

WORLD WAR CUP

Written by

Robert Finlayson

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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