

To be the first

written by

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1919: Two men risk their lives in an attempt to achieve the impossible.

Drama about the first successful non stop flight by Lt Arthur Whitten Brown and Captain John Alcock over the Atlantic on June 14/15th 1919.

1919

The Great War is finally over. Peace has returned after four long years. Millions have died in the conflict. Those who survived struggle to adapt to a new world.

The Influenza Epidemic, commonly known as "Spanish Flu" is devastating global populations.

An estimated fifty million will die from its effects worldwide.

Social unrest is rife. Mass unemployment is everywhere.

Families mourn those who shall not return.

A challenge is set that will push both human and machine to the ultimate limit of endurance and beyond.

The world is about to get two unlikely heroes.

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT 1

EXT. FIELD - EVENING SUMMER EARLY 1900'S.

A young BOY (10) runs through a grass field flying a canvas and wooden kite high in the air somewhere in Lancashire.

As he runs he laughs excitedly. He stops when he spots a MAN standing at the edge of the field. He is the boy's father.

FATHER

John! Come on, its getting late!

John lets the kite fall to the ground before picking it up. He walks as slowly as he can towards his father.

His father places his arm on his son's shoulder before walking off together

JOHN

One day I will fly!

FATHER

Yes son, of course you will.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING 1900'S

ARTHUR WHITTEN BROWN SENIOR and his wife EMMA (both 40's) sit opposite each other having dinner. A place has been set between them. Enter ARTHUR WHITTEN BROWN JUNIOR (17-19). Emma looks up at him.

EMMA

Arthur! Where have you been?!

Arthur walks to the table, sits on at the empty place on the table. He starts his meal.

ARTHUR

Out. Problem?

ARTHUR SENIOR

Don't speak to your mother like that!

ARTHUR

Sorry.

ARTHUR SENIOR

Better be. Now you're here. We need to discuss your future.

Arthur continues to eat, only half listening.

ARTHUR SENIOR (CONT'D)
How would you like to go to South
Africa.

Arthur stops eating and looks at his father.

ARTHUR
Really. Why?

ARTHUR SENIOR
A position has come up in
Johannesburg. I think it will be
good for you

Arthur continues to eat.

EMMA
Arthur! Will you please listen to
your father!

ARTHUR
I've got my studies.

ARTHUR SENIOR
I hope you are not referring to
those ridiculous notions of yours.

ARTHUR
It's the future father.

Arthur Senior takes a bite.

ARTHUR SENIOR
It will pass. Mark my words.

ARTHUR
No it won't.

ARTHUR SENIOR
Utter poppycock! Look, you've got a
good opportunity here. Just take it
okay. It's only for six months.

ARTHUR
I'll think about it.

Arthur stands up and leaves the room.

ARTHUR SENIOR
I blame all those books he reads.
He's got a good career in front of
him. He just can't see it.

EMMA

Maybe. Don't be too harsh. He'll
come round. You know he does.

EXT. FIELD - SUMMER DAY 1913.

Three young MEN all in their 20's (JOHN ALCOCK, HARRY HAWKER,
FREDDIE RAYNHAM) sit on the grass having a picnic.

JOHN

First and second! Level with you
now Harry!

HARRY

You were lucky Jack. That's all.

FREDDIE

Would have beaten you both if my
engine hadn't packed in.

HARRY

Yes Freddie. Face it you're crap!

Freddie throws a friendly punch at Harry.

FREDDIE

Wait till I win that. You won't be
laughing then.

He points to the folded Daily Mail newspaper lying on the
ground. The headline reads: £10,000 for first successful non
stop trans-Atlantic flight".

HARRY

Yeah right. You ain't got a chance.

FREDDIE

Wanna bet?

HARRY

Yeah, alright you're on.

FREDDIE

How about you Jack prepared to lose
your money?

JOHN

Okay. Can't let you two take all
the glory.

They all shake hands.

EXT. FIELD - DAY WINTER 1916.

A muddy field in northern France pockmarked with shell craters. Artillery and machine guns can be heard. Overhead aeroplanes fly.

A wrecked British biplane lies strewn across the field. A PILOT lies slumped in the front cockpit. It is hard to tell if he is alive or dead.

Sat next to the wreckage is Arthur Whitten Brown. He drifts in and out of consciousness. His left leg shattered by a bullet wound.

Four GERMAN soldiers run across the field. They stop when they reach the wrecked aeroplane.

One German looks at the pilot, shakes his head. The pilot is dead. He then looks at Arthur. The other soldiers point their rifles at Arthur who is struggling to stay awake.

A soldier wraps a bandage around Arthur's wound. Two of the soldiers help Arthur onto his feet who is supported by the two Germans as the party exits the field.

INT. CELL NIGHT SUMMER

A stone walled rat infested cell. Moonlight shines through the open barred window high up in the wall. The air is humid.

On a rough wooden single bed sit two RFC airmen (both mid 20's). They look miserable, are unshaven and filthy.

A pewter plate is on the floor with a piece of stale bread.

One coughs violently. This is John Alcock. The other slaps him on his back. John stops coughing.

PRISONER

You okay?

JOHN

Yeah I am now ta.

PRISONER

I'll sleep on the floor tonight.

JOHN

No it's my turn tonight.

PRISONER

Seriously I don't mind. You need it more than me.

JOHN
Don't be stupid.

PRISONER
Don't argue. Its only temporary so
don't get too comfy.

John picks up a pewter mug standing on a small table. He takes a gulp before spitting it out.

PRISONER (CONT'D)
For God's sake! How much longer?

JOHN
They keep saying tomorrow

PRISONER
It's always bloody tomorrow!

He kicks the plate hard. From a crack in the wall a brown rat emerges sniffs the breads before disappearing with it from the same crack.

JOHN
It will come.

INT. POW CAMP - DAY

Arthur is sat at a table studying. A book lies open. We see a map of the Atlantic on its pages. Next to the book is a piece of paper with various calculations written in pencil. A GERMAN SOLDIER enters carrying a Red Cross parcel. He approaches Arthur.

GERMAN
(in German)
This is for you

ARTHUR
(in German)
Thank you. You can put them here.

The German places the parcel on the table then exits. Arthur opens the parcel and takes out a book.

INT. ATTIC BEDROOM - NIGHT

John Alcock tosses and turns, moaning and murmuring. He is having a nightmare. He wakes up in a cold sweat, panting. Sits up, rubs his eyes. From the skylight moonlight provides the sole source of light.

Gets up, walks to a table, splashes cold water from a bowl onto his face, then uses a cloth to dry himself. He returns to the bed. Sits down reaches under the bed, fetches a bottle of brandy. Drinks from the bottle before replacing it under the bed. Climbs back into bed and tries to return to sleep.

INT. CLAIRVOYANT'S TENT - DAY

Arthur is having his fortune read by a WOMAN FORTUNE TELLER. On the table are a set of Tarot cards. She holds his hand, runs her finger across his palm.

WOMAN

I will tell you, that you will go
on a great journey.

ARTHUR

Anything else?

She deals the cards and studies them.

WOMAN

I see water. Lots of water.

ARTHUR

The Atlantic! It must be!

WOMAN

Alas. The cards do not tell me.

Arthur prepares to exit. He stands up.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Wait there is more.

Arthur sits back down.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

You will not make this journey
alone.

ARTHUR

Kath wants to live in America.

WOMAN

No, I don't think its that. I see
great things, but many dangers lie
ahead.

ARTHUR

Thank you. If you're right, I'll
let you know.

Arthur stands up, pays the woman and exits.

INT. OFFICE - DAY MARCH 1919.

Caption: Vickers - Brooklands 1919.

PERCY MULLER sits behind a desk writing. John Alcock sits across from him. He is sloven in appearance, puffy eyes and unshaven. His clothes look too big for him, not helped by his stocky build. His sandy coloured hair needs cutting. His breath smells of alcohol. Muller is not impressed.

PERCY
You're late again

John tries to stifle a yawn.

PERCY (CONT'D)
Another bad night?

John remains quiet.

PERCY (CONT'D)
You really need to see someone.

John shuffles uncomfortably.

JOHN
I'm fine honestly

PERCY
Well you don't look it. Get a bloody haircut at least.

JOHN
Seriously everything's fine. Just had a bad night.

PERCY
You seem to be having quite a few bad nights. Anyway read this.

He passes a copy of the Daily Mail over. John reads the headline: "10,000 for first successful non stop trans Atlantic flight"

PERCY (CONT'D)
They're re-running it.

John continues to read then puts the paper back on the desk.

PERCY (CONT'D)
So what do you reckon? Interested

JOHN
I'm on it any time.

PERCY
Good, cos we've decided to enter,
and we want you as the pilot.

JOHN
Thought you would be.

PERCY
It could mean the difference
between us going or going bust.

They stop talking as the sound of aero engines drowns out all noise for a moment.

JOHN
Can't do it on my own, can I.

PERCY
Course not.

JOHN
So who else?

PERCY
No names yet. Was thinking of a nav
and an engineer.

JOHN
Ditch the engineer. I can manage
the engines if needed.

PERCY
Sorry, too risky. Would prefer a
three man crew.

JOHN
It'll be extra weight. We'll be
overweight as it is with all the
fuel.

PERCY
If you're sure then will go with
two but I'm not convinced.

JOHN
Trust me, we'll be okay.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

We are in a London terraced house. KATHLEEN KENNEDY (Irish 20's) and Arthur are sat on the sofa. We see a newspaper with the headline "Influenza latest". On the mantelpiece are sympathy cards.

KATHLEEN

I mean, he made it through France
for three years.

ARTHUR

I know.

He tries to comfort her.

KATHLEEN

He was like a brother to me.

ARTHUR

And to me.

KATHLEEN

It's just not fair!

ARTHUR

I know. Said when the funeral is.

KATHLEEN

Haven't been told yet.

She pauses for a moment.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

You still going tomorrow?

ARTHUR

Might as well. Got nothing to lose.
Besides don't want to upset your
father.

INT. OFFICE - DAY MARCH 1919.

Percy is at his desk. Arthur sits across from him. A WOMAN waits by the door.

WOMAN

Will that be all Mr Muller?

PERCY

Could you arrange for some tea
please?

WOMAN
Of course Mr Muller.

She exits.

PERCY
You're hear to discuss radiators?

ARTHUR
I am. The ministry's interested in
the latest developments.

PERCY
Can't tell you much. Things have
been very quiet lately.

ARTHUR
I can quite understand.

There is a knock on the door. Door opens slowly. A GIRL
enters carrying a tea tray. She is trembling trying not to
have an accident.

GIRL
Your tea sir.

PERCY
Thank you Sally. Just place it here
please.

Sally gingerly walks over and places the tray on the desk.

SALLY
Will that be all sir?

PERCY
Yes thank you Sally.

Sally does a small courtesy and quickly exits. Percy pours
two cups. Offers one to Arthur who accepts.

PERCY (CONT'D)
We've had to lay a load off. Only
good thing about the war. Provided
employment. Now we're just ticking
over.

ARTHUR
Everyone's in the same boat. I've
heard Tom's about to go under.

PERCY

Looks like he's offering his company to Harry. That's the rumour around here.

ARTHUR

He won't be the only one.

PERCY

We're looking at the civil market.

ARTHUR

Don't blame you. Could be the way forward.

There is a knock at the door. Enter John Alcock. He has smartened up since we last saw him. His hair is short and looks like he's finally had a decent night's sleep. John nods at Arthur.

JOHN

Sorry to disturb you Mr Muller.

PERCY

It's alright. Whats up?

JOHN

We're going to need some new instruments.

PERCY

As soon as I'm done here, I'll be with you.

JOHN

Thanks.

PERCY

Any luck on finding a navigator?

JOHN

Not yet. There's a couple of lads who may be up to it. But I'm not entirely sure they can hack it.

ARTHUR

Sorry for butting in, but why do you need a navigator?

JOHN

What's it to do with you?

ARTHUR

It's just that I'm a navigator by trade. Served over France.

JOHN

Good for you.

ARTHUR

It's just I keep looking for a navigation job. I even studied long range as I thought it would give an advantage.

PERCY

No luck then?

ARTHUR

None.

JOHN

When you say long range, just how long range?

ARTHUR

Over water. Arthur Whitten Brown by the way. Most people call me "Ted".

JOHN

John Alcock. "Jack" to my friends.

Arthur stands up. Shakes hands with John.

JOHN (CONT'D)

When you say long range, just how long?

ARTHUR

Over the sea away from any land. The true test of any navigator.

JOHN

Alright I'll listen. Ain't promising nowt.

Arthur picks up his cane, bag and rolls. Him and John walk over to another table. Arthur unrolls his map on the table, uses a couple of paperweights. The map shows the Atlantic ocean with various pencil lines running across it. Arthur removes a notepad from his bag and begins explaining his theory to John. We cannot hear what is being said save for a few snippets.

ARTHUR

I mean there's the drift. Direction of the waves will help. Means a drift indicator, compass and sextant.

JOHN

I'm totally flummoxed. Have no idea on half the things you're going on about.

Arthur rolls up the map and ties it up. He places the notepad into his bag.

ARTHUR

So what's this flight you're on about?

JOHN

You've heard about the Mail's latest challenge?

ARTHUR

Who hasn't. I've been trying to get a place but so far nothing.

JOHN

You won't have been the only one.

ARTHUR

Got a couple of firms to ask. If its a no from both then I'll give up.

JOHN

Erm, look how would you feel about being my navigator?

ARTHUR

You sure?

JOHN

I've only just met you and to be blunt you know more than anyone I've interviewed already.

ARTHUR

Thanks.

JOHN

So what do you think?

ARTHUR

To what?

JOHN
The Mail's challenge.

ARTHUR
You serious.

JOHN
If I wasn't I wouldn't be bloody
well asking.

ARTHUR
Its gonna be hard. Fog, ice, rain.
Hmm 2,000 miles of sea to fly over.
Some of the worst weather possible.
Sounds fun.

JOHN
It will be beat anything we've done
before.

ARTHUR
It will be a honour.

Both shake hands

JOHN
Good saves me a job.

ARTHUR
Kath's going to kill me.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Kathleen is stood besides the fireplace. Arthur sits on the
armchair.

KATHLEEN
You're a God damn fool!

ARTHUR
No I'm not.

KATHLEEN
Why? I mean why?

ARTHUR
You know why. I've told you loads
of times.

KATHLEEN
Yes, but I didn't think you were
serious.

Arthur gets up, walks across to a bureau, opens a drawer, takes out his maps and notebooks, before returning back to his chair. He remains stood up.

ARTHUR

Why do you think I've done all this.

KATHLEEN

After all you've been through!

ARTHUR

Only because of what happened.

KATHLEEN

At least you came home!

ARTHUR

Maybe that's the reason why I made it through.

KATHLEEN

So you turn up and what, just asked if they going?

ARTHUR

No. they asked me and I said yes.

KATHLEEN

Just like that?

ARTHUR

Yes, if you want to know.

Kathleen picks up a copy of "Punch" and throws it at Arthur. Arthur puts down his maps and notebook, picks up "Punch" reads headline:

£10,000 FOR THE FIRST FLIGHT TO MARS!

Arthur casts the magazine aside.

KATHLEEN

Why not go for that! You've got as much chance!

ARTHUR

Oh come on! No-ones been to the moon yet.

KATHLEEN

And that's never going to happen either!

ARTHUR

You never know. One day it may happen.

KATHLEEN

Seriously though, have you really thought about all this?

ARTHUR

Course I have.

KATHLEEN

So when do you intend to leave?

ARTHUR

Soon as possible. Don't have much time if we want to beat the others.

KATHLEEN

Others?

ARTHUR

Sopwith going. Harry's their pilot. Fred Raynham too and Handley Page.

KATHLEEN

Yes but why you? Can't someone else go.

ARTHUR

And let someone take the glory?

KATHLEEN

But father's got you an excellent position. Why can't you just be grateful you've got a job.

ARTHUR

I am grateful, but this is my chance.

KATHLEEN

What about our wedding? Have you thought about that?

ARTHUR

Yes I have.

KATHLEEN

And?

ARTHUR

I thought we could have it after I came back.

