

WORLD WAR CUP

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. THE SOMME - NO MAN'S LAND - DAY

SUPER: "CHRISTMAS DAY 1914"

IT IS FREEZING COLD.

The battlefield is covered in heavy snow.

German and English troops are separated by a mere hundred yards in their trenches.

The pale sun rises slowly over the silent battlefield.

EXT. ENGLISH TRENCHES

A SOLDIER walks down the full length of a trench with a kettle in hand.

Activity abounds as dozens of soldiers tend to their monotonous daily duties.

SPIERS shivers uncontrollably as he approaches a group of soldiers huddled around a miniature Christmas tree.

SPIERS
Happy Christmas, lads.

SOLDIER
Happy Christmas, Spiers.

SPIERS
The tea is ready.

SOLDIER
Well give us a cup, then.

SPIERS
Right.

He leans over, collecting some small tin cups from a bench.

Spiers pours out several cups of tea for the men. He hands a cup to his friend, TULL, and an IRISH SOLDIER seated next to Tull.

TULL
Cheers, laddie.

IRISH SOLDIER
That's grand, Spiers. Thanks a
million.

Spiers smiles as he pours himself a small cup as well.

SPIERS
Where'd you find the tree,
Corporal?

TULL
(pointing)
Just over there, near the Jerries'
lines.

SPIERS
It does the trick, then. Lifts up
the spirits of the men.

IRISH SOLDIER
That it does, lad, if only for the
day.

SPIERS
Right. Has anyone seen me football
around?

TULL
I saw Bell and some of the boys
from the Yorkshire Regiment having
a kickabout over by the Mess.

Spiers sets the kettle down and walks in the direction of
the Mess.

EXT. GERMAN TRENCH - DAY

A group of German soldiers sit around a small fire where
CORPORAL VOLLER is making a pot of hot wine. He adds a tiny
cinnamon stick into the small pot.

MAYER and GLAUBERG are two men in his unit.

The men speak in German with SUBTITLES:

VOLLER
That's much better. This wine was
spoiled anyway.

GLAUBERG

What do you think the English are
having for Christmas Day?

Voller shrugs his shoulders. He hasn't an idea.

VOLLER

Tea, I'm sure. It is the only
beverage they know.

MAYER

They drink beer as well, albeit,
warm beer.

VOLLER

See what I mean, they also eat
pudding made of pig's blood. And
the history books try to convince
us that we are of the same lineage
as them.

MAYER

They aren't known as Anglo-Saxons
for nothing.

VOLLER

Here, it is ready.

He takes the pot off the fire, inhaling the vapors. Voller
is pleased with the result.

Glauberg holds a cup out as Voller pours him out some wine.
He then pours some out for himself and Mayer.

MAYER

Tasty, Corporal.

GLAUBERG

Yes, this hits the spot.

VOLLER

I want for nothing now but a
comfortable bed and some football.

GLAUBERG

Then you wish for everything.

MAYER

At least we have a ball.

Mayer, Voller and Glauberg all pause from drinking their
wine, exchanging the same look with one another. Mulled wine
hits the spot on a cold winter's day.

EXT. ENGLISH TRENCH

Spiers approaches three soldiers kicking an extremely weathered brown leather football around a small opening in the trenches.

SPIERS

How are things, lads? Can I join you?

SCOTTISH SOLDIER

(in a thick accent)

As you like, aye.

The SCOTTISH SOLDIER passes the ball to Spiers who juggles it a few beats.

SCOTTISH SOLDIER (CONT'D)

No bad.

SPIERS

Average, is more like it.

He passes the ball back to SERGEANT BELL.

BELL

You've just given me a novel idea.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - ENGLISH SIDE

Tull, Spiers and Bell stand on the edge of their trench looking towards the Germans' side.

BELL

Right, here's the idea. A pack of fags and a pint of me own stash of porter for the first man who boots the ball into the Jerries' trenches.

Spiers and Tull exchange glances. Bell grins, relishing the thought of what might happen.

TULL

Anything to cure the boredom, ay, Sergeant?

BELL

A mutual cease-fire is in effect.

SPIERS

So how do we know the Jerries will honor that?

BELL

Only one way to find out.

He flicks the football up to his hands then throws it over to Spiers.

Spiers juggles it for a moment, popping the ball off his knees into his hands.

EXT. GERMAN LINES - TRENCH

Voller chews on a piece of crusty bread. He holds a cup of hot wine in his right hand.

Spiers's football drops into the trench, hitting his arm and knocking the cup to the ground.

The men speak in German with SUBTITLES:

VOLLER

What the hell?

EXT. ENGLISH LINES

TULL

Good kick, man!

BELL

Way to hoof it, Spiers!

SPIERS

Cheers. I was about to sign for the first team before I enlisted. Queens Park Rangers.

BELL

Blimey. After this damn fool war ends perhaps you can resume your promising career old chap.

