

MERRIDAY - NEWS FROM HOME

We follow Lieutenant Caswell as he STRIDES purposefully through the camp. He has a book in his hand. We don't see what it is. He passes a private, seated on a box reading mail.

The private is Giles Merriday. He is quiet. He appears PENSIVE. Sad, almost. By one boot is an opened parcel. A small box, partly concealed by a jumble of brown paper.

Caswell stops, steps back a pace and turns to the private.

CASWELL
(a faint smile)
Ah, Private Merriday.

Merriday looks up. Recognition crosses his features. He straightens up, shoulders square.

MERRIDAY
Sir.

CASWELL
Well done this morning. Bullard told me all about it. Caught your breath yet?

MERRIDAY
(smiles)
Just about ...
(beat)
... sir.

CASWELL
Look, I know you've been busy this morning but I'd like you and Corporal Bullard to join Sergeant Dunbar on a further reconnaissance of jerrie's position.
(pauses)
Your input would be extremely useful. Having been there.

MERRIDAY
(a little downcast)
No problem, sir.

CASWELL
(nods to the parcel)
News from home. And some goodies, too, I gather.

Merriday leans over and PULLS a jar from the box. It has a fabric cover, secured with ribbon.

MERRIDAY

(looks at the jar,
wistfully)

A taste of home, sir. Crab apple
chutney. The wife puts a drop of
rum in it.

(beat)

Sort of takes the edge off.

CASWELL

And the news ... ?

(beat)

Good, I hope.

MERRIDAY

(looks up and purses
his lips)

Generally speaking, sir. You
know how it is.

CASWELL

(sadly)

I do.

MERRIDAY

The wife's brother Tom. Down in
Hounslow. A doodle-bug took out
a house a few doors away.

(beat)

Tom was okay, but he lost all
his windows. Wrecked his
greenhouse.

(beat)

His two young lads ...

(beat)

Well, one of 'em's wettin' the
bed now. He's nine.

Lieutenant Caswell remains SILENT a moment. Unable to comment, perhaps. He REACHES out and places a hand on Merriday's shoulder.

CASWELL

Bad luck.

(pauses)

I gather our RAF boys are
delivering the same to jerry,
but with a whole lot of with
interest.

(beat)

If that's any consolation.

MERRIDAY

(looks up, sadly)

I'm not sure it is, sir. You see, I think of Tom's boys. I mean, it's not their fault, is it? All this.

(beat)

Can't help but wonder how many young German lads're wettin' *their* beds.