

FADE IN

BLACK SCREEN:

INT. LARGE TENT - PITCH BLACK - NIGHT

A series of haggard, sunken cheeked, pain wracked faces are 'circled' by the light from flashlights as one by one the eyes in the faces look up showing their horror, despair or fatalism, while their lips form 'thank yous', 'Oh God' or remain closed. The sharp staccato of pistol shots echoes across the screen.

BRITISH OFFICER V.O.
Step on it lads, the Japs will
have overrun this place in no
time.

SEGUE: The sound of boots running becomes the drone of a USAF MUSTANG fighter bomber flying over the mist enshrouded jungle as the morning sun dissipates the mist.

After several low flying sweeps the Mustang climbs to safer heights.

EXT. BURMESE JUNGLE - DAY

The specks of TWO Eagles high above, hitching a ride on thermal currents.

Jungle foliage threatens to engulf the Pagoda and its many outbuildings as the air shimmers under the hot sun. Palm trees, exotic trees and vines, filled with all kinds of invisible but vocal wildlife, mesh as far as the eye can see.

SING SONG VOICE O.C.
The wind is in the palm trees
and/the temple bells they
say/come you back you British
soldier/come you back to
Mandalay.

Monkeys screech, hidden by the dense foliage their voices strident in the otherwise silent landscape.

Suddenly the monkeys' voices are still replaced by the drone of a Mustang air plane.

EXT. JAPANESE GUN PLACEMENT - DAY

A large gun arcs around getting a fix on the Mustang. A SOLDIER opens the breach while another SOLDIER thrusts in a shell and slams the breach shut. A second later the shell blasts out seeking the Mustang.

INT. MUSTANG COCKPIT - DAY

USAAF veteran pilot Colonel JOHN COCHRANE is sweating as he pulls on a damp stub of a cigar. He watches as a shell explodes nearby giving him a fix on the Japanese gun position.

COCHRANE

You guys will never learn. Now I gotcha.

The Mustang banks, diving toward the Japanese gun placement, flying at tree top height. Two rockets blast from under the Mustang's wings. Seconds later the gun placement EXPLODES.

A multitude of screeching birds of all colors flap over the smoking jungle umbrella.

INT. MUSTANG COCKPIT - DAY

On Cochrane's lap is a well used map. He scans it, shakes his head. Taps the fuel gauge where the needle settles on 1/4 full.

COCHRANE

Scotty, you receive me, over?

SCOTTY (FILTERED)

Loud and clear. What's cookin'?

COCHRANE

If those Chindit Limeys are down there, either the Japs have killed 'em, or they've starved to death. Put the coffee on. Back in twenty. Over and out.

The Mustang banks, breaks off search as birds resettle in the trees.

EXT. IN THE JUNGLE - DAY

In dirty, ripped sweat-stained jungle clothing, a dozen Japanese SOLDIERS are searching for something.

Some distance away, hidden in the dense undergrowth a small skinny bunch of CHINDITS have stopped to rest; everyone's out of breath.

To a man they wear stained, filthy uniforms and are all unshaven and haggard looking.

Two Chindits Sergeants, RIGGS and BOWEN, sit propped up against a tree, both have untreated leg wounds.

Brigadier MIKE CALVERT bends down, pulls a piece of busted pencil from a ripped breast pocket, licks the lead, starts writing something on a small piece of paper and hands it to them.

RIGGS
What's this Sir?

CALVERT
Give this to the Jap C.O. Good luck. I'll buy you a drink in London.

Calvert and the patrol disappear into the jungle.

BOWEN
Shit or bust I s'pose.

Some time later Riggs and Bowen are dozing when an angry Japanese soldier kicks their feet and hollers at them.

JAPANESE SOLDIER
On your feet. Up, Up, Up!

Despite struggling to get to their feet the two Chindits are assailed by another Japanese soldier. Now two Japanese soldiers are kicking the weak and injured men.

An annoyed OFFICER steps forward and starts shouting.

Riggs beckons with open hands.

RIGGS
(Strong Cockney accent)
We don't understand mate.

A Japanese SOLDIER boots Riggs and Bowen to the ground. They groan trying to hide their obvious pain.

The other two Japanese soldiers grab them by the hair and haul them to their knees as the Officer draws his sword, takes a stance, starts Bushido sweeping sword movements.

The SWISH the blade makes is chilling. Riggs manages to pull the piece of paper from a pocket.

Believing he's going for a weapon, one of the Soldiers rifle butts his face. Riggs goes down and lies motionless in the dirt. The Soldier grabs the paper and hands it to the Officer whose anger heightens as he reads it. He screws it up, tosses it at Bowen who picks it up and stuffs it in his pocket.

DISSOLVE TO:

ON SCREEN : JULY 17, 1997, LONDON

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

A gleaming, chauffeur driven, late model Bentley stops outside a shop whose sign proclaims it to be : Olde London Shop - SPINK - founded 1666, 69 Southampton Row.

Two sprightly, smartly dressed men, early 70s, ex Army Sergeants Riggs and Bowen get out, walk briskly through the entrance.

The car pulls away.

INT. AUCTION ROOM - DAY

PEOPLE are lining up to get in, Riggs and Bowen join the queue for catalogues. After paying Riggs scans the pages, fingers a number.

SUPER: Catalogue number 111. Medals or Brigadier Michael Calvert. DSO with bar.

Riggs nods his head to Bowen. They enter the room, sitting near the back.

A grey-haired, barrel-chested, thick-set old man in civilian clothes that have seen better days, leans on his walking stick as he's led to the front row. Slowly he sits on a chair, sighs, relieved to sit.

Fidgeting, he unbuttons his jacket. Taps up a folded handkerchief in his jacket's breast pocket. The jacket's cuffs are frayed. Scuffed suede leather patches cover the elbows. The check-shirt collar is worn. Despite his somewhat tatty tweed suit - it's obvious it's of a good cut and quality.

He is 82 year-old ex Brigadier MICHAEL CALVERT.

SIMON JEFFREY auctioneer, raps his Gavel on the Lectern. The audience chatter slowly fades. Simon scans the audience. Fingers through pages of the day's auction list.

SIMON JEFFREY

Good morning and welcome ladies
and gentlemen. We have a full
day for you, the feature of
which, and a passion of mine,
World War Two memorabilia, which
we will get to in about an hour
or so. So, without further delay
I will begin.

Some time later.

SIMON JEFFREY

And now ladies and gentlemen. One of the finest collections of World War Two memorabilia Spink has ever had the pleasure to auction. Catalogue number One-hundred-and-eleven describes a set of medals awarded to one of England's most distinguished soldiers. I refer to Brigadier Michael Calvert.

Simon Jeffrey hits the lectern with his gavel.

SEGUE TO :

STIRLING HOUSE, HANOVER, GERMANY,

TUESDAY 8TH JULY 1952. 1020 HOURS

INT. LAW COURT - DAY

On a long table (the bench) the court members sit in military uniforms. In the centre: the PRESIDENT Brigadier MORGAN and JUDGE ADVOCATE in civilian clothes. O.C. BARNETT. Other members, two to either side of them: Lt. Col. MITFORD, Lt. Col. GARINER-BROWN. Lt. Col MUNN. Lt. Col PALMER.

The PROSECUTOR: Lt. Col. CAMPBELL and the DEFENDING COUNSEL Mr. GRIFFIN-JONES stand, behind their respective tables, in front of the bench.

Everyone sits silent, waiting.

Mike Calvert is brought before the court, he stands next to Griffith Jones.

Brigadier Morgan looks at Calvert who seems to be swaying on his feet.

BRIG. MORGAN

Do you object to be tried by me as President, or by any of the officers, whose names you have heard read over?

CALVERT

I have no objection.

The President, Members and Judge are duly sworn in.

Barnett looks at Calvert.

BARNETT

Major Calvert, it is proposed that at your trial the proceedings shall be taken down by a shorthand writer who has been appointed by the court. He is Mr. R.W. Barnett of the Directorate of the Army Legal Services of the War Office, whom you see on your left.

Calvert doesn't look at the man.

BARNETT

Do you object to him acting as shorthand writer.

CALVERT

I have no objection.

Barnett is sworn in, other formalities end as follows:

BRIG. MORGAN

Do you object to either of these officers acting as interpreters?

CALVERT

I have no objections.

BARNETT

Major Calvert, you are described in the charge-sheet as the accused, Number 58046 Major James Michael Calvert, DSO, Corps of Royal Engineers, attached Commander Royal Engineers, Hanover, an officer of the regular force. Is that a correct description?

CALVERT

That is correct.

BARNETT

You are charged on this charge-sheet with four charges, all of which are laid under section 41 of the Army act.

(MORE)

BARNETT (cont'd)

The first charge alleges when on active service committing a civil offence, that is to say, gross indecency to section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885, in that you at Soltau on a date unknown in or about the month of April 1952, being a male person, committed an act of gross indecency with Lothar Gebien, a male person. Are you guilty or not of the first charge?

CALVERT

Not guilty.

Three other almost identical charges are read, naming three more German teenagers: Egon Schneider, Host Bartels, Heinz Furhop.

Calvert pleads not guilty to all three. We move forward as Barnett concludes his last statement.

BARNETT

... that you have been prejudiced thereby, or on any ground that you have not had sufficient opportunity for preparing your defence?

CALVERT

I do not wish for an adjournment.

Barnett acknowledges Calvert with a slight nod.

BARNETT

Major Calvert you may be seated. Colonel Campbell, do you make an opening address?

Calvert sits down, moistens his lips with his tongue. Griffith-Jones seeing Calvert's discomfort, eases a glass of water towards him. Calvert sips some water, dries his lips with a handkerchief.

Lt. Col. Campbell stands.

CAMPBELL

I do sir. Gentlemen, before I outline to you the persecution's case, may I be permitted to say something of a rather personal nature?

Campbell looks at the bench.

BARNETT

Of course.

CAMPBELL

Thank you sir.

Campbell drinks from a glass of water. Clears his throat, then turns over a page of his documents. Looks at Calvert an arm outstretched toward him.

CAMPBELL

That Major Calvert comes before you with this tremendous record of service to his country should find himself today in this predicament, whether he is guilty or whether he is innocent, must be a source of distress to all who know him and all who know of him. May I say that I, as prosecutor, share that sense of distress in the fullest measure and that the burden of prosecuting this case before you, as it is unfortunately my duty to do, weighs heavily indeed upon my shoulders. Thank you. Now sir, if I may deal with the case itself. At the time these offences are alleged to have been committed Major Calvert was then Lieutenant Colonel and he was Commander Royal Engineers stationed at Soltau.

SOME TIME LATER

CAMPBELL

... inevitably you as a court, must and, in fact, the prosecution invite you to do so - view everything these young men have said before you with the gravest suspicion. You will not act upon it, as I say, without that corroboration required by law and without the greatest degree of certainty in your minds. During the course of that investigation the officer with Major Calvert present in his quarters found in a locked drawer which the Major opened, a German magazine circulated amongst men who are either practising homosexuals or are inclined to homosexual activities....

SOME TIME LATER

CAMPBELL

...shortly after these alleged indecent acts are to have taken place at Major Calvert's flat, a series of burglaries occurred in the annex to the headquarters' mess of this brigade. Major Calvert himself had several things taken, his wallet, his revolver, some ammunition and a sweater. The four prosecution witnesses I have spoken about were arrested by the German police as authors of these crimes. Two are to be charged over these offences, two others are not. That concludes the prosecution's case sir.

Campbell sits down and takes a long drink of water.

BARNETT

Mr. Griffith-Jones.

The court erupts as people talk among themselves.

The JUDGE hits his gavel on its base.

JUDGE

Order in the court! Anyone not complying will be directed to the exit forthwith. ... You may proceed.

He nods in Michael Calvert's direction as he sits erect, as his Lawyer Griffith-Jones stands and delivers his defense speech.

GRIFFITH-JONES

That man sitting there is not perfect. He is fourteen stone five pounds of trouble. And he has other problems. Brigadier Calvert is a fighter, a brawler, and an alcoholic to boot. With that on your side, it is little wonder he's sitting right here. But he's not here as a result of any of these traits. No gentlemen, he's here because some petty high ranking Army officers are jealous of this soldier. They hadn't either the guts or courage that this man has in abundance. They don't like the way he fights; and, thank God they don't.

(MORE)

GRIFFITH-JONES (cont'd)

If they did we'd probably be talking German or Japanese, that's if any of us were still alive, because Britain would have lost the war. But we didn't lose, because of fighters like Brigadier James Michael Calvert, DSO with bar. He curses, speaks his mind, and this offends some senior officers. Clever, certainly, pugnacious even, this man never fitted in. His type of fighting was novel and suspect by many Army officers in the forties. Such men had been taught along traditional lines, face-to-face battle, relying on tight discipline and orderliness.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. AUCTION ROOM - DAY

The audience is still as the auctioneer continues.

SIMON JEFFREY

Brigadier Calvert is still regarded as the soldier who founded a British tradition that's been the bedrock of armed forces worldwide. I refer to the SAS. Brigadier Calvert is with us today.

Riggs and Bowen stand, begin applauding vigorously as others join in. The full room is standing, clapping. Simon is surprised at the response.

He descends from the stage, eagerly walks to Calvert, helps him to his feet, despite difficulties in standing upright, Calvert does so with Simon's aid.

Calvert turns to face the crowd, buttons his jacket, waves his stick, nods in appreciation, smiles broadly.

One MAN, about Calvert's age, remains seated. He is MAJOR-GENERAL KIRBY Retired.

CALVERT

Thank you.

Simon returns to the stage as Calvert sits back down.

SIMON JEFFREY

That was totally unexpected. Brigadier Calvert asks me to thank you ladies and gentlemen.

(MORE)

SIMON JEFFREY (cont'd)
 Brigadier Calvert's medals are
 impressive by any standards.
 Referring to the list you'll see
 Brigadier Calvert was awarded
 thirteen medals, plus the DSO
 with Bar. A total of fourteen.
 And they include: two DSOs and
 bar, The American Silver Star,
 the French Legion d'Honneur, and
 the Belgian Order of Leopold. My
 father fought alongside this fine
 soldier in World War Two. Will
 someone start the bidding at Ten
 thousand pounds?

He smiles and scans the audience. The seated gentleman
 raises his hand.

SIMON JEFFREY
 Do I hear Ten thousand five
 hundred?

Simon points gavel to interested party.

SIMON JEFFREY
 Thank you sir.

After a few more bids Simon is familiar with those
 interested. He looks at each, scans audience, and smiling
 points gavel at the same Man.

SIMON JEFFREY
 Do I hear Eleven thousand pounds?

Quickly the price increases, as eager BIDDERS raise their
 numbered cards.

SIMON JEFFREY
 Eighteen thousand pounds ladies
 and gentlemen. Once, Twice,
 Thrice. Sold for eighteen
 thousand pounds. You're number
 sir?

Simon stubs gavel closing proceedings.

SIMON JEFFREY
 That, ladies and gentlemen
 concludes our sale for today.
 Our next one is in three weeks'
 time. I look forward to seeing
 you all again. Thank you, and a
 safe journey home.

Bowen leans toward Riggs.

RIGGS

That'll please the old boy. Now they can 'ang in his Regiment's 'eadquarters.

BOWEN

Let's go and tell 'im they're staying in England. It'll put his mind at rest.

Bowen and Riggs shuffle through the crowd toward Calvert. Unexpectedly the elderly bumptious-looking man who remained seated, steps in front of them.

He is retired Major-General KIRBY. An obstinate Royal Engineers' staff officer. On his jacket are Medal ribbons.

KIRBY

Name's Kirby, Major-General, retired. I wanted those medals so they can hang in the Regiment's H.Q.

RIGGS

And what Regiment might that be?

KIRBY

Royal Engineers.

RIGGS

We got a betta outfit than that.

KIRBY

And who might that be?

BOWEN

The Chindits. S'cuse us, we gotta meet a real soldier, our C.O. Maybe you've 'eard of 'im Brigadier Michael Calvert, DSO and Bar. Was you who denied him the Victoria Cross three times, wasn't it? One of the desk-top Curry Colonels, safe on your arse, in India. Whilst Brigadier Calvert was at the sharp end. With us. Leading from the front as always.

KIRBY

You've obviously not read the true account of the war against the Japanese?

RIGGS

And who might be the author of it? Not you by any chance?

Riggs moves right into Kirby's face.

RIGGS

You're the bastard who crucified
the Chindits Commanding Officer
Major-General Orde Wingate in
your book, ain't ya?

Bowen steps up alongside Riggs.

BOWEN

I read the lot mate. It's a
hatchet job by a little man like
you who couldn't compete with him
in the military argument or in
battle. It's misfired. Get 'old
of Brigadier Peter Mead's
account, Orde Wingate and the
'istorians'. Mead was there at
the sharp Not like you,
hundreds' of miles away in India,
behind a bloody desk!

Bowen, Riggs start to move. Bowen turns, stares at Kirby.

BOWEN

I don't normally swear. But in
your case it's deserved.

Riggs then stops, returns to Kirby. Putting his nose
against Kirby's heavily veined bulbous red nose.

RIGGS

You're the bastard in Delhi who
knocked back the Brigadier's V.C.
recommendation.

FLASHBACK

ON SCREEN: Officer's mess, General Headquarters, Delhi,
1944

INTERIOR: THE BAR - OFFICERS' MESS - NIGHT

Large ceiling fans swirl as Indians flit around tables
serving drinks, clearing glasses. Stuffy 50 year old Staff
Director, Major-General Kirby, several senior staff
OFFICERS and Lt. SHAW, a junior officer relax.

