

The Great War

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FADE IN:

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAYBREAK

SUPERIMPOSE: The Battle of the Somme; October 7, 1916

Allied forces face off with German forces in their respective trenches. No-man's-land, a twisted mesh of barbed wire and craters, divides them.

An artillery barrage begins.

Shells POUND the ground around each trench. Dirt and other particles shower men huddled below.

Occasional machine gun fire is a WHINING contrast to the continued ARTILLERY BLASTS.

ALLIED TRENCH

BRITISH SOLDIERS dart back and forth in the trench. They seek cover as shells SCREAM toward them. The shower of sediment continues to rain down.

Two British PRIVATES (18) man a machine gun. They send bursts of rapid fire across the void.

CAPTAIN WALKER (25) stops in the trench behind the men.

CAPTAIN WALKER

Forget about that pop gun. We've got an unmanned Stokes.

PRIVATES

(in unison)

Yes, Sir.

The Two Privates scramble to the mortar. Private #1 grabs field glasses, scanning for a target. Private #2 pulls the former operator off the mortar.

Private #1 SHOUTS OUT some coordinates. Private #2 dials them in. He drops a shell in the mortar tube, with the usual PLOP sound. The Privates cover their ears. The shell CRACKS as it springs from the tube.

GERMAN REAR

The German Command is positioned a short distance from the front. The artillery barrage is a DULL THUD here.

A phonograph plays CLASSICAL MUSIC outside the command tent. The DULL ARTILLERY seems almost a supporting percussion to the music.

A LANCE CORPORAL (20s) sits next to a motorcycle. He paints images of the war in watercolor. The painting isn't bad.

ALLIED TRENCH

The ground SHUDDERS under the continuing artillery barrage.

A section of the trench collapses on a group of MEN. One scrambles free only to see his friends buried alive. He crawls across the ground in shock.

GERMAN REAR

The Corporal continues to paint, oblivious to the carnage in the trenches.

An AIDE meets the GENERAL as he exits the command tent. They speak in German.

AIDE

The winds are optimal this morning, sir.

GENERAL

Have Kohl initiate a gas attack.

The Aide scribbles some orders on a piece of paper.

AIDE

Runner!

The Corporal abandons his brush and rushes to the Aide.

AIDE (CONT'D)

Corporal, take this to Captain Kohl.

The Aide hands him the paper.

CORPORAL

Yes, sir.

GENERAL

And be quick about it. Before the winds change.

The Corporal makes a hasty and sloppy salute. He jumps on the motorcycle and ROARS off toward the front lines.

GERMAN TRENCH

The Corporal dodges craters on the motorcycle. He skids to a stop short of the trench. He leaps off the bike and dives into the trench.

CORPORAL

Captain!

CAPTAIN KOHL (30s) turns toward the voice. He snatches the orders from the Corporal's outstretched hand.

CAPTAIN KOHL

Prepare a gas attack.

Men scramble for gas canisters from a nearby stockpile.

The Corporal stands by, awaiting further instructions. The Captain looks at him with a measure of disdain.

CAPTAIN KOHL (CONT'D)

Is there something else?

The Corporal shakes his head.

CAPTAIN KOHL (CONT'D)

Dismissed.

The Corporal sulks off.

ALLIED TRENCH

Soldiers scramble for their gas masks as the first mustard gas canister crashes down.

CAPTAIN WALKER

Gas! Gas attack!

A cloud of yellow gas seeps from the canister and spills into the Allied trench.

Private #1, on the Stokes Mortar, cannot find his mask. He panics as he searches. He chokes and his body convulses as the fumes take a lethal hold.

Suddenly, the gas swirls upward and disperses as:

AN APACHE LONGBOW ATTACK HELICOPTER and

A BLACK HAWK HELICOPTER

swoop over the Allied trench.

Soldiers on both sides of the field huddle in terror at the sight of these strange flying machines.

PRIVATE #2

(muffled by gas mask)

What the hell!

The helicopters hover over no-man's-land.

Captain Walker slowly, unsure, slides off his gas mask. He aims his field glasses at the hovering beasts.

He sees an American flag on the tail section.

CAPTAIN WALKER

It's the bloody Yanks!

Allied Troops awkwardly poke their heads out of the trench for a peek. Allied soldiers CHEER.

GERMAN TRENCH

Some of the Germans are paralyzed with fear. Others take cover wherever they can. Only a daring few take quick peeks at the hovering flying machines.

One German Private makes the sign of the cross and MUMBLES a prayer.

The German Corporal dives back into the trench. He snatches a rifle from one of his terror stricken country men, and fires on the helicopters.

Hellfire missiles and hydra rockets SCREAM from the Apache.

Shell casings cascade to the ground from the Black Hawk's .50 caliber machine guns and the 7.62 mm mini-guns.

