

Making Apocalypse Now

Episode 10: Ride of the Valkyries



Forward

By **CINEMATYLER**

Thanks so much for supporting this series! I know it has been a long time since the last episode, but it took a lot of time to organize the research for the episodes on the Valkyries Sequence. The 'Making Apocalypse Now' episodes don't make as much money as my other videos, so I really appreciate your support. This Companion PDF is a little scaled back from what I have been doing for previous episodes because the time it takes to put these together has been causing delays in getting the episodes published.

My goal with this episode was to organize as many notes, photos, and behind-the-scenes clips as I

could alongside the sequence to better understand how each part came together to form something breathtaking and cohesive.

The execution of the Valkyries Sequence is nearly impossible to wrap one's head around. The logistics involved in getting cooperation from the Philippine government was a nightmare. Choreographing helicopters, explosions, and hundreds of extras was a task made even more daunting due to a wide variety of on-set issues and improper communication. It is a wonder how such an amazingly epic sequence was able to form out of a shoot with so many problems.

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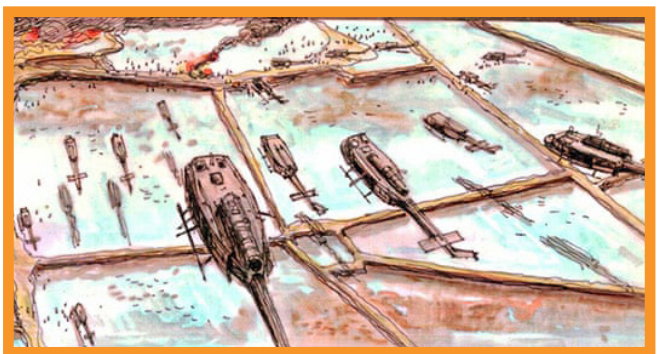
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CHARACTERS



Francis Ford Coppola:

The Hero. A director coming off the massive success of *The Conversation* and *The Godfather* parts I and II is about to embark on a journey that will test his limits—physically, mentally, and spiritually. Will he change the film industry? Will he survive?



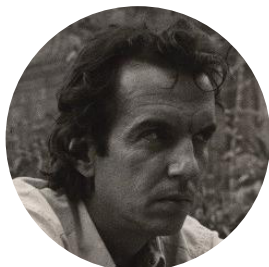
Vittorio Storaro (Cinematographer):

The Genius. An Italian cinematographer apprehensively accepts perhaps the most important role on this team—capturing the images that will tell this epic story. A true student of light and color, Storaro must bring these grand ideas into reality. Failure would bring a potential end to Coppola's career. Can he do it?



Walter Murch (Editor):

The Wizard. He is given the monumental task of constructing the Valkyrie's Sequence from dozens and dozens of camera angles and miles and miles of film stock.



Dean Tavoularis (Production Designer):

The Designer. His creative eye will breathe life into the surreal world of *Apocalypse Now*. Working on multiple large locations at once (including the construction of a giant temple) could make a person lose their mind, but Tavoularis keeps cool under pressure.

Shot List

VALKYRIE SEQUENCE

These shots make up the Valkyrie Sequence up to the end of this episode. Seeing them all side-by-side gives us a better understanding of how the sequence was constructed.



