

ARTICLES OF WAR

PRESS KIT



EX MORTIS
FILMS

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ONE LINE SYNOPSIS

A young American pilot fighting in 1944 writes what may be the final letter of his life, bearing his soul to the man who inspired him to enlist... his father, a stoic veteran of World War I.

ONE PAGE SYNOPSIS

Jim (Clay Adams) captains the crew of the “Dakota Zephyr,” a B-24 bomber engaged in attacking Germany during the autumn of 1944. The young American pilot is halfway through a treacherous 35 mission tour and has his next target in sight – the heavily defended railyards of Vienna, Austria.

The pilot is guiding his squadron of bombers towards the drop zone when the sky in front of them suddenly erupts in a devastating barrage of German artillery fire. Jim holds steady by remembering his memories of home, his hopes and dreams, and his fear of the future... the words of a letter he wrote after his first few months of combat, a letter he now carries on every mission he flies.

Facing death at any moment in the blackened skies over Vienna, the pilot begins to narrate his letter. Jim’s words reveal an honest admission of fear and regret addressed to the one person in his life that’s never shown a hint of weakness... his father. A veteran of World War I whose quiet stoicism originally inspired Jim to volunteer for duty, but whose silence no longer makes sense to a pilot contributing to the deadliest bombing campaign in history.

As Jim prepares to release his ship’s lethal payload, he wonders if telling his father the truth will bring him the peace he dreams of once there are no more missions left to fly.

DANIEL M. KANEMOTO'S FILMOGRAPHY

A LETTER FROM THE WESTERN FRONT (1998)

The haunting narration of a young American soldier echoes across battlefields of light and shadow in an intimate love story set against the sweeping backdrop of World War I.

- *Gold Medal, Animation Category, 1999 Student Academy Awards*
- *3rd Place, Digital Animation, 1999 Student Emmy Awards*

ON THE ROAD FOR CHRISTMAS (2003)

On Christmas Eve, a lonely snowman aims his 18-wheeler towards the North Pole and puts petal-to-the-metal!

CAST & CREW BIOGRAPHIES**Daniel M. Kanemoto (Writer/Director/Producer/Animator)**

Daniel M. Kanemoto is a writer/director whose 1999 debut, A LETTER FROM THE WESTERN FRONT, won the Gold Medal for Best Animated Short at the Student Academy Awards. For the past decade, Dan's diverse body of work (from feature films to national commercial campaigns) has been featured on Nickelodeon, MTV, the Discovery Channel, and film festivals around the world.

Dan was raised in northcentral Wisconsin and is a 1998 graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts film program. He hates writing about himself in the third person, but pretty much loves everything else about making movies.

Ryan Shore (Composer)

Ryan Shore's diverse background of classical, jazz and contemporary music, combined with his ability to be highly collaborative and to deliver music on time and on budget, has quickly moved him to the forefront of the most sought after film composers today. His recent scores include PRIME (Universal Studios) starring Meryl Streep and Uma Thurman, HARVARD MAN (Lions Gate) starring Sarah Michelle Gellar and Adrian Grenier, and VULGAR (Lions Gate) produced by Kevin Smith. Upcoming releases in 2007 include NUMB starring Matthew Perry and Mary Steenburgen, THE GIRL NEXT DOOR, based on the best selling novel by Jack Ketchum, and JACK BROOKS: MONSTER SLAYER, for which he recorded and conducted his score with the 91-piece Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra.

For more information, please visit www.ryanshore.com.

Joe Pleiman (Sound Design)

Joe Pleiman is from Kensington, MD. After graduating from NYU's film school, he turned his attention towards music and sound design. He currently works as a sound designer and freelance composer in Boston, MA, sound designing shows like ASSY McGEE and WORD GIRL. He has written music for SESAME STREET, various Freeverse Software video games and other independent projects.

His most recent album project is with a band called "The Fall Leaves" and can be heard by visiting www.thefallleaves.com.

