

Allies Win Myitkyina Airstrip – 1944

Text: *ALLIES WIN MYITKYINA AIRSHIP*

Narrator: In northern Burma on the road to China is the strategic Jap-held city of Myitkyina. Two miles to its south is Myitkyina airstrip, key to the capture of this stronghold. United States transports and gliders head for the field, taken just hours before by Chinese and American troops. Aboard these big ships, Chinese reinforcements and American airborne engineers ride together with tractors and other airbase equipment. Below is the rough shell- and bomb-pocked Myitkyina strip, still under enemy fire, where the heavily loaded gliders must land.

Watch this glider, coming in fast and low, it heads for what appears to be an unavoidable collision on the closely packed field. The gliders unload. Some of these troops will stay to guard and recondition the airstrip, but most will push on to take the city of Myitkyina. Uncle Joe's Chariot brings General Joseph W. Stilwell to the field. He confers with General Frank Merrill, whose Marauders took the Myitkyina strip after an epic 25-day mountain march through Jap lines. Our planes, some of them wrecked in landing, dot the airbase. Jap opposition continues from the air. An enemy plane comes over to attack the field.

Here in the jungle, Lieutenant Colonel Seagrave, famed Burma surgeon, has set up a hospital. He operates on casualties while our fighters provide cover overhead. Myitkyina airstrip is an important stop on the air supply route to China. Thanks to American and Chinese soldiers fighting in hot, insect-ridden swamps and jungles, it is now in Allied hands.

Text: *U.S. SERVICE WOMEN TOUR EGYPT*

Narrator: American servicewomen, having completed a period of active service in Italy, see ancient Egypt while on route to duty in the Middle East. At a canteen established by the Cairo Police Department, they find a bit of home. Like thousands of tourists before them, these American Army women visit the Sphinx and the pyramids.

Text: *ALL U.S. GUNS IN NORMANDY BARRAGE*

Narrator: On July 3rd, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Invasion Commander, once more visits American troops in Normandy. With Lieutenant General Omar Bradley, United States Ground Commander, and Major Wyche of the 79th Division, he tours units and division commands. Eisenhower journeys to talk with Major General "Lightning Joe" Collins on the outskirts of Cherbourg. Next day, shells are stacked high. At exactly noon, in observance of July 4th, America's Independence Day, every United States gun in Normandy will send a shell crashing into the enemy. General Bradley will fire one of the Long Toms.

In the French town of Grandcamp-les-Bains, liberated Frenchmen join in celebrating America's Day of Independence. The stars and stripes and the French tricolor go up side by side. Trained by their school master, the children of the village join in singing "America."

Children [Singing]:

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From every mountainside
Let freedom ring!

Text: *FINAL STAGES OF SAIPAN BATTLE*

Narrator: Saipan Island in the Marianas, great Jap stronghold just 1500 miles southeast of Tokyo. Here, American carrier-based planes land at recently captured Aslito airstrip, now renamed Conroy Field. For three and a half weeks, planes, ships, guns, and men have fought fiercely in the greatest land battle of the Pacific theater to date. The carrier planes gas up for action. Nearing the final stages of the campaign, fighters and bombers take off to smash the Japs in the northern tip of the 75 square mile island.

Smoke billows from a Jap ammunition dump hit by our bombs.

On Hill 500, north of Conroy Field, Lieutenant Colonel Evans Carlson, famed Marine Raider commander, sees the progress of the battle, as United States mechanized equipment and men move up in force against the enemy. Marine and Army divisions backed up by Vice Admiral Marc Mitscher's Task Force 58 must complete the annihilation of 20,000 Japanese troops on Saipan.

Mortar shells to be dumped on deeply entrenched Japs, fighting back from pillboxes and steel-doored caves on the island.

Direct hit on a Jap cave as relentlessly United States guns clear the path for our advancing forces. In the battle for Saipan, 2,360 Americans were killed. For the Japs, there were 19,000 dead in this action.

With the capture of Saipan, the Allies are now within 2,000 miles of Tokyo, the Philippines, and Formosa. Typical of the marines and soldiers who won one of the war's great victories at Saipan, these Yanks have demonstrated once again that as individuals and as combat units, they are more than a match for the Japs.