

DUNKIRK

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Black screen.

Water slaps hollow metal, metal knocks creaking wood...

Super title:

DUNKIRK

FADE IN:

Paper. Falling like snow. Six young, filthy Tommy's raise their heads along a deserted street, checking rubbish bins, windows... One crouches to check a coiled garden hose. He tries the tap - nothing...

Title 1:

THE ENEMY HAVE DRIVEN
THE BRITISH AND FRENCH ARMIES TO THE SEA

One Tommy plucks paper from the air... Propaganda leaflets showing their position... "YOU ARE SURROUNDED"....

Title 2:

TRAPPED AT DUNKIRK,
THEY AWAIT THEIR FATE

He wads the leaflets up, crouches, drops his trousers... The Tommy with the hose carefully lifts each side...

Title 3:

HOPING FOR DELIVERANCE

He gets a tiny dribble of water which he licks from the nozzle -

Title 4:

FOR A MIRACLE

BLAM BLAM BLAM! Tommy jolts, grabs his trousers. All six race away from us, towards a fence twenty yards away. One by one, five are shot down. The survivor climbs the fence. Gunfire bursts through the fence, ten feet away -

Tommy tries to reload his rifle - fingers struggling with the magazine, training forgotten. Gunfire splinters the fence, five feet away -

Tommy thrusts his index finger into the breech of his rifle again and again, scraping skin. A round jumps into the chamber -

Gunfire three feet away -

Tommy tries once, twice - slides the bolt forward -

Gunfire right next to him -

Tommy spins around, fires blind until empty, scrambles out the back. He races down narrow Dunkirk streets. Breathing. Kit jangling... Building after building... He rounds a corner -

BLAM! Bullets hit dirt and bricks near him. The street ahead is barricaded, manned by French troops.

TOMMY
ANGLAIS! ANGLAIS!

The French stop firing and wave him through.

He scrambles over their sandbag barricade, taking in their dirty frightened faces as he passes...

A French Soldier grabs him...

FRENCH SOLDIER
Allez, Anglais.

Tommy's mouth opens at the man's bitterness.

FRENCH SOLDIER (CONT'D)
(contempt)
Bon voyage.

He shoves Tommy down the street behind their protection.

Gunfire behind. Tommy takes off again, hurtling down the dark street, heading towards the blazing light of -

EXT. BEACH AT MALO LES BAINS - CONTINUOUS

The longest, widest beach he's ever seen, sunlight dazzling off the water, endless dark fences snaking across the sand and out into the water. Tommy squints - not fences, lines of men, hundreds of thousands of men...

Tommy looks around, clutching his stomach. He clammers over a dune, feverishly undoing his belt, dropping trousers and squatting before he realizes -

He's not alone -

Another soldier, British army shirt undone, sweating with the labour of burying a body. This is Gibson.

The other man notices Tommy, but barely pauses. Tommy finishes, pulls up his trousers and moves towards him. Tommy helps stoop to tie over the body.

Tommy notices the corpe's stockinged feet, then watches Gibson stoop to tie his boots...

Gibson looks up at him. Tommy shrugs, gestures for Gibson's water can. Gibson hands it over and Tommy takes a swig, carefully catching drops in his hand, then licking them off his palm.

Tommy leaves Gibson buttoning his shirt and heads back onto the beach.

There are destroyers out on the water, too far to reach.

Tommy wanders down to join one of the long, snaking lines which extends into the sea, soldiers up to their chests in water, waiting patiently for ships which do not move.

The man at the back turns to Tommy, unwelcoming. Points at his own insignia.

MAN

Grenadiers, mate.

Tommy moves off. Looks around at other impossibly long lines, at the unattainable ships. Futile.

A line of stretcher-bearers comes past, carrying wounded men along the beach towards the harbour...

Looking where they're headed, Tommy sees a long, narrow breakwater extending out into the sea, packed with soldiers. A hospital ship at the end of it.

This breakwater extends a kilometer into the sea. It is called the Mole.

Super title:

1. THE MOLE

one week

Tommy becomes aware of the sound of distant aircraft. Soldiers peer up into the sky...

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

DIVE BOMBERS!

Tommy spots the distinctive kinked wings of the notorious Stuka dive bomber, its nightmarish howl rising as it picks up speed, diving at the beach...

The lines of men instantly vanish - soldiers scattering back to the dunes, burrowing into the sand... The first bombs lift sand into the air.

The stretcher-bearers put down their loads, lying across them, protecting them as the area is hammered...

The first Stuka pulls out of its dive, revealing two more Stukas diving. There are nine more about to follow...

Tommy sees a soldier lying on his back, rifle aimed at the sky, firing defiantly, desperately at the attacking plane... The ground around him lifts into the air with the second wave of bombs.

Tommy buries his face in the sand as the bombs blast and blast and blast -

The explosions stop. Tommy lifts his head. BOOM! Another wave of bombs explodes in series up the beach. Then, finally, quiet. Tommy rises...

The stretcher-bearers, back on their feet, lift their burdens (four bearers per stretcher, one at each corner).

Several stretchers are left behind on the sand.

Soldiers on the beach watch in despair as one of the destroyers is slipping below the water, smoke billowing.

MALE VOICE (CONT'D)
WHERE'S THE BLOODY AIR FORCE?!

CUT TO:

EXT. ENGLISH COAST, WEYMOUTH HARBOUR - MORNING

A lanky youth runs down to the masts of the crowded harbour.

He races along the wooden dock, jumping over the ropes as he rushes to a large yacht, the Moonstone.

Super title:

2. THE SEA

one week

The youth, George (seventeen), leaps from the dock into the well. Two naval officers emerge from the cabin, pushing past. George watches them go, confused...

Mr. Dawson (fifties, civilian dress) hands George a stack of china plates and ducks back inside.

A second young man, Peter (nineteen), emerges, carrying boxes.

PETER

Navy's requisitioned her - there's some men across the Channel, at Dunkirk, need taking off.

(points at dock)

They told us to strip her and load those life jackets.

George looks along at the dock. At a pile of hundreds of life jackets. George looks at Peter. Surprised.

GEORGE

Some men?

PETER

Navy'll be back in an hour. My dad wants to be ready before then...

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY - DAY

Moving through billowy peaks, three sleek, beautiful Spitfires streak into frame. Elegant. In confident formation.

Super title:

3. THE AIR

one hour

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

The pilot, Farrier, has a light touch on the controls. He checks his left and right, scanning the skies.

VOICE ON RADIO

Check fuel, Fortis 1 and 2.

Farrier reaches forward to his fuel gauge, pushes the button beside it - the needle shoots up to three-quarters full.

FARRIER
Seventy gallons.

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - CONTINUOUS

The pilot, Collins, checks his fuel gauge -

COLLINS
Sixty-eight gallons, Fortis Leader.

FORTIS LEADER
(over radio)
Stay down at five hundred feet to
leave fuel for forty minutes
fighting time over Dunkirk.

COLLINS
Understood. Vector 128, angels
point five.

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier checks his chart.

FORTIS LEADER
Keep an eye on that gauge, even
when it gets lively - save enough
to get back.

With a glance at his fuel gauge, Farrier pulls on the stick.

EXT. SKY - CONTINUOUS

The three planes bank left in perfect harmony as we -

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH AT LA PANNE - LATE AFTERNOON

Tommy looks down at several patients on stretchers left
behind bearers dead or disappeared...

One of them groans. Still alive.

Tommy looks around. Gibson is there.

They grab the stretcher and hustle down the beach towards the
mole...

EXT. BASE OF THE MOLE - CONTINUOUS

A Warrant Officer tries to keep order as men line up to start the shuffle out along the eight-foot wide concrete mole.

The line of stretcher-bearers approaches...

From the base all you can see is the backs of helmeted heads queuing out onto the narrow breakwater.

The Warrant Officer sees the stretchers, waves them past -

WARRANT OFFICER

Along the mole. All the way, she's
leaving -

A ship's whistle -

WARRANT OFFICER (CONT'D)

That's it.
(he turns)
MAKE WAY! MAKE WAY!

The stretcher-bearers squeeze past...

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Tommy and Gibson hear the ship's whistle. They start running with the stretcher, heading for the base of the mole...

EXT. BASE OF THE MOLE - CONTINUOUS

The Warrant Officer addresses a group of French soldiers.

WARRANT OFFICER

NO FRENCH! NON FRANÇAISES -
SEULEMENT ANGLAISES! ENGLISH ONLY,
YOU'LL HAVE YOUR OWN SHIPS!

Tommy and Gibson arrive, panting. The Warrant Officer looks up at them. The ship's whistle - the Warrant Officer points up -

WARRANT OFFICER (CONT'D)

That's two minutes - you've missed
it.

He turns back to arguing with the French...

Tommy pushes forward with the stretcher. Soldiers try to let him through on the narrow mole -

The Warrant Officer, seeing Tommy, just shakes his head.

EXT. HOSPITAL SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Stretchers are loaded up the gangplank onto the deck of the ship, supervised by a Petty Officer.

He checks his watch, then looks along the mole at the remaining stretchers...

EXT. THE MOLE - CONTINUOUS

Tommy weaves along the mole, squeezing past the mass of troops jamming the breakwater...

Tommy leans out over the edge where the rail is missing, a twenty-foot drop to the churning water...

Gibson follows, echoing Tommy's route and footing.

EXT. HOSPITAL SHIP - CONTINUOUS

The last of the line of stretchers is carefully, awkwardly raised up from the mole onto the deck of the ship. The Petty Officer speaks urgently to the last stretcher-bearer.

PETTY OFFICER

Last?

The Stretcher-Bearer nods, too breathless to speak, then follows his colleagues back down off the ship.

An explosion hits the water nearby -

Everyone hits the deck as shells impacts the water.

EXT. THE MOLE - CONTINUOUS

Tommy is pulled up short as Gibson stumbles -

An ME 109 strafes the length of the mole with gunfire - soldiers hit the deck, several are hit...

Gibson struggles up.

CUT TO:

EXT. WEYMOUTH HARBOUR - DAY

Peter and George rush things off the boat, then start loading the orange life-preservers. Mr. Dawson looks up from his charts to see naval officers and crew coming along the harbour, assigning crew members to boats...

Peter follows his gaze -

INT. MOONSTONE - CONTINUOUS

Peter bursts into the cabin, stacking life vests.

EXT. MOONSTONE - CONTINUOUS

The pile of life vests on the dock shrinks... Mr. Dawson watches the naval men coming closer -

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier lightly brushes his fingers over the dashboard.

COLLINS
(over radio)
Dunkirk's so far, why can't they
load at Calais?

Farrier looks over at his wing mate, Collins (Fortis 2).

FORTIS LEADER
(over radio)
The enemy had something to say
about it.

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - CONTINUOUS

Collins scans the skies above...