KIRBY

These scruffy eccentric beachhead
commando cowboys are the biscuit.
Wingate eats raw onions. What's
the British Army coming to?

SHAW

They're just unconventional sir.

Kirby ignores Shaw's remark.

KIRBY

This is no way to run a campaign. We have to show the Nips we're in charge by conventional tactical warfare. Calvert's laid back on discipline and thinks nothing of tearing off with his men, on mad skirmishes at the front, would you believe. Apparently you can smell his unit miles away. (Laughing) No doubt when the enemy arrive in force they'll pick up the strong odors, and that'll be the end of these two-ragged arse Cavaliers. I've no doubt the Japanese commanders will not lose any sleep.

SHAW

Their Longcloth campaign was a complete success. Not forgetting the Chindits walked over fifteen hundred miles during that op.

Kirby tries pressuring this junior intelligence officer.

KIRBY

Wingate and Calvert's defiance of all military conventions and behavior is disgraceful. Neither makes any effort to win friends; heaven knows men like these two need them up here.

Kirby smirks as he glances for approving nods and signals the Indian waiter for refills for everyone.

SHAW

I didn't realize war was about making friends... Sir.

KIRBY

Given sufficient rope and they'll dangle. Everything I hear is unbecoming of a British Army officer. After talking to Wingate, I'm convinced he's not a sufficiently balanced commander. 90 percent of his ideas are dangerous and absurd.

The waiter returns with a tray full of glasses and hands them around.

OFFICERS

Hear! Hear!

END FLASHBACK

INT. COURT ROOM

Everyone present is listening intently to the defending counsel.

GRIFFITH-JONES

To win wars the victor needs soldiers like Calvert. I know whose side I'd want to be on, brave men leading from the front. Calvert's vision was the same as his commanding officer the late Major General Orde Charles Wingate. Rapid reaction forces and guerrilla action deep behind enemy lines. Calvert saw the Japanese soldier at work in China many years earlier, when he hid under sacks of potatoes in a bullock cart outside Shanghai. He considers them the best fighting men he's ever seen. Face-to-face tactics spelt disaster and a great loss of life. A new approach was essential to preserve that loss at any cost, and win the fight. Bear in mind the atrocious conditions they fought under, the jungle, the monsoons, malaria, dysentery.

CUT TO: FLASHBACK

INT. OFFICERS' MESS - DAY

Kirby is smirking, proud of himself, some officers shift nervously, only Shaw dare show his disapproval.

KIRBY

In the end it'll be left to us to kick the Japs out of Burma. And those two will be long forgotten a few years from now. Mark my words.

Kirby glances around for approval and stares hard at Shaw who defies him.

SHAW

General Ismay said, it's the biggest air operation ever to take place. If Wingate and Calvert pull it off, it will go down in history as the finest piece of military strategic planning ever conceived. And whatever acclaim and exaltations Wingate is credited with will be sufficient.

KIRBY

Sounds like you would like to join them Lieutenant.

Kirby guffaws as others laugh along with him.

SHAW

I'd consider it an honor. The recommendation for Calvert's DSO is on your desk, along with my transfer request. Calvert and his men are deep in mud while you sit on your arses being waited on hand and foot.

He turns on his heels and marches out of the bar.

CUT TO:

INT. AUCTION ROOM - DAY

Riggs and Bowen surprise Calvert who recognizes them instantly and shakes their hands vigorously.

CALVERT

Good God man. I simply don't believe it. Sergeants Riggs and Bowen. What on earth are you doing here?

RIGSS

'old on a minute sir, we may not 'ave been officers, but we live in 'ampstead now. Not bad for a cuppla of ragged-arse Chindits.

BOWEN

What's all this about selling your medals?

CALVERT

Really don't need them anymore you know. Anyway, how is it you knew about them being auctioned?

Riggs and Bowen know Calvert is lying.

BOWEN

We didn't, we come 'ere most auctions. Struck lucky you might say.

RIGGS

In that case it's a good job we bought 'em!

Calvert is obviously surprised and chuckles.

CALVERT

What on earth for?

BOWEN

Well we thought it would be a nice touch if they 'ang in the Regiment's H.Q. For old times' sake you might say. Not that we're sentimental you understand. Mark my words, should've been at least one V.C. amongst 'em. If anyone deserved Britain's 'ighest award it was you sir. I speak for every soldier who fought in Burma. T'was the bastard Delhi Curry Colonels who knocked you back three bloody times.

Bowen takes his wallet from suit inside pocket and hands a chewed up piece of brown paper to Calvert, who unfolds it and laughs.

BOWEN

Bushido. That Jap officer knew exactly what you meant sir.

RIGGS

That piece of paper saved our lives. There's no doubt about it sir. Remember writing it?

Calvert slips on a cheap pair of wire framed spectacles.

CALVERT

(Chuckling

You didn't believe me when I handed it to you. "These men have fought for their King and country just as you have. They have fought gallantly and been wounded.

(MORE)

CALVERT (cont'd)
I leave them confidently in your charge, knowing that with the well known traditions of Bushido you will look after them as if your own." How did you get this?

FLASHBACK:

EXT. BURMESE JUNGLE 1944 - DAY

Riggs and Bowen on their knees wait for the swish of the Officer's sword on their necks.

The officer is reading the piece of paper Bowen had. He screams, screws it up and tosses it back to Bowen.

END FLASHBACK

BOWEN
Good job you knew Japanese sir!
Is that what it really said?

CALVERT
Roughly translated, yes.

RIGGS
'ow rough is rough sir? It must 'ave been pretty rough. T'was only when he got over 'is initial rage, with what you wrote that 'e replaced 'is sword. Then he screwed up your note and tossed it away, bloody annoyed he was. We though you'd really flipped. We were treated pretty well. Apart from one bastard, who kicked us when the officer wasn't looking, and their rice wasn't much cop.

CALVERT
Can you take a surprise?

BOWEN
Depends.

CALVERT
I dared not tell you at the time. But my knowledge of Japanese was rusty. I knew King, Country, Gallantry and Wounded, I knew more swear words than anything. And with the word Bushido I felt sure an officer would get the gist.

RIGGS

Trouble was all we got was rice
and more bloody rice. So what
have you been doing with
yourself, sir?

CALVERT

Been pretty busy one way and
another you know. Writing
another book. Several papers on
guerrilla warfare, lectures.
Life's pretty full.

RIGGS

We might have been the 'Forgotten
Army' but those soldiers of the
Japanese Army in Burma were
utterly forsaken, in every
respect.

BOWEN

So those days are on the front
burner all the time?

CALVERT

Constantly.

Calvert's pride prevents him being truthful. Riggs and
Bowen partially believe him.

BOWEN

Got far to go sir? We can drop
you off.

CALVERT

No thank you. I'm not that far
away. A friend is going to
collect me.

RIGGS

'ere's our card sir. If there's
ever anything we can do for you.
Phone. We mean it.

Super : A Business Card: RIGGS & BOWEN - Scrap Metal
Merchants - London 0191 667892

CALVERT

Scrap metal and cars.

BOWEN

You'll never guess who buys most
of our scrap metal?

CALVERT

Who?

BOWEN

The Japs!

They all laugh.

CALVERT

((Very serious)

Just don't you boys ever get involved with military politics, especially not those of the British Army because they are overrun with pricks. In fact I'm going to be writing a 'tell all' paper on how the Army will be in future years. The Title is going to be "Kicking against the pricks"!

All three start walking towards the doors across the deserted room, laughing, as four MEN fold and drag chairs to the sides.

SEGUE TO:

ON SCREEN: THE WAR OFFICE - LONDON - 1943

INT. WINSTON CHURCHILL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Several ashtrays are spilling over, empty cups, saucers are scattered about a large table. SIX tired CHIEFS of Staff talk quietly.

A door opens, JANE SAMUELS, a middle aged woman dressed in an Army uniform, hurriedly dashes in with a tray and starts clearing the table.

JANE

Whilst he's on the phone I'll clear up, you men are messy blighters. It's a wonder you can see across the table with all this smoke.

Showing her disgust, Jane frantically fans away the fumes. Leaves as quickly as she came. Before she closes the door the overweight figure of weary WINSTON CHURCHILL walks into the room and over to his chair. As he sits the officers begin to rise. Churchill manages a slight smile.

CHURCHILL

Stay put. The President likes to talk. Good evening again.

He glances at the wall clock.

Clock hands are at 12:10

CHURCHILL

Or rather, good morning. Where were we? Ah yes, we have to get a grip of the Burmese situation. After much deliberation there is only one course of action open to us. Small groups of highly trained units, each man a specialist. They get in, hit hard, get out fast. Selected targets only are hit. We need two things. The best men available, and a priority target list. You're aware of my interest in such units. I know I have your full support. This is a top priority. The training begins immediately. I have such a soldier in mind. Thank you.

As Churchill leaves everyone rises.

INT. SECRETARY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Churchill smiles at Jane as she tidies her hair, sitting at the typewriter, waiting.

CHURCHILL

To: General Sir Hastings Ismay. I consider Brigadier Wingate should command the Army in Burma. He is a man of genius and audacity, and has rightly been discerned by all eyes as a figure quite above the ordinary level. The expression of "Clive of India" has already gained currency. There is no doubt in the inefficiency and lassitude, which has characterized our operations on the Indian front, this man, his force and his achievements stand out, and no mere question of seniority, must obstruct the advance of real personalities to their proper situations in war. He's to return home for discussions at an early date. There is another soldier, Major Mike Calvert, I've heard a great deal about, not all of it good. What do you think of him?

CUT TO:

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

The defense lawyer Griffith-Jones still has the audience captive.

 GRIFFITH-JONES

Before joining the Army he left Cambridge with an Engineering degree, won blues for swimming, and became the army middleweight boxing champ. Later he floored the United States heavyweight Pacific Champ in three rounds. At thirty three he was the Army's youngest Brigadier. Montgomery was certainly not offended when Calvert and another officer challenged the security at Monty's camp. When they breached it, Montgomery said of him, and I quote: "He's the only officer who gave me a straight answer," unquote.

EXT. A STATELY ENGLISH HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is in total blackout.

A large balustrade balcony, with flower pots everywhere, looks out over vast well manicured lawns. Armed SOLDIERS, with German Shepherd dogs, patrol the grounds.

INT. HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

Montgomery is entertaining 20 OFFICERS. They're drinking and cracking jokes.

 MONTGOMERY

Of course they won't. Flight Sergeant Wells's dogs will have them first.

 JUNIOR OFFICER

You've got a bet on it, sir?

 MONTGOMERY

Good as money in the bank. Still the fellow showed spunk.

Not to be seen not appreciating Monty's lousy humor they all start laughing. The JUNIOR OFFICER tugs out his wallet. Plonks his money on the table.

 JUNIOR OFFICER

Five pounds sir?

Other officers back him up, slapping more notes on the table. Montgomery glares at them, reluctantly agrees.

MONTGOMERY

I see. You think this officer is
that good do you?

After slapping down his cash, Montgomery calls over a SERGEANT standing at the door. The sergeant bends down. Monty whispers in his ear.

SERGEANT

Right sir, I'll pass that on.

The sergeant leaves.

EXT. STATELY HOUSE - REAR GROUNDS - NIGHT

Two figures dressed in black clothing, wearing balaclavas, emerge from a hedge below the balcony. After tugging themselves through the balustrade, one crawls, left, the other right. Both making for the house and the large flower pots.

They hurriedly start burying explosives in each pot.

Some time later.

Everyone is asleep when the flower pots start exploding. Geraniums, pottery chunks, dirt, fly everywhere.

German Shepherd dogs start barking, SOLDIERS appear. In the darkness someone's shouting orders above the din.

INT. MONTGOMERY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Montgomery wakes, confused, he fumbles for his specs on his bedside table, tips over a glass of water as the Sergeant rushes in.

SERGEANT

Get under the bed, sir.

Still confused Monty actually gets down on his knees, quickly realizing that's useless, he gets up.

MONTGOMERY

Let's get downstairs Sergeant and
find out who the hell's
disturbing my bloody sleep.

SERGEANT

Could be Germans Sir.

MONTGOMERY

So we'll kick some arses then.

INT. HOUSE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Montgomery strides across the hall toward the door, where another SOLDIER stands guard rifle at the ready. Montgomery is defiant, hands on hips, very angry.

MONTGOMERY

Well?

SERGEANT

Well what sir?

MONTGOMERY

Out of the way man.

Montgomery shoves the soldier aside, pulls back two large bolts, swings open the creaking door.

MONTGOMERY

Calvert! Bloody Hell!

Calvert and SMYTHE, without balaclavas, are leaning against the door frame, hands clasped behind their backs. From out in the darkness SOMEONE shouts.

SOMEONE

Close the fuckin' door. Don't you know there's a blackout.

CALVERT

Attention.

Calvert and Smythe come to attention, snap leisurely salutes, Calvert is smiling broadly as he hands Montgomery a geranium sprig.

CALVERT

Needs re-potting. We won the bet. We won't trouble you for the cash tonight sir. Goodnight General and, sleep tight! I sure do love a good explosion! Oh yes....your security needs tightening.

Montgomery realizes he's been had.

MONTGOMERY

What?

He slams the door hard.

MONTAGE OF SHOTS - CALVERT BLOWS THEM UP AT NANKAN

- Calvert's #3 COLUMN hurries through the jungle towards two railway bridges.
- The two railway bridges are used to supply the Japanese 3rd Army in their fight against American General Stilwell's Chinese forces in the north.
- Calvert and his men, under cover of darkness, their faces and any exposed flesh covered in mud, attach explosives to the bridges' struts.
- Unseen by the Brits groups of Burmese and BTA SOLDIERS, look on.
- Retreating into the surrounding jungle they wait for Calvert's signal.
- Calvert raises his arm and demolition EXPERTS plunge the contacts down.
- Calvert and the #3 Column watch as the two bridges explode and panicked Japanese COMMANDERS order their TROOPS to fire.
- Japanese bullets fly through the air, every which way as Calvert's hidden and camouflaged MEN fire back, killing many Japanese trying to escape the falling debris and havoc of the demolished bridges.
- Burmese VILLAGERS and members of the BTA cheer as the Brits leave the area at a run.
- Calvert leads his intact #3 Column 100 miles east and across the Irrawaddy.
- Coming across enemy PLATOONS they make short shrift of them, inflicting damages and casualties before disappearing into the enfolding jungle.

END MONTAGE OF SHOTS

ON SCREEN MAYMYO - BURMA

INT. CALVERT'S TENT OFFICE - DAY

42 year-old Brigadier CHARLES ORDE-WINGATE arrives at Calvert's jungle outpost.

A duty CORPORAL stands, salutes.

CORPORAL

Sir.

WINGATE

At ease corporal. Major Calvert about?

EXT. JUNGLE WARFARE SCHOOL - DAY

Calvert is striding back to his tent from the unit's Radio tent. He is visibly angry as he stamps into the tent's open entry area.

CORPORAL

Officer to see you sir.

CALVERT

Who is it?

CORPORAL

He didn't say sir.

Calvert struts into his office, removes his grubby sweat-stained cap, tosses it into a corner and sees, much to his annoyance, a bearded Brigadier Wingate sitting at his desk.

CALVERT

(Curtly

Who are you?

WINGATE

Wingate. Who are you?

CALVERT

I have never heard of you, and that's my chair.

WINGATE

I've heard about you. And the description fits!

To Calvert's surprise Wingate vacates the chair with an apology. Showing no resentment of the treatment by a disrespectful Calvert.

WINGATE

Would you describe your Henzada raid a success?

Calvert stares quizzically at Wingate.

CALVERT

Yes. I'm surprised you know about it. I doubt it was the Curry Colonels who told you, they fart on the right side of their trouser seam. My ploy was to let the Burmese know the Australian army had landed, and were an advance party.

(MORE)

CALVERT (cont'd)

It was fortunate the BTA -that's
Burmese Traitor Army - saw and
heard us.

WINGATE

(Smiling)

I know what BTA means Major.

CALVERT

But our presence had already been
signaled to the Japs. And now
they'll have to divert a large
number of troops from their main
thrust. It also kicked them in
the teeth. To date we've been
the ones on the run. We killed
over 120, and it took place in
the middle of a large town in
front of a big Burmese audience
and BTA. It'll lift the Burmese
spirits and place grave doubts in
the minds of the BTA. Recruits
will not be so eager to join the
so-called invincible Jap army.
And especially after the somewhat
brutal way they treat the
civilian populations.

WINGATE

The Burmese allies have suffered
18 months of unrelieved defeats.
We're going to crank it into top
gear and stay there until the
Japs surrender. Fostered by the
Jap propaganda machine, the
legend's grown assiduously that
they're born invincible jungle
fighters. We're putting that
myth to rest forever. Not only
in Burma, but throughout the
world. It'll be our soldiers who
will go in and show that man-to-
man, we are superior to the Jap
at any game. I'm looking for a
second-in-command Major. It's
yours, along with promotion to
Colonel. And if you think what
you've been through was easy, I
assure you what's coming up, will
make it seem like a holiday.

CALVERT

Honored and delighted to accept
sir. If you'll keep those Curry
Colones in Delhi out of my way.

WINGATE

We're not about to win popularity contests. Defeating the enemy takes precedence over personal relationships and is what matters. We ignore petty military politics and bureaucracy. Many are waiting for us maverick warriors, as we're referred to, to trip and fall on our back-sides. Time is short.

CALVERT

It's good to have a senior officer who shares the same views.