Soldiers on both sides of the field dive for cover at the sound and sight of the weapons coming to life.

German soldiers are cut down in the trenches. Rockets obliterate the command tents.

Seeing the enemy in ruins, the Allied forces charge across no-man's-land, their spirit renewed. They too fire on the Germans.

The helicopters cease firing.

When the smoke clears, every German lays dead or dying. Allied troops CHEER. Some leap into the German trenches for souvenirs.

As the men see the carnage up close, an EERIE SILENCE falls over the field.

The sound of the SWOOSHING ROTORS is now DEAFENING against the calm.

The Black Hawk rotates toward the Allied trench. Rockets and machine guns ROAR to life once again.

When the firing ends, every man on the field is still.

The helicopters move to open field behind the German trench and land.

BEHIND THE GERMAN TRENCH

DR. JAMES WHEELER (35) a lanky, awkward man, who tugs uncomfortably at his flight suit, clings to the open door in the Black Hawk as it settles.

SERGEANT CARAVETTA (20s) fit, hard body, hard core Marine, gives Wheeler a nudge.

CARAVETTA

Let's go professor.

Pushed again, harder, Wheeler stumbles out of the helicopter. He wobbles as he catches his footing.

Wheeler drops his helmet, as he trades it for eye glasses.

He sprints across the field toward the Apache. He stumbles, nearly falling into a crater.

COLONEL JACK BOWMAN (40s) chiseled, virile and completely at home on the battlefield, climbs down from the Apache cockpit.

MAJOR MARK DANBY (30s) in every way Bowman's second, seems equally suited for the battlefield, almost as chiseled, and nearly as virile. He steadies the ladder as his commanding officer descends.

Wheeler shouts between deep breaths.

WHEELER

Bowman!

Danby steps between Wheeler and Bowman, shielding his superior.

WHEELER (CONT'D)

You're insane!

DANBY

You forget yourself.

Danby punctuates his words with a sharp finger poke to Wheeler's chest. Wheeler stumbles backward.

WHEELER

The mission was to kill just one man!

BOWMAN

The mission is to preserve the American way of life.

WHEELER

At the expense of thousands, including our Allies?

BOWMAN

How did you expect to target only one man on this field?

A group of MARINES has congregated outside the Apache. Bowman nods to Danby.

DANBY

Locate the objective.

Danby and Wheeler are locked in the staring version of a Mexican standoff.

DANBY (CONT'D)

If he's even here.

Danby's contempt for Wheeler is as palpable as the death on this battlefield.

Marines fan out, and begin a grid search of the German trench.

WHEELER

German medical records indicate he suffered a gunshot wound in the leg today.

BOWMAN

Gotta love the Germans. Meticulous record keepers. Possibly their only redeeming quality.

WHEELER

And what's our redeeming quality?

BOWMAN

They've all been dead for a hundred years.

WHEELER

They haven't experienced the rest of their lives yet.

GERMAN TRENCH

Sergeant Caravetta turns over German corpses. He compares their faces to a photo of a German soldier.

The Sergeant turns over the corpse of the German Corporal who acted as the runner.

BEHIND THE GERMAN TRENCH

Radios SQUAWK to life.

CARAVETTA (O.S.)

Colonel, I got him. One hundred-eighty meters north of your position in the trench.

Red smoke rises on the horizon where Caravetta marks his location.

The men converge on the smoke.

GERMAN TRENCH

Other Marines arrive on the scene and compare their own photos to the man.

Wheeler, Bowman and Danby arrive.

Seeing the death up close, Wheeler convulses.

DANBY

What a pitiful little man he was.

BOWMAN

Lance Corporal Adolf Hitler, welcome to the last Reich.

Bowman FIRES several shots into the corpse with his sidearm.

Wheeler staggers from the trench and vomits. Danby shakes his head.

DANBY

A disgrace to that flight suit.

BEHIND THE GERMAN TRENCH

Wheeler sits in the open bay door of the Black Hawk.

He pulls a small radio receiver from his pocket. Wheeler extends the antenna and activates the device. A TONE BEEPS periodically.

Bowman and the others return to the landing zone.

BOWMAN

Men, congratulations on a job well done.

WHEELER

Let's track the satellite reentry capsule.

BOWMAN

The receiver, please.

Wheeler hands the device to the Colonel. Bowman turns off the receiver, silencing the tone.

BOWMAN (CONT'D)

We don't need the capsule.

WHEELER

That's our fuel. Without it, we can't return to our own time.

BOWMAN

We're on an historic mission.

DANBY

Load up. We're Oscar Mike.

Men scramble to load their gear into the helicopters.

WHEELER

Our window to return to our time is rapidly closing.

BOWMAN

Wheeler, didn't you tell me that the best way to change the future was to change the past instead?

WHEELER

We won't be able to go home.

BOWMAN

We are home.

