

Invasion
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The heavy smoke not only obscured the sight of the battlefield, it was so chokingly dense that it made it hard for Jessup to breathe. The Lieutenant stopped his half crawl to lean against a burned out car while another fit of coughing racked his chest. When it finished he continued his slow progress, dragging his injured leg behind him. The last he had heard there had still been a group of holdouts defending the power station at the harbor. He hoped they had some kind of medic available to them. If not, he was sure he'd lose his leg.

A random gust of wind blew the worst of the smoke away for a few moments giving him a view of what lay ahead, and his breath froze in his throat. One of the huge enemy weapons platforms lifted above the burned out shell of a building. It was festooned with gun turrets which were all tracking back and forth, searching for targets. One stopped, its muzzle pointed directly at him. Within moment all the weapons were trained on him. In a futile display of resistance, Jessup lifted his handgun and emptied it at the mammoth machine. The bullets bounced off without leaving a single mark.

The weapons platform drifted slowly towards the injured man, then settled to the ground, crushing a small office building and several burned out cars in the process. Then a gangway slammed down from its towering side. Jessup cursed himself for wasting his last ammo. If he'd waited, he berated himself, maybe he would have been able to get a few of the bastards before they got him. He tried to stand and run, but his leg buckled and he fell.

He turned, expecting to see the lizard faces of the aliens approaching. Instead he was greeted by a smiling, blonde-haired, teenage boy.

"Come on, there are enemy infantry on the ground in the area." The boy slid an arm around Jessup's shoulders and he found himself spirited into the bowels of the huge enemy ship. He was turned over to a medic who, from the numerous bandages in evidence, was more severely injured than he was himself. He tried to question the man who simply pointed at a heavy bandage across his throat and made hand signs. So the Lieutenant lay back and let the man work on his leg.

The medic finished and stepped away just as a uniformed figure hobbled up. Jessup tried to stand but the man waved him back.

"At ease, Lieutenant. They tell me that you were just picked up. What news do you have?"

Jessup swallowed, noting the bronze eagles on the man's shoulders.

"Well, Colonel. My name is Jessup, I'm from the air combat group off of the carrier Enterprise. We engaged an advancing enemy column in Long Beach yesterday morning, but we might as well have been using water balloons for all the good our ordinance did. They knocked us out of the air like a broom sweeping down cobwebs. I ditched somewhere north of the heaviest action and have been on the ground for a day and a half. I was trying to reach the power station at the harbor. I heard there was still some resistance there."

The colonel shook his head. "There is no power station any longer. Just one hell of a big hole where it was. How many others from your group made it through the attack?"

Jessup let his eyes drop. "I think I'm the only one, sir. I saw at least six other strikes against the enemy by Naval and Marine attack forces. Even one that looked like Air Force fighter bombers. They burned them all right down to dust.
