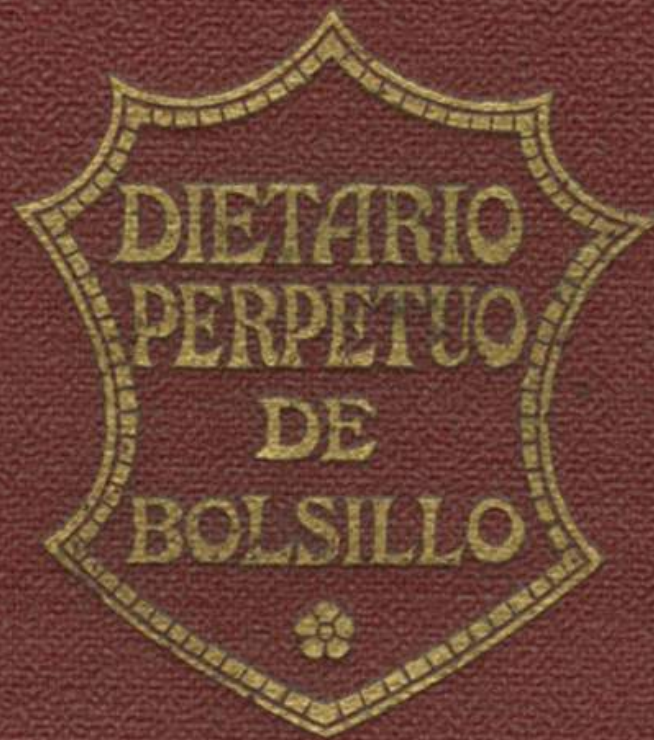


MERRIMAN'S
DIARIES:
EXEGESIS



RAYMOND M. HOFF

January, 2018

Self-published by Author

© Copyright transferred to the Tamiment Library, Bobst Library,
New York University.

Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the persistence of many people, foremost, Rickard Jorgensen who retrieved Robert Merriman's diaries from the archive at Tamiment Library and had them scanned for study. The initial group of readers, Rickard, Josie Yurek, Nancy Wallach, Alan Warren and the author, took nearly a year to decipher Merriman's handwriting. As the diary pages were transcribed, understanding the context of Merriman's daily life was necessary to confirm the nearly 400 names he calls out in the diary. With the support of Tamiment Library and the technical support of Jorgenson and Company, a Wordpress blog was created in 2013 to reveal the diary pages and backstory on a day-by-day basis and discuss the transcription.

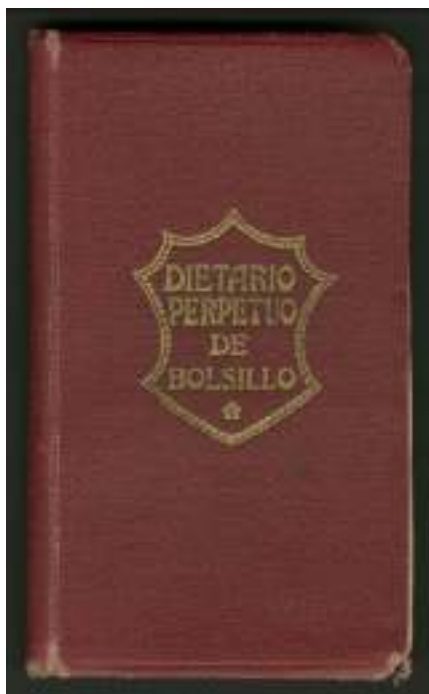
The involvement of others in reading the blog and correcting our transcription was incredibly helpful. Barry McLoughlin, Richard Baxell, David and James Convery, Amanda Vaill, Michael Petrou and even the venerable Paul Preston had a look at the transcription and provided comments and corrections. The continued support of Chris Brooks in adding and shaping the diary descriptions of the North Americans was invaluable as his knowledge of the Lincolns is second to none. Chris is the biographer of the Lincolns for the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives. Chris was gracious enough to allow us to create mini-biographical footnotes in the following text and all of those footnotes come from his research.

The author wants to thank all who supported this project including Bonnie Hoff who said nothing when nights and weekends were absorbed in the blogging and writing.

This book is dedicated to Harold Hoff, a Lincoln Vet, and one of 35,000 men who went to Spain to fight fascism when it was not accepted to do so. Of the 2731 Americans who went to Spain, nearly 1000 did not return. Every one had a story, not just those who wore stripes. To the families of these men, many who don't know anything about the Spanish Civil War, we hope that this will provide some new knowledge on their sacrifice and remind us that fascism still lives and the fight goes on. ¡No pasaran!

Preface

Robert Hale Merriman wrote two diaries while in Spain during the Spanish Civil War (January 1937 - April 1938). Robert Merriman's diary was particularly important as he became the defacto Commander of the XVth (English Speaking) International Brigade in Spain in March of 1938. In order to understand more about this man and the nearly 2700 Americans who fought in Spain under the banner of the XVth Brigade, and particularly the Lincoln and Washington Battalions of the Brigade, these diaries, which have never before been transcribed and published, are presented here in their entirety. This work is the result of a project to understand the background in Merriman's diaries and was presented in blog format (<http://merrimandiary.com>) for two years while a group of researchers contributed knowledge of the events described. The blog format allowed readers to follow along at the same pace that Merriman wrote them, revealing one page of the diary (approximately two days) every two days.



Robert Merriman's First Diary

The diaries are handwritten in an approximately 3.5" x 5.6" bound notebook. As Bob Merriman's handwriting was dense and changed much over the year that it was written, the transcription may not be entirely accurate. If you are not familiar with the history of the Lincoln Brigade, much of what is written will be cryptic and need explanation. A team of six people transcribed the diary. We provide a commentary for each of the diary entries. In that way, we hope you will learn about Spain, about this war, about the Americans involvement in fighting fascism and understand why we believe this diary is an important historical document that needs preservation and exposure to the public. We hope you enjoy reading Bob Merriman, in his own hand.

Who was Robert Merriman?

Robert Hale Merriman was born in Humboldt, California, on November 17, 1908 to Henry and Faye Merriman. Henry was reported in some histories to be a lumberjack but by 1920 he was living in Santa Clara, California, and working as a vulcanizer of tires in San Francisco, a profession he kept until at least the 1940s. Henry and Faye moved to Los Angeles during the Depression and settled in Mojave, California in the late 1930s. As we progress with Robert's diary, we will see a letter from Faye ("Mother") to Robert later in 1937.

Robert Merriman was to become the Commander of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion in Spain, then head of the training unit at Albacete, Spain, and subsequently Chief of Staff of the XVth Brigade, which encompassed most of the English-speaking units of the International Brigades. His two diaries are a chronicle of the development of the Brigade over the period from January to November 1937. By studying it, we learn quite a bit about the actions of the Brigade on a day-to-day basis.

