

LAFAYETTE ESCADRILLE (TV EPISODE)

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. LAFAYETTE ESCADRILLE INSIGNIA — IMAGE

The Lafayette Escadrille Insignia was shown as the head of Native American Warrior.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Before America's entrance in the war, the Lafayette Escadrille was the name of a French Air Force squadron with American pilots in World War I. Named after the Revolutionary War hero, the insignia of the Lafayette Escadrille symbolized as a Native American Warrior in full headdress. Most of the Lafayette Escadrille Pilots saw action at Verdun against the German Air Force. This is a story of the AMERICAN PILOTS who fought in the sky of the Western Front.

CUT TO:

TITLE: THE GREAT WAR: THE ANIMATED SERIES

CUT TO:

EPISODE TITLE: LAFAYETTE ESCADRILLE

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT I

CUT TO:

EXT. VERDUN AERODROME - DAY

April 23, 1916.

The Lafayette Escadrille Pilots landed on Verdun Aerodrome. Most American Pilots were flown in Nieuport 17. FRENCH LT. CHARLES NUNGESSER is the French Pilot who climbed out of his plane. American Pilot, Stuart Emmet Edgar, came to see the French Ace.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

Bonjour, Monsieur Edger.

STUART EMMET EDGAR

Hello, Charles. Have you found the Huns?

CHARLES NUNGESSER

I shot down three German Planes this month. What about you, *Monsieur?*

STUART EMMET EDGAR

A couple of DFWs, Charles.

RAOUL LUFBERY

DFWs are also used as a reconnaissance mission to locate our positions to prepare for German offensive in the Western Front.

ELLIOT C. COWDIN

What about the German Fighters?

GEORGES THENAULT (O.S.)

I believe the Germans are flying the Albatros Fighters.

RAOUL LUFBERY

CAPTAIN THENAULT.

Captain Thenault came to see the Lafayette Escadrille Pilots.

GEORGES THENAULT

I just heard that the Germans are no longer using the monoplanes in the war.

BERT HALL

Are you telling me the monoplanes are useless for the Germans?

GEORGES THENAULT

Oui, the Germans brought new planes to bring the Allied Squadron down. I expect the Germans will be on the offensive to attack Verdun, but we must not fall by the hands of the German Empire.

WILLIAM THAW II

Then we must repel the German Invaders before they reach Paris.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CACHY - DAY

At Cachy, the Lafayette Escadrille Pilots are discussing their tactics and strategy.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

I came up with my strategy by using tactics to defend my people in Verdun. We'll fly low to protect our forces on the ground.

STUART EMMET EDGAR

What about the bombers and reconnaissance aircraft?

CHARLES NUNGESSER

We'll use diving speed...

(MORE)

CHARLES NUNGESSER (CONT'D)

...to intercept enemy bombers and
reconnaissance aircraft before the
Germans know the Allies position
were.

WILLIAM THAW II

But how can we stop the Germans
advance towards Verdun?

BERT HALL

We've lost James Rogers McConnell,
but the Germans wants to invade
France.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

And that's why we can't allow the
Germans spot our troop movement.

PHILIPPE FEQUANT

(Speaking in French)

*Lieutenant Nungesser, the Captain
wants to see you and your pilots
for tomorrow's briefing.*

CHARLES NUNGESSER

(Speaking in French)

*Thank you, COLONEL FEQUANT. We'll
meet him right away.*

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. FRENCH AERODROME - NIGHT

At Night, Captain Thenault gives the briefing for tomorrow's
mission for bomber escort to their target.

GEORGES THENAULT

Gentlemen, tomorrow is a big day
in Verdun Sector. Your mission is
to escort our bombers to disrupt
the zeppelin factories.

(MORE)

GEORGES THENAULT (CONT'D)

The zeppelin production must be stopped before the Germans are planning for intercept mission. Charles Nungesser will be your squadron leader and remember, keep an eye out for Oswald Boelcke. He will lead his squadron into an ambush. Any questions?

Nobody asks questions of Captain Thenault.

GEORGES THENAULT (CONT'D)

Excellente. Get some rest and prepare for dawn patrol tomorrow.

They all left the aerodrome.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. NUNGESSER'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Charles Nungesser was petting TWO LION CUBS, WHISKEY AND SODA, named after both alcohol and caffeine beverage drinks when someone was KNOCKING at the door.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

Quoi dans.

BERT HALL

Sorry to bother you, Charles.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

It's alright, *Monsieur*. They won't hurt you.

BERT HALL

I'm not talking about your lion cubs, Charles. I'm talking about a new batch of Albatros Fighters. Have you seen them, Charles?

CHARLES NUNGESSER

I never seen these new planes before, but...