Jeff Yorkes (Editor)

You might know Jeff Yorkes from his appearance in Detective Comics issue #787, where he fought Batman - for real. He is also a NY-based editor and filmmaker who's cut for the likes Sesame Street, Nickelodeon, MTV, Coca-Cola, Gold Circle Films, Columbia-TriStar, Fancy Feast, Goya Foods, Enterprise Rent-a-Car, the Oxygen Network and ExpoTV. He's garnered some internet attention for his Cinemashups, splicing together cool movies with cool songs. Upcoming projects include the web documentaries, "Disturbances in the Force," for the upcoming Weinstein Company movie FANBOYS.

Robert Vargas (Storyboards)

Robert Vargas' career in the entertainment industry includes work in feature films, network television, and commercial production. He has served as director, producer, writer and artist for both traditional and CG animation. Former employers and client list includes George Lucas' Industrial Light & Magic, MTV Networks – Nickelodeon, Nick Jr., Blockbuster Entertainment, The History Channel, MCI/Worldcom, Sony and Arista Records. Film and television work includes Clint Eastwood's SPACE COWBOYS (Warner Bros.), the all digital feature FRANKENSTEIN AND THE WOLFMAN (Universal/ILM), Bill Cosby's Emmy Award winning LITTLE BILL (Nick Jr.) and the Nick Jr. series THE WONDER PETS!

Warren O'Neill (Drawn Animation & Character Design)

Warren O'Neill has drawn classical animation for Chuck Jones Film Productions and Dreamworks Feature Animation. He has designed characters for shows on MTV and Spike TV, as well as segments on Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network. He's illustrated work for Christina Applegate and Rita Wilson, and he was selected by Jerry Seinfeld to design all the heads for his line of "Comedian" action figures. His latest character design work can be seen in the PBS TV show WORD WORLD.

Clay Adams (Voice of 'Jim')

Clay Adams has provided lead voices for the hit TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES: FAST FORWARD (FOX) as well as Cartoon Network's YU-GI-OH! GX. When he's not a cartoon, he can be seen in his recurring role as Lloyd, the Lakeview bartender on AS THE WORLD TURNS (CBS). An actor since the age of eight, he has appeared in numerous plays, commercials, and industrials.

CREDITS

Produced, Written & Directed By
Daniel M. Kanemoto

Music By
Ryan Shore

Sound Design By
Joe Pleiman

Edited By
Jeff Yorkes

Storyboards By
Rob Vargas

Drawn Animation & Character Design By
Warren O'Neill

Digital Animation, Backgrounds & Compositing By
Daniel M. Kanemoto

Featuring
Clay Adams
as the voice of 'Jim'

Original Score

Orchestra Conducted By **Ryan Shore**
Performed By **The Skywalker Symphony Orchestra**
Recorded At **The Skywalker Scoring Stage**
Recorded By **Leslie Ann Jones**
Mixed By **Lawrence Manchester**
Mixed At **Avatar Studios**
Orchestrated By **Paul Cristo**
Music Preparation By **Matt Buckenmayer**
Orchestra Contracted By **Janet Ketchum**

Post-Production

Sound Re-Recorded At **Sound One** • New York, NY
Film Transfer By **Alphacine** • Seattle, WA
Sound Re-Recording Mixer • **Martin Czembor**
ADR Engineers • **David Boulton & Bobby Johanson**
ADR Recordists • **Krissopher Chevannes & Brian Gallager**
Additional Field Recordings By **Steve Gabeler**
Letter Handwriting By **Joe Pleiman**

Research

'Dakota Zephyr' Nose Art Based On 'Ill Wind?' By **Don Allen**
Air Navigation Chart Reference By **Robert H. Dodd**
South Dakota Photo Reference By **Michael Kanemoto**
B-24 & PT-17 Study Models By **David Meiklejohn**
The New York Public Library Picture Collection
Heber Valley Aero Museum
The Collings Foundation