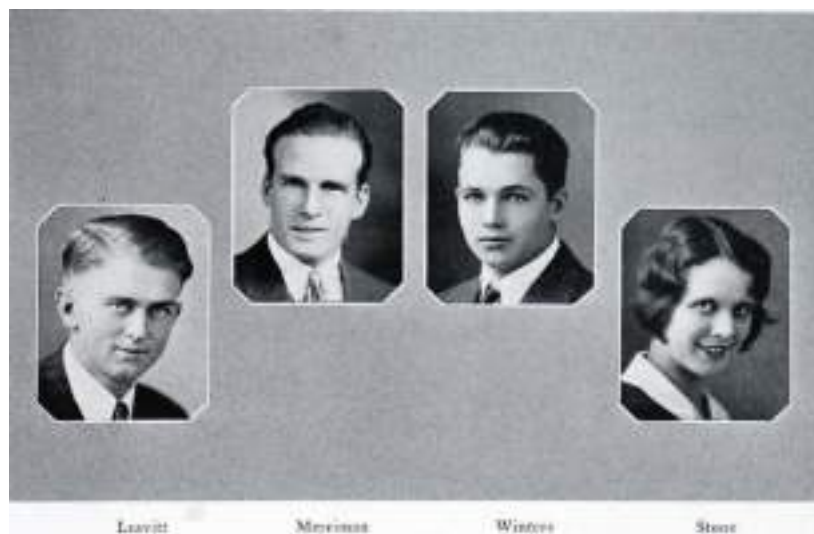


Major Robert Merriman, December 1937 (image courtesy NYU Tamiment Library Image 11-0634 of the Harry Randall Collection¹, used with permission)

In 1931, Bob Merriman was a cadet officer at the University of Nevada at Reno, graduating from the University on May 9, 1932. His biography at the Abraham Lincoln Brigades Archives (ALBA)² states that he married Marion Stone on his graduation day. Marion appears frequently in his diary (she is mentioned often in the diary so we will discuss Marion in more detail as the year progresses).



Robert Merriman's photo in the University of Nevada Yearbook under the Military Department (Cadet) Credit: US Yearbooks, Ancestry.com



The staff of University of Nevada's Sagebrush (University newspaper) in 1931. Robert Merriman (Junior Manager) and Marion Stone are featured. Credit: US Yearbooks, Ancestry.com

Bob Merriman subsequently attended the University of California at Berkeley as a graduate student, but according to some biographies he was also a professor. The evidence, however, indicates that he had teaching duties at Berkeley as an assistant instructor the Economics Department, but it is not clear that he earned an advanced degree.³

By January 1935, Robert and Marion left the U.S. on a Newton-Booth Traveling Fellowship in Economics⁴ and traveled to Moscow where it was reported by some critics that he attended the Lenin School. Rolfe⁵, Eby⁶ and McLoughlin⁷ contradict this view and state that Merriman was in Moscow to study agricultural economics. Merriman himself says that he spent one year at a "Communist academy" and then studied agricultural practices.³ Comintern documents say that Merriman was not a member of the Communist Party. When he entered Spain, he was listed as an "anti-fascist", a label used for non-communist volunteers. He certainly became part of the Communist Party of Spain with an application in January 1937.

It was from Moscow that Merriman would go to Spain in 1937 when the need arose for Internationals to fight in Spain. In Paris in January 1937, Robert met up with Milly Bennett (Mildred Bremler Mitchell), a reporter, and they travelled to Spain together. He told Bennett he was going to study collective farming. Milly Bennett had been in Moscow as a reporter for the English language *Moscow News* and was heading for a new assignment while in Paris. Spain beckoned.

Milly Bennett's papers are in the Hoover Archives at Stanford University and she recalls the meeting:

I was poking through the books at Brentano's {in Paris}, looking for a good, short history of Spain, when I saw Bob Merriman, snatching books from the shelves by the fistful with his hamlike hands. Good old Bob from Moscow! I yelled. He yelled. We fell into each other's arms. What was I doing in Paris? Why wasn't I in New York where I'd started last month? What was he doing in Paris? Why wasn't he in Moscow cramming his economics?

"I've got a job covering the Spanish war. I leave tonight"

"Wait for me," Bob said, "wait until tomorrow and I'll go with you."

"You! What does Marion [his wife] say? You'll get killed. The foreign brigades are the shock troops. They have the biggest casualties." (Twenty thousand French volunteers, hundreds of Slav, German, Italian political emigres had gone to Spain shortly after the outbreak of the war on July 18, 1936 and their casualties were mounting.)

Bob said he expected to do some work on the new collective farms, but he didn't look me in the eye when he said it.

"Nonsense. I was in Spain last month and cruised all over the place with that human dynamo Anna Louise Strong. What few collectives there are don't need your advice."

He said, alright, I am going to Spain to fight, but nothing I could say would change his mind. If Marion couldn't, how could I? He'd had ROTC training at the University of Nevada and knew a little about machine-guns and he'd like to try it out fighting fascism.⁸



*Mildred Bremler (Milly Bennett) in San Francisco in the 1920's. From Milly Bennett, *On Her Own*, ed. A. Tom Grunfeld, M.E. Sharpe Publishers, Armonk, NY.*

Milly would go on to tell her friends in a letter that she and Bob went to a Department store and were able to buy gas masks "which would fit over our hornrimmed glasses", ammunition and Merriman bought himself a pistol.

According to this journal entry, Robert entered Spain, via train, on January 11, 1937. Robert's daily diary starts on this date. The appendix contains several pages at the beginning of the diary that gave his first impressions of what he saw in Barcelona and Valencia and this is presented in the appendix.



Frontispiece to Merriman's diary

JANUARY 1937

Salud España!

11 Enero S. Higinio
from Paris with Melly Mitchell
1:40 PM crossed border to Port
Bon. Station filled with posters
baggage checked registered by
police. Met young Englishman
with passport impounded.
without documents. Bridger speaks
by militia - arms carried freely
and anarchist flag on evidence
since they run the R.R. Signs on
train about workers control of R.R.
Respect collectivized property
evening in Barcelona at A.E. A.M.
12 Enero S. Arcadio
(read 7-10 later for more stuff)
visited center - saw Cathedral
Generalidad at a popular
restaurant on narrow back
street. Street is like a narrow
mountain dip. Working class
on balconies. Drink first from
wine jug of glass with spout
which shoots wine into mouth
visited exposition grounds. saw
cuba for sugar - bread cigarettes
and milk. Dined with comrades and
later visited huge market of Com. (?)

January 11-12 ••• Salud España!

Salud España!

11 Enero

S.Higinio

From Paris with Milly Mitchell unusual united front. 1:40 PM crossed border to Port Bou Station filled with posters. Baggage checked registered by Police. Met young Englishman with passport impounded. Without documents. Bridges guarded by militia - arms carried freely and anarchist flags in evidence since they run the R.R. Signs on train about workers control of R.R. Respect Collectivised Property. Evening in Barcelona & met A.E., AW.

12 Enero

S. Arcadio

(Read 7-10 dates for more stuff) Visited center saw Cathedral. Generalidad ate in popular restaurant on narrow back street which is like a narrow mountain defile. Washing hangs on balconies. Drank first from wine jug of glass with spout which shoots wine into mouth. Visited exposition grounds. Saw Cues {sic. queues} for sugar - bread cigarettes and milk. Dined with comrades and later visited huge appt. of comrade. Visited some of the headquarters and lunched with C.H. and Seacord.

§ § §

On January 11, 1937, Robert Merriman crossed into Spain by train and began the journey of his lifetime. The first few diary pages give his impressions of Barcelona and Valencia as he moved southward to the Albacete training base of the International Brigades. Diary pages are transcribed in a non-serif font.

His traveling partner was Milly Bennett (Mildred Mitchell) whom he joined up with in Paris. Mildred was writing for a Russian

newspaper at the time, but had been a reporter with the Daily News in San Francisco with wild experiences in China in the 1921. Her own exploits were written up in a memoir *"On Her Own: Journalistic Adventures from San Francisco to the Chinese Revolution, 1917-1927."*⁹ Milly Bennett had been in China with William Burton, brother of another Lincoln Vet Wallace Burton, and now she and Wallace were in Spain, her as a reporter and Wallace to fight. More on Wallace Burton will be revealed in September.

