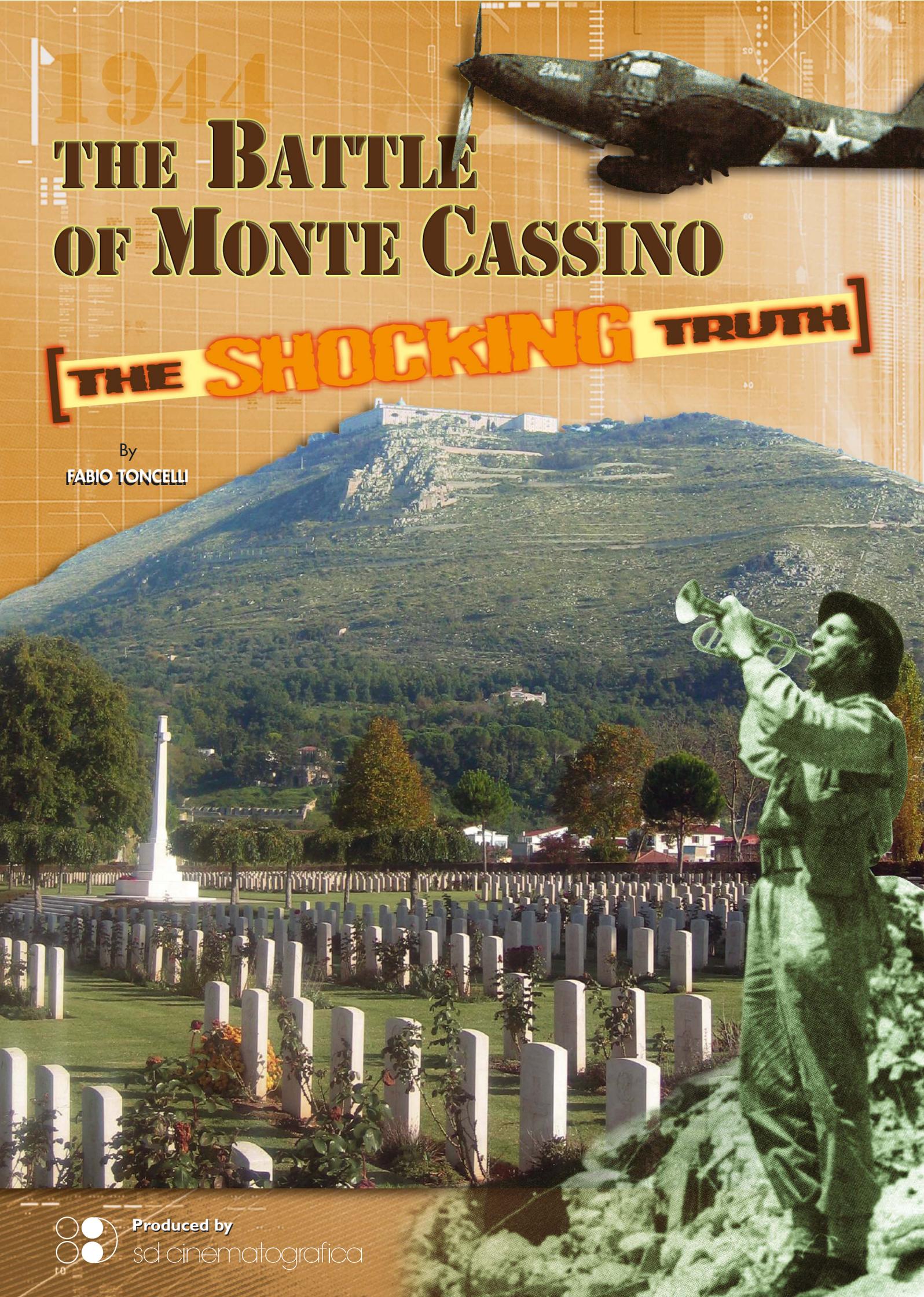


1944

THE BATTLE OF MONTE CASSINO

[THE SHOCKING TRUTH]

By
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Produced by
sd cinematografica

15 February 1944 is a glorious day in central Italy. The sky is limpid and there is not a cloud on the horizon. The Benedictine abbey of Monte Cassino, halfway between Rome and Naples, gleams majestically in the sun.

The abbey is one of the most important monuments in the whole of Christianity. It is here that Western monasticism was born. Over the centuries, a collection of works of art of incalculable value has been accumulated: paintings and frescoes by Titian, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Tintoretto, as well as marvellous architectural works and sacred art, statues and thousands of mediaeval books and manuscripts, including the very first document in the Italian language.

From the top of the hill, its historic walls dominate the entire valley of the Liri River. It has been here for over 1400 years, inhabited by monks who have lived according to the Benedictine rules since it was founded by St Benedict himself.

In less than two hours, it will no longer exist.

Why did the Allied forces during the Second World War decide to bomb the Abbey of Monte Cassino with such unprecedented violence?

Who took this decision?

Was the destruction of one of the world's most important artistic treasures correct from a military point of view?

Or was it unnecessary?

Or even worse: was it a mistake that favoured the enemy and cost the lives of thousands of Allied soldiers?

Was the destruction of Monte Cassino an act of war or a criminal act?

On the eve of the **65th anniversary**, with the mountain still covered in signs reading: **"No entry: danger, mines!"** the truth is emerging about the destruction of the abbey and the terrible battle that was fought to conquer it. The battle resulted in one of the worst massacres of the Second World War, with the death of 50,000 from the multinational contingent of the Allied forces, 20,000 German soldiers, plus thousands of Italian civilians, in a battle that went on well into the spring.