Special Thanks

Brad Buckwalter • John Canemaker • Sharon Eagan
Dan & Stacey Erdman • Jim Gardner • Muriel Hardy
Tom & Lee Hardy • Jane Holland • Markus Horak
Henry & Bonnie Kanemoto • Michael Kanemoto
Rose Liebman • Steve Loftus • Ruth McKee
Jennifer Oxley • Naree Song • Charles Thorpe
Andrea Tieng • Richard Vague • Brian K. Vaughan

Dedicated to Elizabeth Kanemoto

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Richard Vague Film Production Fund
(New York University)

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PRODUCTION STORY**“Don Allen’s Nose Art” by Daniel M. Kanemoto**

For as long as I can remember, I’ve always loved “nose art” – those one-of-a-kind, unmistakable emblems that air crews started painting on the sides of their planes in World War II. When I was ten years old and deep into my “model airplane” phase, I’d wander up and down the aisles of the hobby store and pick the box with the best looking painting – and the best paintings always featured nose art. Even though my finished models always had a droopy, slightly crash-landed look about them (I’m horrible at gluing things together, unless my own fingers count, in which case I’m an expert), I could always salvage the nose art (usually in the form of a sticker, which I’d paste on whatever notebook I was using in elementary school that year).

So even before I started researching ARTICLES OF WAR, I was building a collection of nose art from the 1940s. These historical artifacts would serve as my inspiration when it came time to create an original symbol for the fictional plane of my film, the “Dakota Zephyr.” This would be an important piece of artwork, a visual cue for my audience to immediately identify the “hero” aircraft from the rest of the squadron.

I always planned to create a brand new piece of nose art for the Dakota Zephyr, but that changed the instant I laid eyes on the incredible paintings of Don Allen. I first read about this legendary nose art designer in an article on www.historicwings.com, where I learned that an entire gallery of his work is featured at the Air Mobility Command Museum in Dover, Delaware. Mr. Allen re-created all of his original nose art designs for the museum (the originals, of course, were destroyed when the planes that survived the war got scrapped in the years following V-Day).

Mr. Allen’s work is, in this humble artist’s opinion, simply the best – vivid, original, and amazingly well rendered. I find it hard enough to paint using my computer, where every mistake can be magically “undone” with the click of a mouse, but Mr. Allen created his work against an unforgiving metal fuselage, using paint scrounged from limited supplies in wartime England.

Mr. Allen’s nose art paintings are the work of a confident artist, and when I saw his collection of beauties at the AMC museum, it was love at first sight.

My personal favorite of Mr. Allen's wartime creations is his nose art for "Ill Wind?," a P-51 Mustang flown by Nicholas "Cowboy" Megura. The timeless design is both simple and elegant... a beautiful girl swept up in a breeze, barely able to hold onto an umbrella that's about to take flight. Back in 1944, that breeze was obviously the "Ill Wind"... but when I saw it, I immediately imagined it was the "Dakota Zephyr" sweeping the lady off her feet.

I held onto this concept throughout pre-production and just couldn't let it go. Every time I tried creating an original design of my own, it wound up looking like a pale imitation of Mr. Allen's original work. So in the end, I used Mr. Allen's "Ill Wind?" emblem as the nose art for the Dakota Zephyr. I switched a few colors around, but overall, it's a faithful reproduction of the original. Thankfully, Mr. Allen – now a retired commercial artist living in Ohio – recently viewed a rough cut of the film and approved the use of his artwork in my production. He sent me an amazing handwritten letter, describing his wartime experience:

The 33 months I spent in WWII England as a commercial artist remade into an air mechanic/nose artist/left waist gunner was certainly a life changing experience. The keyword is "life" – there were incidents during my wartime service that could have been disastrous, but Lady Luck was sure on my side.

My 4th Fighter Group was the highest scoring in victories in the whole 8th Air Force – but it came at great cost – 128 of our pilots died in combat – the "unlucky" ones... Every one of those 128 had grave misgivings each time they strapped themselves into that small cockpit. They somehow made themselves believe it was going to be the other guy that got "it."