Peter Carroll¹⁰ describes their meeting in Paris:

"When Millie Bennett, correspondent for the Moscow News, entered Brentano's bookshop on the rue Opéra in Paris in early January 1937 in search of a Spanish dictionary, she was surprised to see her old Moscow drinking buddy, Robert Merriman, snatching books about Spain by the fistful... Soon the two Californians were charging around Paris to buy a revolver, cartridges, and (with memories of the World War) gas masks to fit over their horn rimmed glasses"

The sentence starting the diary was "From Paris with Milly Mitchell unusual united front" meaning that they two of them made an odd couple. We have been unable to decipher who "A.E., A.W." were. There was a Briton, Alan Warren, in Spain at this point. Arthur Olorenshaw was also in Spain at this time and Merriman may have not known how his last name was spelled when he wrote these initials. He would not be naming sensitive people in his diary if he thought it might be stolen.

§ § §

January 13-14 ••• Barcelona to Valencia

Visited some of the headquarters and lunched with C.H. and Seacord

13 Enero

S. Gumersindo

Took the train at 3:43 for Valencia documents checked en route. Fine meals served. As we left Barcelona tiny children stood by and gave the Red Front salute. Blind sell lottery tickets in Barcelona. Trip along the sea. Train 2 hrs late into Valencia. Streets dark with few blue lights – occasionally street car (1 AM). Huge city in complete darkness. Comrade escorted us to hotel where met Liston Oak. Arranged room for Milly and I slept with Liston. First bombardment here yesterday. 10 killed in hospital - cruiser in harbor.

14 Enero

S. Hilario

Walked the streets early. Streets full of small stands selling pens, caps, leather gds. Visited Party Hdqtrs. Soviet Consul. Ministry of War. Food plentiful - less machines all commandeered and streets jammed. Town noisy - funerals – meeting demonstrations. Met Wintringham. Lunched with Kitty B{owler}. UGT influence greater here. Small businesses taken over here & not in Barcelona

§ § §

As we can see from the diary, Merriman remained in Barcelona until his train left for Valencia on the afternoon of the 13th. Secord (in the diary) is believed to be Merriman's spelling of the name of American Volunteer Douglas Seacord^a.

^a Douglas Earl Seacord was born June 10, 1908 in Memphis. XV BDE, Lincoln BN, Jarama; initially MG Company Commander then moved to Adjutant Battalion Commander; KIA February 27, 1937 during the assault on Pingarron Hill, Jarama.²

We will correct Merriman's spelling of names to help clarify the volunteers he is mentioning.

As a bit of background, between 13 and 16 July 1936, a number of Generals of the Spanish Army, including General Emilio Mola Vidal and Francisco Franco organized the Spanish Foreign Legion in Morocco to lead an "invasion" of Spain. We cannot reproduce that history here but there are many excellent books on this uprising against the elected Republican Government of Spain. We can recommend Hugh Thomas¹¹, Anthony Beevor¹², and Paul Preston¹³ as three additional sources of the background and history of the war. Preston's book is particularly good to understand the major leaders of the Second Republic as well as the "forces of the invasion" as the Spanish called the Fascists. By late fall, International units from all over Europe had been mobilized to help the endangered Republic. In November 1936, Franco had built two assaults on Madrid, one from the south and the other from the north by way of the Asturian coast. The division of Spain is seen in a map from Thomas' book.



Map 7 from Thomas¹¹, showing the division of Spain at the uprising.

Madrid held in November 1936 with the mobilization of the Madrileños (residents of Madrid), fortifications on the west of Madrid and a major battle at University City in the northern suburbs. Famous in International Brigades (IB) history was the arrival of the German Thälmann Battalion to help defend Madrid.

The first group of 96 Americans to travel to Spain left New York the day after Christmas in 1936. Douglas Seacord was one of that group. "C.H." could be a reporter since Liston Oak was a reporter for the *Daily Worker*. However, Charlotte Haldane was also in Barcelona in 1937. We will discuss her in coming diary entries.

Liston Oak had been publicity director for the International Labor Defense in the early 1930's and subsequently made several trips to Moscow. Interestingly, Robert Merriman wrote in his own biographical sketch³ that he had been involved with ILD in Berkeley so it is possible that Merriman knew Oak prior to Spain.

By 1937, Oak was working in Valencia in the office of the English Language Propaganda Division and described himself as Director of the Office. Milly Bennett who would go to work in the Propaganda Office arranging for stories for English language reporters would be in contact with Oak until at least May 1937. At that point, Oak became disenchanted with Spain and later became a virulent anti-communist in the US, writing stories as managing editor of the liberal anti-communist *New Leader* and for *The Voice of America*, especially during the Alger Hiss Case in the 1950's. He died in 1974.

Merriman talks of the bombing of a hospital in Barcelona in January with 10 dead. We have yet to find the details of that event but there is an article by Balcells¹⁴ that describes the air war on Catalonia by the Franquistas. Barcelona's *La Vanguardia* newspaper has no record of a bombing of a ship in the harbor killing 10 people in that week's papers. There was a torpedo attack on the Ciudad de Barcelona (it survived this attack) and the bombing of the English Embassy reported on January 10.¹⁵

Merriman also speaks of meeting Tom Wintringham, a commander of the British Battalion. Wintringham wrote a memoir¹⁶ describing his exploits in Spain. We will come across him several times in the next six months. Kitty B. is Kitty Bowler and Wintringham's future wife.¹⁷

January 15-16 ••• In Valencia

night 14th met M{arion} Greenspan at M.

15 Enero

S.Mauro

visited the office where Milly and L. O. {Liston Oak} are working. Visited the exhibit against fascism. Found International brigade Hdqtrs. Ate lunch with {Pinky} Griffiths AP man & Greenspan Returned to I.B. and had not sufficient documents and finally sent me to Militia where I received pass to Albacete. Met *Der Tag* representative. Went to 2 peseta nightclub with one drink included. Youth Congress opened today. Met Cober {Cockburn} D.W. London.

16 Enero

S. Marcelo

Visited the port - saw new caravan of trucks for housing. Received ticket and salvo-conducto for Albacete. Talked with Griffiths and he used pressure. Saw Koltsov. Met Rubio Hidalgo went to Vodka bar and saw group of American aviators (mercenaries) ate at Victoria and ran for train crowded to utmost. Got in 2nd class and soldiers sat and slept on floor almost impossible to pass. Some had bottles. Train started 1½ hrs late.

§ § §

To travel from one posting to another required a "salvo conducto" or a safe-conduct pass. Frequent references will be made to these important passes throughout the diary and many IB soldiers generated a lot of trouble for themselves when they did not have one. Desertion could be the charge and the penalties severe.

Merriman met several people on these two days in Valencia. "Met M. Greenspan at M." could be "Marion Greenspan at Milly's". M.

Greenspan is George Marion (a.k.a. Marion Greenspan, husband of Celia Greenspan). Celia Greenspan was the subject, along with Martha Gellhorn, of the documentary, "Into the Fire: American Women in the Spanish Civil War"¹⁸.



Notarized photograph of Marion Greenspan (George Marion) from a letter from Daily Worker associate editor Harry Gannes, naming Greenspan as the Daily Worker (DW) Correspondent in Spain. George Marion Papers ALBA 045, Tamiment Library, New York University Bobst Library.