WINGATE

LRP's. Long Range Patrols, deep behind enemy lines, supplies coming in by air drops, with landing strips to take out the wounded, can and will cause havoc to any enemy, disrupting vital communications. General Wavell ordered me to take charge of all guerrilla activities. There is plenty to do, and little time to do it. So that's it, in a nutshell, Calvert. I report back to Wavell for his approval, then it's all systems go. We will beat the Japs at their own game. We get in his guts and give him a dose of medicine he'll never forget.

CALVERT

Sounds more like a stick of dynamite to me. Explosives are right up my street.

WINGATE

So Monty told me.

CALVERT

If you don't mind my asking, sir, what is your background?

WINGATE

Oh this and that. I created and commanded a group of Ethiopian 'patriots', known as the Gideon Force, which disrupted Italian supply lines and we also provided intelligence to the British Forces.

CALVERT

So how did you end up in this hell hole?

WINGATE

Usual, political reasons, the Gideon Force was disbanded and Archibald Wavell, Supreme Commander of the Far Eastern Theatre in India, requested me to come to Burma to raise irregular forces to operate behind Japanese lines, in a similar fashion to what we had been doing in Ethiopia.

CALVERT

Irregular is right, sir!

WINGATE

So I've been touring the country and developing my theory of long range penetration. To date, I've only been able to do it on paper, but I think it can and will work. So how did you get here?

CALVERT

I was born in India, at Rohtak near Delhi, where my father was acting Governor of the Punjab. Followed my brothers to the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich, and was commissioned into the Royal Engineers in 1933. When Japan entered the war in December of 1941, I was the chief instructor at this jungle warfare school at Maymyo here in Burma.

WINGATE

Is this where you wrote your paper "Operations of Small Forces Supplied and Supported by Air"?

CALVERT

Good God didn't realize anyone else had read it!

WINGATE

Well I did, and that paper has been read the Army's top brass, and I know we're on the same wavelength. So welcome on board Colonel!

CALVERT

Colonel. Thank you sir.

The two men shake hands and then clasp one another in a hug.

WINGATE

I hear you pack a mean punch too? Is that story true that you floored the United States heavyweight Pacific Champion in three rounds?

CALVERT

Yes, sir.

WINGATE

When did you ever have the time to take up boxing.

CALVERT

Well for starters, I had older brothers (they laugh) and then I went to Cambridge where I studied Mechanical Sciences. So it seemed natural to swim and box for the Army, sir. Became Army middleweight champ.

WINGATE

Remind me never to annoy you!

They shake hands and salute one another laughing.

INT. A BAMBOO HUT - NIGHT

A group of rigid JAPANESE SOLDIERS stand at attention. Their COMMANDING OFFICER is shouting, pacing in front of them.

CLOSE side of a Soldier's neck. From under his ragged dirty shirt collar a fat, ugly, beetle crawls biting his neck fiercely. The man winces, dying to swipe it off but dare not.

The Commanding Officer continues his bombastic tirade.

COMMANDING OFFICER

Who are these men? Wingate and Calvert? They must be stopped.

(MORE)

COMMANDING OFFICER (cont'd)

The Imperial Japanese Army is disgraced every day they remain alive. And each one of those days our disgrace worsens, whilst the glory of our inferior enemy grows out of proportion to their worth. We are a disgrace to our Emperor and the Japanese nation.

The Commanding Officer struts back to his office, slams the bamboo door shut. He opens a cupboard and takes out a white uniform, undresses, puts on a well used and creased Karate uniform. He ties a worn Black belt around his waist and then starts a practice session

CUT BACK

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

Griffith-Jones is still speaking in defense of his client Calvert.

GRIFFITH-JONES

Calvert demonstrated astonishing qualities of bravery and leadership behind the Japanese lines, inspiring the men around him and presenting the best fighting soldiers he'd ever seen with their first real setback as they swept through Burma. Lieut. General Mutaguchi, the Japanese commanding Officer in Burma said: "The Chindit operation completely disrupted my campaign plans, and changed my whole assessment of Burma. The Chindit incursions show that crack troops can operate independently in the jungle.

ON SCREEN LONDON AUGUST 4, 1943

INT. THE WAR OFFICE - LONDON - NIGHT

Wingate and Churchill are dining alone.

CHURCHILL

Congratulations Wingate, yours and Calvert's operation of such a considerable force for so long and at such depth behind the enemy's main forces were a spectacular success. The hearts of men were stirred in India, Britain and the United States.

(MORE)

CHURCHILL (cont'd)

For the Chindits the RAF and USAF crews who kept them supplied. Those soldiers who are still unconvinced will find themselves no longer in control. Confidentiality is paramount as is the importance of frankness between ourselves. Without it meetings are worthless, more important are the lives of your Chindits. Calvert's a hero. I take it you saw the papers?

WINGATE

A great officer, he's already a full Colonel, and been awarded the DSO. Wish I had more like him. Of course we would never have come anywhere near success had it not been for the U.S. Air Force boys.

CHURCHILL

Going into swampy jungles to fight the Japanese is like going into the water to fight a shark.

WINGATE

Indeed it is sir. Someone said it's like trying to build a wall out of quicksand. The Japanese have been referred to as being similar to lizards, slithering here and there and everywhere, in the jungle. We Brits keep fighting them and falling back only to find them entrenched behind us. Bloody cess pool sir.

CHURCHILL

Well if anyone can do it, it'll be the Chindits.

ON SCREEN: FEBRUARY 8th 1943

EXT. JUNGLE EDGE - BURMA - DAWN

Calvert with his MEN begins the long trek into Burma.

SOLDIER #1

Remind me, what is this campaign called again?

SOLDIER #2

Operation Longcloth!

SOLDIER #1

Let's hope it's short and brief.
 If windy pants Wavell hadn't
 cancelled the larger offensive it
 might all be over by now!

MONTAGE OF SHOTS - OPERATION LONGCLOTH

- 3000 Chindits, Wingate with them, begin their march into Burma.
- The Chindits, divided into seven columns, cross the Chindwin River and faced off with Japanese troops.
- Two columns march to the south and receive their air supply drops in broad daylight creating the impression that they are the main thrust of the attack.
- A man impersonating a British GENERAL is among them.
- RAF mount air attacks on Japanese targets to help with the deception.
- One column successfully carries out demolitions along the railway.
- The other column is ambushed and only half get away.

END MONTAGE OF SHOTS

EXT. MAIN JUNGLE ROAD - NEAR MANDALAY - DAY

An endless column of ragged refugees pouring north along a potted, rutted, dusty jungle road, meet Calvert's outfit heading south to fight a lone Jap group who have become detached from their main force.

Calvert's trucks are overheating and in a sorry state.

BLAIN

Bloody strewth! Look at 'em!
 Looks like the whole population
 of Burma trekking north. Poor
 devils, they're the meat in this
 bloody sandwich.

CAMERA PANS sad faces of the column.

Supported by a crutch hewn from a bran an elderly NATIVE stops and jabbars away in Burmese at some soldiers, smiling constantly. It's a thank you. Blain hands him a packet of Woodbine cigarettes.

BLAIN

There you are Granddad. Keep
 smiling, you can go back home
 before long.

Calvert calls the radio operator, as Transport officer Captain MCQUEEN joins Calvert.

CALVERT

Report to H.Q. Japs entering south, City deserted, no opposition so far.

MCQUEEN

I'll have to sacrifice one truck, cannibalize it to keep the other three going; don't ask for how long please, I'll do my best with what we've got. I haven't mentioned it before, but we are out of oil, and the last of our Petrol. We're running on oily rags. If anything else breaks, snaps or grinds to a halt sir, we'll be joining the refugees. Two petrol pumps are useless; one truck has a makeshift petrol tank rope on top of the cab feeding fuel straight into the carburetor. Unfortunately we're wasting more petrol than is reaching the carbs.

BLAIN

Blimey sir. Sir Henry Royce would be proud of you. I bet he never thought of that one.

CALVERT

Brilliant Captain, let's hope it doesn't cop a sniper's bullet.

Ahead are a group of dilapidated corrugated iron clad and roofed buildings. McQueen calls out.

MCQUEEN

Look, up ahead, could be an abandoned RAF store. It may be our lucky day!

McQueen runs ahead, picks up a piece of timber, leans heavily and yanks the lop-sided squeaking iron door open.

Calvert and Blain are right behind him.

CALVERT

Anything any good?

MCQUEEN

(Unscrews small lid and sniffs)

(MORE)

MCQUEEN (cont'd)

It's fuel, high octane aircraft juice, better than nothing but it'll probably blow the engines quicker. But beggars can't be choosers, we simple have no choice but to use it. And they look like 20 gallon oil drums, so we're back in business. At least for the immediate future.

BLAIN

That's all that's on our minds sir, for now. The immediate future.

CALVERT

Sergeant Major let's get as much aboard as possible.

BLAIN

Right-o sir.

Thousands of refugees, stream past Calvert's resting men who watch the refugees in amazement. Shortly after only three trucks pull away.

An elderly determined ENGLISH LADY - clutching two small suitcases lunges out in front of the first truck. Calvert's thrown out of his seat as the DRIVER stops abruptly.

LADY

Stop! Who is in charge here?

Calvert leans out of the window.

CALVERT

You're English! Can I help you madam? I'm Calvert.

LADY

Good to see you. I thought the other Colonel had forgotten all about us.

CALVERT

What Colonel?

LADY

I don't know his name he never gave it! He said he would send transport. Obviously you are it. So let's get these children and the elderly out promptly.

She quickly gets her group organized.

CALVERT

Madam, clearly there has been a mistake. We are not that transport. We're after the Japs who by now are not that far behind you. Anything can have happened to that Colonel. He may have tangled with those Japanese and be dead now! He may have reached the next town, but there are no trucks available. I have no doubt when he made the promise he did everything in his power to do so. I am also sure there are no trucks on their way to collect these people.

LADY

Young man. I am no fool, it's now obvious our chances of being collected fade with each passing day. I can no longer cling to the belief he will do so for whatever reason. Never the less, the Colonel said transport would come. It has come! You are here. Now get your soldiers off the vehicles, and help us get aboard and out of here, pronto. Otherwise I'll report you to your commanding officer, for failing to carry out a direct order from the Colonel. You can sort out which Colonel yourselves. Do I make myself understood? You have already wasted about ten extremely valuable minutes. I must say young man these army vehicles are a ramshackle, run-down, sorry looking lot. Is this the best they can spare!

CALVERT

Madam, we do not have any London Transport Buses available right now, never the less a driver will take you to the next town, where I am sure you will find that Colonel and be properly cared for. Is there anything else you need? Medical supplies, some water? Food maybe?

LADY

I am weighing up the 'pros and cons' young man.

CALVERT
 (Interrupting)
 Madam, the Japs are barely a mile
 down that road. Please hurry.

LADY
 There is a right and wrong way to
 do things. Just where will you
 take us?

CALVERT
 If necessary, right into India.
 But I am confident we can hand
 you over to the safety of a
 British unit somewhere along the
 way. Needless to say I'll send
 some of my men for protection.
 (He smiles) Rest assured.

LADY
 That's more like it young man, I
 accept your offer. You will need
 all the supplies yourselves,
 thank you all the same. But some
 water would be appreciated.

As a single truck moves off, the lady is hanging on like
 mad to the overhead rail that supports what's left of the
 flapping-shredded tarpaulin cover, she calls from the back
 of the last truck.

LADY
 Young man. I will report your
 kind deeds to the Colonel. You
 should get promotion for this.
 Now what's your name again?

She is calling out loudly and cupping her ear for a reply,
 but Calvert and McQueen are talking, swatting mozzies,
 wiping the perspiration from their heads and faces.

CALVERT
 Amazing woman! She's taking all
 this bloody mayhem in her stride,
 as if she's walking down an
 English village street with her
 school children and teachers.

One of the trucks blows up as a result of the aircraft fuel
 causing Calvert and McQueen to turn. All they see is black
 smoke and a huge ball of flame hiding the woman and her
 truck from their view.

MCQUEEN
 More powerful than I imagined.

CALVERT

It'll make the Japs wonder if we've a secret weapon aimed at them. Anyone injured Sergeant Major?

BLAIN

No chance, those blokes left that truck faster than Lentaigne ever could!

EXT. OVER BURMESE JUNGLE - DAY

Spewing from Dakotas towing gliders are thousands of parachutes bursting open with equipment, guns and soldiers.

Mustangs fighter bombers with drop tanks, armed with rockets and bombs, machine guns blasting away tear into Japanese positions.

RETURN TO SCENE

WINGATE

Like I said we could never have done what we did, or had the success we enjoyed had it not been for the Yanks. They supplied us with food and ammunition and acted as our artillery by bombing the Jap guns that were shelling us. They did wonders landing on impossible strips and taking out our wounded. The clinging soggy runways were enough to give any pilot nightmares. These men, without one complaint, did it hundreds of times.

CHURCHILL

I have no doubt the audacity and genius of operation Longcloth is one of the most remarkable enterprises of the war. Which has set the Japanese thinking hard about their future in Burma and their invasion of India. I take it Calvert's looking after things?

WINGATE

Despite a severe dose of Malaria and Matron MacGeary's threat never to treat him again. The Chindits are in excellent hands. He even forgot his 31st birthday. But his men didn't.

CHURCHILL

He'll go far, we're desperately short of his calibre of men. Bit of a renegade I hear. Promote him.

WINGATE

Thank God he is.

CHURCHILL

Wavell's a good man, anything you need, go through him. Forget Delhi. It Wavell's away you have my permission to contact me direct.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHINDWIN RIVER TRIBUTARY - DAY

Calvert with a dozen men gaze at the cool swirling muddy water from the flooded riverbank.

HENDERSON

That water looks inviting sir. It's too good to miss.

CALVERT

We stink to high heaven. Got twenty minutes. In you go, keep quiet, eyes peeled, boots on. We're not out of danger. I'm going to have a look around that bend.

Calvert wanders to a small tree covered cove, and, believing the coast is clear, slides under the water, surfacing in waist deep water, head only above the water - he turns.

He is not alone, startled, a JAP SOLDIER is standing ten feet away facing him.

Calvert recognizes Colonel's insignia on Japs' bush shirt. (The officer of previous scene practising Ju-jit-tsu). The Jap senses this is the man that's caused all his humiliation.

Staring at each other neither can believe their luck. Both look for the other's soldiers. There are none in sight.

Suddenly the Jap steps into the water moving toward Calvert. They reach one another and a terrific fight to the death in the churned up muddy water begins.

The Jap officer's mastery of Ju-jit-tsu is more than Calvert can handle. Calvert believes he is finished.

Suddenly the Jap slips in the mud. As he tries frantically to regain his advantage he loosens his rear-neck hold on Calvert.

Calvert manages to lock the Jap's neck in a side-lock. Eventually with signs of exhaustion overcoming both men, Calvert's greater strength tips the scales in his favor. Keeping the Jap's head under the water until he is dead takes everything Calvert can muster.

Near exhaustion Calvert manages to push the face-up limp body toward mid-stream. Then he staggers up the bank and back to his men.

HENDERSON

God! What the hell's happened to you? You look like you've been fighting a croc.

Calvert's face bleeds profusely. His heavily bruised torso, with long deep scratches minus skin oozes blood.

CALVERT

(Panting)
Japs. In the next cove. I've just killed their C.O. (Wearily)
Get the rest.

HOWARTH

Leave it to us.

Each man pulls on his shorts, then grabs his gun. They go off quickly and quietly, stalk the Japs, taking them by surprise.

They rejoin Calvert.

CALVERT

How many?

HENDERSON

Twenty, just in time, they'd have cottoned on quickly. The body was about to float past them.

HOWARTH

We gotta get moving, you can bet there's other patrols around.

CALVERT

First man I've ever killed with my bare hands.

HENDERSON

Sir, we have to get crackin' supplies of food and ammo are low. Come on, we'll get you on your feet.

CALVERT
(Groaning
Thanks!

INT. JAPANESE HQ - NIGHT

General Mutaguchi is talking with his Senior Officers.

MUTAGUCHI
The Chindits are completely disrupting my campaign plans and changing my assessment of Burma. Their incursions shows that crack troops can operate independently in the jungle and can carry out attacks on an east-west axis.

GENERAL NUMATA
The British forces maintained their traditionally high standard of discipline throughout a difficult campaign. The high standard of morale and discipline of the Colonial forces surprised our troops. Our worst enemy is the weather. The climate is much too hot and wet for us. The British have adapted better.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL FUJIWAR IWAICHI
In my area the British and Indian forces made persistent and determined counter-attacks, we suffered heavy casualties. No soldier can maintain this pressure for protracted periods without severe loss of effectiveness. Eventually we have to retreat.

MUTAGUCHI
Gentlemen, it is with great regret I heard on the Delhi radio of the death in an airplane crash of General Wingate. This is a sad loss for the British Army. A great military leader who was both a genius and a man of action. Tonight I will say a prayer for the soul of this man in whom I believe I've found my match.

EXT. A JUNGLE TRACK - NEAR MANDALAY - DAY

An ELEPHANT and a HORSE emerge from the jungle. Sergeant BLAIN'S riding the Elephant plodding towards Calvert and a group of 400 MEN, 120 MULES, some BULLOCKS, 4 badly dented TRUCKS.

BLAIN

I know just what you're thinking sir. We've christened 'er Flossy. You might say she's the first recruit to the Chindit circus. And before you ask, we've got a driver.

CALVERT

(Smiling)
Really?

BLAIN

And this is recruit number three sir. Flossy.