KATHLEEN

Why not before?

ARTHUR

Not enough time. Besides should we win you'll have the wedding you've always wanted.

KATHLEEN

All I want is a simple affair!

Arthur tries to hug her, Kathleen backs away.

ARTHUR

Then that's what you'll have.

KATHLEEN

Well I'm not prepared to wait. Its me or your flight!

She storms out the room, leaving Arthur standing.

INT. HANGAR - DAY

We are in a typical hangar of the period. It is clear that this place once built tens if not hundreds of aeroplanes employing hundreds of workers both male and female.

Now it is virtually empty, the sheer space adding to the feeling of loneliness amongst the very few employees left. These are the lucky ones for they still have their jobs. Each are at separate work stations. Some even wear gauze face masks.

In the centre of the hangar is a Vimy biplane bomber covered in a creamy white linen fabric.

Its wheels are off the ground, mounted on three triangular wooden trellises: one under each wing with the third under the rear fuselage just in front of the tailplane.

The aeroplane looks so small in the large hangar.

All around MEN are working on the aeroplane. Some are busy on the airframe, whilst others are tinkering with the engines. There are a few young lads probably apprentices along with some veterans from the recent conflict battle scarred a couple with missing arms and legs using rudimentary prosthetics.

A handful of WOMEN are sat by a wall on benches that once sat dozens sewing fabric onto wooden frames.

The atmosphere is one of chattering, hammering and sawing, in other words the full cacophony of noise one would expect in a workplace.

This particular Vimy itself is totally different from all the others. The gun turrets have been faired over. Extra fuel tanks have been installed in place of the bomb racks. A ladder rests on the left side of the fuselage leading up to the cockpit.

Arthur and John are in conversation with REG PIERSON. No one takes much notice, instead continuing with their tasks. A few stare at Arthur for a brief moment with some suspicion.

REG

Beautiful isn't she. Best kite there is, if I say so myself.

JOHN

How much more you got to do?

REG

Not much. Should be ready by the morning if we work through the night.

A commotion from the far end of the hangar causes the conversation to stop. The sound of something metal clanging on the floor rings out, followed by sniggering.

Reg yells at a group of three TEENAGE BOYS in a corner who at stood in the corner.

REG (CONT'D)

Oi. This ain't a bloody playground y'know! Back to work now! Good mind to sack the lot of you! Plenty of hard working folk out there!

Everyone stops working, glance in the direction of the boys. Some begin to mumble inaudibly before returning to their tasks.

The boys suddenly stop their sniggering stare in embarrassment at Reg, before returning back to their tasks in silence heads bent down. Reg watches them like a hawk for a moment.

REG (CONT'D)

Bloody kids. Miles behind everyone and I've got idiots like that to deal with. I'll sack 'em in the morning.

ARTHUR

Alright if we go up?

Reg nods in approval. John climbs up the ladder scrambles over the side and into the cockpit.

With his crippled leg Arthur struggles climbing into the cockpit swinging his left leg over the cockpit side first. Arthur looks around, noticing the brass switches and levers.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Bit cramped ain't it?

JOHN

Wait to the rest of the stuff gets put in.

ARTHUR

Great. Better be worth it.

JOHN

Anything not need cam go. Wireless for starters.

John pulls out a screwdriver from a pocket, turns around to begin to dismantle the wireless set situated behind him. Before he can Arthur places his hand on his arm to stop him.

ARTHUR

Don't think that's a good idea. May need it.

JOHN

It'll take up room. And they never work. Get rid that's what I say.

ARTHUR

Sooner be safe than sorry. If we do have to ditch want to least be able to send an SOS.

JOHN

I have no intention of ditching.

ARTHUR

I had no intention of being shot down and it happened.

REG (O.S.)

Everything okay up there?

ARTHUR

It's find. Jack wants to dump the wireless.

REG

Keep it.

JOHN

Don't need no gimmicks! All i need
are wings and engines!

REG

I'm with Ted on this. Don't worry
Jack we can lose the weight
elsewhere.

ARTHUR

What about fuel?

Reg gets out a notepad and pencil from his jacket pocket and scribbles down a few calculations. Looks back up at the airmen.

REG

If my calculations are right you
should have about 870 gallons which
should be plenty.

ARTHUR

Come on, we'd better leave em to
it.

Both climb out of the cockpit. Arthur takes his time due to his leg injury.

EXT. AIRBORNE DAY

Caption: 18th April 1919

A Vickers Vimy is flying a few hundred feet over southern English countryside. It is clearly different from the normal model, missing its nose-wheel skid and the turrets have been faired over. We see John and Arthur cramped together in cockpit, buffeted by the wind barely able to move. They are both dressed in flying suits of the period. John is concentrating on flying. There is hardly any space between them. Every nook and cranny is full of instruments either for flight control or navigation. In front of Arthur clipped to the dashboard is the sextant. Underneath the bench is the navigational machine along with charts and log. On the cockpit side next to him is the drift calculator.

Arthur is practising his navigating skills, trying to make notes whilst being buffeted. Arthur glances at the fuel gauge, sees the fuel is running low. He taps the gauge, indicates it to John who sets a course to Brooklands. Through the glass panel below Arthur's feet the ground can be seen passing below them at speed.

INT. OFFICE - LATER

We are back in Percy's office. Arthur and John are sat in conversation with Percy who is reading John's report.

PERCY

Seems you had a good flight.

JOHN

Wasn't too bad. Still a few issues to sort out. Other than that I think we're ready.

ARTHUR

I'll still like to do a few more tests.

JOHN

We ain't got time! We need to get going!

ARTHUR

Yes but its better to iron out all the faults before.

PERCY

I agree Ted. More we get done now, less to do over there.

JOHN

Fine, we'll do more and that's it. This time over the sea.

(turns to Arthur)

Lets see how good you really are.

INT. SHOP - DAY

Burberry's, Regent Street London. Arthur and John are trying on their flying suits in a special room at the back of the store.

Under Arthur's partially zipped opened suit is an electric vest.

A couple of FEMALE ASSISTANTS are helping them get into the suits. Arthur struggles to get his damaged leg into the suit.

With some effort and with help from one of the assistants he manages to get into the suit. He zips up the suit before attaching the suit to the electric power supply on the floor.

Once he is in his suit John begins to walk around testing its movement. His walking is restricted by the bulkiness of the suit.

ARTHUR

So, what's the verdict?

JOHN

Good thing we won't be walking much.

John returns to his chair. He attaches his suit to the electric supply. He can feel the electric vest beginning to work.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Ain't been electrocuted yet. That's a relief.

ARTHUR

Just hope they work when we need them.

They sit as their electric suits begin to charge. They begin to sweat as the heat arises.

JOHN

Look at this way, we'll be lovely and toasty.

He signals for the assistants. The assistants come over and help him out of the suit.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Arthur and John are in Kathleen's dining room sat around an oval table. They are joined by Kathleen Kennedy and her father MAJOR KENNEDY. They are having an afternoon tea.

KATHLEEN

So you're the one to blame for taking my Ted away.

JOHN

Guilty as charged.

ARTHUR

Not entirely his fault.

KATHLEEN

You're not what I expected.

JOHN

Not sure how to take that.

KATHLEEN

I meant it as a compliment.

JOHN

Thanks.

KATHLEEN

So what's in for you?

JOHN

Other than the money? The challenge.

MAJOR KENNEDY

Ah the lure of adventure. We should always be pushing the boundaries. Isn't that right Kathleen?

KATHLEEN

Yes father, whatever you say.

JOHN

I want to be the first. I've been waiting for this since I were little.

KATHLEEN

That's what Teddy said.

ARTHUR

I believe one day we'll all be flying.

JOHN

Hope so, keep me in a job after this.

MAJOR KENNEDY

So you've no intention of retiring?

JOHN

No sir, I'll be bored within the day.

ARTHUR

Better than carrying people than bombs.

MAJOR KENNEDY

Until the next time.

KATHLEEN

Didn't we just fight that war to
have no more war?

MAJOR KENNEDY

My girl, if you believe that, then
you'll believe anything. Isn't that
right Arthur?

ARTHUR

I hope you're wrong sir, but
somehow I doubt it.

MAJOR KENNEDY

(to John)

I do hope you know what you're
doing.

JOHN

I do. Trust me nothing's being left
to chance.

MAJOR KENNEDY

Good to hear. Preparation is
everything. Isn't that so Kathleen?

KATHLEEN

Yes father, whatever you say.

MAJOR KENNEDY

If I were your age I'll probably
trying it myself.

KATHLEEN

Father, honestly!

INT. SHOP - DAY

The hangar is empty save for Arthur and John.

The Vimy is gone. Instead are several enormous wooden crates
on wooden metal rimmed wheels.

Each crate is stamped with the Vickers logo and underneath
the legend:

Vickers Aviation Ltd. Transatlantic flight.

On a trestle table is a small cardboard box. Arthur opens the
box. He pulls out a compass and a sextant wrapped in paper
and packed tightly surrounded by straw.

JOHN
They from the ministry.

ARTHUR
Yep. Expected more though.

He pulls out a note and reads it.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
It's from Kath's father. He
apologises but this is all he can
get.

JOHN
Bet bloody Harry's getting
everything he wants.

Arthur places the items back in the box, then picks up the
box.

ARTHUR
Best get these to Rex.

JOHN
Think he's still at the Bluebird.

John picks up the box as they walk towards the hangar's exit.

INT. BEDROOM NIGHT

Kathleen is sat up in bed on the left side reading as Arthur
enters. By the bed is a bedside cabinet with an oil lamp
glowing a dim light. Other furnishings consists of a
wardrobe, set of drawers and a dresser. She puts her book
down and looks at him. Arthur undresses and gets ready for
bed. The clock shows the time as 11:30.

KATHLEEN
You're late back.

ARTHUR
I know, been busy, sorry.

He climbs into bed. Kathleen stops reading.

KATHLEEN
Well? I take it you're still going?

ARTHUR
That's the plan.

KATHLEEN
Do you even care about me?!

ARTHUR
Of course I do.

KATHLEEN
Huh, Doesn't seem like it.

ARTHUR
I'm doing it for us. Give us a chance of something better. Not having to rely on your father all the time.

KATHLEEN
Why can't you just lead a normal life? Like everyone else?

ARTHUR
Because.. its not in my nature.

KATHLEEN
That's not a reason.

ARTHUR
By doing this I may have a chance of getting a job with Instone or someone else as a navigator.

She rolls over, her back towards him, who wraps his arm around her. She shows no response.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Promise this will be my last.

She rolls back over to face him.

KATHLEEN
Promise?

ARTHUR
Wouldn't be able to beat this.

KATHLEEN
Well if you don't come back you won't be having anymore adventures that's for certain.

Arthur doesn't say anything instead he rolls over onto his back and stares at the ceiling before switching the bedside lamp off and plunging the bedroom into darkness.

EXT. DOCKSIDE - DAY

Caption: 4th May 1919 Southampton docks.

A typical day at Southampton docks. Ships are being loaded and unloaded, passengers embarking or disembarking from the various ships moored. Dockers are calling out to each other. The whole place is one of full of noise and hustle and bustle of a major port. We notice a few people wearing face masks. A newspaper stand informs us of the latest influenza developments.

There is a loose haphazard form of social distancing but nothing regimented nor organised.

Towering above all the other vessels berthed by the quayside is the liner RMS Mauretania. Her size dwarfs all the other vessels.

Dockers and the ship's crew are busily loading cargo onto the ship as passengers are either saying their goodbyes before climbing up the gangways.

The Vickers team of seven (including Arthur, John and Percy) are getting ready to embark standing next to the Mauretania. Their personnel belongings are gathered around on the ground.

Kathleen is stood with them, along with her father, Major Kennedy who is in his army uniform. Arthur is facing her as is John. Percy is overseeing the loading of the teams luggage onto the ship.

John looks up at the ship with trepidation. It is unclear something is unsettling him. Kathleen looks at him.

KATHLEEN

Are you okay? You look a bit flush.

JOHN

I'm fine. Just suffer with seasickness that's all. Don't mind boats, its rough seas I'm not keen on..

KATHLEEN

So is Arthur. Its why he's never been keen on water.

MAJOR KENNEDY

If you keep busy you should be alright. Don't look down if you can help it.

ARTHUR

Thanks, I'll try not to.

KATHLEEN

Its quite ironic really when one considers.

JOHN

What is?

KATHLEEN

You two, both don't like the water, and yet you're going to try and fly over it.

JOHN

I know, must be bloody mad or just plain stupid.

ARTHUR

Ah yes, but at least we'll be quicker coming back.

MAJOR KENNEDY

That's if everything goes accordingly.

KATHLEEN

Just make sure you come back safe.

JOHN

Don't worry about Ted, I'll make sure nothing happens to him.

(to Arthur))

Ted! I'll see you onboard.

Don't be late!

John gives Kathleen a hug before shaking her father's hand. He then picks up his bags, placing one over his shoulder whilst holding onto the other before heading towards the ship's walkway.

Kathleen reaches into her handbag and pulls a toy black cat. She gives it to Arthur.

KATHLEEN

I've got a little something for you. He's called Twinkletoes. You know what they say about black cats. He won't be a bother, probably snooze throughout just like a real cat, and he won't need feeding either.

Arthur takes the toy cat then kisses her on the lips.

ARTHUR

Thank you, that is so thoughtful. I hope he does bring us luck. We're going to need as much of it as we can get.

He hugs Kathleen for a minute. As they separate Kathleen looks at him, wipes away a tear. This may be the last time she'll ever see him again. The anguish is evident on her face. She is trying to put a brave face on.

KATHLEEN

You better come back Arthur Brown. You've got an important date to keep.

ARTHUR

I will I promise. I have every intention. Besides don't want to have to have to cancel our wedding again.

MAJOR KENNEDY

(to Arthur)

Well I wish you the best of luck. I've got faith in you lad. Don't let the side down.

ARTHUR

I don't intend to sir. And thank you for all of your help.

MAJOR KENNEDY

Pleased to have been able to help

Maurentania's whistle sounds. Male voice heard shouting for all passengers to board ship alerting that they will be setting sail very soon. The Vickers ground-crew begin to embark.

PERCY (O.S.)

Ted! Come on, you don't to miss the boat. It's about to sail.

ARTHUR

(shouts back)

I'll be there in a minute!

Percy walks up to the trio.

PERCY

Well make sure you are. Do you need
a hand with your bags?

ARTHUR

Thanks. I can manage one if you
could take the other please.

Percy picks up one of Arthur's bags and begins to make his
way towards the Maurentania. Arthur turns to Kathleen

KATHLEEN

Go on, you best be going.

She hugs and kisses Arthur goodbye, they embrace tightly.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Come back to me.

ARTHUR

I will I promise, even if I have to
swim back.

He begins to walk towards up to the walkway then walks up
onto the ship. Kathleen is stood at the dockside along with
her father.

As the mooring ropes are cast off, Maurentania blows her
whistle and begins to slip away from the quayside.

John, Arthur and the rest of the Vickers team, along with
other passengers waving and blowing kisses to those on the
dockside who return the compliments.

Kathleen waves a handkerchief and mouths "I love you". Arthur
returns the compliment with a wave. With all the noise it is
pointless to make oneself heard.

Everyone else either onboard ship or by the quayside are
doing the same waving and blowing kisses.

KATHLEEN

They'll be alright won't they?

Her father puts his arm around her shoulder.

MAJOR KENNEDY

Do you know my girl, I genuinely
believe they will.

They and all the others left on the dockside watch as the
huge liner disappears from view.

EXT. TOP DECK - DAY

The Mauretania somewhere in the Atlantic.

There is nothing but the greyness of both sea and sky, other than the great ocean liner herself there is no life.

John standing on at the stern, looking down at the wake caused by the liner as it ploughs its way through the waves. BOB DICKER (27) approaches stand next to him and gazes down also at the sea. Other passengers are standing around him chatting away. John is oblivious to them all, clearly lost in his own thoughts.

BOB

What's the matter, Jack?

John keeps looking at the sea.

JOHN

Nothing, just thinking its a bloody long way isn't it.

BOB

Can't back out now.

JOHN

Wouldn't dream of it.