Celia Greenspan clip from promotional materials on "Into the Fire" (Credit: Intothefirefilm.com)

The New York University's Tamiment Library has excellent holdings on the Spanish Civil War from the Abraham Lincoln Brigades Archives. We thank Tamiment for supporting us in this discussion of Merriman's Diary. Tamiment's finding aid on the George Marion papers discusses Celia Greenspan and her role as a nurse with Norman Bethune and later in Murcia hospital in charge of their medical laboratory. Adrienne Clarkson, a previous Governor General of Canada, mentions Celia Seborer Greenspan in her book "Norman Bethune"¹⁹.

Merriman says he met L.O. who was the Liston Oak with whom he shared a room with the previous night. He also says he met with writers for the German paper *Der Tag*.

Cober is a homophone of Cockburn (pronounced Coburn), who was a writer for the *Daily Worker (DW)* in London. Claud Cockburn (aka Frank Pitcairn) reported throughout the war and

there is a Gerda Taro photograph of him and Fred Copeman (we will meet him later) at Brunete.



Fred Pitcairn (left, aka Claud Cockburn) of the Daily Worker and Fred Copeman (photo by Gerda Taro)

Griffiths who wrote for the Associated Press is still a bit of a mystery. Both Milly Bennett and Merriman meet with Eric "Pinky" Griffiths, a New Zealander who worked as a pilot and in May was an AP reporter. It is likely this reference is to Pinky Griffiths.

Two other names are mentioned. Rubio Hidalgo (Luis Rubio Hidalgo) was Chief of the Foreign Press Office and Mikhail Koltsov was a writer for *Pravda* and an advisor to Stalin on activities going on in Spain at this time.

At the end of the 16th, Merriman has caught a train for Albacete. Albacete was the training base of the International Brigades. The diary flows over onto the next page and we will pick it up in two days.

§ § §

17-18 January ••• Arrival at Albacete

almost impossible to pass. Some had bottles. Train started 1½ hrs late.

17 Enero

S. Antonio Abad

and arrived 6³⁰ in morning in Albacete. Went to barracks I.B. but finally chased around until found cadres office and got letter for quarters and food until tomorrow. walked streets-damp and muddy

Lonesome-fear!!

Sunday and all is quiet. Staying in I.B. building across from Gran Hotel. Talked with political commissar. Will know answer tomorrow. Have room with bed to myself. Streets crowded this evening. Main street crowded with soldiers and quite well dressed women. Plastered with posters. Many economic.

18 Enero

Sta Prisca

Met Mrs J. T. Murphy - 5 Englishmen & e R. went to Cadres office again and then to general hdqtrs and presented letter. Went back at two & at five. Talked with comrade and told to return tomorrow at 6. Met English nurse who is going to Madrid and other two to another post. Saw German brigade leave. Fine bunch. Know two fine comrades – one German & the other Russian. Met Russian woman trying to be dentist here. Late at night political director of last Americans slept in my room. Talked late ...

§ § §

Edward Arthur Burroughs, the Bishop of Ripon in England, quoted a British seaman on war in *Fight for the Future (1916)*: "*Months of boredom punctuated by moments of terror*" : such is a description of life in the military will be reflected in Merriman's diary as he goes from the mundane to the terrifying in a few pages.

Merriman's diary is not difficult at all to understand for these two days in January but his diary is rarely filled by boredom. Even when not in battle, Merriman kept extremely busy and we will have few breaks over the year with as little to explain as in these two days.

At the time of his arrival in Albacete, the base of the International Brigades, Merriman was not officially in the International Brigades and was trying to sign up. Bob Merriman will spend a considerable amount of his next year near Albacete in the surrounding villages, leading the training bases. The "Cadres" office, mentioned in the Diary, was the Communist Party office in Albacete and the point of contact for those who were either sent by the Communist Party or who had a party card. At this time, the Brigade Training was led by André Marty, Commander of the Base at Albacete, and Lucien Vidal of France²⁰, who was later to lead at Albacete.



Mrs. J. T. (Molly) Murphy

Mrs. J.T. Murphy was named in the diary. She served as a nurse in Spain. Her husband, Jack Murphy, was a founder of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Molly Murphy is described by Angela Jackson as a "suffragette" who was an organizer for the Pankhurst Women's Social and Political Union in Sheffield, England.²¹ Jackson's study of the British nurses provides an invaluable aid to deciphering some of these cryptic remarks by Merriman. Molly Murphy would last until summer of 1937 in Spain returning home in poor health. In this passage, he mentions meeting Mrs. Murphy and one other nurse who were going to Madrid and two nurses who were going elsewhere, which was likely Grañen where British nurses were sent. "e. R" remains as a cryptic abbreviation here.

Another tremendous resource for untangling these diaries should be mentioned here. Marion Merriman Wachtel and Warren Lerude wrote a memoir about Robert Merriman in 1985, *American Commander in Spain*¹⁹. Mrs. Wachtel's reminiscences of the time

are touching and give much greater insight into Merriman's state of mind in going to Spain than does the diary. Marion did not accompany Bob on his entry to Spain and they had had quite a row over his leaving to volunteer to fight in the Spanish Civil War. Marion subsequently was ordered to leave Russia after Bob's departure. One can see that Merriman let his emotion of the moment sneak into the diary with the line interposed between the paragraphs "**Lonesome - fear!!**" His wife's memoir fills in a lot of the true emotion he felt about himself and his comrades at the time. It should be read along with this diary.

Merriman says that he met five Englishmen in Albacete along with Mrs. Murphy. At the time of Merriman's arrival, the British contingent of the Brigades had returned from the Cordoba front. Some of the British brigade went to Madrigueras for further training and many new British and Irish arrivals were sent there to be incorporated into the British Battalion. On the 11th of January, Frank Ryan and "Kit" Conway had led a company sized unit of the British to Las Rozas, a suburb of Madrid, to help in the fighting there. On the 17th of January, they were in the middle of a pitched battle to remove the Rebel forces from within Madrid's limits. An excellent study of the involvement of the Irish in Spain has been written by McLoughlin and explains many of the events that Merriman will encounter between the British and the Irish over the next month.⁶ Of the 145 British that went to Las Rozas for this campaign, only 67 returned.⁶

§ § §

January 19-20 ••• Settling in at Albacete

went to breakfast with American roommate. Met two fine Scotchmen

19 Enero

S. Canuto

and went for long walk in the country. One comrade only complete survivor of first English section. Has been on three fronts in Madrid. Country pretty but methods of cultivation and irrigation primitive. House pumps with wheel and buckets on rope which drops into well. Saw Kerrigan and had first talk. Visited staff and shall leave soon for Am. Section. Visited {Winkler} chief cadres and met the unhappy Russian woman dentist - Met Bulgarian from Moscow. In evening visited Sp. family listened to

20 Enero

S. Sebastian

radio and home thru moonlight only streets. Met Kitty. Went to lecture on history of Spanish events and then met Greenspan and 3 Americans from camp. Saw Donaldson and to see Vidal in the morning. May go out tomorrow. Found room for Greenspan. He is in Cerca Mercantil. Ate twice at Grand Hotel. Talked with Stembel {sic, Stember}.

§ § §

Bob Merriman clearly was accepted into the Brigades between the last diary post and these two days. He mentions meeting Peter Kerrigan²² who was Commissar of the British Battalion at this point. Vital Gajman (Lucien Vidal) is seen in photo in a Jugoslavian text "Španija"²³, the original of which is in the ALBA Archives. The Jugoslavian text identifies Vidal is the man with the glasses.

