot. But I don't like our chances.

EXT. HUDSON BOMBER - DAY

The Australian bomber fly's low and slow over the motor boat a package suspended by parachute is dropped.

A sailor from the motor boat swims out to retrieve the package.

The hudson bomber rocks it's wings as it fly's away from the area.

EXT. ARAFURA SEA - MOTOR BOAT - DAY

David Richards unwraps the package with food and tinned water. A flare gun and several flares are also in the package. One of the tins of water has a note wrapped around it.

ARTHUR

What's it say skipper? Are they comin' for us?

DAVID RICHARDS

Says that the Kalgoorlie is on her way, and that we should fire the flare gun every half hour from twenty-three hundred hours tonight.

One of the men passes over the flare gun and flares to David.

ARTHUR

Praise Jesus, I knew someone was watching over us.

DAVID RICHARDS

This could be it lads. We could be going home.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Only if they're around, no guarantee they will show up.

INT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - BASE HQ - DAY

In the operations room is Cuthbert Pope and Laurance Tozer. Both men are at the telegraphist station.

LAURANCE TOZER

Message from the Kalgoorlie. Arrived at location. No sign of raft or survivors. Resuming search.

CUTHBERT POPE

How does a raft full of men simply up and vanish?

A staffer places two markers with Japanese flags south-west of Betano Timor.

LAURANCE TOZER

Japanese cruisers could of picked them up.

CUTHBERT POPE

Not likely, damn Jap bastards would murder the lot of them first.

LAURANCE TOZER

We should not speculate as to their fate. Give the Kalgoorlie time to widen the search.

CUTHBERT POPE

They have another twelve hours, then I have to call them back.

LAURANCE TOZER

Sir those men could still be alive...

CUTHBERT POPE

Enough, don't you think I know that. It Pains me to do it. But we have to face reality. The war stops for no man.

EXT. ARAFURA SEA - MOTOR BOAT - NIGHT

David Richards fires the last of the flares into the air. It burns out, with no response.

DAVID RICHARDS

That's it last one gone. Someone must have seen that.

ARTHUR

Japs would have. They show up and forget it.

Arthur runs his finger across his throat, gesturing the cutting of it.

JACK DUCKWORTH

I'll jump in and risk it with the sharks before that happens.

ARTHUR

Light a fire on the boat, that will get their attention.

JACK DUCKWORTH

Are you mad? Burn the only thing that floats and keeping us alive.

DAVID RICHARDS

No, wait give it a try, what else have we got to lose?

JACK DUCKWORTH

Our lives.

Men gather up what ever is dry, covered in Oil and set it alight with water proof matches. The fire burns bright.

EXT. HMAS KALGOOLIE - ARAFURA SEA - BRIDGE - NIGHT

Harold Litchfield scans the vast blackness, when the glow of the fire is spotted.

HAROLD LITCHFIELD
Helm, steer toward to that fire.
All stop, don't want to run the
poor bastards over.

The sailor at the helm carries out the orders, an officer places the ship's engine telegraph into the all stop position.

HAROLD LITCHFIELD
Stay on the port side of the fire.
Have rescue parties stand by with
blankets. Lower cargo nets over the
side.

EXT. ARAFURA SEA - MOTOR BOAT - NIGHT

David richards watches as the fire burns brightly. The men on the boat watching for any sign of a ship.

In the darkness a voice is heard.

HAROLD LITCHFIELD (O.S.)
PUT THAT BLOODY FIRE OUT, OR I'LL
LEAVE YOU HERE.

The bow of the Kalgoorlie comes into view from the glow of the fire.

EXT. HMAS KALGOORLIE - PORT BOW - NIGHT

A rescue party from the kalgoorlie's crew help the men from the motor boat on board. Harold Litchfield greets David Richards.

DAVID RICHARDS
Thank God you showed up. I don't
think we would have made it another
day.

The crew distribute blankets to the rescued men.

HAROLD LITCHFIELD
I don't know how you did it. Damn
lucky, everyone of you.

DAVID RICHARDS
Where do you want us?

HAROLD LITCHFIELD

Get the men below to the mess deck.
Get the worst of the injured to the
sick bay.

DAVID RICHARDS

That bloody motor boat saved so
many men. We could bring it on
board.

HAROLD LITCHFIELD

Why on Earth would you want to do
that for?

DAVID RICHARDS

For history's sake, a permanent
reminder of our ordeal.

HAROLD LITCHFIELD

Well it's your boat.

Two men lower ropes with hooks attached, they snag two ends
of the motor boat and begin to haul it up. Only to have it
break up half way and fall back into the sea.

DAVID RICHARDS

So much for that idea.

INT. DARWIN NAVAL BASE - BASE HQ - DAY

Cuthbert Pope and Laurance Tozer are at the large table map.
A telegraphist arrives with a note in hand.

LAURANCE TOZER

They found them, the men are alive.
David made it. Final count is
nineteen men.

CUTHBERT POPE

That is wonderful news. Any news on
the other men?