CALVERT

An elephant?

BLAIN

Yes sir, she is.

CALVERT

Handy substitute for a bulldozer.

BLAIN

Comes fully trained, cheap to run, carries a pile of our gear.

CALVERT

Well done, I am sure you'll make excellent use of them Sergeant Major.

BOWEN

(Surprised)
That's a promotion sir?

CALVERT

Yes Sergeant Major.

BLAIN

I like the sound of it sir, thank you. I'd call this a good logistics move. So we can keep 'em for the times being sir?

Calvert smiles, nods agreement. Column of men, mules, bullocks move off again. Blain jogs from front, back to Calvert pointing ahead.

BLAIN

Bloody elephant grass is getting thicker every step we take sir. Blokes up front are exhausted 'acking the stuff down. It's 12 bloody feet high with 2" thick stems.

CALVERT

Do you mean we have Flossy, and no one thought she'd enjoy heaving this stuff over? That's why it's called elephant grass.

BLAIN

S'why we're not officers sir.

The elephant starts plodding to the front, Calvert decides to follow. Calls up to Blain.

CALVERT

Sergeant, you get up behind the mahout, I'll stay down here with the compass and shout instructions. Left, right, ahead, etc. Got that?

BLAIN

Better warn you sir when you see that tail lift, move sharpish.

CALVERT

Noted, Sergeant.

Some time later the column stops.

Calvert's watching his compass and charges into Flossy's rear. He doesn't notice her tail rise. Calvert cops the lot, and bursts into laughter.

CALVERT

For God's sake Sergeant, you are not looking after your circus recruit.

BLAIN

Demoted already? Every thing's fine up here. This is when it pays to be an NCO sir.

CALVERT

Another stunt like that and you'll be Corporal, Sergeant Major.

BLAIN

I've 'eard it said that if you step in it, it brings you good luck Sir. Wonder what taking a shower in it will do for ya!

CALVERT

Well anything has to be better than this!

All the men laugh as they trudge on.

INT. CHINDIT TEMPORARY H.Q. - DAY

Calvert's been summoned by Major General WALTER LENTAIGNE. Captain Shaw is present. Calvert's clothing is sweat-stained and filthy. He strolls in with a look of disdain.

He stares at Lentaigne a weak figure. Calvert leaves his floppy hat on. Offers a leisurely salute.

LENTAIGNE

Brigadier, your conduct was disgraceful. This sort of thing would automatically lead to a court martial.

Calvert does not believe his ears.

CALVERT

You haven't had the courtesy to introduce your witness.

LENTAIGNE

Captain Shaw.

Shaw comes to a snappy attention and salutes.

SHAW

Sir.

Calvert returns his salute.

CALVERT

I don't know what you're talking about. I need food, rest and medication. I'm down to eight from thirteen stone. Can't this matter wait for a few days?

LENTAIGNE

No. It's not my fault you nearly got your back sides shot up, milling about the jungle for several weeks. You blew some bridges and rail tracks.

(MORE)

LENTAIGNE (cont'd)
Suffered huge material losses,
casualties a third, many who
returned are now unfit for
further action. This operation
had absolutely no strategic
value. So come on man. Don't
let's beat about the bush.

CALVERT
I've no idea what you're
referring to. It'll help if I
know what I've done that
automatically leads to a court
martial.

Lentaigne's temper is getting the better of him. He gets up and strolls around the desk, avoiding eye contact with Calvert.

LENTAIGNE
I see why you're so disliked by
H.Q. It's only because General
Slim said you were doing good
work that we're taking no action,
a grave error in my judgment.
You chased some soldiers who ran
from enemy fire, and returned
alone. You shot them as
deserters. It's a pity Slim's
intervention has quashed your
court martial.

CALVERT
Where on earth did that story
come from? This happened weeks
ago.

LENTAIGNE
You were seen chasing them, and
the story has only just reached
us.

CALVERT
Then I suggest you and the others
get off your backsides and visit
the troops. Or is it too bloody
dangerous for you? So, because I
didn't bring them back, I am
supposed to have shot them! I
didn't bring them back, because I
never found them. Someone forgot
to tell you they pinched a lorry.
I followed on foot, and returned
30 minutes later. I'm damn
pleased the Chindits aren't
relying on your intelligence
sources.

LENTAIGNE

All of this will be on report.

{As Calvert speaks show scenes in flashback}

CALVERT

You tell Kirby, the lorry in question was pinched in April, before the monsoons began. We found it weeks later in a ditch, the deserters had been bayoneted an stuffed back in the seats. Being picked to pieces by vultures and ants, and for your convenience the lorry was booby-trapped. I wonder if Kirby even knows what a bloody booby-trap looks like. Or would he have ordered you to check it out?

LENTAIGNE

This is not the last of this Calvert

CALVERT

Kirby sent you here by plane for this bloody fiasco!

Calvert starts strolling around Lentaigne, looking at his dress.

CALVERT

Uniform clean and pressed, shoes polished, clean underpants daily. All they have on them is the sweat from your arse sitting on a bloody chair all day. The Chindits and mine are covered in our excrement from explosive bowel movements from dysentery and diarrhoea. That bastard dared to send you to question my actions! You tell him from me to "get off his arse, pick up a gun, that's if he knows what one looks like. Get down here and start killing the enemy with real bullets and not numbers on sheets of bloody paper." And, if he's got a plane to spare, we could do with it to ferry out wounded Chindits.

LENTAIGNE

The quicker the army is rid of your type the better.

(MORE)

LENTAIGNE (cont'd)
 You're on report for not saluting
 a senior officer.

CALVERT
 Salute! You're bloody lucky
 you're not reporting to the
 doctor with a busted nose, now
 piss off before I really get mad.

Calvert turns toward Shaw.

CALVERT
 Captain, don't let these idiot
 desktop commanders convince you
 this is the way they run the army
 and win wars. They're a disgrace
 to the uniform.

An astonished Captain Shaw snaps to attention then salutes
 Calvert.

LENTAIGNE
 You'll be pleased to learn, I've
 taken over from Wingate.

CALVERT
 No one can replace that soldier.

As he reaches the tent flap he turns back.

CALVERT
 I'll have Dr. Simpson ready as
 many wounded as can fit in your
 plane, for your flight back.
 O.K.?... Sir.

He leaves Lentaigne speechless.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCHILL'S UNDERGROUND WAR OFFICE - DAY

Churchill is being handed a telegram by Jane. He reads it
 and crumples it in his hand.

JANE
 Are you alright Sir?

CHURCHILL
 Wingate was a man of genius who
 might well have become also a man
 of destiny. Now he's dead and
 we'll never know.

JANE
 I'm sorry Sir. Anything I can
 do?

CHURCHILL

No thank you Jane. There's no-one who can replace such a man.

JANE

Like you Sir.

CHURCHILL

Oh I'll be replaced, you can count on that. Men's memories are short when it suits them.

CUT BACK TO:

ON SCREEN : MAY 27TH - MONSOON SEASON

EXT. CHINDIT CAMP - DAY

It's a swirling quagmire. Beneath sagging, leaking tarpaulin over the communications section, intelligence officer Major WOOD hands a drenched Calvert the phone.

WOOD

C.O. For you sir.

CALVERT

Yes?

LENTAIGNE (FILTERED)

Your orders are to take Mogaung.

CALVERT

It's a death trap! There are at least 4000 well dug-in Jap troops defending it.

LENTAIGNE (FILTERED)

(Shouting)

You will take Mogaung.

CALVERT

The Monsoon season hasn't reached you yet? Since the 5th of March, the Chindits have walked, crawled and slid hundreds of miles. What they need is the help you promised. In case you've forgotten they're guerrilla fighters. Do you happen to know just what guerrilla fighters are? We go in, hit hard and get out even faster.

LENTAIGNE (FILTERED)

You're on report again. Are you disobeying my direct order?

CALVERT

No. But there must be no misunderstanding. My second in command Major Wood is my witness. Your order is: The Chindits will take Mogaung. Is that correct?

LAWYER (FILTERED)

Good God Calvert, have you taken leave of your senses? Do you want it in writing?

CALVERT

Oh... didn't know you could write... Sir, since you don't seem able to read what I'm saying!

Calvert is holding the phone aloft for everyone to hear. Seconds later he puts it to his ear again.

CALVERT

We're not sitting in rooms with fans. But on Bamboo posts and anything else in a quagmire of mud, under a wet leaking, sagging tarpaulin. The paper's so soggy, the jungle's endeavouring to reduce it to pulp again and replenish it's own resources.

Everyone sheltering under the covered tent are chuffed Calvert is giving this weak officer his dues and several give Calvert the 'thumbs up' sign while others hold their left fists up and smash their right hand on their left elbows.

LENTAIGNE (FILTERED)

Stilwell's intelligence tell us, Mogaung is not heavily defended.

CALVERT

Where might the General get this intelligence? I've told you, we know because we are here, Stilwell isn't, and to the best of my knowledge never has been. There are 4000 well dug-in and concealed experienced Japanese jungle fighters defending Mogaung. This is their last stand in Burma. And if they're fighting so far is anything to go by, they will defend this with their last drop of blood, and ours. I've 550 Chindits left. 1,000 sick and injured.

(MORE)

CALVERT (cont'd)

No artillery, no armored support.
And with the Chindits being out
numbered at least four-to-one,
how do you rate our chances?

LENTAIGNE (FILTERED)

Calvert! Your orders are to take
Mogaung. Acknowledge this order.
Or be relieved of your command.

CALVERT

You're not getting that pleasure.
Before we go in, get the RAF
liaison section to lay a supply
strip. The returning empty
planes can take out our
casualties. Ample food, and
ammunition supplies can be
dropped at Lakum. In Delhi there
are two 4.2 Mortars. I want them
quick. When that's done, the
Chindits will take Mogaung.

Conversation ends as Calvert cuts off Lentaigne.

CALVERT

As if that's not enough, the
Japanese 53rd Division is on it's
way.

SHAW

Does he think we're trudging
through Hyde Park? Every man
jack-of-us has been up to his
waist in mud. The only way the
mules got down the slopes was on
their arses. I've lost count of
the times we've unloaded one that
was stuck fast up to his belly.

WOOD

He promised us 10,000 soldiers.
I bet a pound to a pile of shit,
Stilwell's looking to take more
than his fair share of the credit
for Mogaung. You can see the
headlines : "Stilwell defeats
Japanese and kicks them out of
Burma." He can't even spell
Chindits, so how are we going to
cop a mention. We're "The
Forgotten army." Because that's
what it's going to look like.

(MORE)

WOOD (cont'd)
 Knowing of his anti-British feelings, his staff officer son-in-law kept from him highly relevant information about the Chindits success's making the failure of his own troops less apparent.

Doctor SIMPSON steps forward.

DR. SIMPSON
 Sir, if you wouldn't mind, could you visit the Hospital tent?

INT. HOSPITAL TENT - DAY

Sheet lightning and thunder claps roar through the hills and it starts pouring.

Wounded and sick Chindits lie on wet hammocks, smoking damp hand-rolled cigarettes.

Despite the appalling conditions they are joking about them and their surroundings.

SOLDIER #1
 Always did want to try out a Turkish bath, now I'm glad I waited for the experience!

SOLDIER #2
 You can have your Turkish bath, I'm enjoying my sauna!

SOLDIER #3
 What in Hell is a sonar?

DR. SIMPSON
 Mike, you don't need me to tell you these men have had it. I recommend they be allowed to rest for as long as it is practical. We're treating 20 new malaria cases a day.

CLOSE on some soldiers' injuries.

DR. SIMPSON
 Trench foot, jungle sores are causing horrendous open sores and cuts to almost every soldier, worsened by this humid dripping atmosphere. That's apart from several who've had blood transfusions caused by these leeches. And now they are expected to go into the greatest battle undertaken in Burma.

(MORE)

DR. SIMPSON (cont'd)
 It's madness, sheer madness. The casualties do not bear thinking about. In a nutshell you are all losing more body weight and fluids than is being replaced.

SOLDIER #1
 Spit it out, Doc, we can take it.

Calvert and Simpson look at the soldier. His left fore-arm is missing. The stub is heavily bandaged, blood soaked.

DR. SIMPSON
 Eventually we will all die from starvation.

Calvert looks at his men.

CALVERT
 What do you want to do?

SOLDIER #2
 Come this bloody far sir, pity not to finish off the Nips. Then we can go 'ome.

There's a cheer of support.

CALVERT
 Wingate would be proud of you.

A soldier starts coughing, Simpson hurries toward him. He dies before Simpson reaches him.

CALVERT
 (To himself
 And that's why Wingate ordered all men wounded beyond help to be shot, so that the Nips couldn't get to them and torture them. God almighty what have we come to?

SOLDIER #1
 It's these wet fags Sir. If he'd only had a dry one, he might 'ave made it.

Calvert salutes and returns to under the radio tarpaulin covering.

WOOD
 Sir, we picked up a Japanese message. Mutaguchi's orders are "To annihilate the Chindits".

CALVERT

Really? Well, I don't know how much the Yen is worth now, but let's give the man and his men a run for their money!

EXT. THE QUAGMIRE JUNGLE - DAY

The Chindits haul themselves, their gear, mules and Flossy the 30 miles to Mogaung. On the way, U.S. Aircraft engines are heard getting louder.

EXT. JAPANESE COLUMN - DAY

A convoy of trucks full of soldiers and supplies heads for Mogaung. Hitched to each truck is a large gun.

INT. MAJOR-GENERAL KIRBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Kirby's adjutant hands him a sheet of paper. Kirby's fury grows as he reads.

KIRBY

What's the mater with them? It's the second request from our field commanders to award the Victoria Cross to Calvert. We do not award V.C.s to renegades, who dislike taking orders. Several of which he's countermanded telling more than one of us to 'Get lost' or words to that effect. Before this war is over he'll thump a senior officer, then we can Court Martial him. The army will be a better place without the likes of Calverts and Wingates.

SHAW

Sir, three of his superior officers recommendation is in line with regulations. For it to have been done twice surely signals their firm belief he fully deserves it.

KIRBY

Stamp this request for Calvert's V.C. "Denied" and I'll sign it.

SHAW

You bastard! Now court martial me.

CUT TO:

ON SCREEN: CONFERENCE - CAIRO - LATE 1943

INT. LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM - VILLA - DAY

Churchill, Roosevelt, Chiang KAI-SHEK General "Vinegar Joe" STILWELL, Major General CHENNAULT, are seated around a large table, not looking too happy.

CHIANG KAI-SHEK

Well, that is the way I see it. Burma should be the stage for the initial offensive against the Japanese. Burma, I am convinced, is the key to the whole campaign in Asia. Support by air is mandatory, naturally.

CHURCHILL

And after the Japanese have been cleared out of Burma, what then? I am not in favor of this, my men are spread as thin as thin can be. I'm in favor, as are Admirals King and Nimitz of the United States of America, of sea power, that is the ultimate weapon.

CHIANG KAI-SHEK

You lost the Prince of Wales and the Repulse, they were both sunk by Japanese bombers were they not?

CHURCHILL

(Bristling)

In my whole experience I do not remember any naval blow so heavy or so painful.

ROOSEVELT

(Coughing)

Pearl Harbor!

CHURCHILL

I meant no disrespect, I was referring to British losses, my apologies.

STILWELL

If I might speak? I would be in favor of a Burmese drive but only in the north where I hope General Chiang Kai-Shek and his forces will do some serious fighting.

CHENNAULT

I agree with General Chiang that divisions are not as important as aircraft and I too want to see the Japanese bombed out of Burma.

Stilwell and Chennault look 'daggers' at one another.

ON SCREEN : MAY 1943 - WASHINGTON D.C.

INT. CONFERENCE TABLE - DAY

General Stilwell and Major General Chennault glare at one another.

STILWELL

(Shouting)

The Japs ran us out of Burma. We took a hell of a beating. And the locals were glad to see the Western overlords defeated. Did you even read the bloody Japanese newspaper? No, I didn't think so. Well let me read it to you.

He picks up a newspaper from his briefcase and reads the translated text.

JAPANESE NEWSPAPER

'We do not have to reward our friends with posts in the government, they had taken them before we arrived!' That's what we are up against in Burma, not just the Japanese, but the locals too. It's the ground soldier, slogging through the mud and fighting in the trenches, who will win the war.

CHENNAULT

(Hollering)

But God damn it, Stilwell, there aren't any men in the trenches!

EXT. THREE LANDING ZONES - BURMESE JUNGLE

Calvert, Wingate and other OFFICERS await the return of a reconnaissance plane.

They run outside of their tents and look up as a lone RAF plane comes in for a landing on the rough runway.

As the PILOT climbs down from his aircraft the whole group 'rush him'.

WINGATE

Well?

PILOT

I checked the three landing zones, the one code named Piccadilly is covered with logs, making landing impossible.

WINGATE

God damn it, that's all we need, that means the others will be subject to being ambushed. To proceed with Broadway and Chowringhee would be murder.

CALVERT

I'll go in with my men, sir!

WINGATE

Which of the other two, Broadway or Chowringhee would you recommend?

PILOT

Probably Broadway.

WINGATE

If you're sure Calvert. I know you're not called Mad Mike for nothing.

CALVERT

Would be my pleasure sir.

He salutes and runs off towards his men.

Soon Calvert and his men, back packs on are ready for lift off.

MONTAGE OF SHOTS - BROADWAY BOUND

- Several planes take off and fly low over the jungle canopy, the PILOTS scanning the ground for the drop zones.

- Many casualties are suffered landing on the terrible Broadway ground.