Merriman also mentions meeting "Winkler" who is unidentified in ALBA photos. Peter Winkler who was the personnel officer for the Brigades. Peter Winkler is shown on the photo below from Wikipedia.



Peter Winkler (Kazimierz Cichowski, Wikipedia Commons Photo)



ALBA Photo 177_175009. (l-r) Vladimir Copic, Hans Klaus, Lucien Vidal and Sizan (Suzanne). Sizan was said to be an organizer of one of the hospitals of the International Brigades. Identifications of Sizan and Vidal are from Kapor²³. This photo is believed to be from Ambite Mill on June 25, 1937.

Kitty Bowler has been mentioned previously as has Greenspan. This passage says that Merriman says that he found a room for Greenspan, a "he". This Greenspan is believed to be Marion Greenspan (aka George Marion, a reporter). George Marion was married to Celia Greenspan and went by the name Marion Greenspan when writing. The references to Greenspan will always be to the husband who worked in Madrid in the International Brigades offices there.

Donaldson is also mentioned as an initial contact for Bob Merriman. Alec Donaldson, from Scotland, arrived in Spain on Christmas Day 1936 and was sent to the Cadres Office by Peter Kerrigan. He requested front line service but Will Paynter denied the request. Donaldson then worked in the Brigades Commissariat in Madrid. He became demoralized and was stationed in Barcelona after April 1938.²⁴

The last name on the list is spelled Stembel but Merriman is clearly referring here to Samuel Stember, an American who Marion Merriman Wachtel referred to as "a somewhat minor functionary who was supposed to be the political leader of the American volunteers"²⁵. Stember was said "to lack the charisma to rally the men". While that criticism might seem damning, other studies of the Lincolns are no less harsh. Carroll²⁶ calls Stember "a weak man" incapable of challenging Andre Marty and the other French who were leading the training base. Landis says that Merriman and Stember came up to Albacete together, Merriman as Adjutant to James Harris, Commander of the Lincolns (we will hear much of him in weeks to come) and Stember as Commissar. Landis characterizes him as "a very uninspiring personality", quoting "Consensus".²⁷ And Cecil Eby, whom many Lincoln Vets came to distrust for his strong anti-Communist leanings in his writing, was characteristically nasty about Stember, calling him "a loser", a "smaller-than-life figure" and "The Jello".²⁸

It may not be surprising that immediately after arrival at Albacete and Tarazona de la Mancha for training, Bob Merriman was thrust into the leadership of the American contingent. His ROTC training made him one of the few early arrivals who had any kind of military experience. However, like any army, getting his assignment was a matter of waiting.

§ § §

January 21-22 ••• Merriman waits on the Brigades

21 Enero

Sta Inés

Went with Greenspan, to HQ, who finally left for Villanueva to see Americans. Visited Phil Bard on two occasions. He has only English nurse here. Talk with Vidal and received instruction. Spent afternoon trying to find uniform. Got everything except jacket which is most important. Planned to visit English camp but couldn't make it. Talked with Donaldson.

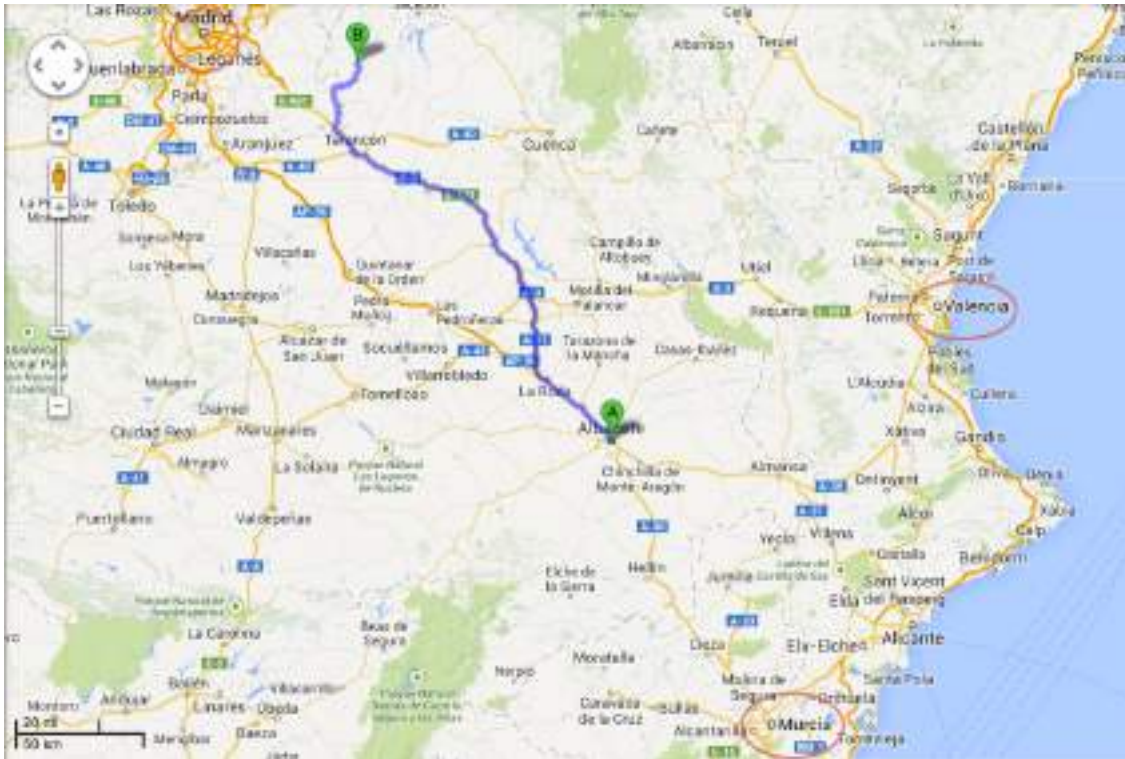
22 Enero

S. Vincente Español

At 9³⁰ reported at G.N. {Garda Nationale}. Met Steve Daduk and talked while waiting. Finally called in & bawled out by Marty who told Stember that we were instructed to show at nine sharp. Mistake. Given pamphlet and came out with Vidal. Had 3-hour discussion on situation up to date and then general meeting in which Vidal & Stember spoke. Ate & had discussion in evening. Commander Harris and I discussed plans. Steve came in with transfer. Met mayor of town.

§ § §

Merriman spent several days in Albacete trying to get a decision if he was in the Brigades and to which unit he would be assigned. Not all of the Brigades were at the Brigade headquarters in Albacete. A few minutes of geography might help understand some of the names in the diary. First, in the map below, Albacete (A) is situated between Valencia and Madrid.



Map of Spain in the Levante Region. Madrid is shown circled in the upper left and Valencia is on the right. Two other locations are shown at the ends of the route. At the north is Albares where the Lincolns will end up near the end of the first diary and at the south is Albacete. Also circled is Murcia which was the location of a major hospital. Recall the fighting in January was around Madrid. Credit: maps.google.com

For reference, the distance between Albacete and Albares is 220 km. At a finer scale, the training of the International Brigades was done around Albacete.

Merriman is in Albacete on the 21-22nd of January but he says Marion Greenspan was off to Villanueva de {la} Jara which is shown on the smaller scale map below to be about 30km north of Albacete and this was to become the initial training base of the Lincoln Brigade. We point out other local towns: Tarazona de la Mancha (where the IB's trained later), Madrigueras (where the British Battalion was based) and La Roda which was a stop on the way to Madrid. Gas was often picked up at La Roda since it served all of the training bases on the way to the Front.