(MORE)

CHARLES NUNGESSER (CONT'D)

...I did lead my squadron against the Germans in the early months on Verdun, but our mission failed because the Germans killed many soldiers on the ground, and I won't fail again tomorrow because we will defend France before the Germans reach our doorstep. I'll meet you there in the aerodrome tomorrow, so don't be late.

BERT HALL

I won't let you down, Charles.
I'll see you tomorrow at dawn.

Bert Hall left Nungesser's Quarters. While Nungesser takes care of Soda and Whiskey.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

FADE IN:

EXT. FRENCH AERODROME - DAY

April 24, 1916.

The Lafayette Escadrille Pilots are getting ready for their first aerial combat in Verdun, France.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

Messieurs, the French are counting on us. We can't let the Germans interfere our plan. Our best option is to stay close to our bombers.

WILLIAM THAW II

Charles, what about the German Ace?

CHARLES NUNGESSER

Captain Thenault ordered us to fly to the treetop level. So, let's not waste our time and complete our mission.

Charles Nungesser and his Lafayette Escadrille Pilots ride the French Nieuport 17 Fighters to prepare for takeoff.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT.: ZEPPELIN FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

In the sky on the Western Front, Charles Nungesser and the Lafayette Escadrille Pilots escort six Cauldron G.4 bombers to their target to bomb the German zeppelin factories. As they near the target, Charles Nungesser spots Oswald Boelcke and a squadron of Albatros D.II Fighters. The German Ace signals the attack on the Lafayette Escadrille Squadron from below and begin to dogfight in air-to-air combat. Fighters on both sides were shot down over the Western Front. Elliot C. Cowdin SHOTS DOWN the German plane. The stricken Albatros SLAMS into the ground. Lafayette Escadrille Pilot, Bert Hall, spots the Albatros at 11 o'clock. Bert Hall gets in position behind the German and fires with his Vickers Machine Gun. The stricken Albatros crashed into a farm field. Meanwhile, the Cauldron bombers drop their payloads on the zeppelin factories to disrupt the production of zeppelins.

The Lafayette Escadrille Pilots returned to base after completing their escort mission at Verdun Sector.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT.: FRENCH AERODROME - DAY

Charles Nungesser tells the Lafayette Escadrille pilots the news.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

Good news, *gars*. We've located the German Trench in Verdun.

WILLIAM THAW II

But I didn't see the Albatros go down.

STUART EMMET EDGAR

You mean it's an unconfirmed kill?

WILLIAM THAW II

Yeah, now we know the German Trench is, they have bigger plans for us in the Western Front.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

What plans?

WILLIAM THAW II

To take Paris.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

Paris? It's the capital of France. We need to protect Paris before it's too late.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CACHY - DAY

Charles Nungesser and the Lafayette Escadrille Pilots are having discussion about the German Offensive.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

We've got bad news. The Germans are planning for invasion of France.

BERT HALL

Great! First Belgium and now France?

CHARLES NUNGESSER

Oui. The Germans invaded Belgium last year and they'll do the same in France. They're sending bombers to attack Paris, so I have a plan to take down the German Bombers.

RAOUL LUFBERY

You shot down the Huns earlier, remember?

CHARLES NUNGESSER

Yes, Lufbery. You'll have to do the same as I did last year.

RAOUL LUFBERY

And if we don't, then France will fall to the German hands.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT II

ACT III

FADE IN:

EXT. VERDUN AERODROME - DAY

April 25, 1916.

The Lafayette Escadrille Pilots scrambled to their fighters as they HEARD an air raid Siren in the background.

STUART EMMET EDGAR

What's going on here?

CHARLES NUNGESSER

The Germans are preparing to bomb Verdun! We must stop the Germans before they reach Verdun. Get your plane ready, *Monsieur*. We don't have much time!

Stuart nods his head.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT. VERDUN - CONTINUOUS

Three German LVGs are heading towards Verdun. The Lafayette Escadrille spot the Germans below. The Tail Gunner opens fire with his Parabellum Machine Gun. The German Fighter Escorts left the German LVGs unprotected. The Germans made a critical mistake. Some of the Lafayette Escadrille Pilots are dealing with the fighter escorts while other Lafayette Escadrille Pilots are intercepting three LVGs. Stuart Emmet Edgar takes out the LVG with his Vickers Machine Gun. The stricken LVG crashed into the wishing well. The Rear Gunner opens fire at Bert Hall, but Hall fires back and the LVG was blown to pieces. Another Lafayette Escadrille Pilot, Charles Nungesser pursues the third LVG as the German Gunner opens fire below, but Elliot pulls up and fires with his Vickers Machine Gun, aiming its left upper wing. The German Pilot tried to shake off his tail.

GERMAN REAR GUNNER

(Shouting in German)

Get us out of here!