- Chindits set to setting up camp.

- Chindits set to making the landing strip fit to take transport aircraft.

- Chindit gliders land on Chowringhee.

- Over the next week 600 sorties transfer 9000 men to the landing zones.
- Chowringhee is abandoned once the flying is completed.
- Broadway now has a garrison including field artillery, anti-aircraft guns and even a few Spitfires.
- A group led by FERGUSSON set up another base named Aberdeen north of India into which the 14th Brigade is flown.
- Meanwhile Calvert and his men set up another base at Mawlu, astride the main railway and road leading to the Japanese northern front, calling it White City.
- Ferocious jungle fighting follows around Broadway and White City.
- Chindits and Japanese in close hand to hand combat, with bayonets and kukris against katanas.
- The Brits begin to lose ground and are exhausted resulting in most of the 16th Brigade being flown out.
- Wingate's plane crashes during a thunderstorm, into the jungle-covered mountains.
- Calvert being handed a telegram with the news of Wingate's death.

CALVERT

The one man who could get us out
of this bloody mess, gone, plane
crash! God Almighty what's next?

- Calvert receiving orders from Lentaigne to abandon White City and Broadway and support Masters.
- He crunches up the orders angrily.

CALVERT

God damn that idiot. He now
wants us to abandon this and go
north and help out Masters and
build another stronghold to be
called Blackpool so that we can
block Japanese supply routes.
What the fuckin' hell does he
think we are doing here?

- Calvert and his men prepare to leave just as the Monsoons break and the heavy rain makes any movement impossible.

- No help can get to Masters under heavy fire from two regiments from the Japanese 53rd Division with heavy artillery support.

- 19 Allied soldiers, so badly injured they could not be moved by Master and his men, exhausted after 17 days of continuous fighting, are shot by the medical orderlies as Masters' group moves out.

END MONTAGE OF SHOTS

EXT. CALVERT'S JUNGLE OUTPOST - WHITE CITY (HENU)

Calvert and his men are entrenched, in squelching mud under fire from Japanese mortar bombs.

Screams of wounded men are accompanied by those of a mule giving birth.

Calvert does his best to calm his troops and they return fire with determination until the Japanese guns are silent once more.

Finally pulling themselves up from their muddy outpost the men squelch their way back to Camp.

They are met by Sergeant LEE of the XXth 1 Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers.

Calvert looks at him warily.

CALVERT

What is it Lee... some good news
I hope for a change.

SERGEANT LEE

The best Sir.

Calvert and his weary troops look at Lee.

CALVERT

Well spit it out, we haven't got
all day.

SERGEANT LEE

We have a newborn in our midst.

CALVERT

A new born! God in Heaven, is
there a woman out here in this
God forsaken place?

SERGEANT LEE

No Sir. One of our ponies gave
birth, didn't even know she was
preggers, Sir!

CALVERT
Hrmph! Well, carry on, updates
as you see fit.

He makes to walk away, stops and turns.

CALVERT
This foal, does it have a name?

SERGEANT LEE
Yes Sir. We named her Minnie.

CALVERT
Minnie, as in Mouse?

SERGEANT LEE
No Sir, as in Mortar, she was
born near the mortar post called
Minnie.

Everyone laughs, and trudges back to camp.

EXT. JUNGLE OUTPOST - DAY

The Chindits are under heavy bombardment once more and
decide to move out.

A long transport line is formed and as they move away the
heavy bombardment reaches them and several mules are
killed. One slightly injured, panics and runs off, kicking
up her heels, inflicting a painful slash above little
Minnie's right eye.

Sergeant Lee, runs from his post and, with an improvised
veterinary kit, works to save her eye.

When the small foal is finally resting and the bombardment
has stopped, Sergeant Lee writes and hands a note to a
soldier.

SERGEANT LEE
Take that to Calvert toot de
sweet!

The soldier runs off and finds Calvert on the front line.

The note is passed up to him and Calvert's expression
changes from one of grim determination to smiles.

CALVERT
(Shouting to be heard)
Good news men, Minnie, though
kicked above the eye, is doing
well.

The men cheer raggedly and then resume their positions and fire at the unseen enemy.

Calvert addresses the soldier who brought the note.

CALVERT

Tell Sergeant Lee that the men and I want updates on Minnie's condition and welfare. She's a real morale booster.

SOLDIER

Yes Sir!

INT. COMMANDER OF FOURTEENTH ARMY - TENT - DAY

SLIM sits with his head in his hands, a damp telegram in front of him.

A SERGEANT stands close by.

SLIM

Damn it. Why did he have to be flying in such weather. Now what? Sergeant, get me Tulloch, Wingate's Chief of Staff.

The Sergeant runs from the tent and returns a few minutes later.

SERGEANT

All set up Sir.

They run through the rain to the communications tent where a chair is set in front of a field telephone.

SLIM

That you Tulloch? Slim here. Listen I need your input. Who would you recommend to succeed Wingate?

TULLOCH (FILTERED)

Well so many are unknown quantities, but if it was up to me, I would recommend Lentaigne.

SLIM

Lentaigne huh? What can you tell me about him?

TULLOCH (FILTERED)

Well, he was at instructor at the Staff College at Quetta.

(MORE)

TULLOCH (FILTERED) (cont'd)

He's commanded a Gurkha battalion with distinction during the gruelling retreat from Burma in 1942 and he commanded, though only for a couple of weeks, a Chindit Brigade. As an officer of Gurkha troops, he has a similar outlook and background to you sir.

SLIM

He's the only one that comes to mind, huh?

TULLOCH (FILTERED)

Well none of the others I can think of have never commanded a battalion sized unit in combat, and anyone else on Wingate's staff lacks the necessary experience.

SLIM

Righto. Well thanks Tulloch, I guess Lentaigne is our man. Over and out.

He rises and returns to his tent.

His Sergeant stays and looks at the men in the tent.

SERGEANT

Well another hard arsed idiot is being put in charge. Wait till the Chindits hear this one.

RADIO OPERATOR

Why what's his problem?

SERGEANT

Problem? Too many to name but I'll give you a few. He hated Wingate for starters, especially his modus operandi. And you people with dark skins, look out. He holds Indian Army Officers, and Gurkha Officers in particular, in total contempt.

RADIO OPERATOR

And that's just for starters?

SERGEANT

Just for starters.

RADIO OPERATOR

Bloody Hell!

ON SCREEN : MOGAUNG - THE LAST JAPANESE BURMESE STRONGHOLD

EXT. MOGAUNG TOWNSHIP - DAWN

An eerie jungle silence is broken only by intermittent parrot squawks and screeches.

In the distance several deep roars of a large jungle cat.

High above an eagle is hitching a ride on a thermal current.

The Mogaung river wraps a snakelike 200 yard wide course behind and along the town's left. It's running fast, a mass of tangled trees and branches.

The intact railway bridge crosses the river on the town's right. The mainly all brick built town is in low lying open marshy ground. Paddy fields, partially flooded, are near to the town, the rest is jungle.

The 4,000 plus Japanese are well dug in with machine gun nests and bunkers everywhere.

Over a P.A. System:

JAP OFFICER (FILTERED)
You are fighting for the Emperor,
and Japanese honor.

INT. JAP BUNKER - DAY

Soldiers, wet and miserable look at one another with glazed over eyes.

JAP SOLDIER #1
There are plenty amongst us who
have never seen the man. So, why
the hell are we in a place we've
never heard of and wishing we
hadn't.

JAP SOLDIER #2
Talk like that could have you
finding your head detached from
your body.

JAP SOLDIER #1
Like that's not going to happen
anyway?

MONTAGE OF SHOTS : THE CHINDITS GET TO LAKUM VILLAGE

- Weary after trekking for three weeks, the Chindits finally reach Lakum Village.

- Lakum village lies on a low hill overlooking the plain two miles west of Mogaung, visible from the Chindit position.
- The Chindits look as if they've one last fight left in them.
- Over several days various reconnaissance groups have tempted many Jap gun positions to open fire during daylight, revealing their positions.
- Twathitgale, a small village, mid-way between Lakum and Jogaung, is chosen by Calvert along with a small tactical-headquarters group to be set up.
- Calvert and his small force manage to hold their position despite several attacks and night bombardments.
- Calvert's small force overlook Mogaung one mile away.
- Calvert is in touch with his H.Q. at Lakum.

CALVERT

I'm going in for a closer decko.
Over and out.

- Lakum communications tent.

RADIO OPERATOR

(To colleagues
He's going in.

SOLDIER #1

Don't call him Mad Mike for
nothing.

SOLDIER #2

Always putting the safety of his
men before himself. He's a gem
is our fearless leader.

GHURKA SOLDIER

Could be one of us!

MEN

((Laughing)
Get outta here!

END MONTAGE OF SHOTS

EXT. JUNGLE NEAR TWATHIGALE - EARLY MORNING

The mist shrouds everything in a haze, giving everything a distorted look.

A pair of blackened hands part the jungle foliage and a black smudged face peers out.

CLOSE Calvert's eyes as he peers up ahead to where a small detachment of Japanese SOLDIERS, three in all, are standing by the river's edge, smoking and chatting softly. They are all bare-footed.

Calvert crawls, inches at a time, towards the small group.

CLOSE his boot clad feet, his dirty khaki pants and top as his hand silently unsheathes his waist band clip holding a deadly looking dagger.

Calvert suddenly stands and with a hideous laugh lunges at the closest Japanese soldier slitting his throat, momentarily shocking the other two.

One of the remaining two soldiers lunges at Calvert who plunges the dagger into the man's belly from his position on his knees.

As he extracts the dagger the other, lunges at Calvert and they both tumble into the river, snarling and fighting like 'dogs'.

The Japanese soldier somehow gets the better of Calvert and is holding him under, screaming profanities, as he struggles with Calvert trying to rise up.

Suddenly the Japanese soldier slips on the rocks on the river bottom and Calvert, sputtering and cursing rises out of the water and he in turn holds the Japanese soldier under the water until his struggles cease.

Calvert steps back into the jungle casting his eyes over to the other side of the river where the rest of the Japanese forces are encamped not thirty feet away.

He picks out the Commanding Officer watching his men drill on a make-shift parade ground, none are wearing boots.

CALVERT

(Laughing to himself)

There's a reason I tell my men
not to take their boots off, and
it's not only because of jungle
rot... it's also to stop bare
feet slipping and sliding.

And with that he is enfolded by the jungle.

EXT. THE SKY - 3 MILES AWAY - DAY

Seventy battered USAF Mustang Fighter-bombers rapidly approach from the north.

They are directed to Japanese gun positions by ground observers' smoke drops.

EXT. CHINDIT POSITION - DAY

Two SOLDIERS light smoke bombs and retreat at speed.

They suddenly stop, one of them signals the other to duck behind foliage.

They squat looking back from where the first one had somehow heard something.

They suddenly stand laughing as Calvert approaches his boots squelching!

SOLDIER #1

Knew it was some kind of bloody jungle animal!

SOLDIER #2

I dunno sounds more like an aquatic creature. Wouldn't happen to be a duck-billed platypus, wouldcha?!

CALVERT

The killer type. Just killed three Japs, on this side of the river. Damn fools, they had taken their boots off.

SOLDIER #2

Yes Sir, never take your boots off, die in your boots, sleep in your boots, eat, shit, walk, in your boots, but NEVER take them off!

CALVERT

Good lad! Well let's get back to camp.

EXT. CHINDITS' CAMP - DAY

Calvert stands on wobbly legs surveying his paltry group of soldiers, all ravaged by malaria and typhus.

CALVERT

Well men, we must soldier on, for freedom and victory. It's been a hell of six weeks as you all know. Our casualties amount to 950. From an original 3,500 Chindits we go to face the enemy about 300 men strong.

SOLDIER #1
Strong, sir!

Everyone laughs!

SOLDIER #2
Well odor-wise and that's the truth.

SOLDIER #3
We may surprise them sir, not just by our uncanny jungle ways but by our distinct aroma!

Everyone laughs uproariously.

EXT. SKY ABOVE CHINDITS' POSITION

Cochrane is peering out of his plane as he talks to the ground.

COCHRANE
Okay. The guys with machine guns, two 1,000 bombs or ten 5 inch rockets. I wanna see those Jap gun positions wrecked. These Chindits need all the help they can get. So let's give it to them.

EXT. OVERLOOKING RIVER - DAY

At a safe distance on the river bank, the main target - the railway bridge - is heavily defended by a group of GURKHAS.

Nearby in the jungle the Allies artillery site, spread out over a wide front under nets and camouflage, 400 Bofor Anti-Aircraft guns; 3 and 4.2 Inch Mortars; 25 pounder Howitzers; US Army issue Machine guns; 300 Brens; Tons of stacked ammunition.

EXT. THE SKY - 1 MILE AWAY - DAY

Cochrane's lead Mustang banks, peels off for first bomb run, others follow. Thirty Mustangs have two bombs, the rest rockets.

The Mustangs come in fast, low, a hundred yards separates each aircraft.

COCHRANE (FILTERED)
Okay you guys make this happen. Those guys down there are counting on us. Pull this off and we can all get some rest, even, maybe, go home.

INT. JAP BUNKER - DAY

The Soldiers recognize the hateful sound of the Mustangs overhead.

The smell of fear is palpable.

Large bombs tear the soft ground apart.

Rockets barrel down scoring direct hits followed by deafening blasts of Machine-guns.

Part of bodies fly everywhere, everything's splattered in blood.

There is nowhere to hide nor run for the unfortunate Japanese soldiers.

The first thirty five Mustangs each drop a bomb, as it does the Mustang rocks from side-to-side, then banks right, climbs away.

The rocket loaded Mustangs fire 6 each on the first run, climb, bank left, re-group.

INT. COCHRANE'S COCKPIT - DAY

Cochrane checks the damage.

COCHRANE

Johnson's squadron, take out that Railroad bridge, the Jap guns and the Japs. Hit 'em hard.

The 2nd wave of Mustangs are already barreling down.

INT. CHINDITS' COMMUNICATIONS TENT - DAY

Calvert is seated at the radio table.

CALVERT

Make it count fellas.

EXT. OVERLOOKING RIVER - DAY

The Gurkhas watch the Mustangs approach at tree top height. Plumes of muddy water spout up, bridge supports buckle and crash. Waves appear as the bridge collapses.

Rockets pound gun positions. The Mustangs regroup, six lead by Cochrane, tear across, each flips a victory roll.

COCHRANE (FILTERED)

Good luck Mike, we'll get drunk when it's all over.

The Mustangs climb and head back to their base.

EXT. TWATHITGALE - DAWN

Chindit Officers and Soldiers wait for Calvert's orders.

CALVERT

In we go. Keep your heads down.
Good hunting.

As the men move out, soldiers chat among themselves.

SOLDIER #1

"e's the only one with the
tenacity, guts and experience to
command the Chindits. And 'e
farts the same side as us.
Unlike those Delhi Arseholes, who
obviously fart the wrong side of
their trouser seams!

SOLDIER #2

Remember when we returned from a
recon? He received a message
from GHQ not to do something on a
Sunday. Mike replied: "Tell us
when it's Sunday." Another time
'e wrote a dozen messages in
Japanese, which we nailed to
trees at strategic spots. "Not
this way - mines", "Booby traps
ahead". What the Japs didn't
know was the notices were right.
So they march off in all the
other directions, straight into
'em. We know it worked, we 'eard
the explosions.

Calvert jogs back and asks the men to hurry up.

CALVERT

Come on men, don't want to keep
those Japs waiting, now do we?

SOLDIER #1

It's okay Sir. We've got the
advantage. They don't know we're
outnumbered 4-1.

They all snicker as they break into a run, guns at the
ready.

DISSOLVE TO:

ON SCREEN : JUNGLE WAR FROM JUNE 6 - JUNE 27

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Calvert's group, to a man, all suffering from malaria or dysentery, many wounded, fight the overwhelming forces of the Japanese.

When there is time for a rest there is no food or drink available, the water being considered undrinkable.

Then it's back to more fighting as another wave of Japanese soldiers, guns and artillery attack the Chindits' position. Always out front is Calvert urging his men on and fighting like a maniac himself.

Finally Mogaung is taken and Calvert goes among his forces trying to do a count.

CALVERT

It's no good, I keep coming up with unbelievable figures. It looks like we lost 50% of our forces.

SERGEANT

We won though, we showed those bastards what we are made of!

EXT. MOGAUNG STREET - DAY

Parts of a few brick buildings stand amid the rubble littered streets. Calvert with Wood look around at the mess, as Chindits scatter to begin mopping up in the streets and buildings, looking for Japs.

WOOD

They're all dead sir.

He points at the scattered dead Jap bodies.

WOOD

They'll finish them off.

Wood points up to some walls still standing, where patient, large dark grey Vultures are perched.

Wood lets fly with his Tommy gun spraying over the walls. Bricks smash and go flying through the air. The Vultures scatter, most escape.

WOOD

These Burmese Vultures are the best fed bastards anywhere.... They may be our enemy but they're still soldiers. The grittiest we've ever come across.

Chindits appear from all sides, guns at the read. They relax when they see it's Wood who was firing.

Waiting to speak to Calvert is an American smart-arse Liaison Officer Colonel Grant, looking like he's fresh out of West Point. He's never been in the Jungle before.

With him are some of MERRILL'S MARAUDERS looking as beat as the Chindits.

Colonel Grant strides forward.

GRANT

Say, that was some shooting.
Colonel Grant, sir. Pleased to meet you.