He places his hand on John's right shoulder before leaving John to his solitary vigil. John remained fixed looking out over the ocean.

INT. CABIN - EVENING

John is sat a table playing cards with some of the Vickers ground-crew: ERIC PLATFORD, BOB LYONS and Bob Dicker. Arthur is noticeable by his absence. Smoke lingers in the air and glasses of whiskey's in various states of consumption are on the table. The ship rocks from side to side as the sea conditions worsen. Some of the players begin to feel queasy and nauseous with seasickness not being used to travelling on an ocean.

BOB LYONS

Take it Arthur's not for cards

JOHN

Said he was busy.

ERIC

Reckon he knew he was gonna lose.

JOHN

Dunno, don't think its his thing.

He throws down his cards as he realises he's just lost the next hand. Eric scoops up his winnings much to the annoyance of the other two.

BOB DICKER

(to Eric)

Don't spend it all. I intend to win it all back next time!

JOHN

No you won't, that money's got my name on it!

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Arthur is studying a map of the Atlantic spread out on the table. He is accompanied by CAPTAIN ROSTRUN and a couple of the ship's OFFICERS.

ARTHUR

Thanks for this Captain. You have been most helpful.

CPT ROSTRUN

Don't mention it As long you don't put me out of a job.

ARTHUR

Doubt it. Not yet anyway.

CPT ROSTRUN

Hopefully not for a long time, or at least until I've retired.

ARTHUR

Whatever, you can't beat the luxury of a liner.

CPT ROSTRUN

Unless you count the airships.

ARTHUR

Not sure who'll be building those, now the huns are out.

CPT ROSTRUN

Isn't herr Zeppelin supposed to building one for the yanks?

ARTHUR

Dunno, is he? So what should I keep
an eye out for?

CPT ROSTRUN

I'll show you. at least you'll see
icebergs better.

They return to studying the maps. Rostrun continues to give
Arthur advice pointing at certain details.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

INT./EXT. SHIP - DAY

Caption: 9th May 1919. Halifax, Newfoundland.

The RMS Mauretania sails into harbour. Passengers crowd onto the top deck to catch a glimpse of land for the first time in days.

The six members of the Vickers team are stood together on the port side as the coast becomes closer. Tug boats are guiding the huge ship into harbour.

The mountainous terrain is covered by thick fog obscuring the view reducing visibility to a few feet. There is a general look of disappointment amongst the passengers.

Some of the passengers begin to moan and grumble wondering if they've made a massive mistake.

BOB DICKER

God! What a dreary place.

JOHN

Maybe Shorts had the right idea.

BOB LYONS

Yeah, would have been if they hadn't crashed just off Ireland.

ARTHUR

Heard they only made twelve miles.

ERIC

If they had succeeded, wouldn't have been much point of us being here.

EXT. DOCKSIDE - LATER

The Vickers team are stood huddled together, trying to stay warm against the cold wind and fog on the dockside. The visibility is only a few feet. An atmosphere of disappointment and despondency descends upon the group.

JOHN

Will never moan about English winter's again.

BOB DICKER

Aye at least it'll be quicker home
for you two. Only just got here and
I want to go home.

JOHN

Don't worry Bob, I'm sure Kerr's
lot crew can give you a lift. Their
plane's bloody well big enough.

BOB DICKER

Well if they do offer, I'll accept
as long as they come second.

An enforced chuckle goes round the group.

JOHN

So now what?

ARTHUR

We've got to get to St John's.
Unfortunately its quite a trek.

JOHN

How long will that take?

ARTHUR

Percy said it took the Sopwith team
a couple of days at least.

A huge groan goes around the group. Their hopes sink even
harder.

JOHN

C'mon lads, best get going.

ERIO

Can't we not find somewhere here to
stay?

BOB DICKER

Not bad suppose we could.

JOHN

We ought to get to St Johns as soon
as. Could spend all night looking
for somewhere.

ARTHUR

True, we can always sleep on the
train.

The group grumble whilst picking up their belongings before
making their way out of the docks.

EXT. OUTSIDE BUILDING - NIGHT

Caption: Cochrane Hotel, St John's, Newfoundland

The Vickers crew stand outside the four storey Cochrane Hotel. The building is need of more than just a fresh coat of paint. They are all cold, wet, very tired and very hungry.

Snow lies in huge drifts swept in a desperate attempt to keep roads and doorways clear. To add further to their misery the constant cold rain penetrates the clothing soaking them to the skin which sinks their spirits even further.

Bob Dicker tries to open the front door only to find it locked. He knocks hard on the door. There is no answer so he tries again this time louder. The door opens slightly. A WOMAN (50's who we'll later know as AGNES DOOLEY) stands in a dressing gown and slippers.

She is distinctly unhappy about woken up in the middle of the night. She stares at the dishevelled group of six through bleary eyes.

AGNES

Yes? Can I be of service?

BOB DICKER

Sorry to disturb you madam, but we're looking for somewhere to stay.

AGNES

Sorry I can't help you. We're full up. You English?

John pushes his way to the front. He is impatient and fed up.

JOHN

Yes madam, we're the Vickers Party to fly the Atlantic.

Agnes just stares at him, looking at John up and down.

AGNES

Oh God! I've got a hotel full of you flyers. You're all bloody mad! Sorry you'll have to find somewhere else. There's a couple of places that may have rooms free.

She is about to close the door on them when Bob Dicker places his foot in the door to stop her.

BOB DICKER

Look madam, we've travelled a bloody long way to be here. All we're asking for is somewhere to sleep even its just for a few hours. Not too much to ask is there.

AGNES

Look I would love to help. Maybe come back in the morning.

JOHN

So what, we just sleep out here?

ARTHUR

Surely there must be something you can do. We've been travelling for over four days.

Arthur who is standing behind Bob steps forward. The cold and wet weather is causing his leg to be more painful.

JOHN

Look madam, we're cold wet and bloody hungry. Okay? We've just had the journey from hell. And I'm fed up!

Agnes thinks for a moment.

AGNES

I can put up some camp beds in the smoking room if that's acceptable to you gentlemen.

BOB DICKER

Madam, we'll even take the floor in the laundry. Thank you.

AGNES

Some of you will have to sleep on the floor. Ain't got enough beds for you all.

She keeps the door open whilst the Vickers party enter the hotel.

INT. COCHRANE - MOMENTS LATER

The Vickers group are all sat in wicker chairs, their luggage dumped on the floor. They are all too tired to unpack and are struggling to keep awake.

The room has a distinctly nautical theme with photos and paintings of ships mounted on the walls along with various maritime memorabilia.

Agnes enters with a couple of teenage boys. All three are carrying camping beds. The trio set up the beds near to the lit fireplace. The two boys then leave.

AGNES

You get yourselves settled, I'll rustle some food up for you. It'll have to be leftovers I'm afraid.

ARTHUR

That will do us. Thanks Mrs er?

AGNES

Dooley. Agnes Dooley.

ARTHUR

Pleased to meet you.

Agnes exits room.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Seems nice.

JOHN

Ain't bothered about she's like. Just want to eat, then sleep.

ARTHUR

Wonder who else is here?

JOHN

Uh?

ARTHUR

When she said about having a hotel full of flyers, who did she mean?

ERIC

I'm sure we'll find out.

JOHN

Hope its Freddie.

Agnes returns pushing a trolley of food pots of tea, a few plates and cutlery.

AGNES

Here we go get this down you. We'll sort out rooms in the morning. A couple of guests are leaving first thing so they'll be two rooms available. We can sort out sleeping arrangements later.

ARTHUR

Er Mrs Dooley, who else is here?

AGNES

How do you mean?

ARTHUR

When you said about other flyers.

AGNES

Oh them! Yes there's some nice young chaps. Can't remember their names. But one's Australian by his accent.

John suddenly becomes more alert.

JOHN

Australian?! Oh God! Its Harry isn't it.

AGNES

Yes! That's it Harry Hawker. Lovely fella.

JOHN

Pain in the arse more like.

The Vickers crew thank Agnes for her hospitality and proceed to eat the food off their laps. Agnes leaves them to it. Once everybody has eaten they all fall fast asleep, three on the chairs whilst three sleep on the beds.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Living room of Kathleen Kennedy's Ealing house. Kathleen is entertaining her father who has come to visit for a couple of days, who has just gone to answer a knock on the front door. He returns with a telegram which he passes to his daughter and returns to his armchair. Kathleen begins to read.

MAJOR KENNEDY

Is it from Arthur?

Kathleen continues to read the telegram.

KATHLEEN

Says they've just arrived in Halifax. Weather's appalling. Will send a telegram when they arrive at St John's.

MAJOR KENNEDY

At least we know they've arrived, that's something.

KATHLEEN

I just want them to come home. A cup of tea?

MAJOR KENNEDY

They've got to the halfway point. Yes please Kath, that would be lovely.

Kathleen gets up from out of her chair, places the telegram on the armchair before heading into the kitchen. Her father call's out to her before sitting down in an armchair.

MAJOR KENNEDY (CONT'D)

Eileen's coming over.

KATHLEEN (O.S)

That's nice. When?

MAJOR KENNEDY

Next week I think. Would it be alright if she stayed here with you?

KATHLEEN (O.S)

Of course she can. Could do with the company.

Major Kennedy picks up a newspaper off the table and begins reading.

INT. COCHRANE - DAY

Around a circular table sit six MEN all in their 20's and 30's, each is smartly dressed and two WOMEN (MARGARET CARTER mid 20's) wearing a mink fur coat and silk gloves. By her appearance and clothes she is clearly a woman who comes from a wealthy background and influence. She is clearly enjoying the company of the men sat with her. The other is ELSIE HOLLOWAY (mid 30's) is also sat at the table next to the other woman. Her clothing is less expensive than her lady friend. The two women are close friends.

The others are Harry Hawker, and his navigator KENNETH GRIEVE, Freddie Raynham, and CHARLES MORGAN. Charles has a crutch besides his chair. His false right leg is outstretched under the table. He coughs regularly due to a side effect of having recently contracted influenza.

John and Arthur are there. Their appearance is totally different from last time we saw them. They are both clean and well dressed and are fully recovered from the previous night's exertions. They both feel relaxed and rested following the previous nights ordeal.

The diners are tucking into a cooked breakfast of bacon, sausages, eggs and bread. There is no alcohol in sight.

There is huge camaraderie and reverie amongst the group. Gossip and laughter fill the air.

JOHN

That's because unlike you, Harry, we believe in preparation before departure.

HARRY

I've never seen such fog. Morning, noon and night. Nothing but fog! No wonder no one's ever flown here.

CHARLES

Surprised anyone wants to live out here.

MARGARET

Excuse me, you are talking about my country. Besides we do have some days of sunshine, just not often.

ELSIE

You get used to it.

KENNETH

Aye I'll never complain about Scottish weather again.

HARRY

What is it with you Poms and the bloody weather?

FREDDIE

Cos unlike your land we actually have weather in England!

The conversation is interrupted by Charles having a coughing fit. He sips a glass of water afterwards. The others look at him with concern.

MARGARET

Are you okay?

CHARLES

Yeah fine thanks, sorry about that.
Still shaking off the bloody flu.

MARGARET

Sorry to hear you caught it.

CHARLES

Got the sodding thing on the way
over. Never felt so ill, Wouldn't
wish it on my own worse enemy.

MARGARET

You're very lucky indeed.

FREDDIE

Yeah, if he'd died I'd be buggered
for a navigator!

Harry stands up and raises his glass.

HARRY

A toast! To the remarkable recovery
of Charles Morgan who for whom luck
has smiled on twice, for not
only surviving the war but also the
influenza!

Everyone others stand up and raise their glasses in unison.

(ALL, except Freddie)

Charlie!

All stand up, take a drink, and put glasses down on table.

JOHN

Be better with brandy or whiskey
even.

ELISE

Told you, it ain't allowed

JOHN

Stupid bloody law.

KENNETH

We should have been on our way by now. But its this bloody weather.

FREDDIE

Same here. I going to beat you lot. Its fate.

MARGARET

Of course fate's got something to do with So has skill and experience.

FREDDIE

Explains why I keep losing. This is the one were my luck finally changes. Its going to knock your tin cups into the hat.

HARRY

Like that's ever going to happen!

Freddie throws a knife at Harry which misses and lands on the floor behind him.

HARRY (CONT'D)

See! You're a crap shot as well!

FREDDIE

Piss off!

ARTHUR

People back home are saying that your planes are too small and with one engine it's sheer suicide.

HARRY

What do they know?

JOHN

That's why we went for two.

FREDDIE

Don't matter about number of engines, its the reliability that counts.

ARTHUR

Better two reliable engines are better than one. Any news on Handley Page?

KENNETH

Arrived a couple of days ago at Harbour Grace up the road. By the sound of it they've bought everything including the kitchen sink. If they get going before us then we might as well all go home.

MARGARET

I've heard they've spent £4,000 just to make a landing strip. They've got a dozen or so mechanics. Even a sodding tractor.

ELSIE

They could buy half this town for that.

ARTHUR

So what's in our favour then?

KENNETH

Simple, it's the navy's attempt so they won't go until everything is bleeding perfect. Kerr's a sodding perfectionist. All one of us has to do is get going before them.

HARRY

Don't suppose we could sabotage their machine.

CHARLES

Not a bad idea. Mind you we'll probably get shot if we're caught.

HARRY

He'll probably arrange for the navy to shoot us down.

ARTHUR

Any news on the Yanks?

HARRY

Nothing as yet. They've got that many ships you can practically walk across without getting your feet wet.

CHARLES

They're supposed to have at least fifty ships strung out on the route.

FREDDIE

I mean its not even an attempt. All they're doing is just a series of hops.

JOHN

Know what their route is?

HARRY

According to the paper they're heading towards the Azores then onwards to Portugal.

CHARLES

At least they've got sense to cross further south.

MARGARET

There's big fuss about it in the papers down south.

FREDDIE

That's a bloody surprise.

HARRY

You know we became the first people to fly in Newfoundland.

CHARLES

Congratulations. Get you a medal.

ELSIE

Caused quite a sensation I can tell you.

JOHN

Not a totally wasted journey for you then.

KENNETH

It was quite a thrill seeing everyone looking up at us.

HARRY

Think we scared most of the folk, especially when we flew over 'em for the first time.

MARGARET

Yes, but most folk never seen a car let alone an airplane around these parts.

John stands up, knocking his chair over.

JOHN
 Another toast! To Harry and
 Kenneth. For the first to fly in
 Newfoundland!

The others at the table raise their glasses and toast Harry and Kenneth in congratulations.

John picks up his chair.

As soon as the toast is over, Margaret brings out a Newfoundland \$1 note.

MARGARET
 Could you all be such kind
 gentlemen and sign this as a
 reminder of a wonderful time.

She passes the note around the group for everyone to sign, with herself being the last one to do so. She neatly folds the note into an envelope before placing it into her handbag.

INT. BEDROOM NIGHT

Harry and Kenneth are in their room at the Cochrane. The room is basic but adequate for their needs.

Kenneth sits on his bed watching Harry stands on a chair carefully balancing a porcelain bowl of water above the door. Once the bowl has been placed in position Harry returns to his bed, sits on bed, and watches the door like a hawk.

KENNETH
 If Mrs Dooley enters, we'll be
 sleeping on the street.

HARRY
 Nope, won't be her.

KENNETH
 So who are you expecting?

HARRY
 We'll have to find out.

EXT. OUTSIDE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

John and Freddie are outside the Cochrane besides a car. John stands besides the vehicle keeping watch whilst Freddie kneels down fiddling with the back left tyre. Snow is still falling.

JOHN
You certain this is Harry's?

FREDDIE
Trust me. I saw him drive around
the town in this earlier.

JOHN
Well hurry up before someone sees
us.

He shivers.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Bloody hell i'm frozen.

Freddie finishes with the tyre. There is a slight exhaling of air escaping from the deflated tyre. Freddie heads to the rear of the car and lets the air out of the spare. Once he has finished they return silently back to the hotel.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

We are back in Harry and Ken's bedroom. Kenneth is reading a book whilst Harry is reading a technical magazine. Kenneth looks up at the wall clock.