But it's too late! The LVG is squarely in Nungesser's sight and fires at the LVG. The LVG was hit and burst into a flame.

GERMAN REAR GUNNER (CONT'D)

(Shouting in German)

Oh my god! We're on fire!

The stricken LVG plummets down towards the Allied Lines.

GERMAN REAR GUNNER (CONT'D)

(Shouting in German)

Pull up!

GERMAN PILOT

(Shouting in German)

I can't!

The German Pilot can't control the plane and ends up spiraling out of control which the stock footage was taken from *Dogfights: The Greatest Air Battles*. The LVG crashed into the ground. The French Soldiers captured two German Pilots and took them to a prisoner of war camp. Elliot regroups with his fellow pilots and heads back to the aerodrome. Not a signal bomb strikes on Verdun.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VERDUN AERODROME - DAY

Elliot came to see the French Mechanic.

ELLIOT C. COWDIN

Do you know where the prisoners are?

FRENCH MECHANIC

You should talk to the soldiers.
They know where the prisoners are.

PHILIPPE FEQUANT

(Speaking in French)

Are you talking to me?

FRENCH MECHANIC

Non.

(Speaking in French)

He wants to know where you're taking the prisoners.

PHILIPPE FEQUANT

Elliot, our soldiers found them in our lines.

ELLIOT C. COWDIN

At Verdun?

PHILIPPE FEQUANT

Before reaching Verdun.

ELLIOT C. COWDIN

Oh, that's too bad.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

Elliot, Captain Thenault wants to see us.

CUT TO:

INT. THENAULT'S TENT

They meet Captain Thenault inside the tent.

GEORGES THENAULT

What is it?

CHARLES NUNGESSER

I want to know why the Germans are using their tactics against us.

GEORGES THENAULT

Instead of cut-and-run, Oswald Boelcke invented his tactics since the beginning of the war.

ELLIOT C. COWDIN

You mean *Dicta Boelcke*?

GEORGES THENAULT

Oui, he flies every day until the time comes.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

For how long?

GEORGES THENAULT

21 days.

ELLIOT C. COWDIN

21 days?

GEORGES THENAULT

Exactement. You must find Boelcke's weakness before your next mission.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

My people are safe, thanks to Elliot and his Lafayette Escadrille Pilots.

GEORGES THENAULT

Good job. Meet me at the aerodrome tomorrow morning and wait for further orders.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

Merci, Captain Thenault.

BACK TO:

EXT. VERDUN AERODROME - DAY

ELLIOT C. COWDIN

How is your mission?

CHARLES NUNGESSER

I took out the LVG before they reached Verdun and now, they're planning something big.

ELLIOT C. COWDIN

What about the prisoners?

CHARLES NUNGESSER

Colonel Philippe Fequant was
taking care of the prisoners.

ELLIOT C. COWDIN

May I see them?

CHARLES NUNGESSER

Leave the prisoners to me. I'll
deal with them in person.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT III

ACT IV

FADE IN:

INT. PRISON CAMP - DAY

SFX: THUNDERSTORM SOUND

It's a rainy day on the Western Front as Charles Nungesser came to visit at the prison camp where the German Prisoners were held in France.

GERMAN OBSERVER

This is your fault!

GERMAN PILOT

But you told me to maneuver the plane and now, we got captured by the French!

GERMAN OBSERVER

We should've bombed Verdun before the Lafayette Escadrille arrived!

CHARLES NUNGESSER

Not just Verdun. You've killed innocent lives.

GERMAN PILOT

When the war is over, we'll be free from this prison cell and return to Germany.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

Or perhaps they'll execute you both for your war crimes against our nation.

FRENCH SOLDIER

(Speaking in French)

Let me handle the prisoners. You go back to the aerodrome.

CHARLES NUNGESSER

Oui, Monsieur.

Charles Nungesser left the prison camp.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VERDUN AERODROME - DAY

September 23, 1916.

Captain Thenault gives the briefing to Lafayette Escadrille Pilots.

CAPTAIN THENAULT

Gentlemen, you'll be going to do some balloon busting mission on Verdun. The Germans have located in our trench positions by using two observation balloons. They must be destroyed before the Germans can weaken our position. Charles Nungesser will lead his squadron to attack before the Germans have a chance to attack Verdun. Good luck to you all.