Bowman drops the receiver and crushes it under his boot.

WHEELER

You've just condemned us all to live out our lives in this century.

DANBY

Sir, the package is ready for Berlin.

WHEELER

What package?

BOWMAN

We're going to finish their war for them.

The Marines belt out a rousing "OORAH"!

Bowman climbs into the Apache cockpit.

Wheeler scoops up the remains of the radio receiver.

The Black Hawk's rotors swirl to life.

WHEELER

No man should make the same mistake twice.

Wheeler picks up his previously discarded helmet, and slinks into the helicopter.

ANGLE ON THE BATTLEFIELD FROM THE AIR

Bodies stretch as far as the eye can see.

EXT. DEARDON DAIRY - EVENING

SUPERIMPOSE: Fond du Lac, WI; April 5, 2017; Seven Days Before the 100th Anniversary of Unification

The dairy is more like a military compound. High voltage fences surround the facility. Armed guards stand at the gate.

There is not a cow in sight, or any other thing that would indicate that this was a dairy, save the large sign on the building's side.

INT. HALLWAY / DEARDON DAIRY - EVENING

Dr. Jim Wheeler carries a beaker of white liquid.

He looks much like he did in his previous incarnation on the battlefield. However, here he is confident. He is at home in the white lab coat. He moves with purpose.

An ARMED SECURITY GUARD passes. He nods at Wheeler.

ARMED SECURITY GUARD
Evening, Dr. Wheeler.

WHEELER
Good evening.

They pass. The guard stops.

ARMED SECURITY GUARD
Hold it right there.

Wheeler freezes. He turns to face the guard.

WHEELER
Is there a problem?

The guard approaches. He glares at Wheeler, looking him over.

ARMED SECURITY GUARD
What's this?

The guard points to Wheeler's chest. When Wheeler looks down to see what the guard is pointing to, the guard brings his finger up and flicks Wheeler in the nose.

ARMED SECURITY GUARD
(CONT'D)
(laughing)
All you scientists are the same. Smart as a damn computer but as gullible as a baby.

WHEELER
What?

ARMED SECURITY GUARD
Just messing with you Doc.

INT. WHEELER'S LAB / DEARDON DAIRY - EVENING

DR. CHARLES DEAN (60s) pecks away at a keyboard. The room is bright. Fluorescent light reflects off every surface.

Wheeler enters the lab, still perplexed by the incident in the hallway. He stands in the door a moment.

Dean sees the beaker.

DEAN
Is this the monounsaturated fat sample?

Wheeler flicks off the fluorescent lights as he enters. The room is now aglow in the soft light of the desk lamps.

WHEELER

You know I hate fluorescents.

Wheeler places the beaker on Dean's desk.

DEAN

And you know I can't do my best work in the dark.

WHEELER

If past performance is any indication, light or lack thereof has little impact.

Dean pours a small sample into a receptacle on a computer. The machine springs to life. The screen flashes numbers and charts.

WHEELER (CONT'D)

I added a protein blend of whey and sodium caseinate.

Wheeler points to a spot on Dean's chest.

WHEELER (CONT'D)

What's this?

Dean looks. Wheeler flicks him in the nose.

DEAN

What the hell was that?

WHEELER

Just testing a hypothesis.

DEAN

Well find another lab rat.

Dean swirls the remaining contents of the beaker, as if a glass of wine. He smells the contents. Then he takes a big swallow.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Much better flavor.

WHEELER

Let's see it on the holo.

A large holographic projection appears in the center of the lab rendering a three dimensional image showing the chemical makeup of the milk sample.

Dean points to the projection to support his points.

DEAN

I backed off on the asorbic, pantothenic and folic acids.

WHEELER

Those are the vitamins.

DEAN

People want flavor.

WHEELER

At the expense of their health.

DEAN

It meets government standards. When is good enough ever going to be enough for you, Jim?

WHEELER

I'll let you know.

He's interrupted by a short SIREN BLAST and then a woman's voice booms over the public address, she is the GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCER. This is a generic voice that is heard in any facility where there are public announcements.

GOV'T ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

The dairy is now closing. Thank you for your hard work.

WHEELER

Let's get the vitamins up a bit.

DEAN

Tomorrow.

Dean bolts from the lab. He flicks the fluorescent lights on as he goes.

WHEELER

There's always tomorrow.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: Boston, MA; April 6, 2017; Six Days Before the 100th Anniversary of Unification

MEGAN WHEELER (28), toned and athletic, runs through the alley. Her tough exterior does little to mask her natural beauty.

Megan hides in the shadows as spot lights sweep the ground from a hovering police vehicle.

The hover police car passes. Megan dashes through the alley.

A surface police car rolls to a stop at the intersection. It blocks Megan's path.

The spotlight on the car swings into the alley.

OFFICER #1
(on PA system)
Freeze.

