

FADE IN:

A PILOT'S POV (AERIAL) - DAY

Gliding above the heavens as if in powerless flight, glimpses of a rugged mountainous terrain break through the clouds.

BELOW:

A valley and a forest of trees.

BEYOND:

A beach cloaked in a grey morning stillness.

EXT. ON THE BEACH - DAY

A gentle ocean surf surges over a sandy shore. Bits of debris begin to appear; a helmet, pieces of a torn military uniform. A stream of red, the color of blood, washes onto the sand, like a watercolor running across a page, then flows back out to the sea.

The ethereal silence is broken by an EAR PIERCING SCREAM from a rocket powered mortar shell. A BRIGHT FLASH followed by a TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION as hellfire and ash rain down on the beach.

SUPERIMPOSE:

JUNE 6th, 1944
OPERATION OVERLORD
NORMANDY, FRANCE

EXT. BLOOD, SWEAT, AND FIRE - D-DAY

Against an ARTILLERY BARRAGE of German machine guns, land mines and cannon fire, ALLIED TROOPS and EQUIPMENT surge onto the beach from an ARMADA OF LANDING CRAFT. GUNFIRE tears MEN apart. EXPLOSIONS throw bodies into barbed wire barricades. TRUCKS, TANKS, and ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS roll across the beach. Many are destroyed in their tracks. The SCREAMS of pain from the torn and broken bodies reverberate through the deafening madness. Hour after hour, ship after ship, barrage after barrage, a hundred men dying at one time. BODIES FLOATING lifeless in the sea. Young men lying on the beach; DEAD, WOUNDED and DYING, next to weapons that never had a chance to fire. The devastating carnage of man's mechanized inhumanity, and the utter senselessness of war. Fodder for the guns and the cannons, as STEEL TRACKS grind their way across the beach, churning BLOOD SOAKED sand into dust.

INTO:

EXT. TWO MILITARY HELICOPTERS - DAY (PRESENT)

Spinning rotor blades. Two turbo-jet HELICOPTERS with FRENCH MILITARY MARKINGS fly side by side, eclipsed by the vast uplift of the Pyrenees Mountains of Southern France. Coming upon a clearing, a perilous perch between the jagged rocks and the unforgiving cliffs, the FIRST HELICOPTER touches down.

SUPERIMPOSE:

PIC DU DOULY MOUNTAIN
CENTRAL PYRENEES, FRANCE
PRESENT DAY

EXT. PYRENEES MOUNTAINS - A CLEARING - DAY

The side door of the helicopter slides open and FRENCH MILITARY PERSONNEL jump out in commando style; rotor blades whirling.

The SECOND HELICOPTER touches down. A distinguished ELDERLY STATESMAN (80), a man who we will come to know as a 'young boy' named RENE RUMEAU, climbs out of the helicopter assisted by two FRENCH MILITARY COMMANDOS. He steadies himself with his cane on the uneven ground, followed by an entourage of formal dressed DIGNITARIES and FRENCH MILITARY OFFICERS in full dress uniforms. The entourage makes their way along a prepared path leading to a clearing.

EXT. PIC DU DOULY MOUNTAIN SIDE - DAY

A small well kept GRAVE SITE among the alpine trees, next to what appears to be a pile of rusted WRECKAGE; all that remains of a once mighty four-engine WWII bomber aircraft ravaged by time, the elements, and the heartiest of souvenir scavengers.

GRAVE SITE:

Two FRENCH SOLDIERS place a ceremonial funeral wreath at the base of the monument. The plaque reads:

IN MEMORY OF THE CREW FROM
No. 624 SQUADRON
ROYAL AIR FORCE
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES
IN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM
ON 14th JULY 1944

The soldiers step back and salute, followed by a moment of silence. A single candle flickers in the solemn mountain air.

Monsieur Rumeau stares at the candle, stern and composed. The military Honor Guard stands at attention. To his right, a

young FEMALE OFFICER. To his left, a tall handsome MALE OFFICER. They are both dressed in full FRENCH COMMANDO gear, side arms at the ready; eyes focused, determined, and proud. The FRENCH MILITARY COMMANDER calls all to attention and begins to read the names from an honor role. Eyes to all, as he calls out each name, the same names which appear on each of the GRAVE MARKERS:

FRENCH COMMANDER

Harry Clarke, Sergeant: canonnier de machine (machine gunner) RAF (Royal Air Force).

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James Edward Walsh: mécanicien de bord (flight mechanic) RAF.

--

Jack Brooke, Sergeant: canonnier de machine (machine gunner) RAF.

--

William Ronald Wharmby, Sergeant: opérateur par radio (wireless operator) RAF.

Monsieur Rumeau stands proud, hand across his chest, listening to each name as it is called out loud. His eyes locked upon the flame of the candle as it burns.

INTO:

A FLAME:

Black smoke billows from a pair of burning oil drums which mark the beginning of the runway in the desert.