COLLINS
Down here we're sitting ducks.

FORTIS LEADER
(over radio)
Keep 'em peeled. They'll come out
of the sun.

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier looks around into the blinding sun...

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL SHIP - CONTINUOUS

The Petty Officer barks orders at the crew -

PETTY OFFICER
Man the bow line! Ready on the
stern!

Troops stuck down on the mole below look resentfully at the ship preparing to depart. One Soldier calls up -

SOLDIER
Any more room?

The Petty Officer glares down at him.

EXT. THE MOLE - CONTINUOUS

Tommy breaks through a tight crowd of soldiers and stops.

In front of him is a jagged chasm. One narrow plank laid across it. The drop is fifteen feet to rocks and concrete below.

The ship's whistle sounds. Tommy stares -

SOLDIER
Take a run at it!

Tommy glances at the Soldier who spoke. Looks back at Gibson.

TOMMY
One, two, three!

Tommy bolts across, pure concentration, the plank bowing and bouncing as he crosses the middle, Gibson following. Tommy's foot slips, he almost goes over, rights himself -

Helpful arms grab them as they hit the other side, a couple of cheers from the crowd. Tommy ploughs on -

EXT. HOSPITAL SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Tommy passes the stretcher-bearers coming back down the mole. One of them moves to help but Tommy shakes his head, pushing past.

The Petty Officer gestures at his men to pull the gangplanks -

PETTY OFFICER
PULL THE GANGPLANKS!

Tommy and Gibson arrive at the end of the mole.

TOMMY
Oi!

A gangplank is shoved back down.

They struggle up it with the stretcher.

When they make it to the deck they practically drop their burden, gasping for breath. Orderlies takes the stretcher below.

Tommy and Gibson look around for a place to perch, catching their breaths...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Dawson sees the Naval Officers stepping onto their dock -

MR. DAWSON
Ready on the stern line.

George hops onto the dock, unties the stern line. Stops. Looks at the approaching Officers. Then back to Mr. Dawson -

GEORGE
Aren't you waiting for the navy?

Mr. Dawson starts the engine. Peter jumps down onto the boat with the bow rope...

MR. DAWSON
They've asked for the Moonstone,
they'll have her. With her captain.

PETER
And his son.

The boat moves off. Peter looks to catch the line from George.

PETER (CONT'D)
Thanks for the help, George.

Who, instead, jumps onto the stern, to Peter's surprise.

PETER (CONT'D)
You know where we're going?

GEORGE
France.

MR. DAWSON
Into war, George.

GEORGE
I'll be useful, sir.

Mr. Dawson looks at George. Pushes the throttle forward and they motor out of the harbour into the English Channel...

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - DAY

Collins spots something -

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier spots the ME 109 coming out of the sun -

FARRIER
Bandit - eight o'clock.

FORTIS LEADER
(over radio)
Break.

EXT. SKY OVER ENGLISH CHANNEL - CONTINUOUS

The three Spitfires dart away from each other. The German plane takes the left one (Collins), hurtling down -

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - CONTINUOUS

Collins dives, rolling, glancing back -

COLLINS
He's on me!

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier banks around, lining up on Collins' pursuer.

FARRIER
And I'm on him -

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL SHIP - EVENING

Tommy and Gibson shuffle around the deck, looking for a spot to settle...

The Able Seaman manning the gangplank calls over -

ABLE SEAMAN
You two, get a shift on!

Tommy reluctantly follows Gibson onto the plank.

EXT. THE MOLE - CONTINUOUS

As he shuffles down the gangplank he looks over at the thousands queuing on the mole...

A Second Lieutenant on the mole waves Tommy along -

SECOND LIEUTENANT
Off you two! Back up the line!

As Tommy steps off the plank he hears a noise: Gibson, finger to his lips, 'shush', is crouched in the crisscross structure below the mole where he can't be seen by the officers on top. He beckons Tommy to join him...

PETTY OFFICER
That last barrage damaged the rudder!

The Second Lieutenant turns to the Petty Officer. Tommy slips down beside Gibson -

SECOND LIEUTENANT
Tie up again while we try to fix it.

They settle in on the beams just above the water line...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - MORNING

Mr. Dawson comes to the back of the well, fits the tiller, to steer from outside, Peter at his side. George, on the bow, looks across at several naval vessels on the same course.

Suddenly he spots a bomber overhead -

GEORGE

Mr. Dawson!

Mr. Dawson's eyes don't leave his course -

MR. DAWSON

One of ours, George.

George looks up at the plane. A Blenheim passes over.

Looking down to his left - a fishing trawler bobbing along. Further back down the convoy he sees a Thames paddle steamer.

A destroyer approaches from the opposite direction. As George peers, he starts to make out shapes of men on the decks.

The destroyer passes close enough that George can see the boat is packed with soldiers. Weary, bedraggled, dispirited soldiers. George stares at the haunted faces.

As the Moonstone rides over the wake of the destroyer, an ominous boom reverberates in the distance. Too sudden for thunder, the boom multiplies into a distant barrage...

Mr. Dawson comes forward, drawn by the sound. He stares at the horizon - distant black smoke precisely where they're headed. More booms. Mr. Dawson looks at George. Who is scared. He puts his hand on his shoulder. Nods reassuringly.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier concentrates, trying to angle his plane at the tail of the ME 109 ahead... but the German plane keeps pulling out of his sights, turning right, pulling g's, rolling...

FARRIER

On my mark - draw him left, Fortis
2... Three, two, one, mark -

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - CONTINUOUS

Collins pulls hard left, rolling up and left as tracer fire streaks past.

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier watches the ME 109 cut left to follow Collins. He pushes the button on his stick to strafe the plane with his cannons... Smoke starts trailing from the German plane.

FARRIER

Clear.

EXT. SKY OVER ENGLISH CHANNEL - CONTINUOUS

The ME 109 trails heavy smoke as it tips towards the water -

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - CONTINUOUS

Collins straightens out, tries to look back -

COLLINS

Is he down?

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier watches the ME 109 smash into the water, breaking up in a fiery mess -

FARRIER

Down for the count -

Tracer fire smashes into Farrier's plane, sparking inside and out. Farrier banks hard right as a second 109 streaks away. He straightens up.

FARRIER (CONT'D)

Fortis leader, one bandit down...

Nothing.

FARRIER (CONT'D)

Fortis leader, do you read?

Nothing.

Farrier looks around, spots a Spitfire -

FARRIER (CONT'D)
 Fortis 2, I have you to port - no
 eyes on Fortis Leader. Over.

COLLINS
 (over radio)
 Understood, Fortis 1. Orbit for a
 look...

Farrier looks all around as he pulls right on the stick...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MOLE - EVENING

Eerie quiet.

Tommy and Gibson sit in the structure, unseen, listening...

Commander Bolton checks his progress on board the hospital
 ship.

COMMANDER BOLTON
 How long, Lieutenant?

LIEUTENANT
 We need to run a new cable, sir.
 They're scrambling.

Commander Bolton turns to Colonel Winnant, the army
 representative.

COMMANDER BOLTON
 Colonel, you're going to have to
 decide how many more wounded to
 evacuate... one stretcher takes the
 space of seven standing men.

Colonel Winnant takes this in.

Tommy crouches lower as he sees a launch approach...

A high-ranking officer is helped up the ladder onto the mole.

COMMANDER BOLTON (CONT'D)
 (salutes)
 Rear Admiral.

REAR ADMIRAL
 Commander.
 (to Colonel Winnant)
 At ease, Colonel. How's the
 perimeter?

Colonel Winnant gestures towards the smoke-shrouded town -

COLONEL WINNANT

Shrinking ever day. But between our rearguard and the French... we're holding the line. And the enemy tanks I've stopped.

COMMANDER BOLTON

Why?

COLONEL WINNANT

Waste precious tanks, when you can pick us off from the air, like fish in a barrel?

COMMANDER BOLTON

How long does London expect the army to hold out before we make terms?

The Rear Admiral looks sharply at the idea.

REAR ADMIRAL

Make terms? They're not stopping here. We need to get our army back.

The Rear Admiral points across the dark water...

REAR ADMIRAL (CONT'D)

Britain's next. Then the world.

Commander Bolton puts his field glasses to his face.

COMMANDER BOLTON

Christ, you can almost see it from here...

COLONEL WINNANT

What?

COMMANDER BOLTON

Home.
(turns to town)
What about the French?

REAR ADMIRAL

Publicly, Churchill's told them *bras dessous*.
(off look)
Arm in arm. Leaving together.

COLONEL WINNANT

And privately?

REAR ADMIRAL
We need our army back.

COLONEL WINNANT
How many men are they talking
about?

REAR ADMIRAL
Churchill wants thirty thousand.
Ramsay's hoping we can give him
forty-five.

Commander Bolton looks out at the mass of humanity.

COMMANDER BOLTON
There are four hundred thousand men
on this beach, sir.

Down below, Tommy takes this in. Every man for himself.

REAR ADMIRAL
We'll just have to do our best.

Bolton straightens up.

COMMANDER BOLTON
Right, this mole stays open at all
costs.

Bolton points at the funnel and masts of sunken ships.

COMMANDER BOLTON (CONT'D)
We're in range of artillery from
the west - anything else sinks out
here, the mole's blocked and we're
stuffed.

REAR ADMIRAL
Can't we load from the beaches?

COLONEL WINNANT
Better than standing out here when
the dive bombers come.

COMMANDER BOLTON
Impossible.

The Rear Admiral looks at the lines of men on the beaches.

REAR ADMIRAL
Too shallow.

COMMANDER BOLTON

Anything drafting more than three feet can't get near. We don't have enough small boats to ferry men out to the destroyers.

The Rear Admiral nods.

REAR ADMIRAL

The mole it is, gentlemen.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - DAY

Mr. Dawson is on the bow, peering ahead. The distant smoke is closer, small shapes in the sky move above distant ships, accompanied by thunderous booms...

Much nearer: a shape. A wreck. Upside down.

Mr. Dawson moves quickly down the yacht to the well and takes the helm, throttling back. He gestures for Peter to head to the bow.

The Moonstone approaches the wreck. Bodies surround the overturned hull.

Crouched on the hull - a soldier.

Mr. Dawson reverses the screw, slowing to a crawl. Peter stares out at the Shivering Soldier.

PETER

Can you swim?

The Shivering Soldier stares back at Peter. Peter looks back at Mr. Dawson.

PETER (CONT'D)

Can you get closer?

Mr. Dawson looks down the side of the boat, considers.

MR. DAWSON

Can't risk it!

Mr. Dawson turns to George.

MR. DAWSON (CONT'D)

Take Peter a line.

George grabs a coiled rope and heads up to the bow. Peter takes the rope from George -

PETER
I'll throw you a line!