He raises his cup of tea to his mouth when the football Spiers launched into the German trench drops down on his hand, spilling his tea.

BELL (CONT'D)

Bloody hell!

TULL

Oi! It's the ball you launched
into the trench, Spiers.

BELL

How peculiar. It's got a message
written on it.

TULL

What's it say, Sarge?

BELL

How the bloody hell should I know,
Tull? I'm not proficient in kraut.

Spiers picks up the ball, examining the message.

SPIERS

Spiel, spiel... that's the word
for match, Sergeant.

BELL

So it is, lad. What of it?

SPIERS

Well, I believe they're challenging
us to a game of footie.

TULL

A spot of footy! Are you certain,
man?

SPIERS

What else could it be?

BELL

A drinking match, I suppose.

SPIERS

No, no. Mannschaft, spielfeld.
Right. They definitely fancy a
match with us, Sarge.

BELL

Well, I don't know. It's against
regulations, I believe.

TULL

Come on then, Sarge. It's
Christmas Day. They don't want to
fight any more than we do.

SPIERS
Tull's right, sir, if only for
today.

Bell strokes his big bushy moustache.

BELL
Right, then, I'll go and have a
chat with the Captain.

EXT. GERMAN TRENCH

Voller stares through a spyglass across the battlefield.

Mayer and Glauberg are anxious for his reaction.

The men speak in German with SUBTITLES:

GLAUBERG
Well, Corporal, what do you see?

VOLLER
Nothing so far. Everything still.

MAYER
Maybe they are preparing to attack.

GLAUBERG
Don't be silly. Did you ever stop
to think they can't read German?

MAYER
It was the only way, Glauberg.
None of us speak English.

VOLLER
Be quiet! Both of you!

Something catches his attention. Voller lowers the spyglass.

MAYER
What is it, Corporal?

VOLLER
A white flag, sir.

EXT. ENGLISH TRENCH

Spiers waves a makeshift white flag at the edge of the
trench.

Tull and Bell await a response from the Germans.

SPIERS
(looking down)
Should I continue on, sir?

BELL
Keep at it, Spiers. They're the
ones who offered us a match,
remember?

SPIERS
Aye, Sarge.

Up steps CAPTAIN LOVELL, the commanding officer, from the trench.

Bell nervously salutes him.

Tull hides the football behind his back.

LOVELL
What seems to be all the fuss here,
chaps?

BELL
Nothing, sir, well, something
rather...

LOVELL
Good God, man, spit it out! What
exactly are you lads getting up to?

TULL
Permission to speak, Captain.

LOVELL
Granted.

TULL
Sir, The Germans have challenged us
to a football match.

LOVELL
The Jerries have what?!

BELL
He's quite right, sir. They fancy
a game.

LOVELL
 Bloody hell, man, why didn't you
 say so! We'll most definitely
 accept their offer!

BELL
 Splendid.

LOVELL
 Have you chosen your side yet? I'm
 quite the centre-half, you know.

BELL
 I had a feeling as such, sir.
 (pointing)
 But Spiers there played center-half
 for a living before the war.

SPIERS
 QPR, sir.

LOVELL
 I see.

BELL
 But we desperately need the
 services of a proper man between
 the sticks.

Lovell shoots a grin at Bell that covers his face.

LOVELL
 No bother. I'm just the man for
 the job.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD

LOVELL
 The German team lines up against
 the English side. Both sides
 shiver from the cold.

Lovell walks forward and greets Voller with a handshake.

Spiers clears away a patch of snow with his feet, placing the
 ball down on the clearing.

LOVELL (CONT'D)
 Right, lads, game on!

He rushes back to the makeshift goal of backpacks and gun
 netting.

The German goal consists of propped-up rifles and a large outstretched tarp in between them.

Spiers kicks the ball to Bell and the match begins.

A lengthy game of football is played.

The match ends in a draw, 0-0. The Germans and English shake hands.

Voller comes forward and presents Lovell with an ornate beer stein as a souvenir.

Lovell graciously accepts the gift, handing over the match ball to Voller.

As the sun begins sets, both teams part ways, returning to their respective trenches.

EXT. ENGLISH LINES

LOVELL
(clapping)
Good show, lads, jolly good show.
Fairplay, all of you.

BELL
Perhaps one day there'll be a
proper world championship where we
can beat the Jerries officially.

LOVELL
Aye, Sergeant. Perhaps all wars
will be settled on the pitch in
future generations.

EXT. GERMAN LINES

Mayer and Voller walk slowly back to the trench, satisfied with the result and the camaraderie.

They speak in German with SUBTITLES:

MAYER
They played decent, Corporal, but
perhaps in the foreseeable future
there will be a proper world
championship game, between national
sides.

VOLLER

Germany against England, yes? It
would however be unfair to defeat
them, not only in war, but in
football as well.

FADE OUT:

THE END