KENNETH
Bet no one turns up.

HARRY
Just wait.

KENNETH
Well, I'm going to turn in. Don't
snore like normal.

Kenneth puts the book on the bedside table. As he is about turn in there is a knock on the door.

HARRY
See, told you. Who's there!

FREDDIE (O.S)
Its me, Freddie. Can I come in?

HARRY
Of course! Come in Fred.

Freddie opens the door, causing the bowl to break emptying its contents all over him the fragments landing on the floor.

Both Harry and Kenneth burst out laughing at the sight of their sodden friend. Freddie stands for a moment soaking before exiting extremely unhappy.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Harry is in an empty bedroom that clearly isn't his. He is carrying something wrapped in paper. On the writing desk are a couple of notebooks and a typewriter, with a half typed up report. Harry reads the report. He can't help but chuckle. He types something on the typewriter before walking over to the single bed.

Harry lifts up the bedsheets. He removes from the paper a dead fresh fish at the foot of the bed before carefully replacing the covers.

He then silently leaves, quietly shutting the door. He takes a quick peek down either side of the corridor before making his way back to his room.

EXT. FIELD DAY - AFTERNOON

Caption: May 18th 1919. Glendenning's Farm 15:30 Local Time.

Harry and Kenneth are in their flying clothes sitting on the grass waiting for the right moment looking up at the sky. Both are silent each lost in their own thoughts pondering what the next few hours have in store for them.

Their Sopwith Atlantic is being readied for take-off.

The ground-crew are carrying last minute checks on the aeroplane. The area around the aircraft has been roped off.

There are some reporters present ready to write down the days events.

Hundreds of locals who have gathered to watch. The entire place is buzzing with a carnival-like atmosphere, with families having picnics. Children run around some with wooden model planes.

The aeroplane has been roped off. Only the Sopwith team plus Margaret Margaret, who is taking photographs, are inside the perimeter. Her camera set up on its tripod.

Within the perimeter the atmosphere is entirely different to that on the outside. Inside it was deadly serious, no time for fun and frolics, just sheer professionalism.

She leaves her camera on its tripod and approaches the two airmen, there is no jollity only seriousness on their faces.

They seem to be oblivious to the activities going on around them.

MARGARET

All set?

KENNETH

Aye, As soon as Monty gives the word.

Margaret passes Kenneth a wooden box. Inside is a camera.

MARGARET

I shouldn't be asking you this but if you could you possibly take some photographs?

KENNETH

Can't promise but I'll try to.

Margaret looks at Harry who remains quiet. The fun loving boisterous individual from the Cochrane has gone.

This time he is deadly serious, fully focused on the challenge that awaits. He barely notices Margaret nor anyone else.

It is as if he is in a trance. His mind is completely focussed on the mission ahead.

Margaret wants to go up to Harry, offer him some words of comfort or maybe just a brief embrace to reassure him. She stays her distance instead watching him carefully.

She walks up to Kenneth who is talking to a couple of the Sopwith ground-crew. Kenneth stops his conversation with the ground-crew.

Margaret reaches into her bag and brings out something wrapped in a cloth which she passes to Kenneth.

MARGARET

I've made some sandwiches for you.

KENNETH

Thank you. Very kind of you.

MARGARET

Is Harry?...

Kenneth looks across to his pilot.

KENNETH

Yeah, he'll be fine once we're up.

The sound of the Sopwith's engine starting up causes them to look in the direction of the noise.

Harry stands up and looks at his watch. It as if he has emerged from a trance. He starts to whistle a tune of some kind. Margaret sees Harry's fingers twitch involuntarily like he's nervous.

HARRY

Right, lets get on with it.

He turns to Margaret noticing her presence for the first time. He nods at her. She shows no reaction.

MARGARET

You will be okay won't you?

Her focus remains on Harry's twitching fingers. Harry clasps his fingers to stop the twitching.

HARRY

Yeah, I'm fine. Pre flight nerves that's all.

Margaret isn't entirely convinced.

A shout comes over from the direction of the Sopwith. One of the engineers beckons the two airmen that the aeroplane is ready. Harry begins to cheer up.

HARRY (CONT'D)

(to Margaret)

Tell Freddie I'll greet him at Brooklands.

MARGARET

I will. Good luck.

Kenneth and Harry both embrace her, before she walks back to her camera.

The two aviators walk towards to the Sopwith. They climb into the cockpits, Harry in the front, Kenneth in the rear. Harry carries out his pre-flight checks. Kenneth checks through his maps and navigational aids. Harry signals for the wheel-chocks to be removed. He opens up the throttles causing the engine to become louder drowning out all other sound.

The propeller begins to turn faster until it becomes a whirl. The Sopwith begins its take-off run, bumping over the rough ground as it picks up speed jilting the two airmen in their seats.

Reporters start writing frantically on their notepads.

Some of the children begin to run along side the plane in a vain attempt to keep up.

Those watching wait with baited breath as the Sopwith continues its take-off run before ascending into the sky clapping and cheering as it gradually disappears from view.

Margaret waves a handkerchief to the disappearing plane. As the plane grows smaller the fixed undercarriage falls to earth.

EXT. FIELD DAY - LATER

Caption: Quidi Vidi Field 16:40 Local time.

Freddie and Charles are in their aeroplane preparing for take-off. Freddie is in the front cockpit checking the flight controls. Charles in the rear cockpit checks his navigational aids and charts.

Gathered around are the small ground-crew and a few dozen locals who are standing away from the aeroplane as well as a few reporters from. The scene is similar to Harry's take off but on a far smaller scale.

Elsie is present close to the action. She has set up her camera and is preparing to take pictures.

Margaret has turned up standing next to her car. She approaches Freddie. Freddie's aeroplane is not roped off from the public. Him and Charles have to contend with well wishers, reporters wishing to interview them. It is clear that by the expression on their faces they want to leave.

MARGARET

Harry's left.

FREDDIE

At least he kept to his side of the bargain.

CHARLES

Better keep to our side then.

MARGARET

Are you certain you can beat him?

FREDDIE

Of course, we're faster. Contact!

One of the mechanics swings the propeller, once then twice, then thrice. The engine comes alive with a cough and a splutter. The noise of engine causes the onlookers to back away.

Margaret shakes hands with Freddie then with Charles before retreating back. She walks to where Elsie is standing.

One of the ground-crew climbs onto the wing, shouts into Freddie's ear, shakes his hand before climbing down the wing.

The wheel-chocks are removed by the other ground-crew member and the plane begins its taxi run. Both locals and reporters step back as the engine power increases.

The onlookers watch as the aeroplane begins its take-off run past the lake. Although progress is sluggish there is a gasp of relief from the spectators as the aeroplane begins its take off run.

Just as the aeroplane is about to take off a strong gust of wind suddenly blows crosswind under the wings.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - FREDDIE'S P.O.V - CONTINUOUS

We are in the front cockpit with Freddie. He struggles to maintain control as the plane rocks from side to side by the increasing wind strength. He pulls back on the control column in attempt to get airborne. However there is not enough speed resulting in a series of hops.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

A strong gust of wind catches Freddie unawares just as the aeroplane is about to touch the ground.

As the plane crashes head-first into the ground both occupants are thrown forward in their respective cockpits but are held in by their safety belts.

The aeroplane skids along the ground, its undercarriage is ripped away in splinters. The propeller disappears in shards of wood as the damaged aeroplane ploughs along the ground before coming to a halt.

Ground crew and spectators rush instantly to the plane. Freddie has suffered a few cuts and bruises whilst Charles has a severe eye injury and head injury, blood seeps from his wounds. Both are severely dazed and suffering from possible concussion.

One of the ground-crew clambers onto the lower right wing reaches into the cockpit and switches off the engine. He looks at Freddie.

GROUND-CREW MAN
Fred! Can you hear me?!

Freddie doesn't speak but instead nods. Blood is running down his face from a couple of deep cuts. The ground-crew member beckons for help. He is quite groggy and dazed.

Freddie's ground crew rush over and lift the two airmen out of the wreckage. Both are helped to sit down close to the wreckage. Freddie manages to sit up whilst Charles is lying flat on his back next to his companion.

Margaret runs over to the two airmen. She kneels down next to Freddie. Elsie runs over too.

MARGARET

Are you okay?

FREDDIE

Yeah, I'm fine thanks. Just a few scratches that's all. Mind your dress.

Margaret looks down at her dress covered in mud.

MARGARET

Don't worry. I've got plenty.

Freddie can't help but chuckle. He notices that Margaret is wearing Wellington boots under her dress.

Margaret looks across at Charles who is having his eye and head bandaged by Elsie. He is very groggy and confused and is far worse condition than Freddie.

Margaret stands up, offers her hand to Freddie.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Come on, I'll take you to the docs.

With the help of one of the Sopwith's ground-crew Charles is helped towards Margaret's car. Freddie is able to walk by himself to Margaret's car, although he is unsteady. Margaret watches him closely to ensure he doesn't fall.

Once they are in, Freddie is sat in the front, whilst Charles is in the back. Elsie places her camera in the rear of Margaret's car before sitting next to Charles.

Margaret takes care to drive carefully over the rough terrain.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - DAY
Caption: 19th May 1919 18:30 GMT

We are with Harry and Kenneth over the Atlantic. Their aeroplane is being severely buffeted by rain and strong winds. They are encompassed by heavy black clouds. Harry is struggling to maintain control. As they progress through the rain becomes heavier and the wind stronger. Before long the cockpits start filling up with rain water. Harry descends hoping to find a break in the cloud cover. A few hundred feet above the sea he levels off only to discover the cloud bank has descended down to sea level. Fog reduces visibility to almost nothing. Harry climbs back up to a higher altitude.

Steam is starting to appear from the engine's radiators. Kenneth leans forward and taps Harry on the shoulder. Both have to shout.

KENNETH
Engine's looking a bit hot!

HARRY
Just the water! The rain should
cool it!

As they enter further into the cloud the temperature in the engine steadily continues to rise.

Harry switches off the engine and lets the aeroplane glide down before restarting. He then climbs back up before levelling off.

As they make their way the engine temperature again begins to rise. Once more Harry is forced to repeat the procedure.

KENNETH
If we keep doing this, we're gonna
run out of fuel!

HARRY
I know! How far to Ireland!

Kenneth sits down in his cockpit, quickly does some calculations on his pad. He leans forward and taps Harry on the shoulder.

KENNETH
About 800 miles!

HARRY
We may be able to do it then!

Both watch as the steam from the radiator becomes denser. It is clear that the water has hit boiling point.

Harry climbs even higher, ice begins to form on the wings. Clouds begin to disperse allowing a few stars to become visible. Kenneth uses his sextant at the stars.

As they fly onwards the patches of sky begin to appear through the clouds. The clouds begin reform, this time denser and heavier than before. Harry descends downwards. He switches off the engine, restarts it only this time it fails to start.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Start pumping!

Kenneth starts pumping frantically. The plane continues to glide downwards. Just as they about to crash into the sea the engine splutters and restarts. Harry pulls hard on the control column and the plane begins to climb rapidly narrowly skimming the crest of the waves.

KENNETH
That was too close!

HARRY
I know! Water's gone!

KENNETH
How long can we last?!

HARRY
An hour, maybe two! Sorry old chap
I don't think we're going to make
it!

EXT AEROPLANE - CONTINUOUS

The aeroplane is struggling to maintain its course against the worsening weather. Vapours of steam emerge from the overheating engine. The engine is on the verge of overheating at any moment.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Kenneth notices a ship emerging out of the fog. Taps Harry on the shoulder and points towards it.

KENNETH
Down there! A ship!

Harry looks down in the direction Kenneth is pointing.

HARRY

That's it! I'm ditching her. Hold on!

As the ship comes nearer Harry begins to circle around the ship descending in height with each spiral. Both undo their safety belts. Harry pulls back on the control column causing the Sopwith in a nose-up attitude. Harry tries to keep the plane level as the sea rises to meet them.

As the plane lands on the water, both airmen are jolted forward and soaked by the sea water pouring over them. Kenneth fires of a red flare upwards.

With great difficulty they scramble out of the aeroplane and into the cold seawater. Their buoyancy suits mean they remain afloat. They swim towards the rear of their Sopwith, which is nose down in the water. With great difficulty they manage to detach the improvised life-raft from the plane, struggle to climb in. Both are tired and soaked as they collapse in their raft. The ship draws closer.

As the aeroplane floats half submerged in the ocean the box containing Margaret's camera floats away before sinking below the waves.

INT. COCHRANE - EVENING

The Vickers team are sat around in various chairs, joined by Elsie, Freddie and Margaret. Freddie is still recovering from his accident. The atmosphere is now one of grief and sadness.

A newspaper on a coffee table reveals the headline:
"HAWKER MISSING! BELIEVED DROWNED!"

All jollity and happiness are gone. John is silent. He lost one of his closest friends. Agnes comes over with pots of tea and biscuits. She places them on a table.

No one feels like eating or drinking. Agnes takes a cup over to John. She offers it to him.

AGNES

Come on have a cup of tea.

John takes the tea and balances it carefully on the armrest.

JOHN

Thanks.

AGNES

Does anyone know what happened?

ARTHUR

No. There's rumours in the papers,
but nothing concrete. Suppose we'll
never know.

JOHN

Typical Harry taking his secrets
with him.

MARGARET

So now what?

JOHN

Dunno.

His enthusiasm has all but disappeared.

ELSIE

Don't think Harry and Ken would be
happy if you gave up now.

ARTHUR

I agree. We've got to continue for
their sake at least.

ELSIE

You've come all this way. I think
you should continue.

MARGARET

Any news on Charlie?

FREDDIE

He's been sent back to England.
Hopefully he should make a full
recovery.

MARGARET

That's good news. You chaps need
some.

ELSIE

So whose left?

ARTHUR

Just us and Handley Page.

JOHN

Ain't bloody letting that lot win!

ARTHUR

Aye, unless we get a move on or a
miracle happens its Handley Page's
to lose.

John snaps out of his moroseness. He feels angry and determined.

MARGARET
(to Freddie)
What about you?

FREDDIE
Wouldn't mind another bash.

ELSIE
Are you fit enough

FREDDIE
I'm fine. Just need to find another navigator.

MARGARET
Why not go solo?

FREDDIE
Christ! I may be desperate, but I'm not that mad!

ARTHUR
True. No one in their right mind would dare do it on their own.

ELSIE
(to Arthur)
Any news on your aeroplane.

ARTHUR
Got a telegram from Percy. They've set sail. Should be with us soon.

MARGARET
Well that's something isn't it.

JOHN
Still not found anywhere to take off from yet.

FREDDIE
Look I've been thinking. Since I'm not going to be able to participate at the mo. I would like to offer you my field.

John suddenly cheers up. He gets up and shakes Freddie's hand.

JOHN
 Freddie, that is most generous of
 you. Why thank you!

EXT. DOCKSIDE - DAY
 Monday 26th May St John's.

The SS GLENDEVON has arrived at St John's carrying the dissembled Vimy and the rest of the Vickers CREW, including Percy. John and Arthur are there to greet their companions. There are four huge trapezoidal shaped crates, each containing a wing, a large rectangular which contains the fuselage plus four other smaller boxes.

Overseeing the whole operation is JAMES LESTER (50's).

A few people mainly dockers and mariners stare in curiosity, more impressed by the size of the crates than anything else. but the majority of people just walk pass without a second glance.

Heavy horses are harnessed to the collection of wooden crates. Teams of four horses each haul the larger crates, whilst pairs haul the smaller crates.

The convoy begins its slow journey, the iron rimmed wooden wheels bouncing roughly over the uneven ground.

Percy hitches a ride in John's car with Arthur as front passenger.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Kathleen Kennedy's house. Kathleen is sat reading the newspaper. She is joined by her younger sister EILEEN (Irish 19). They have been discussing the fate of the Sopwith crew.

KATHLEEN
 But what if it had been them!

EILEEN
 It wasn't, so be grateful for that.

KATHLEEN
 That's a bit harsh isn't it. Think about poor Muriel. Imagine what she's going through.

EILEEN
 Sorry, but we've got to be grateful for small mercies.