The Shivering Soldier looks up at him, blank. Peter tosses the line. It hits the water several feet in front of the soldier who stares at it.

Peter gathers the line, then tosses it again.

The Shivering Soldier springs for it, grabbing it and hanging on as Peter and George reel him in, pulling him around to the stern ladder.

He is too exhausted to make it up the ladder, so they grab his shirt, pulling him into the well.

George grabs a blanket and puts it around the Soldier's shoulders.

Mr. Dawson glances at the Soldier, then reverses from the wreck the way they came in, and steers wide around the visible portion of the wreck.

Once the water ahead is open, Mr. Dawson speeds up, heading again for the dark smoke of Dunkirk.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY ABOVE THE ENGLISH CHANNEL - DAY

The two Spitfires arc around the wreckage of the ME 109...

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier spots something -

FARRIER
Wreckage below.

He heads low over the wreckage.

COLLINS
(over radio)
More of the 109?

Farrier banks, looking down, spots a half submerged tail - clearly RAF.

FARRIER
No, it's Fortis Leader, over.

COLLINS
Do you think he got out?

FARRIER
Didn't see a 'chute.

Farrier straightens up. Considers.

FARRIER (CONT'D)
Record his position, then set
heading 128, height... one
thousand, over.

COLLINS
Vector 128, angels 1. Understood.

Farrier reaches forward, pushes the button by his fuel
gauge... Nothing.

The glass is cracked. He taps it with his glove. Nothing.

FARRIER
Fortis 2, what's your fuel?

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - CONTINUOUS

Collins checks his gauge.

COLLINS
Fifty gallons, over.

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier takes this down with a grease pencil...

FARRIER
Keep letting me know - my gauge
took a knock back there, over.

COLLINS
Should you turn back?

Farrier methodically checks his other gauge and switches...
checks the responsiveness of rudder, ailerons...

FARRIER
I'm confident it's just the gauge.

Farrier glances at his pencil mark, sets the bezel on his watch.

He taps his gauge one more time. Nothing.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MOLE - EVENING

Bolton watches the Rear Admiral motor away in his launch, the engine noise fading to be replaced by -

A familiar, dreaded sound, building. Stukas.

The men on the mole look up at the sky.

From high above we see how trapped and exposed this line of men stretching a kilometer into the sea really is.

Restless, the soldiers look behind and in front. There's simply nowhere to go. The awful whine builds. Then changes pitch as the bombers go into their dive.

BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM! The bombs impact the sea either side of the mole. Soldiers crouch as low as they can -

The onslaught is endless, terrible and inescapable.

BOOM! A direct hit to the hospital ship -

The Stukas have gone.

Screams and shouts - people start jumping over the side of the hospital ship onto the mole...

VOICES

She's going down! SHE'S GOING UNDER!

Commander Bolton shouts at the men manning the lines

COMMANDER BOLTON

CUT HER LOOSE!

The crew are jumping off the side, the burning ship is sinking.

SUB-LIEUTENANT

What about the wounded?

COMMANDER BOLTON

Cut her loose, and push her off! We can't let her sink at the mole!

The men cast her off and push her off. Crew members and orderlies leap from the deck into the water -

The bow is blazing, sinking ship drifts away from the mole.

Tommy and Gibson pull soldiers up onto the beams of the mole.

As the bow comes around, the stern scrapes along the wooden pilings, splintering them in its path -

A flailing soldier is in its path, trying to swim free -

The steel hull is about to crush him -

Tommy grabs him by the shoulders and yanks with all his might, pulling him clear just as the hull grinds against the wood. Tommy looks down on the breathless, wet soldier. The wet soldier focuses on Tommy.

This is Alex. He nods thanks. Tommy nods back.

Commander Bolton watches the ship slip down into the waves.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - DAY

Mr. Dawson is back at the helm. The Shivering Soldier sits in the well, blanket over his shoulders. Staring at the deck. George watches him, then leans forward.

GEORGE

Come below - it's out of the wind.

The Shivering Soldier glances at the companionway. Shakes his head.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Really - it's warmer.

George reaches out for the Shivering Soldier's arm - who smacks it away -

MR. DAWSON

Leave him, George.

George looks up at the Commander.

MR. DAWSON (CONT'D)

He feels safer on deck. You would too if you'd been bombed -

SHIVERING SOLDIER
U-boat. It was a U-boat.

PETER
Get him some tea, George.

George darts downstairs. Useful.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY OVER ENGLISH CHANNEL - DAY

The two Spitfires head towards the massive black smoke hanging over the distant port of Dunkirk.

There are many different ships and boats of all sizes in the water in front of them...

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - CONTINUOUS

Collins pushes the button to check the fuel gauge -

COLLINS
Forty gallons, Fortis 1, over -

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier instinctively looks at his gauge. Nothing.

FARRIER
Forty gallowes, understood.

Farrier pulls out a grease pencil and notes fuel and time.

FARRIER (CONT'D)
We're about five minutes out -
climb to two thousand.

COLLINS
(over radio)
That's more fuel.

FARRIER
I don't want to get jumped again.
Get some altitude, dive down on the
bastards. Over.

COLLINS
(over radio)
Understood. Angels two, over.

Farrier pulls back on the stick -

EXT. SKY OVER ENGLISH CHANNEL - CONTINUOUS

The Spitfires rise gloriously into higher air...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MOLE - EVENING

Commander Bolton looks over at the wet soldiers clinging to the understructure of the mole.

COMMANDER BOLTON (O.S.)
Right, Highlanders. Let's find you
another ship.

The wet soldiers pull themselves to their feet...

Tommy, watched by Alex, slips into the water, then pulls himself out, dripping. Gibson follows suit. Alex laugh at them... then helps them push into the group.

They follow the wet soldiers up onto the mole, where Bolton's men shepherd them onto a launch.

EXT. LAUNCH - CONTINUOUS

Tommy and Gibson make themselves inconspicuous among the Highlanders, eyes down.

As the launch pulls away from the mole, Tommy glances back at the men lining the breakwater.

The launch motors out of the harbour.

It approaches a destroyer, its sheer iron side towering above the launch, as it bobs up and down alongside.

Cargo nets are dropped over the side, and the men start to step up onto the rail of the bobbing ship, waiting for the rhythmic movement towards the iron wall, grabbing at the rope mesh, struggling to pull themselves up.

Tommy steps up to the railing, next to an exhausted soldier who can barely lift himself up. Tommy grabs his shoulder to steady on the rail as the launch bounces off the iron wall of the destroyer.

They both grab at the net, Tommy climbing up -

The exhausted soldier has not got his feet into the netting, he slips over...

The gap between the launch and the destroyer shrinks to nothing -

The soldier's legs are crushed between the two oblivious crafts. He screams - hands pull him up as the craft separate...

EXT. DESTROYER - CONTINUOUS

The men collapse onto the deck in exhausted piles. Sailors and Nurses urge them to move below decks.

SAILOR

Down below. Come on, mate -

Tommy follows Alex and his mates to a doorway at the head of the stairs down below. A Nurse is standing there.

NURSE

Come on, boys. There's a nice cup of tea for you down there. This way, come on.

INT. DESTROYER - CONTINUOUS

Tommy starts down the stairs. Gibson has stopped at the top, looking down into the stairwell.

NURSE

Come on, down you go -

Gibson, shaking his head, steps back.

Alex sees this - turns to follow Tommy into the crowd in the hold. They are handed a cup of tea and a hunk of bread.

EXT. DESTROYER - CONTINUOUS

Out on deck, Gibson sits by the companionway in the gathering dark as the ship gets under way...

INT. HOLD, DESTROYER - CONTINUOUS

Down below, Tommy and Alex eat and drink hungrily and gratefully. Between bites, Alex gestures to the stairs.

ALEX

What's wrong with your friend?

Tommy watches the door to the hold close. Takes another bite. Uneasy.

Looks around the hold, packed like the tube at rush hour.

TOMMY

Looking for a quick way out. In case we go down.

Tommy and Alex edge through the crowd towards the stairs...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - DAY

George hands the Shivering Soldier a steaming mug of tea.

The BOOMS start reverberating again.

The Shivering Soldier glances up. Realizes something...

SHIVERING SOLDIER

Where are we going?

MR. DAWSON

Dunkirk.

SHIVERING SOLDIER

No, we're going to England!

MR. DAWSON

We have to go to Dunkirk first.

SHIVERING SOLDIER

I'M NOT GOING BACK!

Peter watches from the companionway. The Shivering Soldier throws his arm out of the dark cloud on the horizon -

SHIVERING SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Look at it! We go there we'll die!

Mr. Dawson looks at the Shivering Soldier. Calm.

MR. DAWSON

I see your point, son. Take your tea below and warm up while we plot a course.

The Shivering Soldier considers this. Then takes his blanket and heads down the companionway. Peter helps him down below.

INT. CABIN, MOONSTONE - CONTINUOUS

Peter opens the door to the forepeak and sits the Shivering Soldier down on a narrow bunk.

PETER

I'll get you some more tea.

Peter shuts the door. Looks at the bolt. Considering.

EXT. MOONSTONE - CONTINUOUS

George looks up at the Commander. Addresses him with the tone of a child trying to speak like a grown-up...

GEORGE

Is he a coward?

Mr. Dawson looks sharply at George.

MR. DAWSON

He's shell-shocked, George. He's not himself. He may never be himself again.

INT. CABIN, MOONSTONE - MOMENTS LATER

Peter hands the Shivering Soldier a cup of tea. The Shivering Soldier accepts it wordlessly. Staring in front of him. Peter closes the forepeak door. Pauses.

Peter gently slides the bolt.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier looks down at the mass of ships and boats passing each other. There is the minesweeper, Castor, every inch of her deck covered with troops -

COLLINS

(over radio)

Heinkel, eleven o'clock, lining up to drop her load on that minesweeper -

Farrier's head snaps around - spots the German bomber -

FARRIER
Fighters?

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - CONTINUOUS

Collins peers down, scanning around the Heinkel bomber for its fighter escort... Spots -

COLLINS
109s - off her starboard -

FARRIER
(over radio)
I'm on the bomber.

Collins pushes forward into a dive...

EXT. SKY OVER ENGLISH CHANNEL - CONTINUOUS

Spitfire 2 dives at the German fighters, cannons blasting...

Spitfire 1 dives at the German bomber, cannons blasting...

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier has the Heinkel in his sights, bucking and weaving as his Spitfire slices down through turbulent air... He pushes the button on the stick which controls his guns...

He rolls away from the Heinkel as he dives beneath it, taking his finger off the trigger, fighting the g's with his neck as he pulls out of the dive...

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - CONTINUOUS

Collins fires at one of the 109s until he sees smoke trailing. He dives between the German planes...

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier scans his surroundings as he tries to orient himself relative to the Heinkel...