He snaps to attention and extends his spotless hand. Calvert looks at it, grabs it with his shovel-sized filthy dirty hard skinned hand and squeezes hard. As Grant winces, Calvert smiles, then slowly lets go.

CALVERT

Colonel. Have you anything for me?

GRANT

Just here to make sure everything goes according to plan, sir.

Calvert looks at Merrill's men who shake their heads in disbelief echoing the look on Calvert's face.

CALVERT

And, what, precisely, is the plan?

GRANT

All as per General Stillwell's outline sir.

CALVERT

Do I take it General Stilwell will be arriving soon?

GRANT

No sir. He's directing operations from Head Quarters. My job is to keep him up to date. And, if things are swinging against us, he can evaluate the current situation, make the necessary amendments and ensure we pull this thing off.

CALVERT
(Very angry)
We! Who are we?

GRANT
Take it easy Brigadier. We've heard about you Limeys, taking your goddamn time in getting here. Complaining just about everything. It's about time you guys realized who is running this show.

WOOD
We'll take care of him Mike.

Before Wood steps forward, several of Merrill's men move alongside Grant, apologize to Calvert, grab both Grant's arms, lift and carry him away.

Calvert turns to their senior officer.

CALVERT
Make certain that man does not come near me again. He could well end up with an unfortunate accident.

OFFICER
We'll deal with him first. You can have him when we're finished with him, sir.

GRANT
General Stilwell will get my full report on this.

Merrill's men throw Grant in the muddy river.

The field radio signals a call coming in.

CALVERT
If that's bloody Kirby, turn it off. Knowing him he'll want us to go relieve the siege at Myitkyina. We haven't even got the strength to walk let alone help others. No, we are going to drop back to Kamaing.

SERGEANT
Disobeying orders sir?

CALVERT
Yup, heading for a court martial no doubt.

SERGEANT

Just wanted to be clear sir. We could say the radios didn't work, jungle dampness and all.

CALVERT

No, never lie, or you'll trip yourself up somewhere along the line. All a man has is his integrity, and if you lose that, what's the point? Eh Sergeant?

SERGEANT

Right you are sir.

CALVERT

Get me Stilwell, chop, chop.

SERGEANT

Right away sir.

CALVERT

Want to tell him we did as ordered, we took Mogaung. That should shut up the Curry Colonels for a while.

INT. CALVERT'S TENT OFFICE - DAY

He's lying down, visibly exhausted when his Sergeant comes in.

SERGEANT

Sir!

CALVERT

Yes man, what is it?

SERGEANT

Told them we took Mogaung, Sir.

CALVERT

And?

SERGEANT

They said the Americans claim they had taken it.

Calvert sits up roaring:

CALVERT

What? Those bloody idiots. Tell them I take umbrage!

SERGEANT

Yes Sir!

Calvert sits with his head in his hands as his Sergeant runs from the tent.

COCHRANE

Those bloody arseholes, what do they think we have been doing? Picking our noses! God almighty, save me from the likes of them!

He falls back on his cot and falls asleep.

When his Sergeant returns he takes one look at his exhausted leader and quietly goes back out.

ON SCREEN : THREE DAYS LATER

INT. CALVERT'S TENT OFFICE

He is sat at his field desk going over paperwork when his Sergeant enters with a 'comical' look on his face.

CALVERT

Spit it out Sergeant? What's got you smiling?

SERGEANT

Message came back from H.Q., Stillwell's aide sir.

CALVERT

And?

SERGEANT

(Trying to keep a straight face)

They want to know where umbrage is, Sir. They can't find it on the map!

Calvert looks at the Sergeant in amazement and then guffaws and soon both of them are laughing so hard that the entrance to the tent is blocked by men asking what is going on.

Both Calvert and the Sergeant are laughing so hard they can hardly get the words out.

CALVERT

Bloody arseholes at H.Q. want to know where umbrage is on the map!

Soon everyone is laughing themselves silly.

SERGEANT

Almost better than a drink Sir!

CALVERT

Send a message. Tell them it's located next to that other well known Burmese town called FuQ Yhu!

The men are laughing so hard they have a hard time standing up.

INT. GENERAL STILWELL'S H.Q. - SHADAZUP - DAY

A calmer, partially rejuvenated Calvert with a nervous Lentaigne, wait to be shown into Stilwell's office.

LENTAIGNE

Mike, your careers is on the line here. A court martial is not out of the question, and the future of the Chindits is at stake.

A smart, clean uniformed U.S. SERGEANT interrupts them.

SERGEANT

This way sir.

INT. GENERAL STILWELL'S OFFICE - DAY

Stilwell with his 2nd in command Major-General BOATNER, who, happens to be his son-in-law, wait.

Stilwell is livid as Calvert is shown in, snaps to attention and salutes him. Stilwell barely manages to return their salutes.

STILWELL

Sit down. I have been waiting to meet you for some time Calvert.

CALVERT

I have wanted to meet you sir.

STILWELL

What in God's name have you been trying to pull? Explain yourself!

CALVERT

As far as I know, I haven't been trying to pull anything. Simply trying to beat the Japanese, without much cooperation from your office or ours in Delhi.

STILWELL

You sent some very strong signals
Calvert

CALVERT

You should see the ones my
Brigade Major wouldn't let me
send!

There's a moment of high tension and a scared looking
Lentaigne fidgets nervously.

Stilwell roars with laughter, thumps desk hard.

STILWELL

I have the same problems sending
messages to Washington. I
respect a man who speaks his
mind. Disobeying orders is
another matter.

CALVERT

I think you know the strain we
were under.

STILWELL

God damn it man, I didn't. I'd
sure like to know!

CALVERT

The Chindits landed in Burma
during the night of 5th March.
We set up a stronghold at White
City, Broadway, Aberdeen,
Piccadilly and Blackpool, that's
after operation Longcloth. We
have been behind enemy lines for
over 4 1/2 months, two during the
monsoons. I know of no other men
alive who have fought so
gallantly and continuously. They
have been decimated, diseased,
starved, exhausted, mud-soaked,
bombarded day and night, walked,
crawled and climbed, hundreds of
miles to get here. Waiting for
reenforcements that arrive when
99 per cent of the real fighting
is behind them. The Chindits
captured Mogaung on the 26th of
June.

Stilwell interrupts, stares daggers at Boatner.

STILWELL
 Why wasn't I told these soldiers
 have been in front line duty
 since early March?

BOATNER
 I'll have to look that up sir.

He rises up to leave, Stilwell, angrily shouts at him.

STILWELL
 Sit down! Carry on Calvert.

CALVERT
 The late General Wingate set up
 the Chindits. Their role purely
 that of Guerrilla warfare. Dart
 in, strike hard, and get out fast
 without loss. You know of our
 success at Pagoda Hill?

STILWELL
 Never heard of the place.
 Anywhere near Fuck You?

Stilwell looks at Calvert waiting for his reaction.

CALVERT
 Very near Umbrage.

STILWELL
 I like your style Calvert.

Stilwell stares hard at Boatner again.

STILWELL
 Is that true?

BOATNER
 It'll be on record sir.

STILWELL
 I doubt it.

CALVERT
 Sir, perhaps if I mention a few
 locations. You can say if you
 received my signals.

STILWELL
 Shoot.

CALVERT
 Mawlu, Pinhmi, Longcloth, Nankan,
 Operation Thursday.

Stilwell stops Calvert.

STILWELL

Hang on Calvert, you telling me these are just some of your successes?

CALVERT

That's about the size of it sir, yes.

STILWELL

Why wasn't I told Boatner? What crap have you been dishing up here? Do you realize the magnitude of the grave injustice we have done to this man and his Chindits? Your staff has concealed their achievements and successes. Make no mistake, Boatner, I am going to make certain you and your staff will regret this for the rest of your lives. Now get out!

Boatner scrambles from his seat and exists in a flurry.

STILWELL

It's obvious you and your boys have done a great job Mike.

Through all this Lentaigne looks decidedly sallow.

CALVERT

In those four weeks, 77 Brigade had 1500 casualties from battle and sickness. At times I felt like a butcher, and then I would see a man come out of our makeshift hospital with a half-healed wound pleading to be allowed back into the fight. These men were not professional soldiers; they came from Britain's industrial heartland, farms and the Indian Army. Knowing my orders were to capture Mogaung, these jungle fighters took on the impossible, made it possible and fought themselves to a standstill. Then went on again with that extra bit of effort that wins battles. This is the spirit which finally carried us into Mogaung - the first town in Burma to be re-taken. We could never have come anywhere near success had it not been for the U.S.

(MORE)

CALVERT (cont'd)

Air Force pilots commanded by Colonel Cochran who supplied us with food and ammunition, and acted as our artillery by bombing the Jap guns shelling us. They did wonders, taking out or wounded, skidding on mud-caked strips. The clinging soggy runways were enough to give any pilot nightmares. These men did it hundreds of times without bitching or complaints. Without the help of those pilots and Colonel Cochran we could never have defeated the Japanese. We don't know the name of this Sergeant, but he deserves the highest award the United States had to offer. I have a short list of those Chindits who deserve recognition.

Calvert hands a piece of paper across the desk to Stilwell.

STILWELL

That Sergeant is Jackie Coogan.

Stilwell puts on reading specs.

STILWELL

You know, the Hollywood star guy. There are only four names here, and this guy's under my command, he's already been awarded the Silver Star. That leaves me one short. (Beat) Brigadier Calvert it is my duty and pleasure to award you the Silver Star. Congratulations. Our liaison officer's last signal from Mogaung said, 77 Brigade were cowards, yellow deserters. They walked off the field of battle, and should all be arrested.

CALVERT

Someone once said, "There's one born every minute". You appear to have a few hours' worth up here.

STILWELL

We should have got together earlier Calvert. I am sure we haven't heard the last of you.

CALVERT

If we are the forgotten army,
then the Japanese were utterly
forsaken. I want to be at Imphal
when the Chindits arrive.

STILWELL

Think you and your men could hang
around a bit longer, bolstered by
the 3rd West African Brigade?

CALVERT

African Brigade Sir?

STILWELL

Yes, you two will remain in
action and assist the British
36th Division in its advance down
the Railway Valley south of
Mogaung. After which you and
your men will be withdrawn.

CALVERT

Very good sir.

STILWELL

I'm sorry I didn't give you time
in hospital to put some flesh on
those bones. But I've been
called back to the States, hence
this hurried meeting.

Calvert and Lentaigne stand, then salute. Stilwell throws
a textbook response and shakes Calvert's hand. Stilwell
calls out loud.

STILWELL

Boatner, get in here!

Calvert turns on his heels and almost stumbling leaves the
office with Lentaigne hard on his heels.

ON SCREEN : AUGUST 1944

EXT. CHINDITS' CAMP - DAY

The Chindits are breaking up their camp, on legs weak from
illness and malnutrition, but all appear in fine fettle as
they await departure.

SOLDIER #1

Get your orders?

SOLDIER #2

Yes, says I'm healthy and am to report to a training camp to await new operations. What about you?

SOLDIER #1

Rest and a special diet.

SOLDIER #2

Blimey, 'ope it's not rice.

SOLDIER #1

I swear I'll die if it's bloody rice!

SOLDIER #2

At least Calvert is going with us. Couldn't have survived without 'im. Bloody miracle really, after four years we might get to stop for a while.

SOLDIER #1

We 'ope!

SOLDIER #2

Well, you know what they say, while there's life there's 'ope!

SOLDIER #1

Get outta here!

FADE TO:

INT. KIRBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Kirby is looking at a third request for Calvert to be awarded the Victoria Cross.

He's angry. He shouts.

KIRBY

Sergeant, bring the tray of stamps.

The SERGEANT enters carrying a tray of stamps.

Scattering all except the denied stamp, he grabs and inks it, thumps the stamp on the request sheet. Then flings the tray and rubber stamps across the room. Then signs the request denied form.

KIRBY

Mark this urgent, and get it on the first plane.

SERGEANT
You gutless bastard!

KIRBY
What did you say?

SERGEANT
I called you a gutless bastard.
That's exactly what you are.

KIRBY
You're on a charge.

SERGEANT
In that case, I may as well be
hung for a sheep as a lamb. But
it's your word against mine, and
there's no witnesses. Be careful
of that door sir. You could get
hurt.

The Sergeant punches him on the jaw. Kirby tumbles against
the door, out cold.

SERGEANT
Told ya! Doors can be dangerous.

ON SCREEN: INDIA - AUGUST 1944

The Battalion returns, looking like sad sacks, many of them
injured and weak from the ravages of disease and sickness.
All, immediately stand up and cheer as Minnie is seen
trotting towards them.

The men break ranks and rush around Minnie exclaiming over
her fine shape. She whinnies appreciatively and without
further ado trots ahead of them to the mess where she eats
anything she fancies, including a tablecloth as the men sit
down enjoying a cuppa and laughing.

SOLDIER #1
Don't know if I can get used to
this!

SOLDIER #2
What a hot cuppa?

SOLDIER #1
No sitting on something that
ain't wet!

Everyone roars with laughter.

SOLDIER #2
And food that doesn't have mold
or bugs and other creatures
crawling all over it.

SOLDIER #3
Or out of it!

SOLDIER #1
And having a bit of grub with our
best girl!

All the men stand and holding their mugs/cups up cheer
Minnie! She whinnies back!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARADE GROUND - MORNING

Sergeant Lee and the men are on drill parade when Minnie
decides to join them and seeks out Sergeant Lee.

Disrupting more than one line of men she finally finds
Sergeant Lee and begins to prod him in the back. There is
so much laughter and disruption that the ADJUTANT decides
to dismiss the parade.

SERGEANT LEE
Minnie the only 'soldier' able to
get us off a drill parade thirty
five minutes before time. We
love you Minnie, you're a great
old gal!

The men crowd around her appreciatively some hand her candy
bars, chocolate bars, sugar cubes. She eat it all and
kicks up her heels in delight!

EXT. CHINDITS' GROUP - DAY

Calvert and his men are enjoying a game of football when
Calvert goes down with a grimace. He tries to stand up,
but cannot.

As soldiers crowd around him, he guffaws.

CALVERT
Bloody Hell, the Japs couldn't
bring me to heel, but now I've
gone and done it to myself. I
think I've gone and torn my
Achilles'. Damn, blast, bugger!

His men pick him up and carry him over to the medical tent.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - ENGLAND

Calvert lies in a bed his Achilles heel wrapped and held up by traction equipment.

He looks out over the lawn of the grounds and watches an RAF plane do loops and manoeuvres.

A tear rolls down his cheek and we see him crumple a piece of paper held in his left hand.

CLOSE on Official Order..."We are saddened to tell you of the disbanding of the Chindits units. As of this date, they will no longer exist".

As he lies back a NURSE enters carrying a tray with pills and a syringe on it.

NURSE

Ready for your shot, Brigadier?

CALVERT

Wish it were a real shot... whiskey or a bullet.

NURSE

Come on Brigadier. Things are always darkest before the dawn. I believe good news is coming your way. If the scuttle butt is to be heeded.

CALVERT

What could possibly be good after the bloody Curry Colonels have had their say and the Chindits have been disbanded! They decided it would be more feasible to transform the Chindits into the Airborne Division in India.

NURSE

They probably had their reasons.

CALVERT

Bloody right. They said that owing to losing so many who were repatriated after four years of non stop service overseas they wouldn't have enough men left. Bloody desk Colonels, my men would have stayed on indefinitely given the chance.

NURSE

What about their families?

CALVERT

We were a family, never had a better one!

CUT BACK TO COURT SCENE:

INT. COURT ROOM

The room is silent as Griffith-Jones wraps up his defense.

GRIFFITH-JONES

To win wars the victor needs soldiers like Calvert. I know whose side I'd want to be on, brave men leading from the front. In two years of leadership and tactical intelligence that seemed destined to carry him to the very top. He was dubbed "Mad Mike" because of his habit of laughing out loud at moments of greatest danger. His intelligence officer Colonel Wood said of him. "None of us in experience, prestige or personality came anywhere near him." This verdict therefore, is at best unsafe, and at worst a grave injustice. Brigadier Calvert is now thirty-nine years old. His life is the Army. Take that and his life is no longer. Do not send him into oblivion. You cannot find this soldier guilty. Brigadier Calvert gave his life and soul to the Chindit operations when neither side wanted to know about these soldiers. No one cared. Apart from a few men, including Churchill, they were the forgotten army, forsaken. Gentlemen do not forsake this man in his hour of need. And remember this, these boys, for some reason have conspired together to give this horrible evidence against this distinguished British army officer.

As Griffith Jones returns to his table and Calvert's side everyone rises as the Judge raises his gavel and brings it down on its stand.

BRIG. MORGAN
The court is closed for the
consideration of the finding.

CUT TO:

INT. GRUENER JAEGER BAR - NIGHT

FRANZ the owner is at the bar, looking at the day's edition
of 'Bohme Zeitung'.

HANZ
That's the reason we haven't seen
him. The British Army kicked him
out, the poor man. You must have
told them something.

CARL
Nothing, I promise.

HANZ
You don't get court martialled
for nothing. It says indecent
assault! What's the matter with
you?

CARL
We signed a statement.

HANZ
You can hardly speak German, so
how the hell do you know what you
signed?

CARL
We don't. It was in English!
They told us they would drop the
charges about the guns we'd
stolen from his flat. So we
signed.

HANZ
Oh my God, what have you idiots
done? The man is innocent!

ON SCREEN : MANY YEARS LATER

INT. LONDON PUB - DAY

Calvert sits alone at a table by a window.

A man ALBERT DUNN enters and looks around. Dunn recognizes
Calvert and walks over to him.