KATHLEEN

It was a stupid idea. I blame the Mail. Just to get make more sales.

EILEEN

You could have told Teddy no. You weren't firm enough.

KATHLEEN

But if I had would he have forgiven me?

EILEEN

If he really loves you then yes, given time.

KATHLEEN

I'm not sure though.

Eileen offers Kathleen a cup of tea who takes it then places it on the coffee table.

EILEEN

How are they taking it over there?

KATHLEEN

Not sure. Pretty bad I would say. They were all pretty close.

EILEEN

You never know maybe they'll decide it ain't worth the risk and come home.

KATHLEEN

Doubt it. Not before trying first.

EXT. FIELD DAY

Back at Quidi Vidi. The crates have been unpacked and the Vimy is undergoing its reconstruction surrounded by wooden scaffolding.

The Vickers team are pouring all over the Vimy each carrying out specific tasks. Arthur is helping with the engines.

John looks across the rutted field. He bends down and picks up a stone, rolls it in his hand before throwing it away. He is joined by Percy Muller. John is not happy with the land.

JOHN

Dunno, not convinced, too many obstacles for my liking.

PERCY
Looks too short.

JOHN
That's the other problem.

PERCY
Its better than nothing. We'll
assemble here until we find
something better.

JOHN
Fat chance of that.

PERCY
Come on lets see how they're
getting on.

They both walk towards the partially assembled Vimy.

INT. COCHRANE - EVENING
Caption: 27th May 1919

John and Arthur are sat around a table playing cards. They are joined by Margaret. The game is in full swing with Margaret clearly winning and Arthur in last place. There are a few other guests in the room.

The door flies open, Elsie bursts in. She runs to where Arthur, John and Margaret are sat.

MARGARET
Elsie! Are you alright?

Elsie pants for a moment as she gets her breath back.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
What's happened?

ELSIE
Its Harry and Kenneth!...They're
alive!

The group look at her in disbelief.

JOHN
How?

Agnes offers Elsie a glass of water, who graciously accepts. After gulping the entire glass she continues.

ELSIE

No idea. All I know is they ditched in the sea and were picked up by a passing ship.

MARGARET

Gosh they were lucky.

ELSIE

Very. Ship's captain only saw Harry's flare at the last moment.

ARTHUR

Does anyone else know?

ELSIE

Not sure. I've heard from one of the reporters. He got a telegram from his editor.

MARGARET

How are they?

ELSIE

He said they seemed okay when they disembarked. Another half hour or so then...

MARGARET

You don't need to say it.

ELSIE

They were extremely lucky.

JOHN

Thanks, that's the best news I've heard since getting here.

The entire group hug each other overcome with happiness and relief at the news.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The Vimy's fuselage and wings have now been joined together. Wooden scaffolding still surrounds the aircraft. It is beginning to look more like an aeroplane. The Vickers crew are still working on the Vimy. A small village of a dozen tents have been erected near the Vimy.

A few of the locals are helping by removing stones, filling in divots and smoothing over bumps in an attempt to level the ground to make it more of a passable runway.

Percy is stood with John watching proceedings.

PERCY

Field's looking better now.

JOHN

True, it's smoother, but still not long enough.

PERCY

Still its an improvement. I've heard Boulton and Paul are on their way.

JOHN

Christ! How many more?

PERCY

Dunno. Think they've got the same idea as us.

JOHN

Any more and every single firm will be here.

PERCY

I've heard from De Havillands are thinking about an entry.

JOHN

Well they can find their own bloody field. Ain't having this!

PERCY

Don't worry with any luck we'll be on our way before they even depart.

JOHN

Better be, Bad enough being behind that lot up the road.

He walks off in the direction of the Vimy picking up stones as he does. Percy watches him before heading towards a tent.

INT. COCHRANE - EVENING

John, Arthur and Percy are joined by Margaret and Elsie. Agnes has bought in tea and biscuits. She leaves to tend to some plants.

MARGARET

Will the other members of your party be joining us, Mr Muller?

PERCY
They're still working on the Vimy.

ELSIE
You're working them too hard!

JOHN
We should be out there helping
them!

ARTHUR
I agree with Jack. We can't waste a
second.

JOHN
Aye. Bet bloody Kerr's got his lot
working day and night.

PERCY
I'm not having you two working
yourselves to death before we're
ready.

JOHN
Ain't got time to sit around doing
nowt.

MARGARET
Yes but you've still got our
weather and you can't do anything
about that.

ELSIE
Only God can do that. Let's pray
he's on our side.

PERCY
Anyway I've had a cable from
Brooklands.

JOHN
About?

PERCY
Harry and Ken.

ARTHUR
What did it say?

PERCY
The Mail's given them five grand
each.

ARTHUR

Hope they give us five grand if we
have to ditch.

JOHN

Bugger the five, I want the ten.

AGNES (O.S)

Good means you can pay for the
damage you lot have caused!

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Caption: 9th June 1919 Quidi Vidi

The Vimy has been fully re-assembled. The scaffolding has been removed. The crowd of onlookers has now increased. It seems the entire population have turned up to watch proceedings.

John and Arthur are in the Vimy's cockpit wearing their flying suits. The bulkiness of the suits makes movement almost impossible save for limited forward motions.

The two engines start to roar into life. The locals are taken aback by the noise. It is the loudest sound many have heard in their lives.

A few children stand in front of the whirling propellers feeling the draught caused by the blades cutting through the air. As more people approach the Vimy it becomes clear that take-off is becoming impossible. Some stand directly in front of the Vimy as the engines rev to full power.

Percy along with Bob and a couple of the ground-crew have no option but to attempt to disperse the throng. Some don't move instead staying where they are.

PERCY

Will you please all move! We need
to take-
off!

James Lester comes over carrying a shotgun.

JAMES

Problem?

PERCY

Yep, can't get them to move.

James walks to a spot aims his shotgun skywards and pulls the trigger.

The sound of the shotgun causes everyone to startle and look towards James.

JAMES

Now bloody well move it you lot!

The crowd begin to disperse from the improvised runway. Some grumble but the majority walk quietly.

PERCY

Thanks, that did the trick.

JAMES

Don't mention it.

Parents have gathered their children holding them tightly as the engines increase to full power.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Inside the Vimy's cockpit John is going through his pre flight checks. He moves the control column back and forth, left and right.

Arthur looks at John before ensuring the wireless is working properly. For once the wireless appears to be working perfectly.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

We see the Vimy's ailerons moving up and down and rudders moving left and right.

John signals for the wheel-chocks to be removed. Bob and Lyons remove the chocks and the Vimy begins to move slowly at first picking up speed.

INT./EXT. JOHN'S P.O.V - CONTINUOUS

The Vimy bumps along the uneven ground, each bump becoming more pronounced as the Vimy increases speed.

As the edge of the field approaches John pulls back on the control column and the Vimy leaps into the air.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

As the climbs higher those left on the ground wave and cheer as the Vimy disappears from view.

Elsie takes a photo of the Vimy as it climbs into the air.

JAMES
(to PERCY)
Bit close wasn't it.

PERCY
I know, but this is the best we
could get.

JAMES
May have a proposition for you.

PERCY
What's that?

LESTER
May have a field that could suit
you.

PERCY
Thanks. We'll take a look.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - MOMENTS LATER

Onboard the Vimy flying over the Newfoundland coast, heading eastwards out over the Atlantic. John and Arthur are in the cockpit.

Arthur is looking through the glass panel beneath him in the cockpit floor. Both shout over the noise of the engines.

JOHN
Everything okay?

ARTHUR
Just need to check the wireless.

Arthur taps out a Morse code. As they continue to fly a response is received. Arthur jots down the message.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
All good. I'll do another just be
make sure.

Arthur taps out another Morse code. He waits for a response. As the minutes pass it is clear there is a problem. Arthur readjusts the wireless to no avail. He thumps the wireless.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Bloody thing!

JOHN
What's up!?

ARTHUR
Flaming wireless!

JOHN
Told you it was useless!

ARTHUR
Shut up. Just get us back.

John banks the Vimy around and heads south westwards inland towards, gradually becoming smaller until it disappears from view.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

On Quidi Vidi field people are still discussing what they have witnessed. Great excitement fills the air especially amongst the Vickers ground-crew who are relieved that their aeroplane has finally taken to the air.

The distant sound of aero engines causes everyone to look eastwards. As the noise becomes louder the sight of a biplane growing in size approaches.

The biplane emerges as the Vimy returning from its flight, coming nearer and nearer before coming in to land.

A smoky fire has been lit as a recognition guide. Its smoke can be seen billowing for miles.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

People are scattered all over field as the Vimy approaches the field. Some remain sat on the ground whilst others stand up and look up as the aeroplane passes low overhead.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

John is becoming impatient as he wants to land ASAP. Arthur sticks his hand out of the cockpit to wave the spectators away. Some of the crowd wave back believing he is waving to them.

JOHN
Pity we ain't got the guns!

ARTHUR
You'd thought they'll get the hint.

As the aeroplane continues its landing run a wooden fence suddenly appears. John switches off the left engine causing the aeroplane to swing to the left. The fence disappears under the right wing leaving a gap of a couple of inches between fence and wing.

John switches off the right engine, the propeller blades slowly become more visible until they have fully stopped.

The Vickers ground-crew rush over to the Vimy. Ladders are placed along cockpit sides. John and Arthur struggle in their flying suits to exit the cockpit and descend the ladders.

EXT. FIELD - DAY
Caption Mundy's Pool

John and Arthur are stood in a meadow. They are studying the layout. The meadow is halfway on a hill ending in a swamp. The uneven ground is covered in boulders. A battered Buick car is by the edge of the field.

ARTHUR
What do you reckon, any use?

JOHN
Not really, but its better than
Quidi.

ARTHUR
We're running out of time. Ask me
we've got to take it.

JOHN
Reckon you're right. Must have gone
all over this blasted country.

ARTHUR
Best see if its long enough. Looks
it.

Arthur begins to pace the field. John walks along side him, taking strides as he does. Arthur tries to keep up, but his lame leg means he is soon left behind. Realising he can't keep up he decides to progress at his own speed.

INT. COCHRANE - EVENING

John and Margaret are sat at a table. They just come back from a night out. Agnes has bought them some food to nibble on. However both are not really hungry.

MARGARET

Thank you for tonight.

JOHN

No thank you, had a wonderful time.

MARGARET

Pleased you enjoyed it. Didn't have you down as the theatrical type.

JOHN

Not normally. It's more Arthur's scene.

MARGARET

So, tell me, just what is your scene?

JOHN

Tinkering with engines or flying. Anything were I can get covered in oil.

MARGARET

Join the club. Don't mind getting covered in oil too.

JOHN

Really?

MARGARET

Had to. There's hardly any garages around these parts. So had to learn myself. Quite embarrassing having to get a lift from various farmers, then having to put up with their moaning about cars and anything new.

JOHN

Know the feeling. Maybe you could set up a garage service here.

MARGARET

Have thought about it. But there's too few cars around here to make it worthwhile. There's only me and a couple of others who own one. I'm the only woman around these parts who drives.

JOHN

Maybe later when there are more cars.

MARGARET
Perhaps, we'll see.

JOHN
Carter's garage. Got a ring to it.

Margaret thinks for a moment.

MARGARET
Can't see some of the men wanting
their car being serviced by a
woman, and certainly not me.

JOHN
What's that supposed to mean?

MARGARET
A woman shouldn't drive that's what
they say. A woman should stay at
home.

JOHN
Tell that to my sister! She drove
ambulances in France.

MARGARET
Wouldn't mind meeting her.

JOHN
Not sure if I would like that.

Margaret reaches across and touches his fingers. John clasps
her hand in his.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Arthur is standing a flat section of roof with a wireless
set. He is fiddling with the set. Crackling can be heard
emitting from the wireless. Occasionally an indistinctive
voice can be heard before the crackling returns. John
approaches.

JOHN
Any luck?

ARTHUR
Sometimes. I've got Mount Pearl
twice now.

John looks towards the sky. For once it is a clear night the
stars are out. The wind has picked up to almost gale force.
John looks upwards to the sky

JOHN

Pity we can't go now.

ARTHUR

I know, would have no problem navigating.

Arthur continues to fiddle with the wireless. There is nothing but static from the wireless.

JOHN

Percy would kill us. Why don't you just admit I'm right about that thing.

ARTHUR

It will work. Just needs fine tuning that's all. Trust me.

JOHN

The last person who said that to me we ended up being captured. I'm turning in. See you later.

John descends down the hatch, leaving Arthur to twiddle with the wireless. The occasional crackle can be heard from the wireless.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

It is early morning at the new airfield. Locals, reporters and the Vickers ground-crew are helping to flatten the ground and lengthen the field.

A stonewall is being dismantled in order to increase the length of the field by a couple of labourers much to the annoyance of a few older gentlemen who are stood glaring at the work. Two OLD MEN (both in their 70's) are stood at the edge of the field.

1ST OLD MAN

Shouldn't be bloody allowed.

2ND OLD MAN

Waste of time. They'll crash mark my words.
Like that whatever his name is.

1ST OLD MAN

Bad enough when cars first turned up.

2ND OLD MAN

I blame that Carter woman. Her grandfather wouldn't have put up with all this nonsense.

1ST MAN

He'd have told em to get lost.

They continue watching for a moment before walking off grumbling as they do.

EXT. FIELD DAY - CONTINUOUS

All over Mundy's Pool the residents of St John's are lounging on the field. Children are playing whilst adults are having picnics and chattering.

The Vimy is on the ground. The Vickers team are crawling all over carrying out maintenance. A large crowd of locals have arrived to watch proceedings. Some of them are touching the Vimy, prodding a poking at the fabric. A few are asking questions. John and Arthur are busy talking to the locals.

We cannot hear what they are saying, but by their gestures it is obvious they are both animated. Bob is working on the starboard engine.

The sound of fabric being torn coming from behind him causing distracts him. He stops and looks around. Sees a man in his 60's poking his umbrella through the wings fabric.

BOB

(Shouting towards umbrella man.)

Oi! What the bloody hell do think you're doing!
You want to pay for this!

The man stops prodding the fabric. Glares at Bob. He storms off, roughly pushing a young couple out of the way. Percy approaches Bob.

PERCY

Everything alright Bob.

BOB

Some idiot. Seriously Mr Muller, we've got to do something, otherwise they'll be flying a sieve.

PERCY

We'll get her roped off. Authorised personnel only from now on.

BOB

Sooner the bloody better!

PERCY

My fault. Should have done it before.

Percy walks off and talks to a couple of the Vickers crew who nod and walk off towards some wooden crates located near the edge of the field.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

The Vickers crew are sat on wooden crates in a circle, having a late meal. A fire is blazing in middle of them. They are joined by Freddie. Percy taps the side of tin mug with spoon. The whole scene is reminiscent of a campsite fire. Seven tents have been set up nearby. The Vimy has now been roped off.

Mounted on a trestle is half of a metal fuel tank lying on its side. Percy and John are stood besides it.

PERCY

You sure this will work.

JOHN

Eric reckons so.

PERCY

So let me get this straight. You use this one first, then it becomes your lifeboat.

JOHN

Correct.

PERCY

Lets pray you won't be needing it.

JOHN

Other than as a fuel tank.

Percy leaves John to work on the makeshift lifeboat.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

The Vickers team are working on the Vimy, some are tinkering with the engines, whilst others are either working on the aeroplane itself. John is in the cockpit checking over the instruments. Arthur is sat on the ground studying a chart of the Atlantic, held down on the corners by stones, to stop it blowing away.

Margaret and Elsie have set up their cameras close to the Vimy.

The usual crowd of onlookers are also present. A few reporters are present. Percy is talking to a couple of them. Their conversation cannot be heard, but they are seen.

From the north west the noise of aero engines can be heard, gradually becoming louder as the source becomes closer. Soon the sight of a large biplane appears in the sky getting bigger as it comes closer into view. Everybody stops what they are doing and looks up. Some of the locals point in the direction of the aeroplane, whilst others begin to wave and shout.

The Vickers crew just glance upwards in the direction of the plane before returning to their tasks. Bob stops tinkering on the engines and looks up.