Finding it, he pulls the stick, lining up for another run at it, this time from below...

The bomber is in his sights - he fires his guns...

He flashes past, dangerously close to its top turret which hurls tracer bullets at him. He sees sparking on the hull of the bomber -

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - CONTINUOUS

Coming around, starting to climb, Collins sees the Heinkel veer off course, heading from the minesweeper -

COLLINS
She's turning - you must've damaged her.

FARRIER
(over radio)
Where's the escort?

COLLINS
I got one of -

BLAM BLAM BLAM!! Cannon fire rips into Spitfire 2. Collins yanks the stick but it's too late. Flames leap from the fuselage...

COLLINS (CONT'D)
I'm going down.

FARRIER
(over radio)
I'm on him - bail out.

Collins checks his parachute, opens the canopy. The wind howls inside the cockpit. He survey's the water below - slides his canopy shut again.

COLLINS
The swell looks good, I'm ditching.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLD, DESTROYER - NIGHT

The munching and slurping of starving soldiers.

The engines kick into gear as the destroyer starts to move -

A cheer goes up around the hundreds of men in the hold...

EXT. DESTROYER - CONTINUOUS

Up on deck, Gibson watches several row boats heading towards them. Hearing the engines, they start shouting -

MALE VOICES
Wait! Wait for us!

Gibson spots white water on the black sea - a wake -

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
TORPEDO!

An explosion lifts water at the side of the ship -

INT. HOLD, DESTROYER - CONTINUOUS

The cheering stops, Booooooms shudder the suddenly fragile iron walls of the hold, massive percussions of wobbling metal sheets.

EXT. DESTROYER - CONTINUOUS

A blast that moves every bolt of the destroyer -

INT. HOLD, DESTROYER - CONTINUOUS

Anyone standing is thrown off their feet -

EXT. DESTROYER - CONTINUOUS

A vast plume of fire explodes up and out of the funnel. The deck blasts apart -

INT. HOLD, DESTROYER - CONTINUOUS

Men scream as the iron plates of the walls buckle. A glimpse of water blasting in -

The lights go out. Complete darkness...

Sound of men screaming barely audible over the sound of blasting water and bending metal -

EXT. DESTROYER - CONTINUOUS

The ship lists, rapidly sinking. The row boats pull away, hard. Gibson prepares to jump - glances back at the closed door to the hold - jumps back, opens the door -

INT. HOLD, DESTROYER - CONTINUOUS

Blackness.

The dim light of the open door becomes a beacon. Tommy spots Gibson waiving -

Tommy and Alex claw their way up the steps as the entire ship goes under -

EXT. DESTROYER - CONTINUOUS

Tommy and Alex burst free of the door as it sinks beneath the waves and -

They pull away from the disappearing ship with the strength born of absolute desperation...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - DAY

George hears planes behind them. He looks up -

Three Spitfires in confident formation sweep overhead...

Mr. Dawson keeps his eyes on the black smoke ahead of them.

MR. DAWSON

Spitfires, George. Greatest plane ever built.

George smiles. Then looks quizzical -

GEORGE

You didn't even look.

MR. DAWSON

Rolls Royce Merlin engines. Sweetest sound you could hear out here.

INT. CABIN, MOONSTONE - CONTINUOUS

Peter is folding a chart. A clicking sound catches attention - the handle of the forepeak door is being rattled from the other side. Peter freezes, uncertain what to do...

BANG - the rattles become bangs -

SHIVERING SOLDIER (O.S.)
Hello?! Anyone there?!

Peter puts the chart down, takes a step towards the door -

BANG!

SHIVERING SOLDIER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
OPEN UP, DAMMIT!

Peter freezes. Turns back to the companionway -

EXT. MOONSTONE - CONTINUOUS

Peter pokes his head out. Mr. Dawson looks at him, quizzical-

PETER
He wants to come out -

The banging and shouting of the Shivering Soldier continues.

MR. DAWSON
What did you do? Lock him in?

Peter is at a loss.

MR. DAWSON (CONT'D)
Let him out, for God's sake!

INT. CABIN, MOONSTONE - CONTINUOUS

Peter comes down the companionway, reluctantly approaching the banging, rattling door...

The banging stops...

Peter reaches up to the bolt, braces, gently slides it back...

Opens the door. The forepeak is empty... Peter rushes in, spots the open forward hatch...

EXT. MOONSTONE - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Dawson leans down to try and see in the cabin -

SHIVERING SOLDIER (O.S.)
You haven't turned around!

Mr. Dawson turns calmly to the Shivering Soldier.

MR. DAWSON
No. We have a job to do.

SHIVERING SOLDIER
Job? This is pleasure yacht! You're weekend sailors, not the blood navy! A man your age -

MR. DAWSON
Men my age dictate this war. Why are we allowed to send our children to fight it?

SHIVERING SOLDIER
YOU SHOULD BE AT HOME!

MR. DAWSON
There won't be any home if we allow thus slaughter across the Channel. There's no hiding from this.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier chases the 109 as it circles around on Collins...

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - DAY

Collins glances out at his burning wing. Checks his altimeter, checks his canopy is locked in the half-open position-

Lower...

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier fires at the 109, chasing him off -

FARRIER
He's turned tail, I'm after him -

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - CONTINUOUS

Collins checks his belts are tight, checks the release pin on his harness -

 COLLINS
 Good luck. Watch your fuel...
 (reads)
 Fifteen gallons.

Checks his Mae West, puffing into the inflating tube -

Lower...

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier grease pencils the reading on the chart -

 FARRIER
 Fifteen gallons, understood...

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - CONTINUOUS

 FARRIER
 (over radio)
 Best of luck, Collins.

Collins checks wind direction, checks wave direction on the surface of the water -

Lower...

Turns, lining up along the waves as he descends...

Lower...

The water rushes by blindingly fast...

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier watches Spitfire 2 carve gracefully across the water, before coming to a stop, floating.

Farrier spots a civilian yacht heading for Collins...

He sees Collins' hand stick out of the canopy, waving... He tips his wings at Collins, turns away, looks ahead, chasing the 109 towards Dunkirk...

CUT TO:

EXT. WATER, JUST OUTSIDE DUNKIRK HARBOUR - NIGHT

Tommy and Alex, life jackets on, swim on the swell, bodies and burning wreckage all around, fuel burning on the surface of the water.

Tommy and Alex pull for an overloaded row boat. Tommy grabs the side, tries to climb. He's pushed off by the men inside -

MALE VOICE

Piss off - it's too crowded!

Alex is grabbing at the rail as well -

ALEX

You can't leave us! Make some room -

SOLDIER (O.S.)

You men, leave off. You'll capsize the boat - it's gone over twice on the way out here...

Tommy looks at the Soldier. It is the Shivering Soldier, not yet shivering, in full control of his faculties.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

You have to stay calm. There are plenty of boats.

ALEX

Calm?! Wait till you get torpedoed, then tell us to be calm!

SOLDIER

You have life jackets?

MALE VOICE

Yeah, they do.

SOLDIER

Don't panic, the water's not too rough, or too cold. We're heading back to the beach -

MALE VOICE

Fuck off! Let's go to Dover!

Several voices join in.

SOLDIER

We can't make it across the Channel on this, lads. We need to get back to the beach and wait for another ride.

(MORE)

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

(gestures)

It's not even half a mile. You men
in the water float here, save your
strength, we'll come back for you.

The men start rowing.

Gibson is in the back. Alex spots him.

Gibson quietly drops the rear painter (a small rope attached
to the stern) into the black water.

Alex takes it, hands part of it to Tommy and they quietly
drag behind the boat as it rows in to the shore... The men in
the rear notice, but nobody says anything...

As the dawn breaks, the small, packed boat pulls across the
calm water to the vast, packed beach at Dunkirk.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE - DAY

The Shivering Soldier steps up to Mr. Dawson -

SHIVERING SOLDIER

What is it you think you can do out
there?! On this thing?!

MR. DAWSON

Not just us. The call went out - we
won't be the only ones to answer.

SHIVERING SOLDIER

YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE GUNS!

MR. DAWSON

Did you have a gun?

SHIVERING SOLDIER

Course. A rifle - 303.

MR. DAWSON

Did it help you against the dive
bombers? Or the U-boats?

The Shivering Soldier glares at Mr. Dawson.

SHIVERING SOLDIER

You're an old fool. And you're
going to die if you don't turn
around.

The booms echo. Closer now.

SHIVERING SOLDIER (CONT'D)
We're turning around, now!

The Shivering Soldier steps towards Mr. Dawson, screaming at the top of his lungs -

SHIVERING SOLDIER (CONT'D)
TURN IT AROUND! TURN IT AROUND! -

Peter, hearing this, makes his way back from the bow. The Shivering Soldier grabs the wheel. George grabs his shoulder -

The Shivering Soldier smashes his elbow into George's face, sending him flying backwards down the companionway -

Peter pulls the Shivering Soldier away from the wheel.

PETER
Calm it down, mate.

The Shivering Soldier looks at him, shocked. Confused.

Peter calls down the companionway -

PETER (CONT'D)
George?

Nothing?

PETER (CONT'D)
George?!

Nothing. The Shivering Soldier watches as Peter climbs down to find -

INT. CABIN, MOONSTONE - CONTINUOUS

George, sprawled out at the foot of the steps, on his back, quietly groaning, bleeding from the back of the head. Peter grabs a life jacket and puts it behind George's head.

PETER
It's okay. You're okay. It's okay.

George blinks at Peter. Frightened.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier chases the 109, gradually closing...

Up ahead, a convoy of ships is gathered around the entrance to the harbour...

Farrier passes over a fishing trawler with a blue cabin, covered with soldiers, strangely low in the water, water washing across its decks...

He looks up ahead to the 109, just coming into range...

He spots German planes in the distance, heading towards him - he sights the 109... Fires a short burst... Nothing...

He remembers his fuel gauge... Pointlessly pushes the button next to the cracked gauge.

No response.

Farrier checks his position on his chart. Checks the last fuel reading he grease-penciled... knows he should turn around -

Farrier sights the 109, banking slightly to bring it across his sights...

Farrier fires - the 109 starts smoking, dropping -

Farrier spins around - turning away from the approaching planes. Heading for Dover... for home.

As he passes over the sinking blue trawler, he sees men jumping into the water, swimming for a destroyer nearby...

In his rear-view mirror: the enemy planes approaching...

Farrier looks at his cracked fuel gauge... Thinking...

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH AT ZYDECOTTE (7 MILES EAST OF DUNKIRK) - DAWN

The surf has picked up since yesterday...

Tommy, Gibson, Alex lie on the beach, sleeping as the light comes up on a stormy day.

In the distance, towards the dark smoke of Dunkirk, the lines of men extend into the sea.