The region around Albacete, Spain. The tag "A" is Villaneuva de la Jara where the Lincolns will initially train (and where the French had trained), Tarazona de la Mancha is where the Lincoln and Washington Battalions will later train, Madrigueras was the home of the British Battalion, and Albacete was the Base of the International Brigades. La Roda (also circled) was a center for training of other battalions and a gasoline and train depot that would be used to go to the front. Credit: maps.google.com

Merriman mentions American Phil Bard in this diary segment. The artist Philip Bard² was born in 1912 and lived in New York City. Bard became a member of the American Communist Party in 1931. Part of the first group who sailed on the Normandie on December 26, 1936, Bard was made Lincoln Battalion Commissar. Bard had asthma, however, and health problems plagued him before he could see any action. He would be returned to the US on March 19, 1937, and perform coordination duties for the VALB in New York City.

On the 21st, Merriman says that he spoke with Vidal and received his instructions. He obviously was being appointed as an officer since he was looking for a uniform and jacket. Bob Merriman felt that officers needed to look like officers. This ran at cross-currents

to the "rank and file" attitudes of many of the volunteers who were from the working class and not in "management". This conflict is a thread that will run through the diary and pop up frequently.

On the 22nd, Merriman says he spoke with Steve and the name is spelled Raddick. Michael Raddock has not yet arrived in Spain so this is likely to be Steve Daduk^b who became the company commander of Lincoln Company #2. It is believed that he is talking to Daduk. Victor (Hoar) Howard's excellent book on the Mackenzie-Papineau (Canadian) Battalion relates:

*"Merriman drew up a table of organization which called for two infantry companies and one machine-gun company. Commanding these were John Scott, an Englishman; Stephen Daduk, and American veteran of the air battles over Madrid the previous fall; and Douglas Seacord who was said to have been a civilian lecturer at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point."*²⁹

Marion Merriman Wachtel repeats the bawling out by André Marty in her memoir of Merriman. She said "Bob thought of Marty as a pompous little man, a martinet of the Communist party. But Bob also knew Marty was dedicated in the fight against fascism..."²⁹ Marty repeatedly shows up in studies of the war as an increasingly unstable master of the Brigades. Attribution of executions ordered by Marty in 1938 are still debated. Incontestable, however, are his writings in the Comintern archives about certain Lincolns that are unsympathetic at best and highly critical and derogatory at worse. In 1938, Marty would characterize Merriman as a "fascist". Many of the requests for repatriation of Brigaders back to the US went across Marty's desk and denials were routine.

^b Steven Daduk was born March 10, 1910 and died October 10, 1986, both in Brooklyn, New York. Daduk claimed service as a pilot in the IB in the fall of 1936 where he got a broken hip when shot down. He said he also served in line service near Madrid and was shot. Daduk will initially command the 2nd company, but Merriman will report that Daduk suffered an apparent nervous breakdown before he went into action. He returned to the US on July 2, 1937 and spoke extensively at fund raisers for the FALB.

Merriman again mentions Stember and James Harris, the Brigade Commander. We spoke of Stember previously and Harris will be the subject of discussion later.

§ § §

January 23-24 ••• “Long Live the Lincoln Battalion!”

Long Live the Lincoln Battalion!

23 Enero

S. Ildfonso

up at 6 - meeting of NCO at 7³⁰ and discussed day's plans. Rain came up and men formed in meeting room and we held chalk talk about formations until noon. After lunch marched out to the practice field for drill in new formations. Some difficulties. Rain drove us in and NCO learned new procedure for barrack order while rest of men cleaned yard. In evening had chalk talk with NCO and discussion with two Irish comrades. They will be a problem. Lonesome for Marion but in general satisfied.

24 Enero

S. Timoteo

day of hard work - Rainy weather – prepared indoor range and fired. City mayor offered us things refused to French who were here ahead of us. Attitude of local people towards us is fine.

§ § §

The title of the page is clear. Bob Merriman had been appointed as Adjutant to James Harris to lead the Lincoln Battalion in Villaneuva de la Jara. His first task was to meet with the Non-commissioned Officers (NCOs) and start a boot camp training regimen.

Merriman talks about two Irish comrades who will be a problem. It is unclear from the diary who that may be.

Since this is a short, relatively self-explanatory page, it is possible to address "Vidal", who was the head of Training for the Brigades in the Spring of 1937. According to Antony Beevor³⁰ and Martin

Sugarman³¹, Lucien Vidal was a nom-de-guerre for Vital Gayman or Gajman of France.³² Some parts of his biography seem curious: "il est décoré de la Croix de guerre en 1917" does not align with the list of Croix de Guerre awardees that are on the web (that doesn't make it false, just needing further verification). What appears to be known is that Vidal was removed from the Brigades over the summer of 1937, returned to France, held responsible positions with Radio Telephone France (RTF) and died in 1985. A Wikipedia article's assertion of a relationship with Francois Mitterrand cannot be confirmed at this time. It is known that Vidal was removed in 1937 for alleged financial improprieties with Brigade Funds.³²

After the war, Vidal was quite critical of how the Brigades were used in Spain. His 436 page unpublished memoir on the formation of the Brigades can be found in the RGASPI Archives.³³ We might note at this point that the RGASPI Archives are available online and Fond 545 addressing the XVth Brigade is largely reproduced on microfilm at the Tamiment Library at New York University.

§ § §

January 25-26 ••• Training at Villaneuva de la Jara

25 Enero

Sta. Elvira

Up early - Arranged new range at other end of town. General instruction - Church and gold decorations impressed some men in way people are often impressed in S(oviet) U(nion). Interesting - treasures stored. In the evening 41 new men arrived. Fed and assembled in meeting room. Talks by Harris, Stember, Daduk, Kelly, Parker, Landeta & myself. After meeting NCO meeting and political meeting elected political commissars.

26 Enero

S. Policarpo

New men had time off. In morning and afternoon gave talk with blackboard. At 1³⁰ formed in front of barracks to give send-off to local volunteers in militias marched them round town and to bus and lined up and gave them salute as they drove through the two lines. Man came from Control Service and talked with men. Entertainment in church. 10 acts and footlights - Aaron Harris led.

§ § §

Settling in at Villaneuva de la Jara included building a new firing range at the edge of town. The cupola of the church described by Merriman is shown below and the photographer says that you still can see bullet holes in the painting inside. Merriman is not impressed with the gilt ceiling in the church.

The names of the colleagues with Merriman on January 25 were Harris, Stember, Daduk, Kelly, Parker and what appears to be the name "Tenbetti". Merriman will misstate names of new people he has met. We will correct them as we proceed through the diary. In addition, some of Merriman's abbreviations will be spelled out for clarification. There will be a Parker in the Brigades but he had not arrived in the Lincolns in January. This is likely the Native American Indian John William Parks. We will see that in less than

a month, Mr. Parks will be dead in one of the more unfortunate mistakes at the Battle of Jarama.



Villanueva de la Jara. Ceiling of the the Santa Clara Convent in Villaneuva de la Jara where the Lincolns were housed. The building is now a supermercado (supermarket) (Photo Credit: Alan Warren)

Harris is James Harris who was to command the Lincolns with Merriman. James Harris was Polish in nationality and Harris is a *nom-de-guerre*. Lincoln veteran Robert Gladnick (in an unpublished memoir found at the Hoover Institution's Archives) says that Harris travelled to Spain on the Normandie with the first group and used his actual name on the manifest. To this point, all the names on the sail manifest are identified as Lincolns and a Polish name is not on the list.