BOB LYONS

That's the bloody Handley Page.
Must be further ahead than I
thought.

JOHN

That's torn it.

Bob is stood on a wooden trestle next to the cockpit.

BOB LYONS

Don't worry Jack, we're not far
behind and knowing that lot they'll
run test after test.

JOHN

Wonder whose their pilot.

BOB LYONS

I've heard its a Major Brackley.

JOHN

If that's the Major Brackley I'm
thinking of, I taught him to fly.

BOB LYONS

Well's that's irony for you.

JOHN

Decent chap too. Let's hope Kerr's scared him enough he forgets all I taught him.

As the plane continues its flight, everybody gazes upwards until it disappears from view. Once it has gone the Vickers team return to their tasks muttering as they do. Some of the locals remain whilst others decide to leave the field. A couple of reporters take notes.

INT. COCHRANE - EVENING

John and Margaret are dining at the Cochrane's. They are having afternoon tea. Both are clearly having a good time, laughing and engaging in small talk.

JOHN

Seriously! Stamps!

MARGARET

Yes, why not?

John just shrugs.

JOHN

Nothing. It's just, I dunno, just couldn't imagine you collecting stamps.

MARGARET

Well what do you think I should be collecting?

JOHN

I dunno, I mean don't know what your sort of people collect.

Margaret takes a bite out of a sandwich, before answering

MARGARET

What do mean by my sort of people?

JOHN

You know, you're erm..

Margaret reaches across and holds his hand.

MARGARET

Its fine, I'm not offended.
Honestly

John looks relieved and takes a quick sip.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I know its a bit of an unusual
hobby, but I find them fascinating.

JOHN

I've got nothing against it. Its
just goes against what I've seen of
you. You drive, and take
photographs. I barely know any
ladies that do one of those things,
let alone both.

MARGARET

Why should being a woman stop me?

JOHN

Of course it shouldn't.

MARGARET

Next I'll be wanting to learn to
fly. Now that would surpass
everything I've done up to now.

JOHN

When we've won the race. I'll give
you lessons.

MARGARET

Here or England?

JOHN

England, its rubbish flying country
here, sorry.

MARGARET

No its fine. I have to agree. But
it be a big deal to be the first
woman to fly in Newfoundland.

JOHN

If Freddie gets his plane patched
up I'm sure he'll be happy to take
you up.

MARGARET

I'll have to ask him. So have you
always been interested in flying.

JOHN

Ever since I was little. Me and my dad used make model planes. Before the war I used to fly against Harry and Freddie. It's how I got to know them.

MARGARET

Must have been exciting days.

JOHN

They were. Me and Harry would often win between us. Poor Freddie, always has had rotten luck. Always kept coming second or third, poor chap! Most of the time he broke down.

MARGARET

Well second is better than third.

JOHN

I'm so relieved that Harry's alive. I think if he'd drowned then honestly I don't think I would have been able to go on.

MARGARET

Of course that's understandable, but I do believe that he'd want you to and Freddie would want the same.

She takes a sip from her tea and takes a bite.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

So is there a Mrs Alcock

JOHN

No never has been.

MARGARET

Will there be?

JOHN

Don't think so. Ted's the more settled down type. I'm too...you know...individualistic.

MARGARET

Nothing wrong about being free spirited. I've always wanted to go to England. Elsie's been. Told me all about it.

JOHN

Be happy to show you the sights.

MARGARET

Hold you to that.

JOHN

So you and Elsie?

MARGARET

We're close friends. I mean we're both into our photographs. Her father runs the local studio. Poor girl lost her brother in France. Affected them real bad.

JOHN

Wondered why she seemed so quiet.

MARGARET

Always had been. I think its why she takes so many pictures. More than me.

JOHN

Well you're both very good.

She delves into her bag, pulls out a soft cat toy. She hands it to him

MARGARET

This is for you. He's called Lucky Jim.

JOHN

Thank you. Much appreciated.

MARGARET

With a name like Lucky Jim you should be alright.

JOHN

If he ain't he's swimming. Will keep Twinkletoes company.

Margaret chuckles at his joke.

MARGARET

I've enjoyed my time with you and the others.

JOHN

Thank you. Have to say you're probably the most remarkable woman I've met.

MARGARET

Thank you. Nicest thing anyone's said to me.

Margaret gets up walks round gives him a kiss on the cheek.

Before he can respond she walks away. John gazes at her as she disappears clutching Lucky Jim.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Back at Lester's field. The Vimy is being loaded with fuel, which is being filtered by hand via a makeshift filter from the barrels, then pumped into the Vimy fuel tanks.

The wind is getting stronger. John and Arthur are watching the whole process being carried out by a couple of mechanics. Elsie has taken a couple of photographs of the action.

ELSIE

Why are they doing that?

JOHN

Gets rid of any impurities in the fuel.

Elsie nods but doesn't fully understand the reason.

ARTHUR

Aye, Harry reckons it was the fuel that caused him to ditch.

ELSIE

Sometimes going second is better than going first.

JOHN

Prefer being first.

ARTHUR

Good thing Harry didn't think of this, or no point us trying.

JOHN

He was too impatient. You know what's he like.

ELSIE

How long will this take?

ARTHUR

Percy reckons it could take all day. Hopefully fingers crossed we'll be able to go tomorrow.

After each barrel of fuel has been filtered, the empty barrel is cast aside by two locals who are volunteering to help.

The new barrel is attached to the filter and the whole process begins again.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

As the Vickers crew work on the Vimy, Elsie is busily taking photographs.

John and Arthur are lying on the grass. Arthur is smoking a cigarette. A car can be heard approaching. Elsie looks around.

ELSIE

Margaret's here. Look like she's bought someone.

John looks in the direction of the approaching car. As the car nears John and Arthur stand up. Arthur stubs out his cigarette. Margaret stops the car. Her and her passenger step out. He is a MAN in his 50's.

MARGARET

Gents. How are you all!

JOHN

Fine, thanks, Margaret.

MARGARET

Excellent. May I introduce Dr Robinson, our postmaster general.

DR ROBINSON

Pleased to meet you Gentlemen.

He shakes hands with John and Arthur before admiring the Vimy.

DR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

Its bigger than what I expected.

JOHN

Should see the Handley Page.

Dr Robinson hands a bag over to Arthur.

DR ROBINSON

I would like this to be one of the first mailbags to cross the Atlantic by air, if you would be so kind.

ARTHUR

Can't see why not. Shouldn't take up too much room. Suppose it gives a reason for the flight.

JOHN

What do you mean one of the first?

DR ROBINSON

I'm going to ask Admiral Kerr if he would be willing to do the same.

JOHN

We'll take the whole bloody lot.

MARGARET

Yes, but what if you go down. Surely by splitting the post at least it has a better chance of making the flight.

ARTHUR

You've got a point. Okay we'll take them. Let's get them loaded on.

They walk over to the Vimy. John climbs up into the cockpit. He leans over the side and reaches down as Arthur is about to pass the mailbag up to him.

ELSIE

Can you just hold it. That'll make a great photograph.

She positions her camera and prepares to take the picture. Once she has taken John climbs down from the cockpit.

ELSIE (CONT'D)

Thank you. I've got a nice collection building up.

ARTHUR

Next time we're in town we'll have to look at them.

JOHN

Yeah we may even sign them!

ELSIE

Thank you. I'm hoping this will be my big break. Doubt if anything like this will happen again.

She returns to her camera and begins to dismantle it.

EXT. OUTSIDE BUILDING -EARLY BUILDING

We are outside the local pharmacy. The place is deserted. The door to the pharmacy opens and John walks out acting shifty. He is carrying something in a paper bag. We're not sure what it is but is cylindrical in shape, so we can assume its a bottle.

John looks around to make sure no one is around to see him. He tucks the paper bag into the inside of his coat before heading hurriedly towards to a parked Buick car.

INT. COCHRANE - EVENING

The farewell party for the Vickers is in full swing. The thirteen members of the Vickers crew are present as are Margaret, Elsie and Freddie. Everyone is talking, eating and drinking. Percy taps a glass. We notice bottles of alcohol present although discreetly stacked away in a corner under a table.

PERCY

May I have everyone's attention!

Everyone falls silent and looks towards Percy.

PERCY (CONT'D)

I've received a good luck message from our esteemed rivals at Harbour Grace.

JOHN

Only cos they know we're going to win!

A large cheer goes around the group.

PERCY

May I take this opportunity to thank our hosts for their hospitality. Especially our two new friends Margaret and Elsie.

The Vickers crew clap and cheer.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Also to Freddie, who has put his own misfortune aside to graciously assist his rivals.

They all clap and cheer.

ALL

Freddie!

FREDDIE

Least I could do.

PERCY

Right we've got an early start at Lester's so don't be late up.

ELSIE

Lester's?

ARTHUR

Its what we've renamed Mundy's. Its a way of saying thanks.

ELSIE

I'm sure he'll appreciate it.

Agnes walks into the room all excited.

AGNES

I've got a treat for you all outside.

The party all look at her wondering what she means. Agnes urges them to follow her.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Come on! You won't regret this.

She leaves the room. Reluctantly the others follow her.

EXT. OUTSIDE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Everyone is stood outside the hotel looking northwards, watching the Northern lights in awe and wonder as it dances across the sky lighting it greens and reds.

ARTHUR

Wonder what causes it?

ELSIE

Wish I knew. Local legend says
they're the spirits of ancestors.
Whatever its beautiful.

ARTHUR

Wish Kathleen was here.

PERCY

Always wanted to see this.

JOHN

Thought you would in Scotland.

PERCY

Never got the chance. Not like
this.

The group stand and watch the display. No one talks or utters
a sound. John turns to Margaret.

JOHN

You must be used to seeing this.

MARGARET

Doesn't matter how many times I've
seen it, could watch it every night
for the rest of my life.

We notice John and Margaret holding hands. None of the others
have seemed to have noticed.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Arthur is sat on the grass writing a letter. All around him
are onlookers from St John's and even more reporters have
turned up. He is trying to ignore them all. In the distance
John can be seen chatting to some people possibly reporters.

ARTHUR (V.O)

My dearest Kathleen. This will be
my last letter to you from this
side of the Atlantic. With luck
we'll be setting off tomorrow.
Everything has gone well so far,
except for a little problem with
the wireless. I wish I'd bought you
with me. It is so lonely
without you.

EXT. FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

John is cooking bacon and eggs. The Vickers crew are sat on wooden boxes having lunch. Elsie wonders over.

ELSIE

Some of the folks are saying you're going tomorrow.

JOHN

That seems to be the plan. Percy's got the final say though.

ARTHUR

Depends on the wind though. Stays like this we'll be going.

ELSIE

Don't leave without telling us!

JOHN

Fat chance of that. You lot seem to be here all the time!

ELSIE

No one wants to miss anything. This is the biggest thing that's happened around these parts for years.

John makes her a bacon sandwich which she accepts before walking away.

INT. TENT - EVENING

John is alone in his tent sat on a stool writing on a wooden folding table. A candle provides the only source of light.

JOHN (V.O)

My dear Elsie. Just a quick letter before we go. Just think you'll be holding one the first letters to cross an ocean by air! We're just waiting for the right moment to go. Everyone is buzzing. I just want to go now. Soon I'll be back with you and mum and dad.
Your loving brother Jack.

Margaret enters the tent. Notices John signing his letter.

MARGARET

Didn't think you were going to write any letters.

John places the letter in an envelope.

JOHN

I wasn't intending to but decided might as well.

MARGARET

What about a last...?

JOHN

Always seen them as a bad omen, so ne'er bothered.

John stands up and heads towards the tent flap. He waves the envelope at Margaret.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Better put this with the others.

MARGARET

Be a shame to miss the post! Let me, I'll take it for you.

John hands the letter to Margaret. John reaches into a bag and pulls out a whiskey bottle which he takes a quick drink from.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

The wind has picked up to almost gale force strength. Everything is being blown around. Anything not tied down is carried by the wind. A huge canvas tent has been put up over the Vimy which is billowing in the wind as are tents. Items such as empty fuel cans are being blown around.

INT. TENT - CONTINUOUS

Arthur and John are trying to sleep on folding camp beds. However the wind is making sleep impossible.

JOHN

Should have stayed at the bloody Cochrane.

ARTHUR

It was your idea to sleep out here. Less time travelling you said.

JOHN

Shut up.

He places his head under the pillow in an attempt to muffle the wind.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Caption:Friday 13th June. Expected day of take-off.

The previous nights strong crosswind is still blowing across the field. Percy is clearly concerned as he watches the grass rippling in the wind.

Some of the locals are trying to clear up the previous nights damage as are the Vickers team.

The Vimy has been tethered down but the wind is still trying to blow it over.

A couple of tents have already been upended and are blowing across the field.

PERCY

If it doesn't die down soon, I'm postponing for another day.

JOHN

Not sure that's a good idea. Sorry Percy but I'm certain we can take off in this.

PERCY

Whilst I've got faith in your ability Jack, the thing is if I let you take-off now and you crash in front of everyone, could you imagine how that would go down?

ARTHUR

Margaret would be really upset with you.

JOHN

We'll be alright, once we were up then we should be fine.

PERCY

It's the getting up bit that concerns me. These people have seen one crash on take-off and I don't want them to witness another, especially when it can be avoided.

JOHN

Surely Handley Page will be getting ready to go. We cannot waste any more time! C'mon we need to get moving!

PERCY

Okay tell you what, we'll give it till after lunch. If the wind drops then we were on. Agreed?

JOHN

Fine. We'll wait a few hours then we're off no matter what. Okay.

He storms off leaving Percy and Arthur standing.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

As the Vimy is being refuelled there is a loud snap from the aeroplane. The fuelling process is stopped as mechanics look at the damage. John and Arthur come rushing.

ARTHUR

What's happened?

BOB DICKER

One of the shock absorber's snapped.

JOHN

It can be fixed right?

BOB DICKER

Oh yes, but that's not the problem.

ARTHUR

So what is?

BOB DICKER

We've got to unload all the fuel.

JOHN

How long will that take?

BOB DICKER

Well, its not going to be a quick job. Reckon its going to take us all night. Sorry lads but ain't flying today.

ARTHUR

Looks like its tomorrow then.

JOHN

Think I may have to choose a new
lucky number.

EXT. FIELD - SUNRISE

Caption: Saturday 14th June 1919.

The Vickers team have been working all through the night. They are tired and exhausted. In comparison to the previous day's overcast skies the sun has lit up the sky. The wind is still as strong as ever.

John and Arthur are dressed in fleece lined leather knee boots. John wears a navy blue suit whilst Arthur wears his RFC uniform. Both are having a cigarette.

With the help of a few locals and reporters the Vickers team manhandle the Vimy to its take off position. The wind and uphill slope make the operation hard work.

Final provisions are being loaded onboard the Vimy. Arthur and John are sat on crates eating breakfast. Margaret comes over carrying a cloth bag and a cardboard box.

MARGARET

Morning chaps. Hope you don't mind
but I've made some sandwiches for
you.

She hands the bag over to John.

ARTHUR

Thank you very thoughtful of you.
At least we won't go hungry.

Margaret holds a wooden camera containing a camera which she passes to John, who hands it to one of the mechanics in the cockpit, who stashes it under Arthur's seat.

EXT. FIELD - MORNING

The Vickers team with the help of some of the locals have moved the Vimy to the foot of the hill. As the Vimy is being secured a gust of wind picks up blowing a rope against the undercarriage. A petrol supply line is crushed.

Bob Dicker grabs hold of the pipe and blocks the fuel from pouring out with his hand. Bob Lyons quickly cuts and fits a new section of pipe tubing slotting it over the two severed ends.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

The wind is blowing at approximately 40kts. John is sat on a wooden box smoking a cigarette. He bends down and pulls out some blades of grass. He tosses the blades into the air and watches them scatter in the breeze. Arthur and Percy are with him. The wind seems to be picking up in strength. Approximately hundred locals have arrived to watch proceedings. Many have bought picnics with them, in the anticipation of finally seeing the Vimy take-off on its epic adventure. There is a carnival-like atmosphere in the air.

JOHN

No flight today. Wind's too strong.