Nearby, small groups of soldiers attempt to climb onto small vessels. Row boats are being swamped and overturned in the surf, overcrowded boats are grounded on the sand -

MALE VOICE

Right. Three of you out, or the rest's stuck.

Soldiers give up their places. Some head back out of the surf. Some wade out past the break...

EXT. BEACH AT MALO LES BAINS - CONTINUOUS

Colonel Winnant walks the beach, surveying. He approaches a group of Engineers driving trucks onto the sand, taking the air out of their tires, laying duckboards on top...

ENGINEER

(brightly)

A pier. When the water comes back in. Tide's turning, now.

Colonel Winnant looks out at the churning water.

COLONEL WINNANT

How can you tell?

ENGINEER

(quietly)

The bodies come back.

Colonel Winnant looks out at the water - men in line, chest deep, gently push floating bodies aside as they wash in.

EXT. BEACH AT ZYDECOTTE - CONTINUOUS

Tommy bangs a tin of vegetables on a rock. It springs a leak and he sucks the juice. Gibson holds out his hand. Tommy keeps sucking for a beat or two, then hands it over.

Tommy watches Vanquisher loading troops from the vast crowd lining the mole. Despairing.

Alex opens his eyes and sits up. Spots some Highlanders walking past, away from Dunkirk in loose formation...

ALEX

Hey! Highlanders!

Tommy watches as Alex gets to his feet, heading over to his regimental comrades.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 What's that way?

HIGHLANDER 1
 (points)
 A boat.

Alex follows his gesture to a fishing trawler with a blue cabin, listing in the shallows a mile up the beach.

ALEX
 She's grounded.

HIGHLANDER 2
 Not when the tide comes in, she
 isn't.

Tommy and Gibson are already on their feet. Alex nods at them as they follow the highlanders down the beach towards the grounded trawler...

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN, MOONSTONE - DAY

Peter goes down below to check on George. He checks the bleeding on the life jacket behind George's head.

PETER
 What'd you want to come along for,
 George?

GEORGE
 Sea cadet? You and Mr. Dawson? Best
 thing I ever done. Only thing I
 ever done. I told my dad I never
 done nothing at school. I told my
 dad I'd do something one day. Maybe
 get in the local paper.

PETER
 The *Herald*? Why?

GEORGE
 Maybe teachers would see it. Make
 my school proud.

PETER
 (laughs)
 Who cares what your bloody school
 thinks, George?

George looks up at Peter, desperate.

GEORGE

Please! Please! Don't laugh at me!

Peter looks at George, deciding how to respond.

PETER

I'm going to laugh at you, George -
cos you're being bloody silly.

George is crying.

PETER (CONT'D)

Now, stop it. I need you back up on
deck.

George keeps crying.

GEORGE

I can't. I can't see.

Peter looks at him. Gets a blanket, puts it across George's
chest.

PETER

Get some rest.

Peter gets up. Looks down at the softly weeping boy.

PETER (CONT'D)

I'll need you as soon as you're
able.

George nods. Smiling through his tears.

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - DAY

Peter comes up on deck.

The Shivering Soldier, crouched in the well, stares at him.
Mr. Dawson is at the helm. Peter comes close. Speaking low -

PETER

The blood won't stop. Should we
turn back?

Mr. Dawson looks back towards Britain. Then forward to
France. Thinking. Shakes his head.

MR. DAWSON

Come too far.

BOOM! Explosions nearby -

The Shivering Soldier moves into a foetal position.

Mr. Dawson and Peter look ahead to where plumes of water rise, seemingly in slow motion, amongst the ships up ahead. German bombers drifting overhead, 109 fighters buzzing around them...

Mr. Dawson holds his course...

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier flies, distracted, glancing from his broken fuel gauge to the switch for his reserve fuel tank...

FARRIER

Sod it.

Farrier banks, coming around...

Farrier climbs, trying to gain advantage for the coming encounter, lining up on the German planes threatening the destroyer and the blue trawler...

CUT TO:

EXT. BASE OF THE MOLE - CONTINUOUS

Colonel Winnant makes his way towards the crowded mole. Stretchers of French troops are brought down to the mole. A Private comes out of the crowd, breathless.

PRIVATE

The French've been forced back on the western side, sir.

Colonel Winnant looks at explosions over the warehouses.

COLONEL WINNANT

But they're still holding perimeter?

PRIVATE

For now.

Colonel Winnant pushes on down the mole...

EXT. THE MOLE - MOMENTS LATER

He finds Bolton, but no ships...

COLONEL WINNANT
Where're the destroyers?

COMMANDER BOLTON
There'll be one soon.

COLONEL WINNANT
One?

COMMANDER BOLTON
After yesterday's losses, it's one
ship on the mole at a time.

COLONEL WINNANT
The battle's here, what're they
saving them for?

COMMANDER BOLTON
The next battle. The one for
Britain. Same with the planes.

COLONEL WINNANT
(peers through his field
glasses)
But it's right there! You can
practically -

COMMANDER BOLTON
Seeing home doesn't help us get
there, Captain.

Colonel Winnant turns to the flaming town at their backs.

COLONEL WINNANT
They need to send more ships,
dammit! Every hour the enemy pushes
closer.

COMMANDER BOLTON
They've activated the small vessels
pool -

COLONEL WINNANT
Vessels pool?

COMMANDER BOLTON
The list of civilian boats for
requisition -

COLONEL WINNANT
Civilian? We need destroyers.

COMMANDER BOLTON
Small boats could load from the
beach.

Colonel Winnant watches men struggling to load in the surf.

COLONEL WINNANT
Not in these conditions.

COMMANDER BOLTON
I'd rather face waves than dive
bombers.

Colonel Winnant looks up at the cloudy sky -

COLONEL WINNANT
You're right - they won't get up in
this...
(points)
The Royal Engineers are building
piers from lorries - should help
when the tide comes back.

COMMANDER BOLTON
We'll know in six hours.

COLONEL WINNANT
I thought tides were every three?

COMMANDER BOLTON
Then it's good that you're army and
I'm navy, isn't it?

Colonel Winnant allows himself a smile. Commander Bolton
spots a shape on the horizon.

COMMANDER BOLTON (CONT'D)
Vanquisher...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - DAY

Mr. Dawson, at the helm, studies the horizon. Peter joins
him, glaring at the Shivering Soldier before taking a seat.

Mr. Dawson hears something, starts scanning the sky...

Spots a distant plane... Peter follows his gaze.

Mr. Dawson throws the wheel, bearing to starboard, hard,
throttling up.

MR. DAWSON
Heinkel.

Mr. Dawson points at a minesweeper heading towards them...

MR. DAWSON (CONT'D)
They'll go for the minesweeper.

PETER
Shouldn't we stand by? To pick up survivors?

MR. DAWSON
To do that we have to survive ourselves.

As the boat motors away, Peter looks back to see the Heinkel and its two fighters moving towards the minesweeper...

CUT TO:

EXT. GROUNDED TRAWLER - DAY

The Highlanders approach, cautiously. The beach is deserted here - just disabled army vehicles and dead bodies...

The blue trawler is tilted towards them. They circle the hull, checking it... it seems sound enough.

Tommy and Gibson follow the Highlanders as they climb up onto the abandoned trawler...

EXT. DECK OF GROUNDED TRAWLER - CONTINUOUS

Tommy looks over at the dunes above them. Alex looks around the boat, turns to Highlander 1.

ALEX
Where's the crew?

HIGHLANDER 1
Probably got spooked after they ran aground. Scarpered up the beach.

ALEX
Why?

HIGHLANDER 2
We're outside the perimeter. Enemy could be right there -
(points at the dunes)
(MORE)

HIGHLANDER 2 (CONT'D)
 Best shut ourselves inside and wait
 for the high tide...

Highlanders heads down the companionway into the small hold.

ALEX
 How long's that?

HIGHLANDER 3
 Every three hours.

They descend into the hold, shutting the door behind them.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - DAY

As the Moonstone ploughs through the swell, Peter looks back at the Heinkel coming over the minesweeper...

Peter spots -

PETER
 Spitfire! Dad, Spitfire!

Mr. Dawson turns to see two Spitfires diving at the German bomber and its fighter escort. One Spitfire dives right between two 109s, setting one alight.

PETER (CONT'D)
 He got him, he got him!!

The other Spitfire flies close over the Heinkel, which turns away from the ship. Mr. Dawson eases back on the speed...

MR. DAWSON
 The Heinkel's moved off...

As they watch, one of the Spitfires starts smoking...

PETER
 Oh no...

Mr. Dawson sees the smoke, throws the wheel, spinning the yacht around to head back -

MR. DAWSON
 Watch for a parachute!

Mr. Dawson throttles up...

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farriers hears his engine skip a beat, puts his gloved finger on the reserve tank toggle switch, listening... His engine evens out again. He puts his hand back on the stick, focusing on the German planes...

He throttles up, speeding into the fray, climbing...

CUT TO:

INT. HOLD, GROUNDED TRAWLER - DAY

Dimly lit by a couple of small, dirty portholes.

The soldiers lie around the hold. Sleeping or chatting. Alex is scrounging around the hold, finding nothing useful.

ALEX
(to Gibson)
Poke your head out, see if the
water comes in.

Gibson shakes his head, pulling his arms tight around himself. Alex glares at him -

ALEX (CONT'D)
Talkative sod.

Tommy gets up, climbs up to the door, cracks it. Crawls up into the well - peeks over the rail -

The boat is in inches of water.

TOMMY
Bugger. Barely come in at all.

ALEX
For fuck's sake.

HIGHLANDER 3
Calm down. What goes out comes back
in, right?

ALEX
Yeah, but how long?

Silence answers this. Clearly no sailors aboard.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - DAY

The Moonstone pushes through the swell, full speed, diesel engine straining...

Peter watches the smoke-trailing Spitfire fly lower and lower...

PETER
No parachute...

Mr. Dawson is watching the plane like a hawk, steering around the waves by instinct...

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - CONTINUOUS

The water flashes by blindingly fast...

Collins pulls back on the stick, raising the nose as the plane -

Hits the water with a jolt and a tearing sound. Collins trashed against his belts, forward/back/left/right -

Bang -

EXT. MOONSTONE - CONTINUOUS

Peter watches the Spitfire 'land' on the surface of the water -

PETER
He's down.

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - CONTINUOUS

With a shooosh, the plane is floating over the swell, like a sprinter hearing the gun. Collins releases his belts, starts inflating his life vest, pulls the catch on the canopy, yanking it back along its track. It jams... He thrusts his hand through the gap, struggling... From outside it looks like he is waving...

He looks up to see Farrier's Spitfire shoot over, dipping a swing in salute...

Collins sits in the gently bobbing plane, collecting himself as he watches the water start to rise around the slowly sinking plane.