SUPERIMPOSE:

No. 624 SQUADRON
ROYAL AIR FORCE BASE, BLIDA, ALGERIA
MAY 28th, 1944

EXT. ALGERIA - RAF BASE, BLIDA - AIRFIELD - DAY

07:00 hours. Through the flame of the burning barrel, the burned out wreckage of what appears to be the carcass of a crashed aircraft pushed off to the side of the runway. An ominous reminder of the inhospitable nature of this harsh and desolate place.

A four-engine HANDLEY PAGE HALIFAX BOMBER touches down on the runway. Two more BOMBERS follow, one after the other.

IN THE DISTANCE - APPROACHING:

Followed by a TRAIL OF SMOKE, a third Halifax; 3 engines running, the fourth (outer starboard engine); spinning and

sputtering. Black oil smoke pours from the exhaust.

INT. CONTROL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

TOWER SERGEANT LYLE focuses the aircraft thru his binoculars. The ALARM BELL clangs. The aircraft continues to approach at a high rate of speed.

EXT. RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS

Over shooting the runway on approach, the PLANE banks sharply, buzzing the CONTROL TOWER.

INT. CONTROL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Everyone hits the deck as the aircraft rattles the windows in the tower, passing LOW and LOUD, roaring over their heads.

EXT. RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS

The aircraft sputters in for a landing, coming to a stop at the far end of the tarmac.

A FIRE TRUCK races across the open field.

OIL and SMOKE belch from beneath the aircraft's engine cowl, as the CREW of 6, nonchalant, exits its belly hatch dressed in full flight gear (flight-suits & parachute packs), seemingly joking between themselves.

INT. CONTROL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

The tower personnel recompose themselves.

SERGEANT LYLE

(British)

Tell Commander Stanbury, his new crew of jackasses have arrived..!

LANCE CORPORAL

(salutes)

Yes, Sir.

Down the stairs in double time.

AIRCRAFT BELLY HATCH:

The last to climb out through the hatch is P/O (Pilot Officer) PEERS (Cdn). His flight uniform hides the burn scars on his legs and arms. There is an air of confidence about him.

His 6 member crew are comprised of:

- F/O (Flight Officer) BAYTHORP (Brit) navigator
- F/O GOBLE (Brit) bombardier
- Sgt. WHARMBY (Brit) radio operator
- Sgt. WALSH (Brit) flight engineer
- Sgt. BROOKE (Brit) rear gunner
- Sgt. CLARKE (Brit) air gunner

All young, cocky, and exuberant, yet there is no mistaking that Peers is their leader.

EXT. RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS

Other planes land. Most returning from midnight missions.

A dark colored LOCKHEED VENTURA with minimal markings comes in for a landing. Exiting the plane, 3 Special Forces Commandos: Col. FULLER (American) age 40 (USMC uniform), Capt. JOSE CORTES (Spanish Republican Soldier uniform) age 30, and a beautiful SOE agent (spy) code-name: MONIQUE (French) age 30 (casual blouse & skirt). They climb into awaiting jeeps and are whisked away.

The sound of approaching army trucks, as the desert sand blows across the airfield, and another plane lands.

DISSOLVE INTO:

SUPERIMPOSE:

SOMEWHERE IN NAZI-OCCUPIED SOUTHERN FRANCE

A trail of dust.

EXT. FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE - MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

The dawn breaks. A small convoy consisting of: a black lead vehicle (CITROEN AVANT), and 3 MILITARY TRUCKS with GERMAN MARKINGS, rumble along a narrow, winding country road. Two of the trucks carry a number of heavy armed NAZI GERMAN SOLDIERS. The third transports an imposing ARTILLERY GUN mounted in the back, half covered by a TARP.

AHEAD:

A small FARMSTEAD and FIELD surrounded by thick WOODS.

EXT. FARMSTEAD - DAY

An old farmhouse, a barn, chickens and a couple of goats. In the field, a lone cow grazes. A haze of morning mist fills the air, as the old farm dog begins to bark.

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

An FARMER and his plump WIFE are having breakfast. They hear the dog BARKING.

Through the window, they see the German convoy coming their way. A scurry of nervous activity as the farmer's wife dashes out the back door.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The German convoy approaches the farmhouse and stops.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

THREE RESISTANCE REBELS sleep partly buried in a haystack. Beams of sunlight streak between the clapboard sides of the barn. A FOURTH, their leader JEAN, age 30, awoken by the noise, eyes his rifle just beyond reach.

The farmer's wife rushes in urgently.

FARMER'S WIFE
(French)
Soldiers! Leave, quickly!

Jean kicks the feet of his rebels. They bolt up, revealing dirt-smearred, frightened, teenage faces. Farm boys in ragged clothes, with makeshift weapons.

EXT. FARMSTEAD - CONTINUOUS

German SS COMMANDER DICKMANN steps out of his black Citroen Avant, and is greeted by the old farmer standing in the doorway pointing a single-shot squirrel RIFLE.

20 machine gun armed NAZI SOLDIERS jump from the back of the trucks.