Charles Nungesser and his Lafayette Escadrille Pilots take off for balloon busting mission.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WESTERN FRONT - CONTINUOUS

In the hostile skies of the Western Front, Charles Nungesser leads his squadron on Verdun and spots two German Observation Balloons. Flaks BURST all around the Escadrille Pilots until they spot Oswald Boelcke and his squadron at 9 o'clock high. Charles Nungesser splits up his squadron with his hand signal. Half of Lafayette Escadrille Pilots went after Boelcke and his squadron into a dogfight, while Nungesser and his squadron ATTACK two German Observation Balloons with Vickers Machine Gun. Nungesser BROUGHT DOWN one German Observation Balloon and Bert Hall DESTROYED another Observation Balloon. One of the Lafayette Escadrille Pilot disposes one of the German Fighters and another German Fighter was shot down by William Thaw II. Both sides were shot down in Verdun Sector. As they head back to base, William spots Boelcke right behind his squadron mate. William tried to catch up to him, but it was too late. Boelcke shot Champman down in flames. William watches his horror as his squadron mate slams into the ground in pieces. The Lafayette Escadrille Pilots return to base.

CUT TO:

INT. GERMAN CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

General Ludendorff, and GERMAN FIELD MARSHALL PAUL VON HINDENBURG are having a conversation for the upcoming battle along with the German Staff Officers. They had a plan to bomb England with Zeppelins. GERMAN GENERAL STAFF ERICH VON FALKENHAYN had some bad news at Verdun.

ERICH VON FALKENHAYN

(Speaking in German)

*Our attack on Verdun has failed,
General Ludendorff!*

ERICH LUDENDORFF

(Speaking in German)

Where's Oswald Boelcke?

ERICH VON FALKENHAYN

(Speaking in German)

*He's at the aerodrome, General
Ludendorff, but his squadron is
shot down by the Lafayette
Escadrille. Luckily, the Americans
are remaining neutral.*

PAUL VON HINDENBURG

(Speaking in German)

*So, that's why the Americans
worked for the French Squadron all
along.*

ERICH LUDENDORFF

(Speaking in German)

*I just figured out my plan, Field
Marshall.*

PAUL VON HINDENBURG

(Speaking in German)

What is your plan, General?

ERICH LUDENDORFF

(Speaking in German)

We're preparing for a Zeppelin raid on England to bomb cities by nighttime.

PAUL VON HINDENBURG

(Speaking in German)

How's the war on the Eastern Front going, Ludendorff?

ERICH LUDENDORFF

(Speaking in German)

We're making a good progress on the Russians with the help of Austria-Hungarian Forces. They're starting to revolt against the Russian Czar.

PAUL VON HINDENBURG

(Speaking in German)

If there's a civil disorder in Russia to overthrow the Russian Czar, then what about Italy and Romania?

ERICH LUDENDORFF

(Speaking in German)

The Austro-Hungarians will handle the Italians for themselves, but however, we defeated Romania, thanks to the Bulgarian Forces.

PAUL VON HINDENBURG

Sehr gut.

ERICH VON FALKENHAYN

(Speaking in German)

If we've failed to take Verdun, then what's our plan on the Western Front?

ERICH LUDENDORFF

(Speaking in German)

*It's a pity that Oswald Boelcke
failed his mission on Verdun in a
mid-air collision.*

PAUL VON HINDENBURG

(Speaking in German)

*Send another pilot to deal the
Allies Squadron on the Western
Front.*

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT IV

ACT V

FADE IN:

EXT. PRISON CAMP - DAY

Two German Pilots were tied up behind their back and blindfolded as the French Soldiers LOAD their rifles. One of the German Pilot said his last words:

GERMAN PILOT

The Germans asked for the air support to attack Verdun until a group of Lafayette Escadrille Pilots ruined our plan at the Battle of Verdun. Germany will rise against the Allies on the Western Front. *Rache an uns*, Kaiser and the German Empire.

FRENCH COMMANDER

Pret. Viser. Feu!

SFX: GUNFIRE SOUND

The German Pilots were executed off-screen.

GO TO:

EXT. VERDUN AERODROME - DAY

The ceremony begins as Captain Thenault has an announcement to the Lafayette Escadrille Pilots.

GEORGES THENAULT

Gentlemen, we've just learned Oswald Boelcke died in mid-air collision, but however, you pilots have saved Verdun from the Germans. *Commandant?*

PHILIPPE FEQUANT

Stuart Emmet Edgar, by shooting down the German Planes than any other pilots, you've been promoted to First Lieutenant.

First Lieutenant Stuart Emmet Edgar received the *Croix de guerre* Medal. Colonel Fequant kissed Edgar's cheeks. Lieutenant Edgar and Colonel Fequant salute to each other.

GEORGES THENAULT

Congratulations to all of you.
You're now officially the veterans
of the ariel warfare on the
Western Front.

The Lafayette Escadrille Pilots saluted as four Nieuport 17s
made a V-shaped formation.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WESTERN FRONT - CONTINUOUS

One year later, Major Lufbery lead his squadron of SPAD VIIIs
Fighters in formation on the Western Front ready to shoot down
the German Planes.

FADE OUT.

THE END