Collins tries the canopy again -

Jammed.

He is trapped in the sinking plane...

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier levels off, looking down at the Heinkel approaching -
It has a single fighter escort - an ME 109 off the port wing...

CUT TO:

INT. HOLD, GROUNDED TRAWLER - DAY

Tommy jolts awake - there are steps outside. He moves up to the door. Highlander 1 gets his rifle, moves in front of the door. Aims. Nods at Tommy...

Tommy throws open the door. A Seaman stands there -

SEAMAN

Nee, nee!

Highlander 1 is confused.

Tommy grabs the Seaman, pulling him down into the hold. Highlander 1 holds his gun on him -

ALEX

Kraut?

The Seaman looks uncomprehendingly up at Alex -

ALEX (CONT'D)

Are you German?!

SEAMAN

Dutch! Dutch! Merchant navy. Here to pick you up. To help you.

They sit him up.

ALEX

Why'd you leave your boat?

SEAMAN

In case German come. We wait up the beach with the soldiers. Wait for the tide.

HIGHLANDER 2

You came back, the tide must be in.

SEAMAN

Coming, yes. But more hours till we float.

ALEX

Hours?! Why'd you come back?

The Seaman gestures around the packet hold -

SEAMAN

Not so heavy when I left!

Alex and the others take this in.

A gunshot penetrates the hull - everybody lies flat, Tommy stares at the bullet hole, which lets in light...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - DAY

Mr. Dawson pushes the boat towards where the plane went down.

PETER

There was no 'chute, dad...

Mr. Dawson ignores him. The engine is screaming...

PETER (CONT'D)

Dad, there was no 'chute. He's probably dead -

MR. DAWSON

(snaps)

Damn it, he might be alive!!

Peter is shocked at his dad's outburst.

Mr. Dawson stares at where the plane went down...

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier lines up for his attack... Sighting the Heinkel as it commits to its bombing run over the destroyer, Farrier pushes forward on his stick, going into his dive...

CUT TO:

INT. HOLD, GROUNDED TRAWLER - DAY

Everybody stares at the bullet hole, not making a sound...

Another shot punches a hole two feet from the first -

Highlanders near the holes ease away, squeezing up against the other soldiers...

BANG! A third shot, directly above the first...

Two Highlanders grab their rifles, going for the stairs -

TOMMY

No! Then they'll know we're in here.

HIGHLANDER 1

Why else are they shooting at us?!

TOMMY

Look at the grouping...

Everybody looks at the three bullet holes.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Target practice.

BANG! A fourth hole, near the others...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - DAY

The Moonstone is getting closer to the Spitfire bobbing on the waves.

Close enough to see that it is sinking...

MR. DAWSON

Peter, go forward with the boat hook.

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - CONTINUOUS

Collins smashes the canopy back and forth on its track...
Jammed, jammed, jammed.

Water starts pouring in, streaming through the gap in the half-open canopy. He shuts it... Trapped... Opens it, yanking, water pouring in...

Collins searches around looking for inspiration, for an implement, for anything -

Water rising past his ankles... his calves...

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier dives, plummeting towards the Heinkel...

He glances across at the 109, which suddenly banks towards him, clearly reacting to Farrier's attack...

INT. HOLD, GROUNDED TRAWLER - DAY

As the men stare at the bullet holes, water starts slopping through the lowest ones... A Highlander goes to plug the holes.

BANG! The Highlander screams, clutching his face. His comrades pull him back, trying to smother his cries...

The water pours in steadily through the lowest holes. Alex points at the target zone -

ALEX

We have to plug it!

HIGHLANDER 1

After you, mate!

They stay back from the holes, wary. Watching the water pour in...

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - DAY

Collins pulls the steel flare gun from its holder. Water is coming up over his legs now... he smashes the flare gun into the canopy, again and again...

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier fires at the Heinkel. Tracers zipping at the bomber. The 109 rises at him, guns blazing. Farrier rolls away, trying to dodge the fire -

EXT. SKY ABOVE DUNKIRK HARBOUR - DAY

As Spitfire 1 rolls way, the Heinkel releases its load -
bombs falling around the destroyer -

CUT TO:

INT. HOLD, GROUNDED TRAWLER - DAY

A burst of machine guns fire opens a new group of holes
beside the first -

Alex watches the water spraying in. He turns to the Dutch
Seaman -

ALEX

How do we get off?! Do we need to
ditch some ballast?!

The Dutch Seaman looks at him, uncomprehending -

ALEX (CONT'D)

Weight! Do we need to lose weight!

The Dutch Seaman shrugs.

SEAMAN

Weight, yes.

Alex turns to face the group -

ALEX

Somebody needs to get off.

HIGHLANDER 1

Well volunteered.

ALEX

We don't need a volunteer. I know
someone who ought to get off...

Alex turns to Tommy and Gibson. Points at Gibson.

ALEX (CONT'D)

This one. He's a German spy.

TOMMY

Don't be daft.

Alex stares Gibson down...

ALEX

He's bloody Jerry. You might not've noticed that he hasn't said a word, but I have. He doesn't speak English - or if he does it's with an accent thicker than sauerkraut sauce -

TOMMY

You're daft. Tell him.

Gibson just stares at Alex...

ALEX

Yeah, tell me.

Nothing. Just the sound of water spraying in hard, jetting in through the bottom holes...

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - DAY

Collins smacks the canopy. The flare gun bounces off. He drops the flare gun, scrambles to find it under the water. The water is rising up his chest...

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier cuts right, dodging away from the 109 -

Banking hard, he gets a clear look at the destroyer weathering the explosions.

A plume of water right next to the destroyer comes so high he flies through the top of its spray.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLD, GROUNDED TRAWLER - DAY

Alex turns to Highlander 1, holds out his hand for his gun. Highlander 1 hands it over. Alex moves to Gibson, pointing the rifle, hooks the barrel on Gibson's tags, pulling them closer to read -

ALEX

Tell me... Gibson!

Tommy looks at Gibson, panicking -

TOMMY
Tell him, for God's sake!

Alex pushes the rifle against Gibson's cheek. Gibson cracks -

GIBSON
FRANÇAIS! JE SUIS FRANÇAIS!

Tommy stares, shocked. Alex moves back slightly, taking this in.

A burst of machine-gun fire. Everyone ducks from ricochets.

ALEX
A Frog. A bloody Frog. A cowardly
little queue-jumping Frog...

With the end of his rifle Alex shakes Gibson's tags -

ALEX (CONT'D)
Who's Gibson, eh? A naked dead
Englishman lying out on that sand.
Or did you at least have the
decency to bury him?

"Gibson" just stares.

TOMMY
He did. I helped him. I thought it
was his mate.

ALEX
Maybe he killed him -

TOMMY
He didn't kill him -

ALEX
How do we know?!

TOMMY
How hard is it to find a dead
Englishman on Dunkirk beach, for
God's sake?! He didn't kill anyone -
he was looking for a way off the
damned sand like the rest of us!

The water is spraying in from more and more holes as the water level rises...

Alex has the rifle on Gibson. Another burst of machine-gun fire.

HIGHLANDER 2
 Hadn't they had enough practice by
 now?!

HIGHLANDER 1
 They're making sure she won't
 float.

Highlander 2 looks at the holes spraying water, the water is
 pooling in the bottom of the hold. He turns to the Seaman -

HIGHLANDER 2
 Will she still float?!

The Seaman assesses the leaks...

SEAMAN
 Float, yes. With less weight, yes -

ALEX
 And we know who's getting off -

TOMMY
 You can't do that. We're on the
 same side.

Alex nudges Gibson with the rifle -

ALEX
 Go on, up you go -

TOMMY
 As soon as he pokes his head out
 they'll slaughter him.

ALEX
 Better him than me -

TOMMY
 It's not fair -

ALEX
 Survival's not fair.

HIGHLANDER 1
 No, it's shit. It's fear and greed.
 Fate squeezed through the bowels of
 men. Shit.

TOMMY
 He saved our lives.

HIGHLANDER 2

And he's about to do it again - Go
on -

Alex starts shoving Gibson up the stairs.

TOMMY

No! Just stop!

Alex turns to Tommy, looks him in the eye -

ALEX

We need someone to get off so the
rest of us can live - You want to
volunteer?

TOMMY

Fuck no. I'm going home.

ALEX

And if this is the price?

TOMMY

I'll live with it, but it's wrong.

Alex shoves Gibson up another step, opens the door -

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Alex, one man's not going to make
enough difference -

HIGHLANDER 1

You'd best hope it does, cos you'd
be volunteering next -

TOMMY

What?

ALEX

(indicate Highlanders)

We're regimental brothers, mate.
Just the way it is.

Gibson grabs for the rifle. Tommy jumps at Alex to help
Gibson. They smash against the hull - as they drop into the
water, the ship levels -

SEAMAN

FLOAT! WE FLOAT!

HIGHLANDER 2

START THE BLOODY ENGINE!

The Seaman is already crawling out the hatch, reaching up -

The engine starts, loud as loud can be -

Machine-gun fire strafes the hull. The men duck below the waterline...

The Seaman throws the screw into reverse, full throttle...

The men hold their breaths under the water at the bottom of the hold as bullets pepper the hull...

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 2 - DAY

Collins, water up to his ears now, grabs the flare gun - swinging underwater less effective.

Now he panics, pushing his face up against the canopy, banging with his fists, instinct taking over, no more thought, no more plan - banging, banging, water rising over his ears. Smash - something cracks into the canopy right above his head. He recoils. It impacts the canopy again, smashing the hole -

It is a boat hook...

Collins pulls himself through the hole, elbow first, forcing himself through, pushing off his seat, underwater, he pushes up from the sinking plane...

EXT. WATER, JUST OUTSIDE DUNKIRK HARBOUR - CONTINUOUS

Collins breaks the surface, gasping, looks around -

A private yacht with a young man on the bow, boat hook extended...

Collins grasps the boat hook.

 COLLINS
 (breathless)
 Afternoon.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier comes around again, searching the sky for the German planes...

He looks down at the destroyer. It is leaking oil from a large hole in its side...

The dark oil slick spreads quickly across the water, covering the men in the water between the trawler and the destroyer...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MOLE - DAY

The destroyer Basilisk casts off. Men cover every available piece of deck.

Commander Bolton watches her wake. Colonel Winnant approaches -

COLONEL WINNANT
We've wasted the day, Commander.

COMMANDER BOLTON
I share your frustration, Colonel.

They hear distant shots -

Commander Bolton raises his field glasses... He sees a blue trawler stuck in the shallows miles down the beach.

COMMANDER BOLTON (CONT'D)
Grounded trawler, taking fire.

Colonel Winnant takes the field glasses...

COLONEL WINNANT
The enemy's breaking through the dunes to the east. This is it.