Stember and Daduk have been discussed before. Kelly cannot be any of the Kelly's listed in the ALBA archives. The closest match is Thomas Kelly who arrived in Spain on February 7, 1937, but that is too late for this diary entry. Sandor Voros' list (private



communication from Chris Brooks) of the Lincolns at Jarama lists Kelly as a section leader in section 2 of Company 1 of the Lincolns. Kelly is likely to be an Irish comrade. McLoughlin's list³⁴ of the Irish in Spain lists Michael Kelly who was a platoon leader in the Lincoln Battalion. Kevin Buyer's excellent site on the International Brigades has the photograph of Michael Kelly of

Michael Kelly³⁵

Galway.

Tenbetti (Merriman's spelling) is believed to be Juan/John Landeta. Landeta shows up on the list of Lincolns used by Adolph Ross to identify photographs after the war. John or Juan Landeta was a Cuban American student from New York City who arrived in Spain on January 14, 1937.³⁶ Art Landis says of the Cubans³⁷:

"In the winning of the villager's goodwill {in Villaneuva}, credit must also be given to a young Cuban named Rodolfo de Armas and his equally young commissar, Landetta. De Armas and Landetta were in command of a Cuban section of approximately 60 men that had been assigned to the Lincoln Battalion. They called themselves the Antonio Guiterras Centuria after a revolutionary student, a victim of the Machado terror. De Armas and Landetta had also fought against the early Machado dictatorship of Cuba...."



Research continues into members of the Brigades and an article was published in 2010 on the Antonia Guiterras Centuria on the march in Barcelona.³⁸ Landeta and De Armas are the head of this column.

§ § §

January 27-28 ••• Organizing to Move to the Front

27 Enero

S. Juan Crisóstomo

Left on bus for Albacete arrived about 11 and spent day in seeing people getting supplies, checking on mistake of supplies sent to English and meeting many boys (English) who have been at front. Met some Americans and hunted for our head man. Ate and returned about 1³⁰. New orders about leaving earlier than expected. Who goes?

28 Enero

S. Cirilo

Arose early-went to H.G and finally met Neumann & then Gal, Vidal, Platone and others - went to Banca España got two trucks, waylaid Stern & met new men from our camp - sent cable to Marion. Drove back in truck. Camp in uproar Steele drunk & broke door - claim about pamphlets & accommodation of men with guns - Royce trouble - also bet. Steve & Stember. Night drill night before. Long session into night about going to front - all smoothed out.

§ § §

Bob Merriman's task on these days was still organizational. Not only did he need to train increasingly large numbers of new men who were coming into Villanueva de la Jara, but he had to feed and supply them. The hub for materiel and people was in Albacete. Between them was Madrigueras where the British were. Merriman would find out quickly that the "requisitioning" process included diverting material to your unit when it was intended for another. He found this out the hard way when his supplies only made it half way. The Americans were resourceful, however, and one can often find discussions of "organizing" material that was on the move. His mention of "waylaid Stern" probably falls into this category. Commissars and Adjutants' jobs revolved about getting the supplies they needed.

There is a hint of trouble to come in the phrase "hunted for our head man". James Harris would often go off and be hard to find. Merriman's cryptic "Who goes?" suggests they were already planning their move to the front lines, even though the Americans had been in training for less than two weeks. Merriman would be making up lists of Americans who would shortly go to the front.

On the 28th, many new names arise in the diary. Merriman will mention nearly 300 people over the course of the year and this gives additional historical value of being able to place people by date. We have not met General Gal before. Janos Galicz³⁹ (General Gall) of Yugoslavia was the military leader of the 15th Brigade. Over the summer, he will be mentioned often in the diary.



Leadership of the 5th Army. (l-r) unidentified man (possibly the driver), Peter Becker, possibly Hans Kahle, David Zaret (Gal's Chief of Staff), Vladimir Copic, George Aitken, Suzanne (Sizen), Lucien Vidal, and General Gal (Janos Galicz). Photo believed to have been taken at Ambite Mill on June 25, 1937, at a fiesta thrown by General Gal. ALBA Photo 177_175001, Tamiment Library, NYU, New York, NY.

Platone refers to Felice Platone. Platone was a member of the Communist Party in Italy and became Chief of Staff of the International Brigades.⁴⁰ Platone will show up in the next few months and then not be seen again in the diary. Neumann (Nueman, later to be written Newman) appears frequently in the

diary early on. This is probably the Austrian Doctor Rudolf Neumann who was an early organizer of the International Brigades in Albacete and first Chief of the Medical Service. Vidal mentions him briefly in his report on the formation of the International Brigades.³³

Merriman commandeered a truck from Marvin Stern who was the first Commissar of the Lincoln Battalion. Merriman will become extremely resourceful over the new few months in making sure he has access to transportation. Carroll says:

Given the importance of the commissars, the first American leaders appeared woefully inadequate. Phil Bard, appointed by the American Communist Party in New York, lacked any military skills. When the Lincolns moved to the town of Villaneuva de la Jara for exercises, Bard remained at Albacete to handle battalion affairs; chronic asthma soon forced his return to the United States. As his replacement, Bard appointed another volunteer named Marvin Stern, a New York seaman, who soon offended the local mayor by demanding to know why he had not yet collectivized the land. Argumentative and arrogant, Stern nearly came to blows with several of the men. Angry with his leadership, the Lincolns elected a political committee to bring their grievances to the brigade command. Commander Vidal's response was to call them "naughty children."....⁴¹

Stern clashed with Stember as well and resigned as Commissar to return to the ranks. He disappeared from the Lincolns and was said to have died in Spain in a cloud of innuendo.⁴²

When he got back at Villanueva, Merriman found order disrupted by Ray Steele who had gotten drunk and kicked in a door. Eby says that he was jailed as "drunk and disorderly".⁴² Ray Steele would work as a cook and served in the Lincoln Battalion Machine Gun Company. He served at Jarama and Brunete, and was killed in the latter action. Merriman also had trouble with Andrew Royce.^c

^c Royce was born July 14, 1910, in Malcom, Iowa, and died on March 16, 2003. Royce would become shellshocked from the upcoming action at Jarama on February 27. He was back in action at Guadalajara in March and then assigned to the Transport Group and Training in Albacete from June to November of 1937. He would serve in the Ebro Offensive in July-August 1938 in Company 2

January 29-30 ••• Lincoln Battalion Companies Formed

29 Enero

S. Francisco de Sales

Laid out new company - Steve & {John} Scott at head. Meeting & plans for front. Held political meeting and straightened out things which had accumulated night before. Had meeting with cooks. Steve came back from Albacete and later he had late talk with Scott. Didn't realize then what was to come out of it.

30 Enero

Sta. Marina

Called in by {Eugene} Morse, {Al} Tanz, Scott with Stember. Lecture put men on spot. Steve had talked with Scott about bad front, slaughterhouse and about watching me. We went to Madrig{ueras} & presented case. Talk with Ryan & Wintringham – Macartney and saw the General. Springhall visited map room and armory then saw new rifles (1936). Nathan & Springhall came with me & held late hearing. Sat in on it. Lasted until 3²⁰ Mistakes shown & Steve's statement shown false.