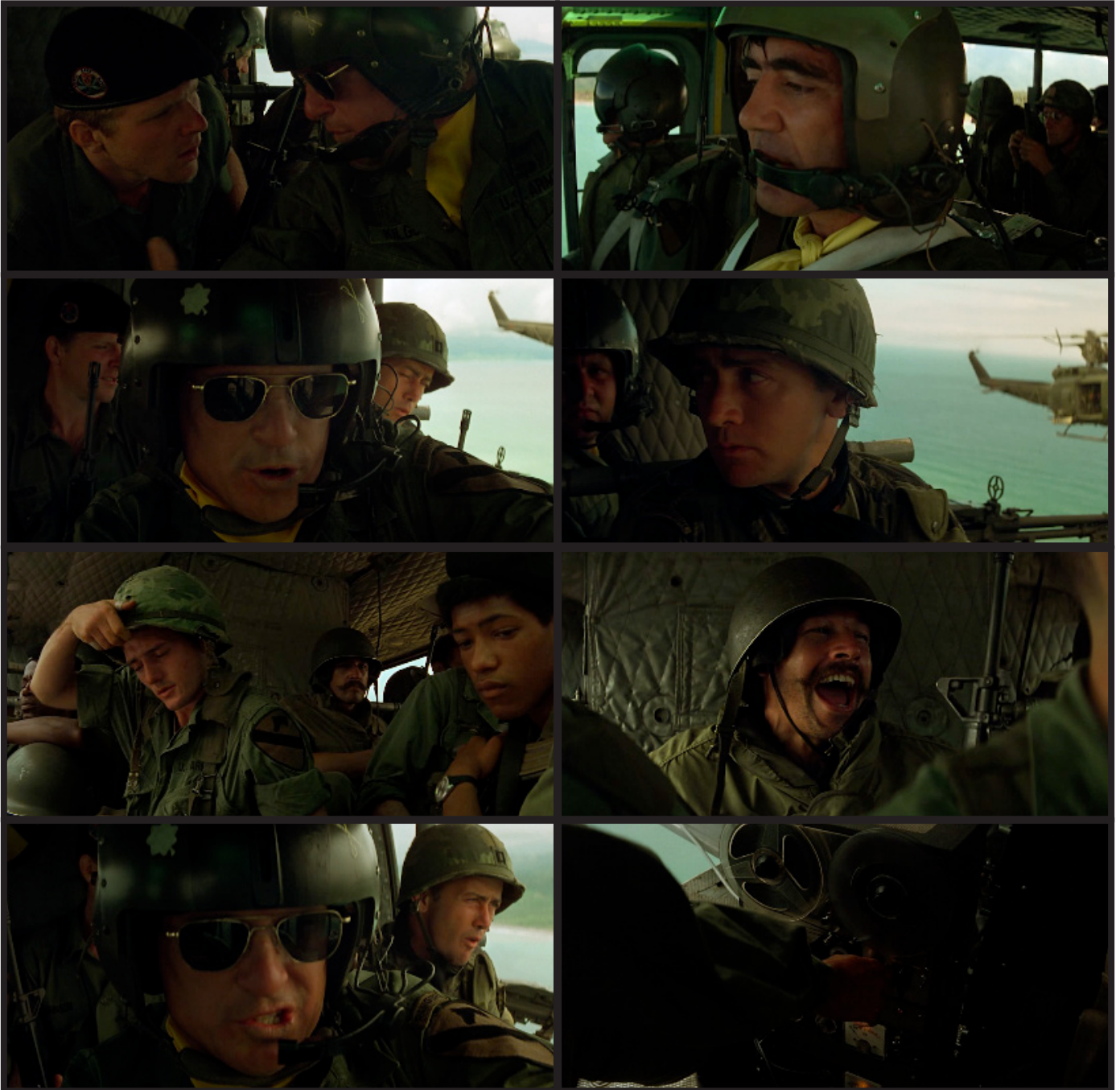
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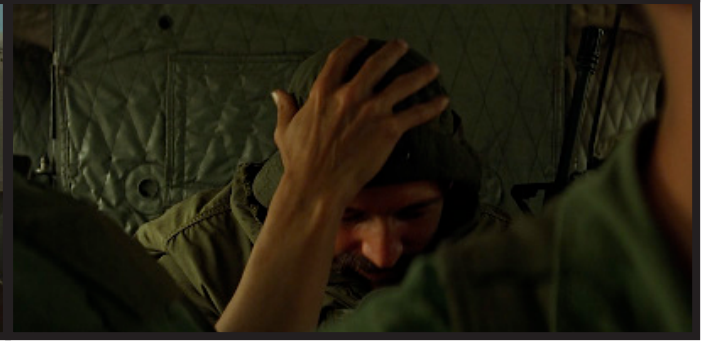
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VALKYRIE SEQUENCE