DUNN
Mr. Calvert?

CALVERT

Yes. Please call me Mike. No-one's called me mister for years. You are Dunn?

Dunn notes Calvert's glass is empty.

DUNN

You can do with another. With ice I believe?

CALVERT

Yes. Thank you.

Dunn returns with a double for Calvert and a Guinness for himself.

CALVERT

From what you said on the phone, you seem to know a lot about me.

DUNN

Special Investigation Branch knows a great deal about a lot of people without their knowledge Mike. I retired a couple of years ago. Gives me time to fish.

CALVERT

The real kind or t'other?!

They both laugh.

CALVERT

So what did you want to see an old soldier about? Presumably you were not in Burma?

DUNN

North Africa. Not so rough as Burma.

CALVERT

Don't tell me you want to write my life story!

DUNN

Afraid not Mike, but someone will sometime. Your two books are already considered the best on the Burma campaign.

CALVERT

You've read them?

DUNN

Yes. Prisoners of Hope is a classic. As opposed to Kirby's biased account. That man should never have made Sergeant, let alone a General. But that's not why I rang Mike.

Pausing, Dunn swigs down some Guinness.

DUNN

Gruener Jaeger. I don't like opening such a wound. But my conscience wouldn't let me keep quiet about it any longer.

CALVERT

Please Mr. Dunn, it's dead and buried, but it still haunts me every single night and most of my days.

DUNN

It was a put-up job Mike. You were set up.

FLASHBACK :

Static lettering

November 1951

BRITISH ARMY BARRACKS - SOLTAU - GERMANY

INTERIOR - OFFICERS' MESS - NIGHT

Calvert's drinking with several NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICERS.

CALVERT

God after just one month here. I don't think I'll ever be happy in this bloody European weather again.

1ST OFFICER

You mean you prefer that sultry heat in Burma sir? (Laughs)

CALVERT

Certainly. It just happens my innards and guts do not. I find a wee dram keeps the fauna in their right place. Mind you the liver takes a hammering. From what I heard you say, I take it you do not see the army as a career these days?

2ND OFFICER

It's a case of having to do it sir. Perhaps if the pay structure equaled what we can make in Civy Street, it may be in the running. But as it is, life in Civy Street pays better. Apart from which with the nuclear age upon us. Just what will be the pattern of future wars?

CALVERT

Soldiers on the ground will always be needed, and the SAS Regiment's role in all future warfare is paramount. Well gentlemen, I've had enough and mess life is pretty boring. There's a decent pub in Soltau - 'Gruener Jaeger', join me there tomorrow.

2ND OFFICER:

Officers don't go there sir. Small-scale black market in cigarettes, tea, coffee, sugar, and clothes anything stamped NAFFl on it. A place for 'has-beens' and scrubbers I am told.

CALVERT

Down to earth bloody people I find them. I'm possibly a bit of a joke down there, but I don't care. This place is like a bloody morgue.

ON SCREEN: MARCH 1952

INTERIOR - GRUENER JAEGER - NIGHT

EIGHT GERMAN teenagers talk with their leader CARL.

CARL

The war's been over seven years, it's gonna be years before the Germans have enough food and cigarettes again. I reckon the British Army camp's a good bet. That officer who comes in here! We can keep him drinking whilst Heinz and Gunther raid his flat.

INTERIOR - CALVERT'S FLAT - NIGHT

Calvert is asleep. A half empty whisky is on a bedside table. CARL, HEINZ with JACOB climb through the lounge window.

CARL
See, I told you he'd be drunk.
(Whispers) Close that bedroom door. Then we can switch this table lamp on.

Quietly they begin searching for anything

Several minutes later, Calvert in dressing gown staggers into the lounge.

CALVERT
What the bloody hell do you want!
Who the hell do you think you are?

Calvert moves toward the door, blocking an escape, not knowing in his stupor that another window is open. He manages to catch the last burglar HEINZ.

CALVERT
It's you! I've seen you in the bar. Have you nothing better to do than rob people.

Calvert opens the door. Heinz dashes out. Calvert slams the door, returns to bed. Where he gulps some whisky.

CALVERT
That's all the bloody thanks one gets for helping the bastards out.

INTERIOR - SOLTAU POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A military POLICEMAN Sergeant JOHNSON with Sergeant DUNN from Special Investigation Branch are talking to the duty GERMAN policemen GUSTAVE.

JOHNSON
Here you are Sergeant! Some cigarettes for you and your wife, and sweets for the children.

He hands a parcel of goodies to the duty policeman.

JOHNSON
You charged and arrested some boys last week for stealing from a British officer.

GUSTAVE

Yes. Bloody criminals, tied up with the communists, they don't know any better. They're always in trouble. They hate you British.

JOHNSON

We'd like to talk to them if you don't mind.

GUSTAVE

You want me to translate? They don't speak much English.

INT. GERMAN POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Johnson and Dunn with Gustave, sit opposite CARL, HEINZ, JACOB, LOTHAR, EGON and HORST.

JOHNSON

Sure, you want for anything boys? Cigarettes, here have these, there's more where they came from. Providing you cooperate with us, then there's chocolate, some clothes, for your mother, things like that. Now, the officer you robbed, you've seen him at the Gruener Jaeger. You thought he is a soft touch? A bit queer maybe?

CARL

He's okay, not full of himself like the other British officers we see around. He gets drunk and buys everyone a drink. We think he's a bit of a laugh.

JOHNSON

That night you took a pullover, some money, his identity card, a gun and ammunition is that right?

CARL

That's all we took, honest.

JOHNSON

That gun and the ammunition has not been found. If we don't find it, you will have to pay for it, and they cost a lot of money. You got that sort of money? Then we get it from your parents. Have they got that sort of money?

All the boys look visibly scared.

JOHNSON

Well, there is a way out of all this deep trouble you are in, and believe me it is deep, ain't that right Gustave?

GUSTAVE

Five years at least.

JOHNSON

Tell you what boys, and we'll see you all right. Did you ever see this man naked?

CARL

No, that night, he came from his bedroom wearing his pyjamas and a dressing gown.

JOHNSON

Really, was it tied up or open? And he grabbed hold of you didn't he?

CARL

No. We were too quick, he was drunk.

HEINZ

He caught me! (Excited-trying to impress)

JOHNSON

Really, then what did he do?

HEINZ

He opened the door and I bolted.

JOHNSON

That's not what he told us Heinz. He says you grabbed his dick. That's what he said. So you're in more trouble for assaulting a British officer. Now that's deep shit boy, really deep. You understand what I am saying do yer? (Heinz starts crying.)

Hearing the noise, another duty POLICEMAN calls through the door.

POLICEMAN V.O.

Everything okay in there?

JOHNSON

Yes, everything's fine, the boy got a bit upset. Nothing to worry about thank you. It's okay. (Calming him down) We can prove he's lying, and it didn't happen like that.

HEINZ

How do you do that?

JOHNSON

We'll make out he's a puffter, and he assaulted you, Carl, and your friends, it's that simple. You, your Mum and Dad don't have to pay for the gun, and the ammunition you stole, plus the other stuff. The British Army will not bring charges against any of you.

Their terror relieved. Dunn looks on in amazement.

JOHNSON

Now each of you just sign this statement. And you will never see us again.

INT. CALVERT'S FLAT - DAY

Calvert's under house arrest. An MP-carrying a tray knocks on his flat door waits a second then enters.

MP

Here we are sir, some sustenance. It isn't Officers' mess grub. So I smuggled in a bottle of your favorite Malt for you.

CALVERT

I need some decent food Sergeant. Not bloody whisky.

MP

I'll leave the bottle anyway sir, and I'll speak to the cook.

For the next 4 weeks before his court martial Calvert is dosed with a bottle of whiskey, plus ten bottles of strong German beer a day. So when he walks in to the Courtroom, he is almost drunk. He looks ill through lack of any decent food. During this time his Lawyer visits him.

CALVERT

So what exactly is your background?

(MORE)

CALVERT□ (cont'd)
 More to the point why wasn't I
 allowed to choose my own
 representative?

GRIFFITHS-JONES
 I am experienced in prosecuting
 indecency charges. And I don't
 know, you'll have to ask the
 Judge Advocate General.

CALVERT
 What bloody confessions? I told
 you, we picked up the youths
 whilst driving back to camp. It
 was a ragging snowstorm outside.
 I told my driver to stop; they
 were near frozen to death. They
 told my driver they had nowhere
 to go. So I told him they could
 get warmed up at my flat and then
 they'd have to go. At my flat I
 gave them a Gin, and shortly
 after they left. I'd been in
 Germany a week and couldn't speak
 the language. Apparently the
 boys were from a reform school.

GRIFFITHS-JONES
 You never saw them again?

CALVERT
 Yes when they returned late one
 night, broke in and began
 stealing things. I woke up,
 chased them away, but I
 recognized them. That's the last
 I saw of them. When I checked I
 found my gun and some ammunition
 was missing. I informed the
 guardhouse immediately. One of
 them spent fourteen days inside.

Griffith-Jones looks startled.

GRIFFITH-JONES
 Well I don't know what to say,
 I'll have to prepare my defense
 from every angle imaginable, God
 only know what the prosecution
 will come up with. Especially as
 it's a case of indecent assault!

CALVERT
 Prosecuting! (Shocked) and you
 are defending me with an indecent
 assault charge. So what chance
 do you think I stand?

GRIFFITHS-JONES
I'm afraid not good Brigadier.

 CALVERT
Surely my driver can give
evidence?

 GRIFFITHS-JONES
I don't intend to call him as a
witness.

 CALVERT
Why not for God's sake, or rather
mine?

 GRIFFITHS-JONES
He's been posted, and is on four
weeks' leave. No one knows where
he is. But they are trying to
find him.

 CALVERT
Don't count on it then, as the
Americans would say 'this is a
frame-up'. Those bastard Curry-
Colonels who couldn't handle me
in Burma have set me up.

END FLASHBACK

 DUNN V.O.
Special Branch was told to get
every single detail about you. I
was not directly involved, merely
a messenger gathering
information. But it soon began
to stink, and when I told my
superior I was immediately taken
off the case and booted down back
to general duties. Three years
later I took early retirement.
It's been haunting me ever since.
The youths who accused you
retracted their testimony even
before the verdict was made.
Though the Judge Advocate General
refused to accept their
retraction on procedural grounds.

Calvert stops drinking, lowers his glass on to the table.

 CALVERT
 (Calmly)
Mr. Dunn. If this is some sort
of joke.
 (MORE)

CALVERT (cont'd)
It's in the most evil taste. I
have nothing to say. So if
you'll excuse me.

Calvert gets up to leave.

DUNN
There was no easy way to drop it
on you Mike. Believe me. I've
been over it a thousand times.

Calvert sits down again, in total disbelief.

CALVERT
My God. What the hell did I do
to deserve that?

Dunn gets up and walks to the bar. As he waits for service
he turns, seeing Calvert with his head in his hands, he
orders another double.

DUNN
There was no other way Mike.

CALVERT
I am delighted that you had the
guts, you would've made a good
Chindit! And you've made an old
soldier very happy, and angry.
Nothing I can do about it now of
course. (Resigned) Or for that
matter about Wingate. The
establishment destroyed both of
us. But I tell you what. No one
else could have beaten the Japs.
Despite Kirby's hatchet job on
him, General Wingate had no
peers. The only soldier who
could conceive the plan, train
the force, carry out operations
and inspire his men in battle.
Many good Generals made their
name excelling at only one of
these tasks. None managed all
four. But then none had the
quality of this man. When we're
all dead and buried, of all the
reputations of British Generals,
Wingate's will grow and outlast
most.

DUNN
Great loss to the Army.

Dunn sinks the last of his Guinness.

DUNN

Only you or your lawyer can try
and get the verdict changed.

CALVERT

And how long will that take?
Bloody years I imagine. I don't
know that I want it all raked up
again.

The both stand and Calvert clasps Dunn's hand in both of
his and smiles.

CALVERT

Than you again Mr. Dunn.

DUNN

It's a pleasure to have met you
Mike. I have to go. Good luck.

Calvert sits swirling his drink in his glass.

FLASHBACK MONTAGE

- Calvert shaking hands with the nurse at the hospital
where he had been treated for his torn Achilles.
- Calvert being appointed to command the Special Air
Service Brigade, made up of British, Belgian and French
units.
- Calvert leading his men on Operation Amherst in
Holland.
- Calvert being awarded several Belgian and French
decorations.
- At war's end Calvert as a Lieutenant Colonel spends
time with the Allied Military government in Trieste - 1945.
- 1950 Calvert is appointed to raise Malayan Scouts
(SAS) Regiment to fight the Communists.

END MONTAGE OF SHOTS

INT. SAS HOSPITAL - HEREFORD - DAY

Calvert is recuperating, sitting sipping a cup of tea, as
Wood surprises him.

WOOD

And how's the writing coming
along Mike?

CALVERT

It's a flog, all a slow handwritten job, then it needs typing, but I'm enjoying it enormously. Surprising how much one got through in all those years. And how it all comes vividly back.

WOOD

I would have liked to have met Wingate.

CALVERT

Not many know Mountbatten offered him the rank of Lieutenant General, but he declined until his 1944 operation was proved. And now every time I look at a picture of General Slim being knighted by Lord Wavell at Imphal... I see the ghost of Wingate present.

WOOD

Wingate would not have liked to have seen you like this Mike. You're in a self-destruct groove. Conquer your demons Mike, it's never too late. You must have the constitution of Flossy!

CALVERT

(Laughing

Apparently she's still plodding around Burma. Let's be frank Robert, the sooner I'm dead and buried the better. It can't come soon enough for me. But I'll die an angry bitter man. If there's a chance I can return and haunt those bastards I'm bloody well going to try.

WOOD

There's a growing ban of ex-soldiers angrier than you about Wingate and yourself. We were all too damn tired to realize how bloody dangerous it was. I don't think they'd try that today, even with the advance in technology and laser guided weapons. Incredible when one thinks about it after all these years.

CALVERT

Yea, remember Kohima? We had the American pilots directed by the RAF officers on the ground dropping 500 pound bombs 25 yards ahead of us both in attack and defence. Scared the shit out of the Japs.

Both laugh like mad.

WOOD

Mike I'll try and look in daily, if you feel like a swig, go for a dip. See you later. How about another book? How about the Malaysian crisis?

FLASHBACK

EXT. MALAYSIAN JUNGLE PATH - DAY

Calvert, sitting next to his DRIVER are slowly inching their way along doing reconnaissance work. All is quiet.

CALVERT

Step on it, would you.

As the driver revs the engine and they take off they turn a corner on the jungle path only to have their jeep's bonnet raked by machine-gun fire.

Before the Jeep comes to a stop, both Calvert and his Driver are out of it and in a ditch. They are peeking over the edge when a grenade is lobbed at them. Calvert dives for it and catches it with his bare hands, as the driver holds on to his helmet with both hands.

Calvert and the Driver look at the grenade which still has the pin in it and is wrapped in raffia holding a piece of paper.

Calvert slowly unwraps the raffia and opens up the note.

CLOSE ON NOTE: "How do you do Mr. Calvert?"

CALVERT

(Laughing hysterically)
Don't worry, it's from Yen and he is not about to polish me off this easily.

DRIVER

Who in Hell is Yen?

CALVERT

Someone I trained in Hong Kong
and is now on the other side
fighting for the commies! Come
on back into the Jeep, best be on
our way.

DRIVER

What if he throws a real live
grenade?

CALVERT

Trust me, he won't.

DRIVER

I trust you, it's the Commy
bastard I don't trust.

CALVERT

Come on, I'll drive.

DRIVER

He still might kill us!

CALVERT

(Yelling)

It's you Yen. Come on out and
fight, man-to-man.

Calvert gets in the Jeep manages to get it started and
signals for the driver to get in, which he does
reluctantly.

DRIVER

Soon as I get back to base I'm
asking for a transfer!

CALVERT

Suit yourself, but you won't have
any fun!

DRIVER

You call this bloody fun?

CALVERT

Well the British Army and the
politicians call it a crisis.

DRIVER

It's a bloody war.

CALVERT

Yes I know, a bloody full scale
war, but with the Korean cock-up
barely over the politicians and
the Army prefer to call it a
crisis.

DRIVER

Jesus Christ... so how did you end up here?

CALVERT

Well the Chindits had been disbanded, you have heard of them haven't you?

DRIVER

Damn right, bloody legends.

CALVERT

Yes well, when General Sir John Harding called me about this 'crisis' I reminded him it would need men like the Chindits only they had been disbanded. So he said "Balls, tell you what, let's get the wedge in the door. How about the Malayan Scouts - SAS Regiment. So here I am again.

The Driver looks at Calvert as though he is insane, especially when Calvert emits a loud laugh!

CALVERT

Fighting is an attitude of mind, a determination to take war into the enemy camp, an acceptance or risk and seizing the initiative.

END FLASHBACK

ON SCREEN : NOVEMBER 1952

EXT. MELBOURNE AIRPORT - AUSTRALIA - DAY

Calvert emerges from the airport formalities. JIM FRANCIS and BILL FORSYTHE approach him.

FRANCIS

Mike Calvert?

CALVERT

Yes, that's me.

FRANCIS

I'm Jim Francis this is Bill Forsythe. You have a good flight?

CALVERT

No, bloody awful.

FRANCIS

We've booked you into a nearby hotel, so we'll drop you off there. After that I'm afraid you're on your own.

CALVERT

What do you mean 'on my own'?

Francis shows Mike press cuttings about his court martial.