The farmer's wife hastens back from the barn.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

The four rebels grab a couple of ancient rifles and sneak out the back of the barn, Jean in the lead.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

In defiance, the old farmer FIRES a warning shot in the air, holding his ground. Dickmann pulls out his pistol and fires. The old man falls to the ground, GUSHING BLOOD. His wife rushes to his side, screaming, cradling him in her arms, cursing the Nazi soldiers.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Jean and his boys react to the SECOND SHOT. They run in a low crouch across the field toward the woods.

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Soldiers burst into the house and begin to search.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Other soldiers search the barn.

IN THE FIELD - CONTINUOUS

A NAZI SOLDIER with a GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG on a leash, heads out across the field. The dog follows the rebel's scent to the edge of the trees. The Nazi soldier stops, leery of the darkened woods beyond. His dog continues to bark, salivating, and tugging on the leash.

The four rebels duck behind trees, rifles poised, listening to the barking. Jean wraps his jacket around his arm and yanks out a makeshift screwdriver sharpened into a knife.

The others aim their rifles from behind the trees and wait, fear dripping from their faces.

The lone Nazi soldier peers into the woods, his dog tugging on the leash. Thinking better of it, he yanks on the leash, cursing the persistent dog.

The rebel fighters are relieved to see him return in the direction of the farmhouse.

The rebels head deeper into the woods. They hear two more shots and glance back.

EXT. FARMSTEAD - CONTINUOUS

Smoke rises from the farmstead, Nazi soldiers set the house and barn ablaze. Two dead bodies lie sprawled on the front porch.

IN THE WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Weary and saddened, Jean leads his rebels on, disappearing into the thickets as the sky fills with smoke.

EXT. FARMSTEAD - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers climb back into their vehicles and leave - the farmhouse and barn in full burn. Thick smoke billows into the air.

INTO:

INT. ALGERIA - RAF BASE, BLIDA - STANBURY'S OFFICE - DAY

08:00 HOURS: Fuller, Jose, and Monique enter WING COMMANDER CLIVE STANBURY'S office. They greet and shake hands.

FULLER

(American)

Col. Fuller, United States Marine Corp. Captain Jose Cortes, Spanish Republican Army. And British Special Operations Agent, Monique.

STANBURY

(British)

But you are French?

MONIQUE

(French)

Parisien. I was an ambulance driver at the beginning of the war. When my husband was killed fighting the Nazis, I was recruited and trained by the British SOE Special Forces.

STANBURY

I'm sorry to hear about your husband.

MONIQUE

Merci. He was a very brave man.

FULLER

Our mission is to parachute into the Pyrenees and meet up with a small band of resistance fighters under the rebel leadership of a man named, Jean.

MONIQUE

Our goal is to organize a disorganized group of rebels, into a fighting force to stop the Nazi swine from sending reinforcements to the beaches of Normandy, by any means whatsoever.

STANBURY

What are your chances of success?

There is a silence between the 3 agents.

JOSE

(Spanish)

We're not even sure they will meet with us.

FULLER

It's hoped that by bringing supplies, food, and weapons, we can convince them.

STANBURY

And if you can't?

JOSE

I am also an old friend of Jean.

STANBURY

And she is French, and not British..!

Eyes to Monique.

There is a hurried knock on the door. Stanbury looks up.

STANBURY (CONT'D)

Yes, Corporal?

LANCE CORPORAL

(British)

Sergeant Lyle wanted me to inform you that your jackasses.

Stops in mid sentence, taken by the presence of Monique.

LANCE CORPORAL (CONT'D)

Excuse me ma'am.

Back to Stanbury.

LANCE CORPORAL (CONT'D)

Your replacement crew have arrived.

STANBURY

Show them to the barracks.
Debriefing at 11 hundred hours.

LANCE CORPORAL

Yes, sir.

Eyes to Monique.

LANCE CORPORAL (CONT'D)

Ma'am.

Excuses himself, salutes and leaves.

EXT. SOUTHERN FRANCE - NAZI OCCUPIED TOWN OF NISTOS - DAY

A pretty, petite, French schoolteacher, COLETTE (20); wearing a shawl over her shoulders, carries a bundle of books in her arms.

ARMED NAZI SOLDIERS stand on every corner. German MILITARY VEHICLES drive freely up and down the French streets. The town is obviously under Nazi control. NAZI POSTERS and PROPAGANDA are everywhere.

Colette bumps into a MAN. The schoolbooks fall from her arms. The man bends to help. The commotion has caught the attention of the NAZI GERMAN SOLDIERS.

MAN

(French)

Mademoiselle. I am sorry. Please let me help you.

Aware that soldiers are watching, nervously, Colette slips the man a FOLDED NOTE. Avoiding eye contact she pulls her shawl, covering her face as the Nazi soldiers look on.

COLETTE

(French)

Merci, monsieur.

Gathering her books she scurries away.

The man continues on, passing the note to a boy, GAETAN, riding by on a BICYCLE.

A NAZI SOLDIER calls out to the man.

NAZI GERMAN SOLDIER #1

HALT!

The man stops.

NAZI GERMAN SOLDIER #1 (CONT'D)

Papers?!

Two more NAZI SOLDIERS approach from behind, cocking their rifles.