It was a huge thrill to communicate with Mr. Allen, a veteran and artist who generously offered his advice and approval of my film. Actually speaking to the artist behind some of the most iconic nose art in World War II history will always rank as a huge highlight of making ARTICLES OF WAR. In fact, Mr. Allen told me his designs have even been featured on model airplanes. If I ever have a kid that goes through the same "phase" I did, you can bet the first thing we build will be a P-51 Mustang with "Ill Wind?" proudly displayed on the nose!

Visit the Air Mobility Command Museum in Dover, Delaware to view Don Allen's hand painted recreations of his iconic nose art designs from World War II. Special thanks to director Michael D. Leister of the AMC Museum and the National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio for their generous time and assistance.

PRODUCTION STORY**“Flying On A B-24” by Daniel M. Kanemoto**

It's the summer of 2003 and I'm crouched inside the cramped metal belly of an American warbird built over sixty years ago. Even though it's the middle of July, my teeth are rattling – not from the temperature, but from the vibration produced by four supercharged Pratt & Whitney R1830 engines, roaring mechanized beasts of iron and oil and God knows what else that's keeping this 45,000 pound monster aloft.

The wind whips across my face – there's no glass in the window I'm hunkered next to, just a 50-caliber machine gun (it doesn't work, but I'm still afraid of it). I've got a fantastic birds eye view of a multimillion-dollar ski resort (we're doing circles above the Wasatch mountain range in Utah, home to “The Best Snow On Earth”).

Welcome aboard the only restored and operational B-24 bomber in the entire world.

Once the most produced Allied aircraft of all time (by 1943, American factories were churning 'em out at the rate of one an hour on the largest assembly line on Earth), today there are only a handful of B-24s left. Most of them are grounded, sitting in museums, their flying days a distant memory of the past. But the Collings Foundation, a nonprofit group dedicated to the restoration and operation of historic aircraft, maintains their B-24 as a “living artifact.” Every year, crews from the Foundation fly the warbird to air shows across the country, offering the public a unique opportunity to pay tribute to those who served and sacrificed during the Second World War.

The efforts of the Collings Foundation have really paid off. I love museums, and I've visited every military exhibit in every city I've ever been in, but short of interviewing actual veterans, I've never felt closer to the history of World War II than while flying on their fully restored B-24.

It's a feeling I'm trying to capture with my film ARTICLES OF WAR, an animated story about a B-24 pilot writing home to his father. It's a film I've wanted make for years, and the reason I climbed onboard a fully operational warbird in the first place. Or perhaps it's the other way around – maybe I've always wanted to feel what it's like to fly on a B-24, and making this film is the perfect excuse... either way, it's an experience I'll never forget.

I've admired B-24 bombers since I was a little kid, long before I discovered the significant role the aircraft played in the Allied victory of World War II. The B-24 is often overshadowed by the always-popular B-17 "Flying Fortress," but although I'm cool with the B-17, I'm a complete freak for the B-24. In this humble artist's opinion, it's just one of the coolest airplanes of all time (I suppose I'm a sucker for the unique twin tail and rudder assembly that gives the B-24 such a distinctive profile).

So even before I wrote the script for ARTICLES OF WAR, I was in love with "THE PLANE" (I always referred to it in my notes as "THE PLANE," in ALL CAPS, because it's that important – I hate sounding so dramatic, but if I couldn't create a convincing B-24, then my movie was doomed to failure).

My home studio was soon overflowing with B-24 research. I started by collecting photographic reference of THE PLANE in books and magazine articles, and once I ran out of photos I hired a talented artist to build a couple of small models for me to study (in addition to building the planes, he also constructed the ingenious boxes they arrived in, which miraculously saved the fragile plastic replicas from the notoriously abusive New York City postal system). Once I figured out what the B-24 looked like from the outside, I took advantage of Google, the greatest research tool of all time, to see what I could learn about their insides. I think I followed every link Google spit out – it turns out there are a lot of people on the World Wide Web who have turned loving the B-24 into a career, which is how I found the Collings Foundation and their one-of-a-kind flying museum.