For the first time, complete archive footage of the first and subsequent bombardments taken from a variety of perspectives shows the infernal bombing of the monastery almost as it happened.

Spectacular computer reconstructions illustrate the dynamics of the destruction wrought by the aerial and land bombing.

German archive footage allows us to relive the battle from inside the abbey and describes how many works of art were saved by moving them secretly to the Vatican. New research shows the real contents of the agreement reached between the Abbot in charge of the monastery and the German forces deployed on the mountain, who were, incredibly, led by a lay Benedictine and lover of classical art, who had studied at Oxford and then became a general in Hitler's army.

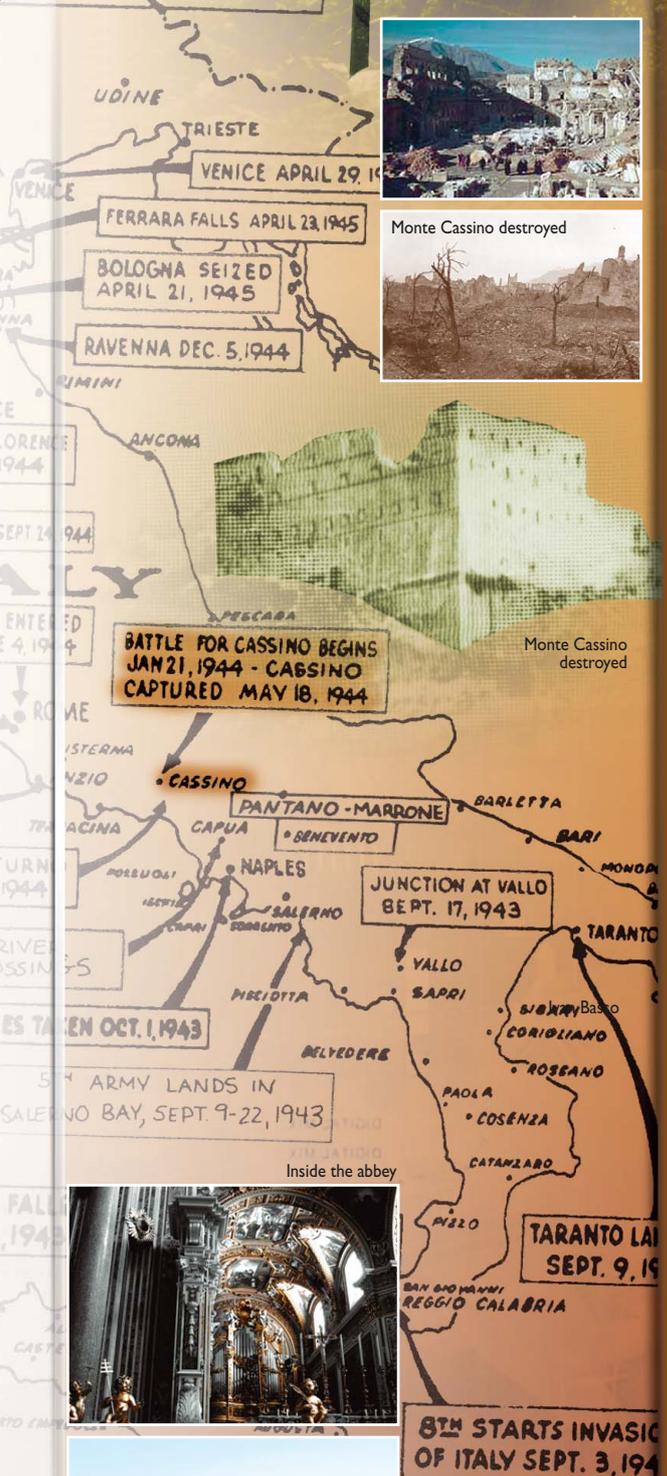
Historical reconstructions and original testimonies from the survivors guide us through the various phases of the battle, a real hell on earth, which lasted, in various phases, for no less than four months, until the Polish contingent finally managed to conquer the abbey, now abandoned by the Falschirmjager, the elite German paratroopers, the so-called "green devils".

Was it really necessary to conquer Monte Cassino to free the road for the conquest of Rome? Why did the Anzio landings not avoid a bloodbath at Monte Cassino? Why didn't the Allies head immediately for Rome?

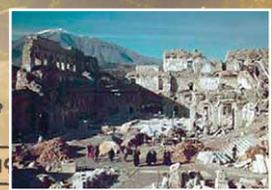
This engrossing narration will reconstruct all the political and military background behind the dreadful stalemate of the Anglo-American military campaign in Italy in the winter of 1944, the dramatic leadership errors and the mutual lack of trust between the Allied partners.

Our original research will finally reveal that the tragic fate of the abbey and tens of thousands of men was determined by the stubbornness of one man, by an ancient book printed in the 700s and by an incredible intelligence mistake on the part of the Allies in interpreting three simple letters: A B and T. The truth is both shocking and dramatically plausible.

ITALIAN CAMPAIGN ENDS MAY 2, 1945



CASSINO
IT IS FORBIDDEN TO LEAVE ROAD THROUGH TOWN ANYWHERE, OR TO STOP YOUR VEHICLE ON THIS VITAL ROAD.
The ruins are sealed off, and are full of mines & boobytraps.
YOU'VE BEEN WARNED!



RUNNING TIME: _____ **52 minuti**
FORMAT _____ **HD CAM**