Shot List

VALKYRIE SEQUENCE



Shot List

VALKYRIE SEQUENCE



Shot List

VALKYRIE SEQUENCE



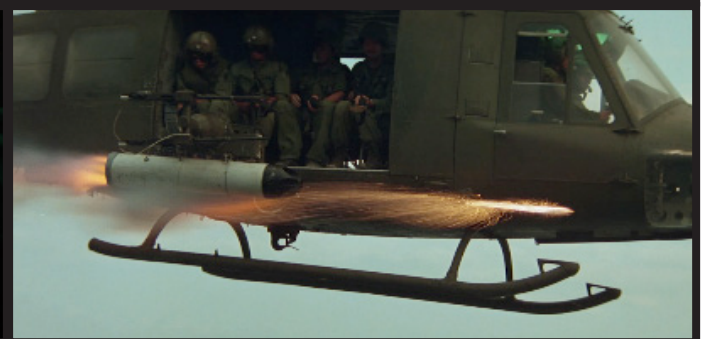
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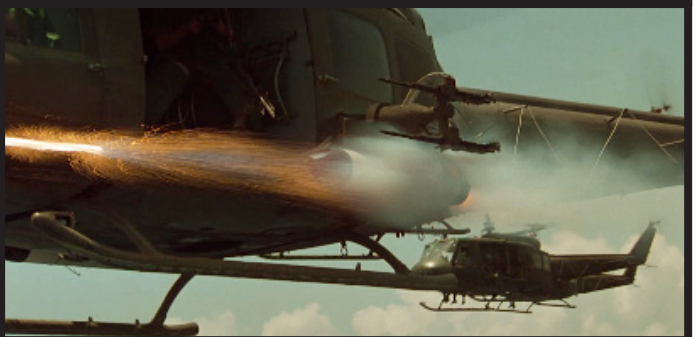
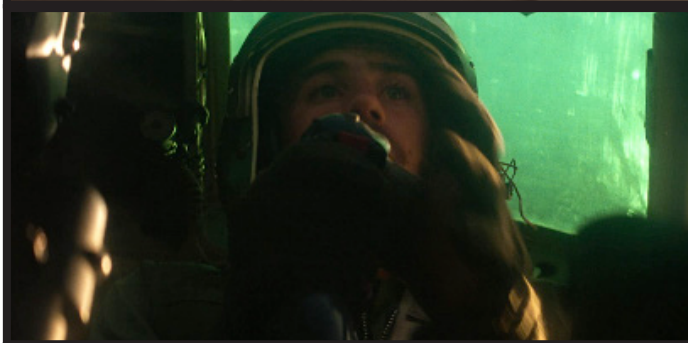
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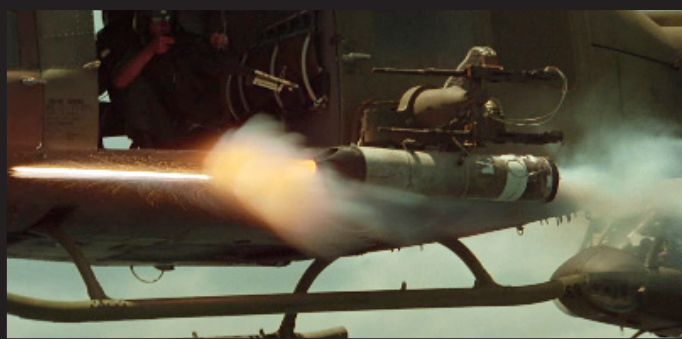
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Shot List

VALKYRIE SEQUENCE



Huey Facts

APOCALYPSE NOW

In this episode, we took a look at the Huey helicopters that were widely used during the Vietnam War. Here are some additional interesting facts about the Hueys.



Nicknamed the “Huey” after the phonetic sound of its original designation, HU-1, the UH-1 “Iroquois” helicopter was the work horse of the Army during the Vietnam War.¹



Bell developed the powerful helicopter in the mid-1950s and produced more than 16,000 units between 1955 and 1976.²

Huey Facts

APOCALYPSE NOW



By 1958, the first Hueys were shipped to Vietnam and used by American advisors in “dustoff” medical evacuation (medevac) missions.¹



Hueys have served with all branches of the U.S. military, as well as multiple U.S. government agencies and at least 48 foreign countries.²

Huey Facts

APOCALYPSE NOW



The UH-1D, redesigned to carry up to 12 troops, with a crew of two, reached Vietnam in 1963. The UH-1D has a range of 293 miles (467km) and a speed of 127 mph (110 knots).³



More than 5,000 Hueys operated in Vietnam, around 2,500 were lost to enemy fire.⁴