FRANCIS

Shell petroleum can no longer offer you the job.

CALVERT

I don't believe it. Bloody fine time to tell me. That's all lies for God's sake ma. Those bastards stitched me up. I want to see the company's top executive and put my case before him.

FRANCIS

That's impossible, we are here to offer you an alternative post in Iraq.

CALVERT

You mean it's Iraq, or no bloody job!

FRANCIS

That's about the size of it Mike. Take it or leave it.

Mike picks up his two battered suitcases.

CALVERT

I'll leave it. How long am I booked in for?

FRANCIS

You're paid up for three nights, after that you're on your own.

CALVERT

So, I've traveled around the world for sweet FA?

FRANCIS

Shell paid for it.

CALVERT

Only one bloody way though.

FRANCIS

It's out of our hands.

He screws up the cuttings, tosses them in a bin.

FORSYTHE

Look mate, how about a drink?
Come on you could do with one.
Do you know anyone here?

CALVERT

That's the best thing I've heard
today. I know a soldier from my
Burma days promised I'd buy him a
drink in his favorite Melbourne
pub. But he lives in Gippsland.

FRANCIS

A long way to come for a pint
that's for sure.

CALVERT

Yes, great soldier. Jim Howarth,
he's a farmer.

FRANCIS

They've been having a hard time
down there. What'll it be?

FORSYTHE

Whisky. Don't think I'm being
nosy Mike, but how are you off
for cash?

CALVERT

They gave me 20 pounds for
expenses. I've got a few left.

FORSYTHE

We had a whip-round, here's a
couple of hundred to tide you
over. With your qualifications
you should be all right in
getting a job. If you get
pushed, here's my brother's
number. He looks after workers
at the docks, you never know, it
may come in handy.

CALVERT

General Slim who was in Burma is
The Governor General in one of
your states, he knows me well.
I'll get in touch to see if he
can make some suggestions.

FRANCIS

Gee, Mike they don't come much higher mate. So how come all this bull shit in Germany?

CALVERT

It's a long story, partly my fault, because I like a drink. But the indecent assault charge is ridiculous.

FORSYTHE

Well if looks are anything to go by Mike, you don't look like one or two of the Arse-bandits at Shell.

CALVERT

Thanks. I'll have another.

FRANCIS

Nothing you can do about it then Mike?

CALVERT

Nothing at all.

FORSYTHE

Say, was it you who knocked over a few Japs in the war, my folks were talking about it recently; some Auzzies they know were there.

CALVERT

The Chindits...

FORSYTHE

That's the name!

CALVERT

I came to Australia in 1940 to train the first Commandos at Wilson's promontory; it's now the SAS. But all that and the years' fighting meant nothing in Germany. Adapting to Civvy life is not easy, when most of one's adult life has been fighting and killing.

FRANCIS

Mike, it's been great meeting you, but we have to go. Good luck, you deserve heaps. Good on ya mate!

ON SCREEN : 10 YEARS LATER - REHAB CENTER - QUEENSLAND

INT. BROUGHTON HALL - DAY

A refuge for alcoholics.

A young intern Doctor GREENE talks to the senior consultant JOHN ARMSTRONG about Mike. Greene hands Armstrong Mike's file.

ARMSTRONG
Brigadier Mike Calvert, here?

GREENE
You know this drunk?

ARMSTRONG
Treated him in India, in World
War Two. Take me to him.

As they walk to a ward, through a long sunny corridor.

ARMSTRONG
How long has Mike been here?

GREENE
About six weeks just after you
went on holiday.

Armstrong is shocked to see Calvert looking so pale and ill.

Calvert gets up from a chair as the doctors approach him.

ARMSTRONG
How, where, when... I mean when
did you come to Australia?

CALVERT
A long story John. Been here now
almost ten years. And you?

ARMSTRONG
In 46, married with three
nippers. You?

Some time later..

ARMSTRONG
Mike we can do no more for you.
From here on, unless you pull
yourself together, and soon, you
will die. What the Japanese
failed to do, you are doing
unaided with remarkable
efficiency.

(MORE)

ARMSTRONG (cont'd)

I make it a practice to read to our patients their report. It's good therapy. Ready?

Mike nods shaking.

ARMSTRONG

Written by Doctor Greene. He is physically grosser than in 1957, and his psychopathic behavior has continued unremittingly with frequent changes of job, alcoholism, and dependency on his former military colleagues who still try to help him out with jobs. His last job at Warragumba Dam, obtained for him by Brigadier Mcarthe-Onslow resulted in another drinking spree and then into Broughton Hall. He has no money and his plans for the future are quite unrealistic. Despite the precariousness and degradation of his present way of life he rains arrogant and full of shallow rationalizations for his behavior. The rehabilitation of such a grossly psychopathic personality will be a Herculean task. I strongly recommend for institutional treatment of his alcoholism in England.

Removing specs Armstrong looks at Mike.

CALVERT

You don't pull your punches. This comes as a shock.

ARMSTRONG

Then it's worked. I make it a practice to read to our patients their reports, it's good therapy. However, I will believe you only if you stop killing yourself. Failing that I have to brand you a liar, is that what you want? Because there is no hint of such a characteristic in your military record. A previous Governor General reckons you were an outstanding fearless leader. It seems to me a travesty to chuck it all down the drain. Because that's exactly where it's going.

CALVERT

You certainly shoot straight from the hip.

ARMSTRONG

But we're only firing blanks Mike.

CALVERT

I do realize that without your help I'd be dead by now, so please don't think I'm being ungrateful Doc, but I'm sure you'd like to see the back of me. When can I leave?

ARMSTRONG

You can walk out of here whenever you wish. You're free to go anytime Mike. You've live in Australia for 10 years. So get another job, save the cash and get back to England. If you don't you'll have a pauper's grave in the local bone yard, and if we don't meet again, I wish you good luck and good fortune. G'day.

ON SCREEN: SOME YEARS LATER - A LONDON HOSPITAL

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - NIGHT

A MATRON and Doctor Simpson, from Burma, check patients in a Victorian hospital ward decorated for Christmas. As the Matron explains the patient's condition they stop, the Doctor looks down at the man.

MATRON

This man was admitted this evening. The local police brought him in.

DR. SIMPSON

Good God! It's Calvert, what on earth's happened to him?

MATRON

According to the police he sleeps rough around the area.

DR. SIMPSON

I see. He's sleeping it off. But keep me up to date with his man, Matron.

MATRON

You know him Doctor?

DR. SIMPSON

Yes I do, probably better than anyone. He was one of Britain's finest soldiers, nicknamed Mad Mike.

MATRON

Who?

DR. SIMPSON

Chindits were men who fought in Burma. The forgotten Army, and it looks like the Army has forgotten him.

MATRON

He doesn't look mad to me. On the contrary, although drunk, when we undressed him and got him into bed, he was quite the gentleman.

DR. SIMPSON

That's just like Mike. But what on earth's he doing here, in this deplorable state? Before I leave give me any information about him you can.

MATRON

I can't I'm afraid Doctor. He was in no state to give any particulars. Why not try the police station? They brought him in. You didn't tell me his surname.

DR. SIMPSON

Calvert. Brigadier Michael Calvert. If it hadn't been for the bunch of jealous senior officers, he'd have a Victoria Cross!

INT. POLICE STATION - FRONT DESK - NIGHT

Doctor Simpson is talking to the DUTY SERGEANT.

SERGEANT

Here we are Doctor, Mr. Michael Calvert, a perfect gentleman of no fixed abode. Never been in serious trouble.

(MORE)

SERGEANT (cont'd)

Seems he likes a drink, we've put him up for the night so-to-speak on countless occasions. When it gets nippy outside mainly during the winter months. He's on social security, no family; at least he hasn't mentioned any. No contact phone numbers or addresses. Seems Mr. Calvert is a lonely man, sad business when there's no one to care for him. He's at the hospital I take it?

DR. SIMPSON

Yes, that's right.

SERGEANT

You know him Doctor?

DR. SIMPSON

Very well, we served together in Burma. As far as I knew he was still in the Army. So how did he get here, and like this?

SERGEANT

Mystery to me sir. Is there anything else I can do for you?

DR. SIMPSON

Yes Sergeant there is. Here's my card with my home number. Please make certain if he turns up here again, that who ever is on duty rings me, and my wife or I will come and pick him up.

SERGEANT

That's decent of you sir. We'll make certain. Good night, sir, and a Happy Christmas.

DR. SIMPSON

Compliments of the season to you Sergeant, and thank you.

INT. DOCTOR SIMPSON'S HOME - NIGHT

Mike, Dr. Simpson with his wife PHYLLIS are dining.

PHYLLIS

Mike, it's a pleasure to have you with us. I'll leave you two to talk while I make some coffee.

DR. SIMPSON

Wouldn't have it any other way Mike. So tell us what happened.

CALVERT

Court martialled, no pension,
nothing from the Army except
disgrace.

DR. SIMPSON

How about Colonel Johnson you
were good friends I recall?

CALVERT

I thought so too. He helped a
great deal at the hearing, even
got the Germans to retract their
statements. I rang him several
times, but he was always out,
never bothered to contact me. So
I took the hint. Eventually he
wrote telling me not to bother
him again.

DR. SIMPSON

Didn't you have three brothers?

CALVERT

Yes, they shunned me also.
Returning from a ten-year stint
in Australia, I received a letter
in Alexandria. It was short,
sweet and came as a shock.
Johnson's was more to the point
and brief. 'We don't want you
back in England'.

DR. SIMPSON

Incredible Mike. So who were
these soldiers at HQ?

CALVERT

There was a host of them. Major-
General Kirby for instance. His
unofficial account of the Burma
campaign destroyed General
Charles Orde-Wingate's
reputation. He tore the man to
shreds. To cap it all, Wingate
refused promotion to General
until the last campaign.
Unfortunately he died in that
plane crash. So they gave his
widow the pension of his lower
rank. When unknown to himself,
he was already a General. It had
been stamped, waiting to be
posted to London.

DR. SIMPSON

It was Lord Wavell who some years ago said, 'The British Army is the most over-administered in the world.' No doubt it's even worse now.

CALVERT

(Laughing

I wrote a lengthy letter to them ages ago. No doubt adding another nail in my coffin. Titled 'Kicking against those pricks.'

DR. SIMPSON

It's always struck me Mike you did many things just to wind them up!

CALVERT

John, you have to admit most of them fully deserved it. We were to help Stilwell with his Chinese forces if you remember, take Mogaung and Myitkyina and an area south, in order to allow communications through to China by road and thus keep China in the war. It's not what the Chindits were trained for. An attack like this is a job for normal army, complete with artillery and armored support. The only bloody artillery we had was mortars. The nearest British vehicles were hundreds of miles away. We were the Chindits, the guerrillas, and the marauders. One minute at the enemy's throat, the next looking for another target. We've sat on Jap railway lines, ambushed Jap patrols, and road convoys, raided their camps and supply depots and skipped away again. Even barged in on a Jap meeting. And here we are, exhausted after four months behind enemy lines, depleted in numbers by wounds, sickness and death, and with orders from a bitchy American general to take Mogaung. Wingate was right when he said "We'll get into the enemy's guts and cause havoc". And we did, much to the Japs' surprise.

DR. SIMPSON
Mike, is drink the reason you
were in hospital?

CALVERT
It's that obvious?

DR. SIMPSON
More so to a Doctor.

CALVERT
It seems to have got the better
of me.

DR. SIMPSON
If you don't mind me asking Mike,
how can you afford it?

CALVERT
I boost the meager social
security cheque with a bit of
gardening.

DR. SIMPSON
Not much about this time of year
Mike.

CALVERT
I ended up in Sussex during the
summer, and potted around for a
few retired people there.

DR. SIMPSON
And where do you live?

CALVERT
Anywhere I can. Many people give
me a room for a week or two.
When I feel I'm an imposition, I
make up a story that I have to
move on. Perhaps they are
relieved.

DR. SIMPSON
There are many fine treatment
centers for alcoholics. I know
an excellent one in Basingstoke.

CALVERT
What a state I've reached.
Broke, an alcoholic, no family,
few friends, living on social
security.

DR. SIMPSON

Mike all the soldiers who fought with you in Burma have no doubt that you and Wingate kicked the Japanese out of Burma. You and Wingate were both more appreciated by those you led than by those in authority.

CALVERT

So who won? I seem to have lost my battle. Don't get me wrong I'm not feeling sorry for myself. Drink is a bastard.

DR. SIMPSON

You're a soldier Mike. After that period in Europe blowing up all manner of things...the Army was your family; thank goodness for us all in Burma. A civilian life doesn't work for you, it's foreign. The engineering degree at Cambridge put you in good stead for an active Army life. The posting to a German backwater is astonishing. Perhaps Kirby played a part. An absolute waste for a man with your guerilla warfare knowledge. You must be the world's expert.

CALVERT

The court martial was a nightmare, worse than anything the Japs could throw at me. I was fed beer and whisky copiously during the month under arrest, so that I deteriorated. I was allowed to wear my medals and both Viscount Slim and Earl Mountbatten told me to call myself Brigadier. In the French Army I'm a Brigadier General. Many people seemed certain I was framed. I did not improve my prospects by becoming an alcoholic for those ten years in Australia. But it's no good crying over spilt milk.

DR. SIMPSON

There are many of us Mike, who want to clear your and Wingate's names.

CALVERT

You'll have to wait until I'm dead. In any case such matters take years to resolve, I don't think I could stand the strain. Could turn me to drink!

DR. SIMPSON

So why were your brothers like that?

CALVERT

Army establishment figures, all senior officers in the Royal Engineers. They felt I'd disgraced and let the family down. That hurt more than anything the Japs flung at me. Mind you I was the youngest, and sent from India to school in England aged six. So I never had a normal family life and environment. Perhaps it's that which has made me what I am.

DR. SIMPSON

It's a good sign, being utterly frank and ruthless, good to get it off your chest. Tomorrow you'll come with me to my center at Basingstoke and meet all the other alcoholics. I have a university professor, a dustman, and a prostitute, a well-known actor. People from all walks of life, and interesting bunch, with a great sense of humor. You could do with a hangover free year, and pretty quick I'd say.

ON SCREEN: 1979 - AN AA CENTRE - NEAR LONDON

INT. DAY

Calvert is finishing his talk to a group of alcoholics.

AA #1

So how much did you drink Mike?

CALVERT

At it's height, dozen bottles of beer plus a bottle of whisky per day.

AA #2

So what made you stop?

CALVERT

A doctor in London whose wife and two children were killed in a road accident was treating me. This man was back in his surgery the following day, treating and talking to drunken bums like me. It shook me to my senses, what's left of them that is. After such a personal tragedy, this man could still face life, so I asked myself, "Why in God's name couldn't I kick my habit"?

AA #1

Who was the doctor?

CALVERT

Doctor Simpson's son.

AA #2

And things have been pretty good ever since?

CALVERT

If you're asking if I still crave a drink, damn right I do. I have a friend who locks me in a room with two buckets. Well ladies and gentlemen, I have some more people to see, so I'll be off, and see you again next week.

CUT TO:

INT. CIVIL ENGINEERS' OFFICE - DAY

Calvert is with the boss. It's his first day.

JAMESON

So Mike, we don't stand on ceremony here. Christian names all around, no exceptions.

CALVERT

Good, I hope I can live up to the Simpsons' expectations.

JAMESON

What say we give each other six months'; you may not like this office life.

CALVERT

And if I don't fit in, I'm out?

JAMESON

Far from it. Good men with your experience are hard to find.

CALVERT

You mean guerilla warfare and explosives?

JAMESON

So we'll start a demolition division. You can head it up.

Six months later.

JAMESON

It's not that you're not pulling your weight. I firmly believe you've tried your damndest to get to grips with civilian life. Your work is O.K. But you're heart's not in it I'm afraid. Do you agree?

JAMESON

A fair assessment Charles.

JAMESON

I've a good pal at County Hall, he's looking for a man with your experience, most of the work is outside, then writing reports, and you've a secretary to do all that. With one of these new Japanese recorders you don't have to write. What do you think?

CALVERT

Kind of you to think about me.

JAMESON

Listen I can call him now and you can arrange a meeting?

CALVERT

Fine, thanks again.

INT. PUB - DAY

Calvert sits looking at his drink. He swirls the glass, finally pushes it away, and stands to leave.

From behind the bar, ex-Chindit Sergeant Major Blain the Publican, sees Calvert's glass remains almost full of whisky.

BLAIN
You alright Brigadier?

Calvert taps the handkerchief in his breast pocket. Looks at Blain and smiles.

CALVERT
Sergeant Major. I never felt better.

He walks out of the pub, his back straight, his step firm.

FADE OUT ON:

It's twilight, we see a LONE Eagle winging his way back to his eerie, and have an eagle's eye view of a gathering mist shrouding the jungle.

At ground level we see soiled headgear, floppy hats, marking the graves of two fallen Chindits. The hats are perched on a 12 inch high wood cross.

SHWEDAGON PAGODA - YANGON - BURMA

A photograph of Major-General Orde-Wingate from (front cover Peter Mead's Bio)

NARRATOR V.O.
Guarding the entrance to the mighty Burmese Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon is a pair of mythical lions. A legend says that Chinthe, or Lion, denotes courage and strength on the ground. Our Commanding Officer, Brigadier Orde-Wingate mispronounced the word as Chindit, and it got stuck in the pages of World War II history. Wingate added the Eagle to the Chindit badge because of its supremacy in the sky. Chindits never die, they go to heaven and regroup. We've already been to hell!

THE END