Megan runs.

Two POLICE OFFICERS exit the car. Officer #1 has his gun drawn. Officer #2 holds a 3-D facial scanner -- a device that resembles a gun with a small monitor situated over the grip and trigger.

They chase her down the alley.

Megan stops. Her eyes widen! A dead end. She turns and faces her pursuers. Megan raises her hands, surrendering.

The officers approach. Officer #1 keeps his gun on her.

OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)
Submit for an ident scan.

Officer #2 aims the scanner at Megan's face. He squeezes the trigger. A laser beam scans Megan's face.

Megan grabs Officer #1's gun arm pushing it away. BANG!
The gun goes off. The bullet ricochets off the alley wall.

With her other hand, Megan grabs the underside of the scanner. She smashes it into Officer #2's chin. He falls to the ground unconscious.

Megan wrestles with Officer #1. He tries to bring the gun around to fire an accurate shot.

Megan slams her knee into Officer #1's groin. He doubles over.

Megan still clutches the gun arm. With her free hand, she lands an uppercut. Officer #1 falls to the ground, out cold.

Megan scoops up the gun. She darts across the street and into the alley on the opposite side.

INT. DARK BASEMENT - NIGHT

The room is cluttered with crates. A single bulb casts a small cone of light in the center of the room.

KENNY "WOCHIE" REDDOCH (20), nerdy in a retro 80's hacker kind of way, hides between the crates.

A door SQUEAKS open.

WOCHIE
Who's there?

A slim FIGURE squeezes through the door. She steps into the light.

MEGAN

It's me, Megan.

WOOCHIE

You scared the crap outta me!

MEGAN

I ran into a patrol.

WOOCHIE

Let's get outta here, Megs.

MEGAN

Don't worry about them. Fire it up.

WOOCHIE

You killed them?

MEGAN

They're sleeping it off.

WOOCHIE

Let's go get their scanner.

MEGAN

Yeah. I'm pretty sure it doesn't work.

WOOCHIE

Damn.

MEGAN

Woochie, let's get online.

Woochie pulls a computer from his backpack.

WOOCHIE

Right. Online.

MEGAN

Are you sure they can't trace this?

WOOCHIE

Hey, I never said that. They probably will trace us. Definitely.

MEGAN

Will they be able to see what we did online?

WOOCHIE

Hell no. All they'll see is unauthorized net traffic. I've got 12 different levels of encryption.

MEGAN

Good. I need travel permits to Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

WOOCHIE

No problem. Put your palm on the scanner.

Woochie pulls out a bulkier, older, archaic hand print scanner. He connects it to the computer.

MEGAN

And I'm going to need a new I.D.

WOOCHIE

Damn Megan! You burn 'em almost as fast as I can forge 'em.

Woochie takes Megan's hand and places it palm down on the scanner. He leaves his hand on hers just a bit too long.

Megan pulls her hand away. She returns it to the scanner without his help.

WOOCHIE (CONT'D)

What's going on in Fond du Lac anyway? I got Joe and Frank credentialed there last week.

MEGAN

Your brother found him.

WOOCHIE

Way to go Joe! Hells yeah!

Woochie abandons the keyboard to dance a little jig.

MEGAN

Now get to typing before the cops find us.

WOOCHIE

So where does the great Jim Wheeler work? Secret military lab? He some kinda rocket scientist?

Megan's hand print appears on the screen. A quick search shows Megan's picture, but the name is Kelly Dupree.

MEGAN

He works at a dairy.

WOOCHIE

He's a farmer?

MEGAN

Chemist. It's synthetic food lab.

WOOCHIE

Uggh. That vile synth milk?

Woochie highlights the name Kelly Dupree and deletes it.

WOOCHIE (CONT'D)

Meg, who you wanna be this time?

MEGAN

Whoever.

WOOCHIE

There was this gorgeous girl in my 8th grade social studies class. Tina something.

MEGAN

Kenny, didn't you say they would trace this activity?

WOOCHIE

It takes at least 20 minutes to triangulate our position.

MEGAN

Keep typing.

WOOCHIE

It's kinda ironic, really.

MEGAN

What?

WOOCHIE

We may be able to cry over spilled milk after all.

MEGAN

We almost done here?

WOOCHIE

Richards. Tina Richards. That was her name. God she was hot.

POUND, POUND, POUND! - Knocks on the door.

Megan draws the gun.

WOOCHIE (CONT'D)

Almost uploaded.

TECH POLICE (O.S.)

Open up. This is the Tech Police.

MEGAN

20 minutes, huh?

WOOCHIE

They're getting better.

MEGAN

Or you're getting worse.

TECH POLICE (O.S.)

We have unauthorized network activity. Under U.S.E. Conduct Code twenty-five dot twelve we have the right to enter the premises and seize all computer equipment.