PERCY

So, what do you want to do?

JOHN

Normally I'll say postpone, but this time. We've got to go. Simple as that.

PERCY

You certain? Remember what happened to Freddie.

JOHN

As soon as the wind drops, Kerr's off. Besides we're heavier than Freddie's.

PERCY

What's your opinion, Ted?

ARTHUR

Best wait for the met report. But if Jack says he can fly in this then I'm with him.

Percy looks at his watch.

PERCY

Right its nearly 11. If this wind doesn't drop by this afternoon then we'll delay till tomorrow. Agreed?

John and Arthur nod silently in reluctant agreement.

JOHN

Fine, but no more delays okay.

EXT. FIELD - AFTERNOON
Caption: 13.00 local

The wind still remains very strong. Percy is in conversation with a group of locals. After a few minutes he shakes the hands of everyone in the group and walks back to the Vimy. John and Arthur are sat on the grass next to the Vimy. They look across as Percy approaches. John lights up a cigarette.

PERCY

Sorry lads, but there is no easy way around this, but I'm calling it off.

JOHN

Oh come on! I've taken off in worse.

PERCY

Sorry, but I can't risk it.

ARTHUR

Margaret says she's heard that Kerr's getting ready to go.

PERCY

That may be true, or it could be another rumour.

JOHN

We've got to go! We'll might as well hand it to him on a plate.

PERCY

Well I don't think Kerr's going to risk it either. He's too cautious.

ARTHUR

Can you be certain?

PERCY

No, but why risk it? It's not in his nature.

Elsie wanders up.

ELSIE

Folk are asking what's going on. I think they're getting impatient.

ARTHUR

I don't think they're the only ones.

JOHN

I want to go now but Percy's having none of it.

ELSIE

I'm no expert but if Kerr hears you've postponed he may decide to jump the gun.

JOHN

Exactly! That's what I've been saying.

PERCY

Yes but what if you do crash, then what?

JOHN

We'll be going so slowly that if anything does happen we'll be able to get out okay.

ELSIE

But won't that mean...

ARTHUR

We'd have blown it.

JOHN

Surely its better to have tried. We've come so far.

ELSIE

True, it would be such a waste to cancel now.

PERCY

Ted, what do you want to do?

ARTHUR

I just want to get off home.

PERCY

Very well, we're on. If anything happens I'll take responsibility.

The two airman shake hands with Percy before heading off in the direction of the Vimy.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - LATER

John and Arthur are sat in the cockpit. As John tests the controls Percy standing next to the Vimy left side by the cockpit reaches up and passes Arthur his stick who reaches downwards to grab it. A black cat saunters in front of the Vimy.

ARTHUR

Is that lucky over here too?

JOHN

No idea.

ARTHUR

Ah well lets hope it is. We're gonna need all the luck we can get.

PERCY

Ready chaps?

ARTHUR

As ready as we'll ever be.

PERCY

Remember Jack, we've only got the one plane so please don't crash!

JOHN

Trust me Percy I have no intention of crashing.

John pulls down his goggles as does Arthur.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Well Ted, ready to go home?

ARTHUR

Can't wait. Got a wedding to attend.

JOHN

True, be a novel way to arrive though.

Bob Lyons begins to swing the starting handle on the port engine causing the engine to splutter into life. A burst of smoke emits from the engine. He then repeats the process with the starboard engine. The two four bladed propellers begin to spin becoming faster and faster until they're spinning whirls. As the noise increases the crowd of spectators begin to move back until it becomes impossible to talk. Parents hold onto the children. Tension rises amongst those on the ground. Slowly the Vimy begins its take-off run.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

As the Vimy picks up speed each bump the wheels go over jolts the two aviators. The wingtips flex wildly up and down. The acceleration pushes the two airmen back in their seats. Just as the field is about to come to an end the Vimy struggles into the air narrowly missing a stone wall by a couple of feet steeply climbing avoiding a couple of farm houses.

EXT. FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

As the Vimy heads inland it disappears from view for a few minutes. Trees block the view from the field. Fear begins to spread amongst the spectators that the Vimy has crashed.

ELSIE

Oh god! They've not crashed have they?!

MARGARET

I'm going to look for them!

She begins runs towards her car when Elsie grabs hold of her arm and points.

ELSIE

Look, over there! See it?

Margaret looks up and sees the Vimy gradually becoming larger as it gets closer. As they pass over at low altitude Arthur waves at the crowd below, who instantly cheer and wave back. Some of the children run and wave after the Vimy. Margaret blows a kiss to John. John doesn't wave back, he is too busy concentrating.

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3

EXT. SKY - LATER

Over St John's people rush out of their homes, look up, cheer and wave as the Vimy flies low overhead. As they pass over the harbour boats and ships blow their sirens and whistles.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - MOMENTS LATER

We are with Arthur and John as they head towards the vastness of the Atlantic and into the unknown.

JOHN

That was a bit hairy wasn't it.

ARTHUR

Good thing you didn't crash. Would have been embarrassing.

Arthur sends a message on the wireless. They fly through blue skies and bright sun. Arthur makes an observation of the sun's position using the sextant.

EXT. FIELD - AFTERNOON

A despatch RIDER on a motorcycle appears, he dismounts, walks up to Percy, hands over a telegram. Percy reads the telegram. He calls the rest of the Vickers team. He waits till everyone has assembled along with Margaret and Elsie.

PERCY

I've just received a message. Its from Ted. They've crossed the coast!

A cheer goes around the group. Everyone embraces and shakes hands.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Now we wait.

MARGARET

When will we hear from them again?

PERCY

Hopefully every half hour.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - LATER

The Vimy is now over the Atlantic. Thick fog envelops the Vimy. The sun is completely blotted out.

The fog is so thick that the propellers cannot be seen. There is a sound of wood being torn and something falling off. Arthur tries to send a message on wireless transmitter, looks out from his cockpit and is buffeted by the wind. He notices the wind-driven generator propeller has fallen off, causing loss of intercom and radio. Arthur rips off throat microphone. Both have to shout.

ARTHUR
Generator's gone!

JOHN
Can't hear!

Arthur points to generator and writes a note "wireless generator smashed". Shows note to John.

ARTHUR
Generator gone!

JOHN
Can you send?

Arthur cups his right ear. John indicates he wants to write. Arthur passes him the notepad. John writes:

"Can you send?" whilst holding onto the control column with his left. Shows note to Arthur.

ARTHUR
No receive only!

John shakes his head. He passes notepad back to Arthur who writes

"Receive only". Arthur starts to turn a handle. The aerial begins to retract into the lower fuselage.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - LATER

A loud rattling noise is heard from the starboard engine followed by a small explosion. Arthur looks over John's shoulder. He sees part of the exhaust has split open and is melting. As Arthur watches the pipe breaks and falls away.

A small permanent flame is left. What's left of the exhaust is now glowing bright red. The noise is now deafening.

ARTHUR
Careful with the engines!

JOHN
I know! It serious?

ARTHUR
Hope not. I'll keep an eye on it.

JOHN
Worse case we'll fly on one engine!

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Kathleen's living room. Kathleen is with her sister and father who are both sat down. All are waiting for news from John and Arthur. There has been no news for at least five hours. Kathleen is pacing up and down in anxiety. Her sister Eileen is becoming frustrated with her.

EILEEN
For God's sake, Kath! Will you just sit down!

Kathleen stops and glares at her sister.

KATHLEEN
Easy for you to say that! There's been nothing for hours.

MAJOR KENNEDY
Your sister's right Kathleen. All you're doing is wearing a hole in the carpet. Just be patient.

KATHLEEN
I knew I shouldn't have agreed to it! What if he drowns?

MAJOR KENNEDY
Arthur and John are well aware of the risks, and they'll have taken very precaution.

KATHLEEN
But look what happened to Harry and Ken.

Eileen tries to calm her sister down. She stands up and holds Kathleen.

EILEEN

I'm sure they'll be fine. No use getting yourself worked up is there? Anyway no news is good news.

Major Kennedy stands up and heads towards the door.

MAJOR KENNEDY

I'll see if anyone has heard anything. I won't be long.

He exits leaving his two daughters standing in the middle of the room.

EILEEN

As soon as father's back, you and me are going for a walk.

KATHLEEN

I'll sooner stay here.

EILEEN

No, we're going out and that's final.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - AFTERNOON

The Vimy is now enveloped by thick fog. Arthur reaches backwards into the small cupboard behind, fetches out two sandwiches. He passes one to John, who eats sandwich one handed whilst holding the control stick with the other.

Arthur then pours himself a drink from a flask. Seeing John has finished eating he passes the cup to him. The Vimy continues its flight in an undulating pattern, pitching up and down, yawing left to right as John battles the Atlantic winds.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Kathleen and Eileen are sat, each having a glass of wine when their father returns. They hear him taking off his coat and hat. Kathleen stands up. She is desperate for news good or bad.

KATHLEEN

Is there any news?

MAJOR KENNEDY (O.S)

No one's heard anything yet.

Kathleen collapses back in her chair as Major Kennedy enters the room.

KATHLEEN

I knew it! They're dead aren't they!

Her father attempts to comfort her.

MAJOR KENNEDY

That's not the case. Just because there has been any news doesn't mean the worse.

EILEEN

There could be a hundred reasons why no ones heard from them.

Kathleen glares at her sister.

KATHLEEN

Such as?!

EILEEN

I don't know!

MAJOR KENNEDY

I've asked the Aero club to pass on any news if they hear anything.

EILEEN

And the Mail have reporters over in Ireland. Besides any ship they pass over will surely report it.

KATHLEEN

If they do pass over any that is.

She takes a sip of wine.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - EVENING

As the Vimy continues its flight amidst the clouds patches of clear blue sky began to appear above them. Arthur looks up, taps John on the shoulder and points upwards.

ARTHUR

Can you get above the clouds?

JOHN

Eh?!

Arthur scribbles note.

Note reads: "Get above clouds".

Arthur holds note in front of John who nods and continues a slow climb. Slowly the Vimy breaks through the cloud-bank nose pointing upwards diagonally.

Once clear of the clouds John levels the Vimy. Instead of clouds surrounding them they were indulged by sun and blue sky. Both are relieved to be out of the clouds.

INT. COCHRANE - EVENING

It is evening in the Cochrane Hotel. The Vickers crew are spending their last night before departing. They too are awaiting any news from John and Arthur. Margaret is there also as is Freddie.

BOB LYONS

Anything?

PERCY

Nothing from Mount Pearl.

MARGARET

That normal?

FREDDIE

Can be. Wireless sets can be very temperamental. I wouldn't have bothered.

PERCY

But your plane was smaller than ours.

MARGARET

What about the other team?

PERCY

As far as we know they're still here.

MARGARET

Surely they must have known they've gone.

FREDDIE

Oh I'm sure they do, but probably thought its better to do another test.

MARGARET

Or maybe they're hoping your lot
have to ditch.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

As Arthur is using his sextant there is a garbled transmission on the wireless, Arthur can only hear a few indistinct garbled words. He tries to retune the wireless in an attempt to get a stronger, clearer signal. He picks up transmitter.

ARTHUR

Hello, Hello. This is Vimy DKG.
Come in please.

From the wireless comes another garbled transmission. Arthur retunes the wireless.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

This is Vimy DKG. Come in over.

The wireless goes quiet. Arthur starts to unwind the wireless aerial. He attempts to send a signal.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

This is Vimy. DKG. Repeat respond.
Over!

JOHN

Anything?

ARTHUR

Nothing. I don't know if they can
hear us.

Arthur taps out a message on the Morse code machine. The Vimy continues to fly through the fog.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - LATER

The Vimy is over the middle of the Atlantic. Taking advantage of the sun, Arthur stands up precariously and uses the sextant to record the sun's position grabbing hold of the cockpit coaming for safety. As the Vimy lurches to the left he is nearly thrown out over the side. John quickly makes a grab for Arthur and pulls him back. As he does so the Vimy banks sharply to the right.

John battles with the controls as he tries to bring the aeroplane on a level flight path. Arthur takes a minute to recover.

ARTHUR

Thanks that was close.

JOHN

Don't mention it. Next time be more careful.

INT. COCHRANE - EVENING

Percy, Margaret, Elsie, Bob's Dicker and Lyons are sat smoking. There is a sense of trepidation and nervousness amongst the group. The lack of news is causing great stress.

PERCY

I've just received news that Kerr has postponed his attempt.

BOB LYONS

Any idea why?

PERCY

No, sorry.

ELSIE

So does that mean yours are the only ones..

PERCY

Yes.

MARGARET

There's still been no sighting?

PERCY

Nothing. The Admiralty station's asked all ships to keep an eye open for them and to report any sightings.

ELSIE

How long before they reach land?

BOB LYONS

Hard to say, depends on weather, speed, altitude. My guess they should reach Ireland about nine ten o'clock.

Percy yawns before rubbing his eyes. They've been working non stop for nearly two days running on sheer adrenaline and now its effect is wearing off.

MARGARET

When was the last time any of you slept?

PERCY

Er..Thursday I think, or it could be Wednesday. I can't really remember.

ELSIE

Don't you think you should all go and get some kip?

PERCY

Bloody good idea.

EXT AEROPLANE - NIGHT

Thick dense fog covers the Vimy. The wing-tips are no longer visible. Only the glow from the broken exhaust being visible, the flame from it precariously touching a wire. Gale force batter the aeroplane as John battles with the controls.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - LATER

Moisture from the clouds begins to condense on goggles and instruments. John removes his goggles.

ARTHUR

(points upwards)

I need to see the stars!

JOHN

Go higher?

Arthur writes note: "Need stars ASAP" passes note to John, who continues to climb the Vimy through the dense thick clouds, until the cloud layer starts to thin out. Between the few gaps in the clouds a few stars can be seen.

EXT. SKY - LATER

The Vimy is flying through the rainstorm. Heavy rain batters the flimsy machine as it battles its way through the clouds.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The moisture from the clouds causes the electric generator to fail. Both flyers have lost any heating to their flight suits.

A large gap appears in the clouds. Arthur glimpses stars. Takes readings of Pole and Vega stars using the sextant remains sat down.

ARTHUR

Halfway! Turn to 110.

John indicates he cannot hear. Arthur scribbles note, shows note to John: "Halfway! Turn 110 deg."

Upon reading the note John banks the Vimy to desired heading. Arthur reaches behind him, gets out Thermos, manages to pour a cup of coffee, drinks coffee. Pours another one, offers it to John who takes coffee, whilst flying one handed. Returns cup to Arthur who places flask back in cupboard.

John has no option but to put his goggles back over his eyes. Arthur is having to resort by dead reckoning to navigate. He keeps looking at his watch and map, trying to work out their position.

The flame from the broken exhaust has diminished but is still visible a permanent glow.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

This is ridiculous!

John concentrates solely on keeping them airborne.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

If we turn back now we should be able to make land!

JOHN

No! We can do this!

ARTHUR

Its too risky! If this keeps up we'll never mae it!

JOHN

If we turn back, we've got to fly back through it again! This storm's gotta end!

ARTHUR

It may not! We go back!

JOHN

We've made it this far! Trust me I
can get us through this!

Arthur returns to focusing on navigation studying his charts. John battles hard with the controls as he fights against the storm.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kathleen and her father are still awake, whilst Eileen has retired to bed. Kathleen is sat on an armchair whilst her father is stood over her.

MAJOR KENNEDY

Come on Kath, I think you should go
to bed.

KATHLEEN

I can't.

MAJOR KENNEDY

Please Kath. You can't do anything
except worry.

KATHLEEN

But what if something does happen?!

MAJOR KENNEDY

I'll sleep down here. If anyone
does knock with news I'll wake you
up immediately. How does that
sound?

She looks up at him.

KATHLEEN

You promise?

MAJOR KENNEDY

Even if I have to throw a bucket of
cold water over you. Now get to
sleep there's a good girl.

Kathleen rises from the chair

KATHLEEN

Yes father. Goodnight father.