The Collings Foundation turned out to be an indispensable resource, because even the best books and websites (and I found some really great ones) weren't enough to satisfy the unique needs of my animated production. Despite all of my detective work, I could never get a feel for what it felt like to actually be inside a B-24. Most of ARTICLES OF WAR takes place from the point of view of a B-24 pilot behind the controls of his ship. Since I'd be animating the movie from scratch, using drawings of the characters composited against backgrounds painted by Yours Truly, I needed to gather as much photographic reference as possible. I needed to see for myself the pilot's point of view... and that meant finding a way to climb inside the cockpit of a real B-24.

Which brings me back to Utah. I discovered the Collings Foundation's "Wings Of Freedom" tour would be making a stop at a small airshow in Heber City, which is coincidentally the summer home of my favorite aunt and uncle (I visit as often as possible, especially in the winter – Utah really does have the best snow on Earth,

and it turns out the summers are awfully beautiful, too). My family welcomed me with open arms, and since Heber City is as small as small towns get, I knew the B-24 wouldn't be too crowded when it was open to the public.

I'd have lots and lots of face time with my favorite airplane.

I arrived on the day of my flight extra early, eager to photograph every inch of the THE PLANE (I even wore a professional-looking photojournalist jacket, just to get into character). The Collings Foundation staff proved to be very patient with the overeager, highly-caffeinated filmmaker that showed up to document every inch of their vintage aircraft. I was allowed inside the normally off-limits cockpit to capture my coveted "pilot's point of view," and I crawled all over plane, clicking away with my digital camera.

I found angles that were impossible to see with my study models, and the interior was completely different than what I imagined. Control lines ran across the interior fuselage – I was warned not to touch them. The front landing gear retracted into the nose of the ship – another thing to stay away from in flight, since the wheel spins so fast after takeoff that it can easily rip off your hand if you accidentally get snagged.

But nothing compares to the warning I got right before my flight took off – the pilot cautioned me not to step off the thin elevated catwalk spanning the bomb bay. The doors, he stressed, were engineered to break away if a bomb ever got loose, so if you put pressure on them, you might crash through the doors and wind up becoming a HUMAN bomb.

For the record, yes, my eyes have never been wider than after hearing this critical warning.

I've been in faster planes – I have no doubt the JetBlue airliner that got me from New York to Utah is a bazillion times more powerful than the B-24 – but my Collings Foundation flight was the fastest, most memorable thirty minutes of my life. Hurling through the air with the roar of the engines rattling my eardrums, it's just impossible not to imagine what it felt like to fly on a B-24 during the war. I visualized myself cocooned in a flight suit, breathing bottled oxygen in a freezing, unpressurized cabin, sitting next to a bomb bay filled with 500 pound explosives, with nothing but a thin sheet of unarmored metal between myself and an exploding German artillery shell.

I have nothing but respect for the veterans who sacrificed so much to fly these warbirds, which during my flight transformed into so much more than just a “cool” airplane.

The flight was the perfect way to begin production on a film centered on the efforts of a B-24 pilot fighting in the war. While I remain eternally grateful that I’ve never experienced a single second of combat, I did get a small taste of what it means to fly on a B-24. I left with hundreds of photos, and even though I had to navigate the bomb bay catwalk a couple of times, I thankfully avoided becoming a human bomb.

These research photographs proved to be indispensable in the making of ARTICLES OF WAR. Interacting with an actual B-24 and personally witnessing its power transformed my direction of the film. Even though I created the movie using drawings and paintings, the Collings Foundation gave me an opportunity to base my artwork on something tangible and real... a warbird that gave me the ride of my life through the mountains of Utah.

In 2005, “The Dragon And Its Tail” received a new paint job and name – it’s now known as “Witchcraft,” in honor of a legendary 8th Air Force plane that flew over 130 missions in Europe. Visit the Collings Foundation on the web at www.collings-foundation.org.