Storyboards

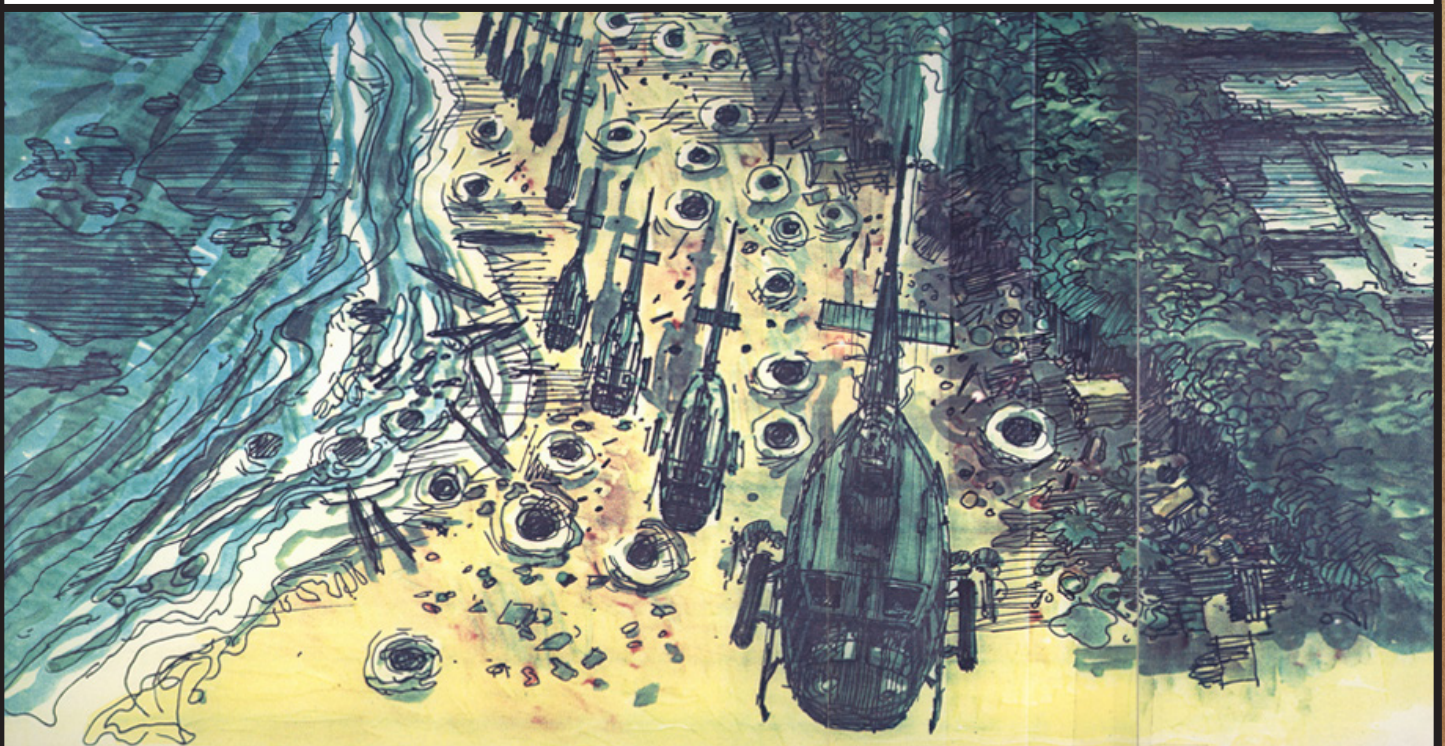
APOCALYPSE NOW

In this episode, we looked at some of Dean Tavoularis' storyboards for the Valkyrie Sequence. Looking at the storyboards, we can see how close the actual sequence lived up to Tavoularis, Storaro, and Coppola's imagination. Below, you can see what Colonel Kilgore was originally meant to look like—with a baseball cap, sunglasses, and big moustache.