INT. HOLD, GROUNDED TRAWLER - DAY

Tommy comes up for air, gasping, spluttering...

Water is pouring in from dozens and dozens of holes...

Alex comes up, coughing, with Gibson...

ALEX
We're off!

Alex crawls over to the stairs, climbs out into the well -

EXT. TRAWLER - CONTINUOUS

Alex pokes his head out as the Seaman is sneaking up to see where they are headed -

The Dutch Seaman turns the wheel, jumps back onto the floor of the well as bullets impact the cabin. He throws the engine into forward gear, turns to Alex -

DUTCH SEAMAN
THE HOLES! PLUG THE HOLES!

Alex crawls back downstairs -

INT. HOLD, TRAWLER - CONTINUOUS

Alex falls down the stairs -

ALEX
PLUG THE HOLES! PLUG THE HOLES!

The men stuff rags, bolts, fingers, anything they can lay hands on to plug as many holes as possible...

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN, MOONSTONE - MOMENTS LATER

Collins, drying himself with a blanket, looks down at George, whose breathing is shallow, sightless eyes open.

COLLINS
(to Peter)
I don't really know, son. You were right not to move him.
(reassuring)
You've done the best for him you can.

EXT. MOONSTONE, WATER OUTSIDE DUNKIRK HARBOUR - CONTINUOUS

The Shivering Soldier watches Collins come out on deck -

SHIVERING SOLDIER
Is he alright?

PETER (O.S.)
No.

Peter is glaring at the Shivering Soldier.

PETER (CONT'D)
No, he's not -

BOOM! Collins follows Mr. Dawson's gaze to a destroyer up ahead being bombed by a Heinkel, huge plumes of water rising just beside her.

The Shivering Soldier retreats into himself. Peter runs up to the bow -

A blue fishing trawler a quarter of a mile off, sinking...

PETER (CONT'D)
Dad, there's men in the water!

Mr. Dawson looks ahead to where Peter is pointing. He puts the throttle forward, heading into the fray...

Collins spots Spitfire 1 arcing around, trying to get a bead on the Heinkel...

COLLINS
Come on, Farrier...

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier pulls on the stick, lining up behind a 109...

He fires, chasing down the plane, firing again... Smoke from the German plane, which starts to drop...

Farrier is in a heavy dive, when his engine chokes.

Farrier's hand darts forward, switching to his reserve tank before the engine can die...

The engine catches again. Farrier pulls out of the dive...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MOLE - DAY

Through the binoculars Colonel Winnant watches the blue trawler pushing out to the sea, low in the water...

Commander Bolton watches a destroyer, under full steam, heading out to the Channel...

Where there are shapes of boats on the horizon...

EXT. DECK OF TRAWLER - CONTINUOUS

The Dutch Seaman aims the boat at a destroyer out at the mouth of the harbour...

EXT. HOLD, TRAWLER - DAY

Tommy, Gibson, Alex, Highlander 1 and the others stuff the holes as best they can. The makeshift plugs pop out every few seconds - the soldiers scabble under water to find them and stuff them back in, hands pressed against water jets, spray coming in everywhere...

EXT. THE MOLE - CONTINUOUS

Omitted.*

* In previous drafts of the script, this is the point at which Bolton and Winnant first see the Little Ships. Ultimately in the cutting room, they returned the entrance of the Little Ships to this location in the film.

EXT. DECK OF TRAWLER - CONTINUOUS

The Dutch Seaman looks over the rail, concerned, to see how fast his boat is lowering into the swell...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE, WATER OUTSIDE DUNKIRK HARBOUR - DAY

Collins watches Farrier spin around to get after the Heinkel.

The Moonstone comes up on the men in the water. Collins comes to the side, to help Peter fish men out, notices the surface of the water -

COLLINS
(to Mr. Dawson)
Oil. We're getting into oil!

Mr. Dawson puts the screw into reverse, stopping the boat.

They fish men out of the water - the men covered in oil, anonymous in their glossy black filth...

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier chases down the Heinkel, closing in as its top turret opens up on him, tracer fire lighting up all around him -

He dives down under the range of the rear turret, then angles up, firing at the bomber's tail...

CUT TO:

EXT. BLUE TRAWLER - DAY

The Dutch Seaman sees water sloshing over the deck.

DUTCH SEAMAN
ABANDON SHIP! ABANDON SHIP!

INT. HOLD, TRAWLER - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers, holding back the water, cannot hear him... One by one they start to abandon the task. More and more water pouring in... Alex and Gibson are last - Alex turns, sees they are alone, grabs Gibson by the shoulder then jumps for the exit. Gibson, still holding back the water, notices too late -

EXT. BLUE TRAWLER 0 C

Tommy gets on deck, sees the Keith, a quarter of a mile away. He dives into the water, pulling away from the swamped trawler -

All the men dive off the sinking boat, swimming for the Keith.

INT. HOLD, TRAWLER - CONTINUOUS

Gibson dives for the exit. He is blasted back by water, dragged down with the sinking trawler...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE, WATER OUTSIDE DUNKIRK HARBOUR - DAY

Peter, Collins and the first oil-covered men pull more oily men from the water, the decks of the yacht rapidly filling. Mt. Dawson looks at the oil slick, concerned. He addresses the oily survivors -

MR. DAWSON
Below deck.

OILY SURVIVOR
No fear.

MR. DAWSON
We need to get as many of you on board as we can before the oil catches fire. Get below or get off my boat - your choice.

The oily survivors head below decks. Peter runs back to the companionway to shout down -

PETER
Careful there!

INT. CABIN, MOONSTONE - CONTINUOUS

Peter pokes his head down, sees two oily survivors moving George from the bottom of the steps =

PETER
Careful!

The oily survivors look up at him. Alex is one of them -

ALEX
(quiet)
He's dead, mate.

Peter takes this in...

PETER
So be bloody careful with him!

EXT. THE MOLE - CONTINUOUS

Commander Bolton stares at the shapes in the distance...

He grabs the field glasses from Colonel Winnant, puts them to his eyes -

Boats. Civilian boats. All shapes and sizes. An armada.

Colonel Winnant peers over Commander Bolton's shoulder...

COLONEL WINNANT
What can you see?

Commander Bolton slowly lowers the glasses.

COMMANDER BOLTON
 (gentle)
 Home.

Colonel Winnant grabs the glasses, confused...

EXT. DECK OF DESTROYER - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers peer over the railing at the absurd collection of vessels passing them in the opposite direction:

Yacht, paddle steamers, fishing trawlers, day sailors, ferries, dredgers, dinghies, row boats...

Crewed by:

Fisherman, merchant navy sailors, naval officers, civilian crew, naval crew, nurses, retired sailors...

The exhausted soldiers lining the decks of the Basilisk start to clap, then to cheer... Some are crying...

EXT. MOONSTONE, WATER OUTSIDE DUNKIRK HARBOUR - CONTINUOUS

Peter steps out of the cabin, reeling. Meets his dad's questioning glance with unmistakable shock -

SHIVERING SOLDIER (O.S.)
 The lad...

Peter turns. The Shivering Soldier is looking up at him with terrified eyes, blanket tight around his shoulders.

SHIVERING SOLDIER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Will he be okay?

Peter looks at the Shivering Soldier. Sees the white knuckles clasp the edge of the rough blanket. Peter nods.

The Shivering Soldier turns, staring out at the destroyer.

Peter catches Mr. Dawson looking at him. Approving.

Collins, pulling a man from the water, looks up at the Spitfire 1 chasing down the Heinkel -

COLLINS
 Come on, Farrier...

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier strafes the Heinkel - no apparent effect. Zipping over it, he dives down out of range of its turret, banks hard left to line up another shot. A 109 cuts across him, Tracer fire shooting past.

CUT TO:

EXT. WATER, JUST OUTSIDE DUNKIRK HARBOUR - DAY

Tommy swims for the Keith...

He hears an airplane... looks up to see a Heinkel coming in over the Keith... The bombs drop, plumes of water shoot upwards all around the ship. Tommy dives under the water for protection. The explosions are deafening - he holds his ears with his hands -

Tommy breaks the surface. The barrage is over, the Keith is still afloat. Tommy swims for it. Getting closer, Tommy realizes he's swimming oil, the black sludge covering his head and arms. He looks back - the blue trawler is gently slipping beneath the water...

Tommy makes for the Keith, even as he sees men jumping into the water from her decks, lifeboats being lowered...

Tommy spots another craft - a yacht heading towards them. Tommy pulls for the yacht as hard as he can...

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH AT MALO LES BAINS - CONTINUOUS

The rag-tag collection of small ships works the beach, picking men up in the shallows, ferrying them out to bigger ships...

Small open boats use the truck 'pier' to load men as the Engineer looks on with pride...

EXT. MOONSTONE, WATER OUTSIDE DUNKIRK HARBOUR - DAY

The Moonstone is filled with oil-covered men, throughout the hold and across the decks - many more still in the water.

The Keith lists, men jump off the far side, away from the oil slick, where small ships are gathering to pick them up...

Under the water, Highlander 1's air runs out. The flames rage above...

His instinct to breath pushes him up into the flames where he is engulfed, screaming, dying -

Tommy lies on the deck at Peter's feet, eyes closed...

TOMMY
(a whisper)
Take me home.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier sees the Heinkel explode, turns away towards the beaches...

He looks down at -

The thousands of men on the beach.

The small ships ferrying out to the larger vessels.

The narrow mole with its endless rope of men...

Farrier is awestruck...

He hears his engine starts to sputter...

It dies and the prop stops...

EXT. THE MOLE - CONTINUOUS

Commander Bolton watches with satisfaction as a paddle steamer ties up. He calls up to a Stewardess (fifty-nine) -

COMMANDER BOLTON
Where's you from?

STEWARDESS
Out of Dartmouth!

Bolton shakes his head in joyous disbelief. He watches men load into a small open sailboat crewed by two young men.

COMMANDER BOLTON
From Deal?

They nod.

COMMANDER BOLTON (CONT'D)
Mind the current at the mouth,
boys.

Bolton spots Spitfire 1. It soars overhead. He waves -

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Where've you all been all my life?!

Commander Bolton sighs at this... then notices. No engine noise.

He watches the Spitfire, concerned, until -

Hears something - another engine... A high whine... He turns to see -

A Stuka...

The men lining the mole shift restlessly. Trapped...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - EVENING

The Moonstone chugs along, low in the water, men laying down along her decks...

INT. CABIN, MOONSTONE - CONTINUOUS

Men lie on every available space, packed in like sardines. Tommy catches sight of Alex looking at him. Tommy nods.

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Dawson is at the helm. Collins hears a distant engine -

COLLINS
That's a fighter -

MR. DAWSON
ME 109, from the South. Peter, take the wheel, listen for my instructions.