LAURANCE TOZER

Kalgoorlie is reporting that David
Richards has given the last known
location. The kalgoorlie is
returning to Darwin.

CUTHBERT POPE

No, have them turn around at once.

LAURANCE TOZER

Sir, Harold did state he was going
to do that. But decided against it.

CUTHBERT POPE

On what grounds? He has no right to
do that.

LAURANCE TOZER

The risk is too high, Japs are all over the place. I think he made the right call.

CUTHBERT POPE

Yes, perhaps. But as soon as the survivors are off loaded. Send the Kalgoorlie back out at once.

LAURANCE TOZER

Shall we send up a plane to confirm the location?

CUTHBERT POPE

Yes, get a cat up quickly.

LAURANCE TOZER

How far are they meant to be?

A staffer places a marker on the large table map.

CUTHBERT POPE

That is at least twenty-four hours sailing time. Four to six hours flying time.

EXT. DARWIN PORT - DAY

At the dock side are Cuthbert Pope and Laurance Tozer. Survivors from the Armidale are assisted down the gangway by the ship's company from the Kalgoorlie.

Two men are carried off on stretchers, their bodies covered with blankets.

David Richards assisted by a sailor stops to meet with Cuthbert and Laurance. David salutes them both, and the salute is returned.

CUTHBERT POPE

So good to see you alive, what happened to them?

DAVID RICHARDS

Made it all the way to the rescue. Died on the Kalgoorlie on the way back.

LAURANCE TOZER

Damn shame, only to die with the finishing post so close.

DAVID RICHARDS

It's not a bloody race.

LAURANCE TOZER

Excuse me.

DAVID RICHARDS

Sorry, letting my emotions get to me.

CUTHBERT POPE

Hate to ask at a time like this, but the code books.

DAVID RICHARDS

Gone, went down with the ship. No one will ever get to them.

CUTHBERT POPE

How many have we lost?

DAVID RICHARDS

Hard to say, so far I estimate in the figure of forty to forty-five men.

CUTHBERT POPE

My God, as high as that.

DAVID RICHARDS

It could have been a lot higher if it weren't for ordinary seaman Sheean.

CUTHBERT POPE

Oh, how so?

DAVID RICHARDS

If you don't mind I would like to get to the sick berth and rest.

CUTHBERT POPE

No, of course not, you can tell me about it later.

The sailor and David continue on toward the sick berth.

EXT. HMAS KALGOORLIE - PORT BOW - DAY

Harold Litchfield supervises the rescue party. Men from the whaler are helped on board by the crew of the Kalgoorlie.

The crew distribute blankets to the rescued men.

Lieutenant Palmer is the first man aboard.

HAROLD LITCHFIELD

Lieutenant how many men have you got?

LT. PALMER

I have seventeen, however we left twelve on a raft. Have they been found?

HAROLD LITCHFIELD

No, a catalina crew did spot them.
Even managed to take a photograph.

LT. PALMER

Poor bastards I should have stayed
with them. What about the rest?

HAROLD LITCHFIELD

They made it, I picked them up last
night. Your skipper is safe back in
Darwin.

LT. PALMER

I can't leave the area until we
find the men on the raft.

HAROLD LITCHFIELD

I understand how you would want to
do that. But I'm sorry we can't
stay here.

LT. PALMER

They have to keep looking for them.
They have to.

HAROLD LITCHFIELD

I'm sure they will, it has been one
horrific ordeal for you and the
men.

LT. PALMER

Trust me it is something that I and
the men who went through it will
never forget.

A crew member wraps a blanket around lieutenant Palmer. They
both walk off toward the mess deck.

FADE TO BLACK.

SCROLLING TEXT: "THE ACTIONS OF ORDINARY SEAMAN EDWARD
'TEDDY' SHEEAN WITHOUT A DOUBT SAVED THE LIVES OF MANY MEN
FROM HMAS ARMIDALE.

"A COMBINED TOTAL OF SHIP'S COMPANY, AIF, DUTCH ARMY OFFICERS
AND DUTCH NATIVE TROOPS TOTALLED ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-NINE
SOULS ON BOARD. ONLY FORTY-NINE MEN WOULD SURVIVE.

"THE MEN PHOTOGRAPHED ON THE RAFT, THEIR FATE WAS NEVER
KNOWN, THEY VANISHED WITHOUT A TRACE.

"EDWARD 'TEDDY' SHEEAN WILLINGLY GAVE HIS LIFE TO SAVE THE
LIVES OF HIS FELLOW SHIPMATES. HE WAS ONLY EIGHTEEN YEARS
OLD. TEDDY WAS ONLY MENTIONED IN DISPATCHES FOR HIS SELFLESS
ACT.

"FOR THE PAST THIRTY YEARS A CAMPAIGN TO HAVE EDWARD 'TEDDY' SHEEAN AWARDED A VICTORIA CROSS CONTINUES TO THIS DAY."

FADE OUT.