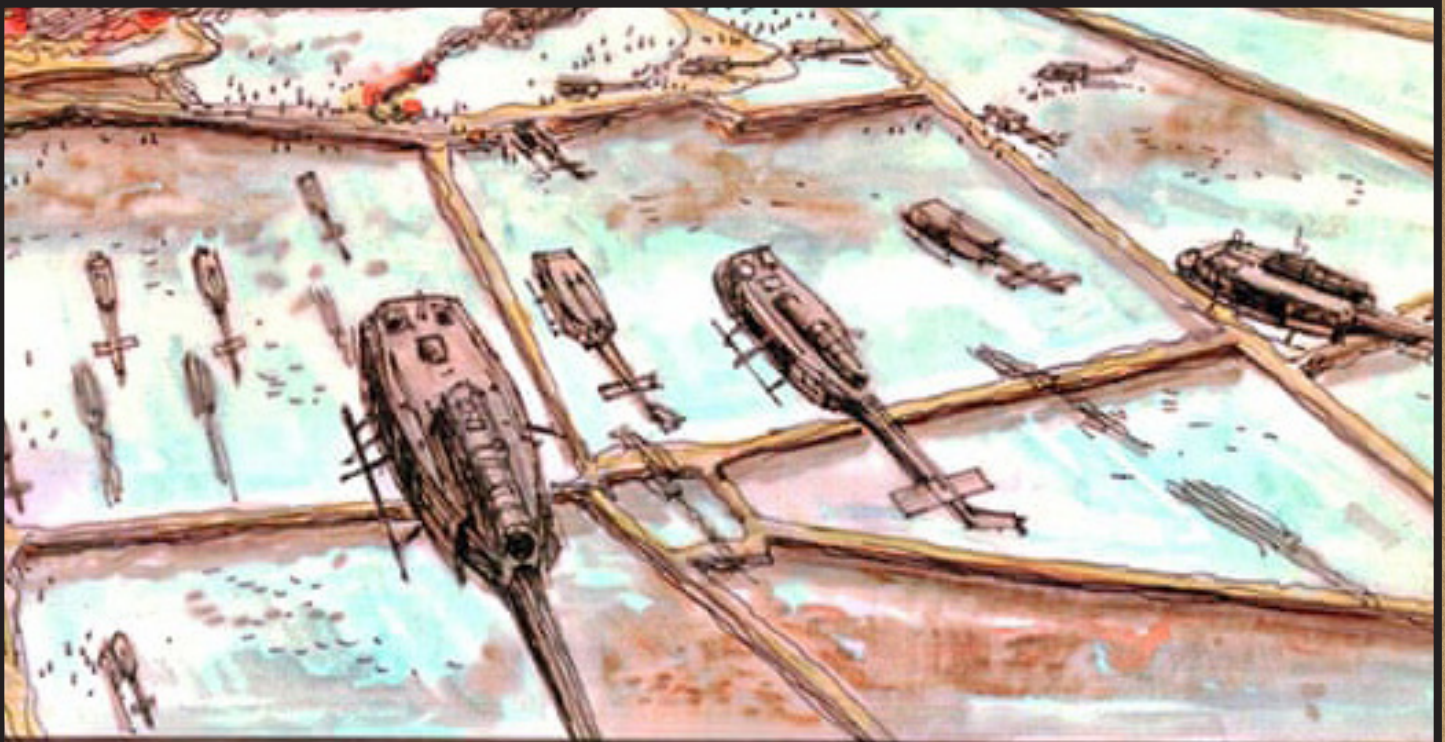
Storyboards

APOCALYPSE NOW



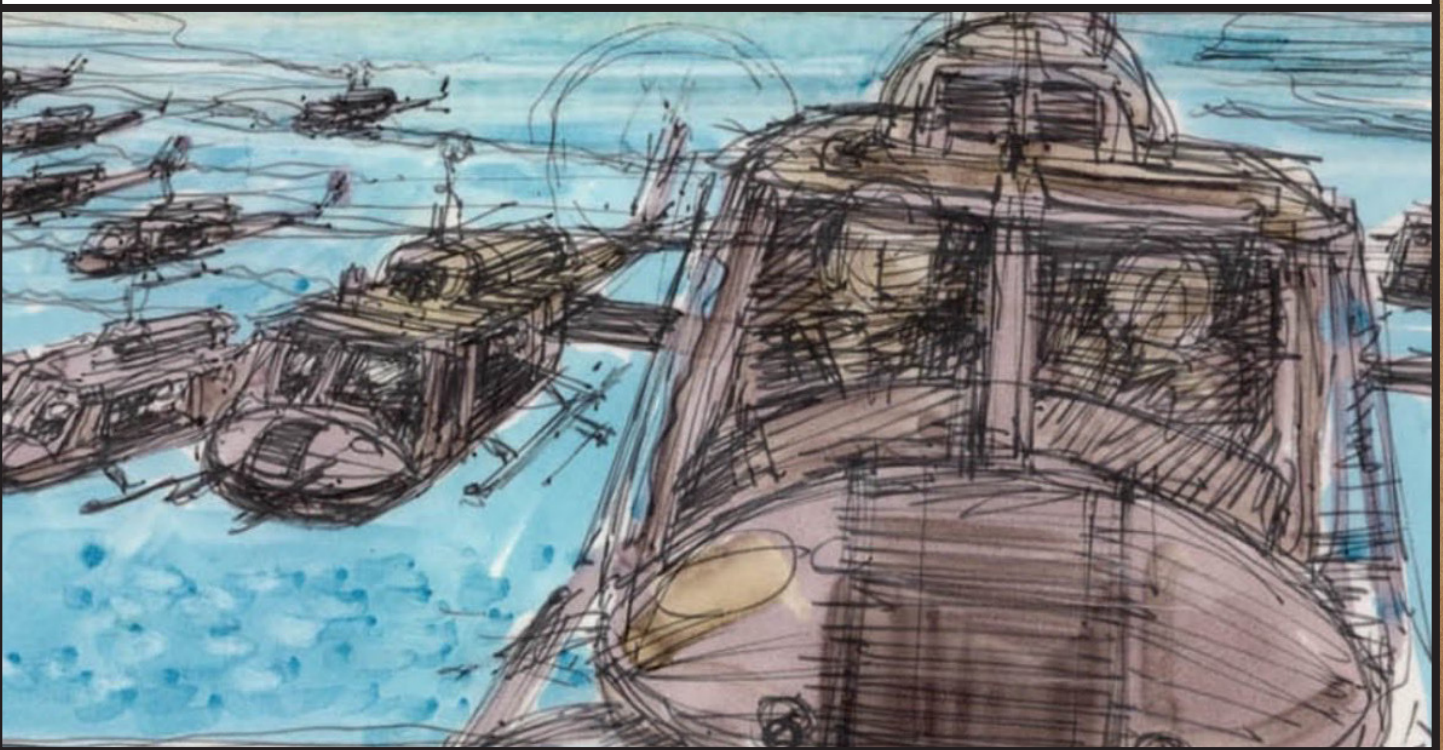
Storyboards

APOCALYPSE NOW



Storyboards

APOCALYPSE NOW



Selected Comments

APOCALYPSE NOW



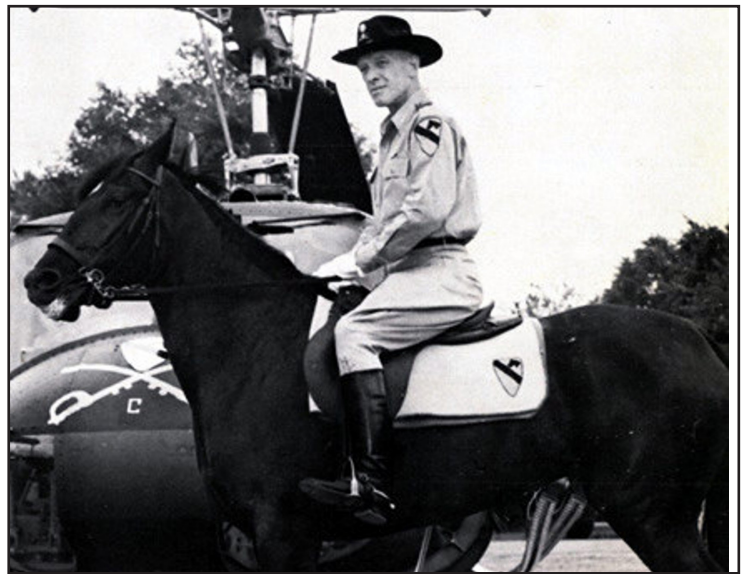
Eric Stevens

7:14 LTC William "Bill" Kilgore was modeled after LTC John "Bullwhip 6" Stockton. The Stetson hat (black hat) was begun by Stockton commander of the 3-17th Cavalry Reg (11th Reg and 1-9th Cav), the Division command group was not apparently eager to approve of it's adoption within the 1st Cav Division, but Stockton persisted in wearing it after he first wore it reviewing a troop formation. The timeline of the Stetson seems appropriate with the movie. Not sure the Huey is black but has the anti glare black paint in front of the windshield



Alan Kaufman

I always thought the LTC Kilgore was based on the real commander of 1/9 Cav when I was there, LTC John B. Stockton. He wore a Cavalry Stetson too and was a larger-than-life character. In fact, a little too larger-than-life. He was relieved of his command for being a little too aggressive and a little too outspoken about it.