She kisses her father goodnight before exiting. Major Kennedy walks over to the drinks cabinet and helps himself to a glass of scotch.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Arthur manages to turn around so he facing towards the tailplane. He stands up in cockpit. Holds onto strut with right hand and wipes away ice from dials mounted on the fuselage strut with left arm using small penknife. Slipstream almost whips left arm away. Once the ice has been clear he struggles back onto his seat, panting heavily. John looks at him. Arthur puts his thumb up.

Without warning the Vimy stalls and begins a spiral plummet towards the ocean. John desperately pulls back on the control column as he struggles to halt the dive, the strain shows on him the physical exertion is beginning to drain him. Arthur is helpless. The Vimy has gone into a corkscrew spiral. The noise from from the engines has become louder. John switches off the engines, before restarting them. The flyers have lost all sense of direction and height.

We see the altimeter showing height decreasing:

4,000ft

3,000ft

2,000ft

1,000ft

500ft

250ft

200ft

150ft

100ft

At 50ft the clouds are still surrounding the Vimy. Finally at 25ft does the cloud-base finally ends revealing the greyness of the ocean waves.

The Vimy ends it descent, levelling off as the crest of the waves splash over the wheels. Spray from the sea hits the cockpit. Both airmen are soaked by seawater. Arthur spits out seawater. John begins to climb.

ARTHUR

Turn round!

JOHN

What?!

Arthur points to the compass. The compass points west.

ARTHUR
We're flying back!

John turns the Vimy through 180° whilst maintaining the climb.

EXT. SKY - MOMENTS LATER

Without warning the Vimy suddenly rolls over onto its back. It is now flying upside down.

EXT. SKY - LATER

It is approximately 5am local. As the Vimy continues its ascent it becomes once more surrounded by clouds, blotting out the sun and sea. The ice begins to form on the wings.

Slowly we see the Vimy descending in a slow descent.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The two aviators are freezing and cold, they are in danger of getting frostbite. Worse their electric suits have failed.

ARTHUR
The ice ain't shifting!.

JOHN
I know!

ARTHUR
I'll see if I can get rid of some.

Arthur begins to climb out of the cockpit. John quickly grabs Arthur's coat. As John lets go of the control column the plane veers sharply.

JOHN
Bloody stupid thing to do! You could have have killed us!

ARTHUR
Got to shift the ice, else we're dead!

JOHN
No! The ice will melt the lower we go!

ARTHUR

There's too much. If I can get rid off some it may give us a chance!

JOHN

Fine, just remove enough okay. I'll try and keep her level. If you fall off I ain't stopping!

Arthur begins to climb out the cockpit. Using the struts as support he gingerly makes his way onto the wing.

Careful not to slip he inches forward, knife clenched between teeth. Arthur begins to chip the ice off the struts. He kneels down, slipping as he does, quickly grabs a strut, and pants heavily. Regaining his composure he scrapes the ice of the lower wing. He makes his way back to the cockpit. As he begins to climb back in John begins to reach across to help, Arthur waves away.

ARTHUR

I'm fine! Just keep her level!

Arthur climbs back in. He breathes heavy.

JOHN

Good job. Here, take a sip.

John passes Arthur the flask. With shaking hands Arthur takes a gulp. He replaces the flask in the cubby hole.

ARTHUR

Thanks. Next time it's your turn.

JOHN

I'll pass thanks!

Arthur looks over John to the right wing. He notices ice has built up on the starboard wings, causing the Vimy fly tilted to the right. Arthur struggles to climb onto the fuselage using the struts and John's shoulders as support.

Painfully he walks on his knees across the fuselage before sliding onto the lower starboard wing. Using the struts as support he kneels down on the wing and scrapes away as much ice as he can. His duty done he scrambles back onto the fuselage using the fuselage struts as support before returning to the cockpit. Once he is safely sat down John begins a slow descent.

EXT. SKY - MORNING

Caption: 08:15 am 15th June 1919.

The Vimy is at 500ft. The mass of clouds are now above and for the first time since setting off they are in clear air. Due to fuel consumption the Vimy is flying in a nose down attitude. John is having to constantly keep pulling back on the control column in order to maintain level flight.

Suddenly the starboard engine begins to misfire. John shuts off the engine. The propeller feathers to a stop. They are now flying on one engine only.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

John is struggling to maintain level flight. His limbs are sore and aching in absolute agony.

As they slowly make their way over the ocean Arthur looks down. Excitedly he grabs John's shoulder points in a jabbing motion ahead and downwards.

ARTHUR

Land!

John looks in the direction Arthur is pointing, spots two small islands. Mist obscures the mainland. John descends to 250ft.

JOHN

Reckon we can make London!

ARTHUR

Shouldn't risk it, best to play safe!

JOHN

Nah, we can make London, if we're careful.

ARTHUR

We've pushed our luck too far already!

JOHN

We can do it! A little further!

ARTHUR

We've done it, fuel must getting low!

JOHN

You're probably right!

EXT. FIELD - LATER

As they cross land Arthur notices tall masts of a radio station. As they fly over the town of Clifden John circles looking for a suitable landing spot. A few of the townsfolk come outside and look up as the Vimy passes low over them. Arthur fires off a couple of red flares diagonally upwards.

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - MOMENTS LATER

John notices a flat field of grass. He begins the landing approach. He switches off the port engine in order to glide down. Some people are on the ground waving frantically. Arthur waves back at the crowd.

The Vimy descends before touching down, wheels glide over before sinking into the bog. As the axles sink the Vimy tips forward, its tail rises high into the air. Arthur and John are lurched forward. Arthur suffers a bloodied nose and mouth.

They sit for a moment. John raises both hands above his head, lets out a massive cheer. Arthur just sits quietly in contemplation.

ARTHUR

Well you've made better landings,
but not bad.

JOHN

Bit rough at the end.

They both hug each other. Arthur scrambles out the cockpit, before helping John whose limbs have stiffened so much he can barely move. They both sit on the ground backs resting on the wrecked Vimy.

EXT. BOG - MOMENTS LATER

As John and Arthur sit on the ground people start running up to the plane, taking care with their footing on the bog. Some are local civilians whilst others clearly military by their British Army uniforms. John manages to stand up, his limbs still aching. He reaches back into the cockpit starts ferreting around before throwing items out of the cockpit towards the crowd.

JOHN

Who wants American cigarettes?

An IRISH WOMAN (late 50's) approaches

WOMAN
Are you hurt?

ARTHUR
Sorry! Can't hear!

WOMAN
(Shouting louder)
I said are you hurt?

ARTHUR
No, we're fine thanks.

WOMAN
Where are you from?

ARTHUR
America.

Crowd look perplexed, some laugh whilst others shake their heads. Nobody believes them.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Yesterday we were in America.

The woman remains unconvinced

WOMAN
Of course you were.

ARTHUR
Let me prove it to you. Take a look
in this.

Arthur stands up, reaches into the cockpit and pulls out the mailbag.

He passes the postbag to a MEMBER of the army SQUAD, who is clearly a CAPTAIN (Irish 20's). He opens the bag up, takes out a letter, notices the date stamp. He holds the bag up to the crowd.

CAPTAIN
(Loud and excitable)
It's true they've done it! Crossed
the bleeding Atlantic! These
letters are from Newfoundland
and they've got yesterday's date
on!

WOMAN
(Suspicious)
Give it here. Lets have a look.

The Captain passes the bag to the woman. She looks at one letter, then a second and finally a third. She hands the bag back to the Captain. She gasps.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

He's right. Its true! They've flown from America!

The crowd begin to cheer, some of the women hug them whilst men shake their hands, causing John and Arthur to grimace.

ARTHUR

Any news about the Handley Page team?

CAPTAIN

Sorry, nothing. We're from the Marconi station over there.

He points north eastwards towards the Marconi station.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Last thing we heard they were still in Newfoundland. If they have set off either they're still on their way or..

He goes quiet realising what the alternative is.

JOHN

Suppose that means we're first.

ARTHUR

Knowing our ruddy luck, we'll get to London only to find Kerr and the whole of bloody Handley Page waiting for us.

JOHN

Somehow I think we've done it. Come on best to let London know we've landed. Besides Kathleen will kill us if we don't let her know we're back.

Both aviators are lifted onto the shoulders of a pair of Irish labourers who carry them across the bog. As they do the crowd follows clapping and cheering.

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

Kathleen Kennedy is having a late lunch. She has not been sleeping. Her eyes are red and her hair unkempt.

There has been no news regarding her fiance and John. She is beginning to lose hope that they are alive.

The house is empty except for herself.

A knock at the front door. Kathleen ignores it. There is a second knock this time louder and repeated.

INT./EXT. OUTSIDE FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Outside terrace door. A messenger BOY (14) is stood outside. He is holding a piece of paper in his right hand.

The door opens and Kathleen Kennedy stands in the doorway staring at the boy. She looks annoyed at him. The boy steps slightly backwards.

BOY
Miss Kathleen Kennedy?

KATHLEEN
Yes.

BOY
Telegram for you.

He hands over a piece of paper. Kathleen takes the paper but doesn't look at it.

KATHLEEN
Thank you, wait there.

She goes back inside closing the door. The boy is stood outside. The door opens and Kathleen is stood there. She gives the boy some coins, possibly shillings. Boy looks at the money then looks up at Kathleen smiling.

BOY
Thank you miss. Oh and
congratulations by the
way.

Boy runs off.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kathleen is stood in the living room. She looks at the telegram before collapsing in an armchair. She begins to sob.

The telegram falls from her hand.

Telegram reads:

"Landed Clifden Ireland safely this morning. Will be with you soon. Love Ted."

EXT. RAILWAY STATION DAY

Caption: 17th June 1919 Rugby Railway Station.

A steam train pulls into the station. As the passengers stare out of the carriage windows they see thousands of people waving and cheering, dozens of Union Jacks are waved. A military band stand on a temporary raised platform strikes up and begins to play "Rule Britannia". Railway porters along with policemen, their arms linked together form a line in an attempt to hold the crowd back.

INT. RAILWAY CARRIAGE COMPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

In a compartment sit John and Arthur are sat next to each other. John is nearest to the window. He looks out the window towards the crowd. He stands up and prepares to leave the compartment. Arthur follows him.

EXT. RAILWAY STATION DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Railway carriage door opens. As John and Arthur step out onto the platform the crowd suddenly erupts into a massive cheer and begin to lurch forward causing the line of porters and police to buckle and bend under the weight.

The military band begins to play the National Anthem.

Hands reach over the human barrier in an attempt to touch both John and Arthur who try and shake as many hands as possible.

A couple of soldiers push their way to the front of the crowd. One of them whispers something to one of the policemen who lets the two soldiers pass before closing ranks.

The two soldiers approach John. They stop and salute him before hoisting them onto their shoulders and begin to walk through the crowd who part allowing a clear pathway. As the two soldiers walk between the crowd people reach up trying to touch John who reaches down to shake as many hands as he can.

John looks over his shoulder and see Arthur being carried on the shoulders of two other soldiers. As with himself, Arthur is shaking as many hands as possible. However unlike John who is clearly enjoying the whole experience Arthur is just wanting the whole affair to be over with.

As Arthur is carried between the crowd he notices a familiar face amongst the crowd. He indicates the two soldiers to put him down.

As they door he limps his way escorted by the two soldiers towards the figure who we now recognise as Kathleen along with her father and sister. Arthur approaches Kathleen who embraces and kisses him.

INT. SCIENCE MUSEUM LONDON - DAY

It is the late 1940's. London is recovering from the 2nd World War.

A Vickers Vimy hangs suspended from the ceiling. We recognise the Vimy at the one John and Arthur crossed the Atlantic in, only this time it has been fully repaired.

Visitors are talking and looking at the various exhibits. A few glance at the Vimy before walking on. To them it is just another aeroplane from a previous bygone era.

Workmen are busy repairing bomb damage. There is scaffolding all over. The whole place looks like a building site. Occasionally a piece of masonry crashes to the ground.

A man in his late 50's dressed in shirt and tie wearing a jacket is stood alone looking wistfully at the Vimy. This is Arthur (now Sir) Whitten Brown. He still has a walking stick, only that this is more elaborate being elegantly carved with an ivory swan necked curved handle.

A few other visitors are stood near him. No one speaks to nor recognises him.

As he stares at his old aeroplane memories come flooding back. He wipes a tear. No one takes any notice, to them he's just some veteran probably flew during the first world war.

A group of seven schoolboys aged around 7-9 are running around pretending to be aeroplanes arms outstretched mimicking wings, making machine gun noises as they play at being warplanes. ONE of them accidentally bumps into Arthur

SCHOOLBOY

Sorry Sir!

ARTHUR

That's alright lad. Just be careful.

The schoolboy stops, stands next to Arthur and looks at the Vimy. He reads the information board.

SCHOOLBOY

Did this thing really cross the
Atlantic. Doesn't look like it.

Arthur can't help but smile.

ARTHUR

Well my boy. It certainly did so.
Would you like to know how.

The schoolboy nods. Arthur walks over to a bench, sits down.
The schoolboy sits on the floor cross-legged looking up at
Arthur. He is joined by the other six who sit on the floor
next to their classmate.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Now let me think. It was back in
1919. I had to go to Vickers...

FADE TO BLACK.

EPILOGUE (before credits)

Both John and Arthur were knighted by His Majesty King George
V. On July 17th they were given a civic reception in
Manchester.

Using only basic navigational aids along with occasional
sightings of sun and stars Arthur managed to guide them
within 20 miles of their destination.

During the flight John Alcock never let fully go of the
controls even for a second for that would have meant certain
death.

On their return to London an estimated 250,000 people came to
see them.

Their Vickers Vimy was repaired and is now on permanent
display at the Science Museum London.

"Lucky Jim" can now be seen at the Science Museum, London.

"Twinkletoes" can now be seen at the RAF Museum Cosford.

John and Arthur had flown 1,890 miles (3.040km) in 15 hours,
57 minutes.

Between 1976 to 2003 Concorde could travel from London to New
York in 3.5 hours

Today the average time is approximately 8 hours.

Over 1,000 flights are flown over the Atlantic each day.

Handley Page never attempted to cross the Atlantic.

Between 8th and 27th May 1919 the US Navy's Curtiss NC-4 became the first aeroplane to cross the Atlantic in stages stopping in the Azores before heading towards Lisbon taking 10 days 22 hours.

John Alcock

John Alcock returned to Vickers as a test pilot.

On 18th December 1919 he was killed in crash whilst flying another of Vickers aeroplanes on a flight in fog at Cottévard, near Rouen in Normandy. He was 27.

Arthur Whitten Brown

Following the success of the Atlantic flight Arthur Whitten Brown would later work for Metropolitan Vickers. He and Kathleen married on 29th July 1919.

During World War 2 he served in the home guard as a Lieutenant Colonel.

He died in his sleep on 4th October 1948 aged 62 following an accidental overdose of Veronal.

They had one son named Arthur, who became an RAF pilot, and was killed on the night of 5/6th June 1944 aged 22.

Kathleen died on 1st May 1952 at Brunswick Nursing home, Swansea aged 56.

They lie side by side at St Margaret's Church, Tylers Green, Buckinghamshire.

Harry Hawker

Sopwith test pilot Harry Hawker would name his second daughter Mary after the ship that rescued him and Kenneth Mackenzie Grieve. He was killed in an aeroplane crash on 12th July 1921 aged 32. His name would live on in the company he helped to found that would ultimately create aeroplanes such as the Hurricane, Hunter and Harrier jump jet.

Frederick Phillips Raynham

Sir Sydney Camm would later describe F.P Raynham as "unlucky" due to the number of times he would just miss out on the major prizes in aviation.

He would later form the Aircraft Survey Company and the Indian Air Survey and Transport Company.

In 1923 he married Margery "Dodie" McPherson. They never had any children.

He received an OBE in 1935.

Freddie Raynham died from a stroke aged 60 in 1954 during a six year caravan tour in the United States.

Elsie Holloway

Elsie Holloway would later become a noted photographer. In 1932 she would photograph Amelia Earhart's attempt to become the first woman to successfully fly solo over the Atlantic. She died in 1971 aged 89.

Margaret Carter

Margaret would continue with her photography. After returning to England John and Arthur signed the cloth in which she had wrapped the sandwiches in and had it returned to her.

Following their departure on 14th June she would never see John again.

run credits