Mr. Dawson steps up onto the seat to look above the roof of the cabin...

MR. DAWSON (CONT'D)
Point her south.

Peter turns the wheel, the Moonstone swings to port, straightens up. Mr. Dawson spots the 109, closing...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MOLE - DAY

Commander Bolton turns to see the Stuka approaching, its distinctively kinked-wing silhouette bearing down like an awful bird of prey...

The soldiers stir, some crouching, some closing their eyes. Commander Bolton takes a knee, bracing. He bites his lip as the Stuka goes into its dive, that terrible whine building...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - EVENING

Mr. Dawson stares at the approaching 109-

MR. DAWSON
Full speed ahead.

Peter throttles up -

The 109 is growing close now...

MR. DAWSON (CONT'D)
Get ready to pull hard to port...
before he fires he'll have to lower
his nose, I'll give you the
signal...

Peter reaches over to the side of the wheel, ready to throw it. The 109 is practically upon them...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MOLE - DAY

Commander Bolton is mumbling a prayer as he watches the Stuka come at them -

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM!!

The Stuka is strafed with fire as Spitfire 1 flashes past -

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier darts past the Stuka, gliding, guns blazing...

EXT. THE MOLE - CONTINUOUS

The Stuka never fires, it just smashes into the sea... The soldiers all along the mole cheer.

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier watches the Stuka disintegrate on the surface of the water. He nods... feeling the unaccustomed silence...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - EVENING

Mr. Dawson stares at the approaching 109. Peter glances back and forth between the 109 and his father...

MR. DAWSON

Wait for it... wait till he's
committed to his line...

The nose of the 109 dips down -

MR. DAWSON (CONT'D)

NOW!

Peter throws the wheel, the Moonstone lurches to port -

The guns on the 109 light up, strafing the water to starboard
-

The 109 flashes over... Collins watches it recede.

COLLINS

He's off.

MR. DAWSON

Bigger fish to fry.

Collins looks at Mr. Dawson. Curious.

COLLINS

How'd you know all that, anyway?

Mr. Dawson steps onto the deck.

MR. DAWSON
 My son's one of you lot. I knew
 he'd see us through.

Mr. Dawson moves forward. Collins steps up beside Peter.

COLLINS
 You're RAF?

MR. DAWSON
 Not me. My brother. Flew
 Hurricanes. He died third week into
 the war.

Collins looks forward at the proud father standing by the
 mast.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier sits in the silence, gliding... looking to see how
 far he might make it up the beach...

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN, MOONSTONE - EVENING

Tommy gets to his feet, steps over other men as he slips over
 to the stairs...

EXT. MOONSTONE, ENGLISH CHANNEL - EVENING

Tommy and Alex poke their heads out -

PETER
 Stay below, please.

TOMMY
 We just want to see the cliffs -

Tommy looks over at white cliffs, ghostly above the dark
 water.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
 Dover?

Peter shakes his head, amused.

PETER
 Weymouth.

Alex shakes his head, sadly.

ALEX

We let you all down, didn't we?

Peter just looks at this exhausted, ragged boy his own age.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier glides, banking, looking for a suitable stretch of beach to ditch...

In the strangely silent plane, he passes over the troops, lines up on the vast stretch of sand beyond Malo Les Bains...

CUT TO:

EXT. HARBOUR AT WEYMOUTH - NIGHT

Soldier after soldier climbs out of the yacht. The Corporal handing out travel chits marvels at the absurd amount...

CORPORAL

How many you got in there?

The Shivering Soldier is taken ashore, wrapped in blankets.

Tommy and Alex stick together as they are handed hot cups of tea and shepherded out of the harbour in long lines.

Peter supervises as George's body is taken ashore.

As Collins steps off the boat a soldier from another boat spots his RAF uniform -

SOLDIER

(furious)

Where the hell were you!

Collins just stands there. He feels a hand on his shoulder. It is Mr. Dawson. He indicates the men filing off the Moonstone -

MR. DAWSON

They know here you were.

Mr. Dawson puts his hat on. To go home.

EXT. WEYMOUTH RAIL YARD - NIGHT

Tommy and Alex, exhausted, downcast, are herded across the tracks towards a train. Before getting on they are handed a blanket and cup of tea by an Elderly Man, who looks at their hands, not their faces, as he hands the rough blankets over -

ELDERLY MAN

Well done, lads... well done,
lads...

ALEX

All we did is survive.

ELDERLY MAN

That's enough. Well, done, lads,
well done, lads...

Alex steps up onto the train. The Elderly Man reaches out to Tommy, touching his face - clearly blind.

INT. TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Tommy flops down, lying across the seat. Alex is slumped opposite, tears starting to roll down his cheeks.

ALEX

That old bloke wouldn't even look
us in the eye.

No response. He looks over. Tommy is already asleep.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MOLE - EVENING

The mole is empty but for bodies.

A Private opens his eyes. He sits up, alone on the deserted mole, his comrades gone, mistaken for dead...

COMMANDER BOLTON (O.S.)

Come on, then, Private...

The Private looks down at the water to see Commander Bolton standing in a launch full of army officers.

COMMANDER BOLTON (CONT'D)

I know we're officers, but it's us
or the enemy, so now's not the time
to be particular...

The Private scrambles down into the launch, where Colonel Winnant stands talking to Commander Bolton.

They look out at the vast deserted beach, littered with corpses and abandoned equipment...

COLONEL WINNANT
(to Commander Bolton)
Churchill got his thirty thousand.

COMMANDER BOLTON
And then some. Almost three hundred thousand. So far.

Commander Bolton steps back up onto the mole.

COLONEL WINNANT
So far?

COMMANDER BOLTON
I'm staying.
(off look)
For the French.

The launch pulls away from Commander Bolton on the mole.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN - MORNING

Sunlight flickering on Tommy's eyelids wakes him. We have the sense that he has been asleep for a very long time.

The train full of soldiers rolls to a halt. Alex opens the window, spots a Boy near the tracks -

ALEX
Hey! Where are we?!

BOY
Siding. You'll put in in a minute -

ALEX
What station?

BOY
(surprised)
Woking.

Alex spots stacks of newspapers waiting to be loaded.

ALEX
Grab me one of them papers.

The Boy hesitates.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Go on!

The Boy pulls the paper off the top and stretches up to hand it to Alex. Alex slumps into his seat. The headline:

CHURCHILL ADDRESSES DUNKIRK EVACUATION
IN COMMONS

Alex thrusts the paper at Tommy.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I can't bear it. You read it.

TOMMY

Can't bear it?

ALEX

They'll be spitting at us in the streets. If they're not locked up waiting for the invasion.

CUT TO:

EXT. WEYMOUTH TOWN - DAY

Peter walks down the deserted high street. He stops. Walks into the office of the local paper, the Herald...

INT. HERALD OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Peter hands the Editor a photograph. Of George.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Farrier checks his canopy is locked, stows loose items, pumping the handle all the while...

EXT. SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

The landing gear inches out of its housing...

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Tommy looks down at the paper. Starts to read. Poorly.

TOMMY

"Wars are not won by evacuations."

Alex shakes his head at this.

The train starts to pull into the station...

The platforms is crowded with civilians. Alex slinks down into his seat, turning away from the window...

A Civilian bangs on the glass, peering in...

ALEX

I can't look,

TOMMY

"But there was a victory inside this deliverance which should be noted..."

Alex turns. The Civilian grins, holding up two beer bottles. The platform is packed with cheering and waving civilians...

Women with sandwiches and drinks rush up to the windows...

TOMMY (CONT'D)

"Our thankfulness at the escape of our army -"

Alex opens the window , grabbing food and drink as Tommy continues to read...

TOMMY (CONT'D)

"- Must not blind us to the fact that what has happened in France... is a colossal military disaster..."

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - DAY

Farrier pumps the handle -

EXT. SPITFIRE - CONTINUOUS

The landing gear inches past halfway down...

INT. COCKPIT, SPITFIRE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Pumping the handle, Farrier checks his belts -

TOMMY (V.O.)

"And we must expect another blow to
be struck almost immediately..."

Farrier holds the plane steady in its descent towards the
sands...

EXT. BEACH AT LA PANNE - CONTINUOUS

Spitfire 1 swoops onto the flat sand, wheels down.

TOMMY (V.O.)

"We shall go on to the end, we
shall fight in France..."

Farrier slides back the canopy and climbs out of the plan...

INT. MR. DAWSON'S HOME - DAY

Peter, gets up from the kitchen. Mrs. Dawson is at the stove,
her back to us.

As Peter grabs his coat he runs into Mr. Dawson, letters in
hand, looking at the Herald. He hands it to Peter...

TOMMY (V.O.)

"We shall fight on the seas and
oceans..."

The small headline:

LOCAL BOY, GEORGE MILLS, JUST 17,
HERO AT DUNKIRK

Peter looks at his father. Nods with satisfaction.

EXT. BEACH AT LA PANNE - DAY

Farrier brushes sand from the wing of his beloved Spitfire...

TOMMY (V.O.)

"We shall fight with growing
confidence and growing strength in
the air..."

Farrier pulls his flare gun... He shoots into the cockpit...

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Alex hangs out of the window, guzzling from a beer bottle, grinning at the women outside...

TOMMY

"We shall defend our island..."

Alex turns, deliriously happy, beer running down his chin -

ALEX

What?!

TOMMY

(louder, over the
celebration)

"We shall defend our island,
whatever the cost may be - we shall
fight on the beaches, we shall
fight on the landing grounds..."

EXT. DUNKIRK HARBOUR - EVENING

Bodies gently bob in the water...

TOMMY (V.O.)

"We shall fight in the fields and
the streets..."

Abandoned trucks and anti-aircraft guns, piles of boots,
stacks of rifles catch the last light...

TOMMY (V.O.)

"We shall fight in the hills; we
shall never surrender..."

Bodies line the length of the mole...

TOMMY (V.O.)

'And even if, which I do not for a
moment believe, this island... were
subjugated and starving..."

EXT. BEACH AT LA PANNE - CONTINUOUS

Farrier kneels, hands on head, as dark shapes of German
soldiers (seen only from behind) surround him...

TOMMY (V.O.)
"Then our empire beyond the seas,
armed and guarded by the British
fleet, would carry on the
struggle..."

Farrier is led away from the burning plane...

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Alex is oblivious. Tommy continues, to himself...

TOMMY
"Until, in God's good time..."

EXT. BEACH AT LA PANNE - CONTINUOUS

Moving towards the burning Spitfire...

TOMMY (V.O.)
"The New World, with all its power
and might -"

The shape of the plane is still visible beneath the flames...

TOMMY (V.O.)
"- Steps forth to the rescue and
the liberation of the old".

Move in on the burning Spitfire until the flames fill the
frame and we -

CUT TO BLACK:

Credits.

End.