Bacon Sarny-Geddon

Scenes like this are why Apocalypse Now is hands-down THE greatest war movie ever, and arguably the all-time greatest movie, in general. Today, this scene would be 80% sterile CGI mush, making it feel like they'd spliced in shots from an MCU movie. And even Full Metal Jacket's "Vietnam" loses so much, from being shot on sets in England. But the authenticity of Apocalypse Now was nuts.



Specter7 All hail the dn

I love how they actually thought out a scene, not hire a digital art team to take their notes and imagine it for them, they made the scene what it is, beautiful.

Selected Comments

APOCALYPSE NOW



Ty Willinganz

My favorite part of the scene was how Kilgore made a huge deal out of giving the prisoner water until he sees the surfer and then completely stops giving the guy water.



swedishmanguy

The giving a drink to the wounded enemy soldier really happened. It appeared in a life magazine article during the war. The photojournalist was in the back of a truck with us and south Vietnamese soldiers taking a wounded enemy back for interrogation. The enemy had a cooking pot strapped to his abdomen as his intestines were falling out of his abdominal wound. The wounded enemy asked the interpreters for a drink of water and they had the truck stop next to a rice paddy for the wounded man to drink from (they were enemies). An American soldier found out what was going on and said... "any man that can fight for 3 days while holding his guts in a tea kettle can drink from my canteen anytime."



Selected Comments

APOCALYPSE NOW

G

General Krang

Most fascinating and beautiful movie ever made, even on an objective level. Watched it probably 1000s of times by now because it has become part of me. I'm endlessly enamored with this piece of what I consider High Art. It's the only movie to make me consistently cry my eyes out haha Thanks for your analysis man!!



David O'Beirn

Thank you for caring, the napalm scene always tears me up because it is so realistic as I saw a mass napalm attack carried out by 4 C-130s that killed 300 NVA. None of us cheered, we all felt sorry for the victims, who thought they were in a rest area. Just ghastly like the whole war, which tore America apart and for which America never apologized, neither to the Asians or to us veterans.



ProfessionalGun 66

Fantastic, a joy to watch. I always thought that the camera crew was an after thought because the shadow of the actual camera crew being dollied can be seen just before Coppola plays his part. I figured that someone in the crew must have seen this and Coppola had to add the news crew to justify it.



Indy Custom Made

I remember watching this when it came out in '79. A few years later I went into the Military. It was nothing like what's in the movie. There might have been a few similarities but for the most part not so much. We did still get to wear the green BDUs and the jungle boots. The Military was still making those small adjustments into today's Army. This was a weirdly awesome movie though.

Selected Comments

APOCALYPSE NOW

A

Alexander Graham

Oh, to see the long-rumored about uncut six hour version with Brando's completely improvised monologue, supposedly discussing the long savage parade of humanity's crimes and a philosophical discussion of the nature of good and evil, all culled from various books that Brando mentioned in an interview on set that dealt with the nature and reasons of mankind's self-destructive impulses since the beginning of time.

I

libertarian45

A good time to ask: what is the explanation for the two different sets of insignia on Kilgore's Stetson? In the first introduction to Kilgore right up to the beach party, his Stetson sports a LTC's silver oakleaf and a smaller cross sabre cav badge. In the assault accompanied by Wagner, he just has a larger crossed sabre badge and no rank. This has always perplexed me. Having just watched this episode, I reckon it's just simple continuity seeing as how there was a 6 month gap between filming the 2 scenes. Still, for a perfectionist like Coppola, this seems unlikely.

I've always loved that bit with the canteen. One of my favourites.



Wailwulf

The Valkyrie attack is a VC strong point, that as stated in the video, Kilgore initially refuses, until surfing is brought up. Since the enemy like to take out officers and this is a hairier to place attack, Kilgore may have decided to not wear his rank like he normally does.'



SOURCES

Endnotes

1. UH-1 Iroquois "Huey" Helicopter - Army War College
<https://ahec.armywarcollege.edu/trail/Huey/index.cfm>
2. Bell UH-1H Iroquois (Huey) - Museum of Flight
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3. UH-1 Huey Helicopter - Military Analysis Network
<https://man.fas.org/dod-101/sys/ac/uh-1.htm>
4. More Than Just a Helicopter, the "Huey" Became a Symbol of the Vietnam War By Chris Klimek - Air & Space
<https://www.airspacemag.com/airspacemag/bell-uh-1h-iroquois-180976722/>

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