§ § §

Action heated up at Villaneuva de la Jara over the next two days. Leaders for the new Lincoln Companies were chosen. John Scott, whose real name was Inver Marlow, was made commander of Company #1, which included the Connolly Column, a group of Irish volunteers who preferred to be in the Lincolns rather than staying with the British Battalion. While some of the Irish (just over half voted to transfer) may have separated themselves from the British, Scott himself was British and the friction between him and the Connolly column would show later.

of the Lincolns. He returned to the US in December 15, 1938, on the SS Paris.

The #2 company was placed under American Steve Daduk, who was reputed to have been a pilot in Madrid earlier in 1936. Landis says that Daduk's exploits as a pilot were verified⁴³ but questions over his background were part of the difficulties with Merriman. The third Machine Gun Company was led by Douglas Seacord. Landis points out that the Company only had two machine guns, an old French Hotchkiss and a Chauchot, both of which were worn down so much no one knew where the bullets were going to go. Landis says:

The Machine Gun Company with, or without its guns, gives an indication of the background and thinking of its members, for they had proudly elected to call themselves the Tom Mooney Company after American labor leader Thomas Mooney, who, at that very moment, was serving a life sentence in Alcatraz Federal Prison.⁴⁸

A photograph of the Tom Mooney Machine Gun Company can be found in the Paul Burns collection at Tamiment. One gunner in the Company said "We behaved like a bunch of anarchists, but we loved that man {Seacord}"⁴⁴.



The Tom Mooney Machine Gun Company. David Smith is to the right of the banner. ALBA Photo 184:1:48:1 in the Paul Burns Collection. Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, 70 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012, New York University Libraries.

On the 30th, Merriman's challenges arose with an impromptu meeting with Stember, Eugene Morse, Al Tanz and John

Scott. Apparently his lecture brought out the unpreparedness of the men. "Steve had talked to Scott about bad front, slaughter house and watching me" is very cryptic. Daduk was reputed to have expertise at the front from Fall 1936 and he may have been referring to the Madrid front being dangerous for untrained troops. Obviously, Daduk was making charges about Merriman and there was a suggestion that Merriman was a Russian plant, since he had come to Spain via Moscow. The "charges" made by Daduk against Merriman were run by the American leadership and the British who were at Madrigueras. Wilfred Macartney, the British Battalion commander, was described ungraciously by Eby as a "paunchy *grandboulevardier*, who, even in Spain, drank nothing other than good champagne and bottled water." Hugh Thomas notes in a footnote "The leader of the English Battalion in training had been Wilfred Macartney, a flamboyant journalist of the Left who was not a Communist - though he had been to prison for giving military secrets to Russia. Already a rich man, he had grown richer on the profits of the book he then wrote on his experiences, *Walls Have Mouths*, published in 1935, after leaving prison, with an introduction by Compton Mackenzie. He had to abandon command of the Brigade because he was shot in the leg {actually it was in the arm} by Peter Kerrigan, Commissar of all the British in Spain, who was apparently merely cleaning his gun".⁴⁵ Kerrigan in a taped interview at the British Imperial War Museum disputed the reports that he had shot Macartney and implied that Macartney had intentionally shot himself. In Kerrigan's words "Who cleans their gun in a moving vehicle?"⁴⁶

The other two names mentioned here were Eugene Morse^d, the head of the Supply Depot and Al Tanz, who was the Quartermaster. Tanz's biography and photo is shown below.

Merriman finishes by introducing the English Captain Douglas (Dave) F. Springhall and Captain George Montague Nathan, the British Chief of Staff. The rifles of which Merriman speaks are new, dated 1936. Many of the Lincolns went into action with

^d Eugene Morse was born August 2, 1908, in Brooklyn, NY. Sailed in the first group to Spain and was injured as a Lieutenant in the first action on February 23. He returned to the US in October 1937. He served in World War II in the Army but passed away August 24, 1948.

"Mexicanskis" which were rifles made for the Russian war against the White Russians and which were sold to Mexico. They came from Mexico but had the Winchester imprints of the Russian Imperial Army and were vintage 1917.

At the end, Merriman notes that the charges against him by Daduk were shown to be false and ultimately this event contributed to Daduk's demise in the Battalion.



Al Tanz^e, Brigade Quartermaster from February to August 1937. ALBA Photo 177_188081, Tamiment Library, NYU.

^e Alfred Leo Tanz was March 15, 1906, in New York City. A graduate of the City College of New York and NY Law school, he was a lawyer and member of the American Labor Party. Tanz served on the line at Jarama and later was battalion quartermaster. He was one of a few Americans who served two tours in Spain returning in the summer of 1938. He was wounded in action in the wrist during the Ebro Offensive. He returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the SS *Ausonia*. He served in the OSS during WWII and parachuted into France prior to D-Day. Highly decorated for his service in WWII, he died in November 29, 2000, in Oakland, California, and is survived by his spouse.

January 31 ••• Training Heats up at Villaneuva

31 Enero

S. Pedro Nolasco

Arose early after hard day & night before. 2 hrs sleep. Steve & Harris left for Madrigueras. Steve suspended and Scott & Morse slept late. Gave lecture on tanks, grenades, gas masks showed mask. Propaganda truck arrived – printed leaflets in English & Spanish saw two films Chapayev & Kronstadt -- one showing for kids at 6. Gave speech & heard local band. To bed at last.

NOTAS

Got rid of Givney today. Jan 30 met son of J. B. S. Haldane New batch of men received Daduk led good day in the field and fine lecture at night and then late the scandal burst and hearing was held.

§ § §

As training progressed in Villaneuva, the leadership personalities in the Lincoln Battalion chafed at each other. The accusations of Steve Daduk against Merriman may have been resolved in Merriman's mind, but the January 31 entry in the diary shows that the issue was not over. Merriman says that Steve Daduk accompanied James Harris to Madrigueras where Daduk was suspended. John Scott (Invar Marlow) and Eugene Morse are again mentioned in today's diary. The day was otherwise routine and Russian movies were shown in the evening. The reader can watch the movies Chapayev⁴⁷ and Kronstadt⁴⁸ online. Together they run about six hours so it must have been quite the movie night in Villaneuva de la Jara.

Merriman also mentions that the step-son of Professor J. B. S. Haldane⁴⁹ visited Villaneuva. J. B. S. Haldane was a chemist and advised on chemical warfare and protection from the poison gas used in World War I. Merriman relates that they began training against gas warfare.



Left to right: Allan Johnson, unknown, Ronnie Burgess, son of Charlotte Haldane and his Mother. ALBA Photo 177_177084, Tamiment Library, NYU.

Merriman notes that Daduk did well in training on January 30 but then the "scandal broke" and the hearing on the previous diary pages was held. Merriman freely uses the term "scandal" throughout the diary and it may not have the same connotation in the 1930's that it has today. One of the dictionary definitions of "scandalous" is "defamatory; libelous." That would clearly fit the situation here. It is believed that the scandal goes back to the fictionalized stories of Daduk's history in Spain. In Sugarman's article about Jews who fought in Spain he says about Daduk:

Capt. Samuel Leon (?) Stephen Daduek/Daduk – 1st American to fly for Loyalists, red/blonde haired pilot, stocky, former sign writer and electrician, wore a red bandana and blue overalls when flying – b 10.2.10 Brooklyn – 2367 64th St Brooklyn - d 10.10.86 – WIA in crash breaking his thigh – flew in battles over Madrid, in Potisis, Fokkers and Breguets (in which he shot down one Heinkel 111). Before and after flying he had fought in the infantry as a company commander of the

Lincolns and with the Thaelman's – WIA several times. Fought in WW2 Medical Corps.⁵⁰

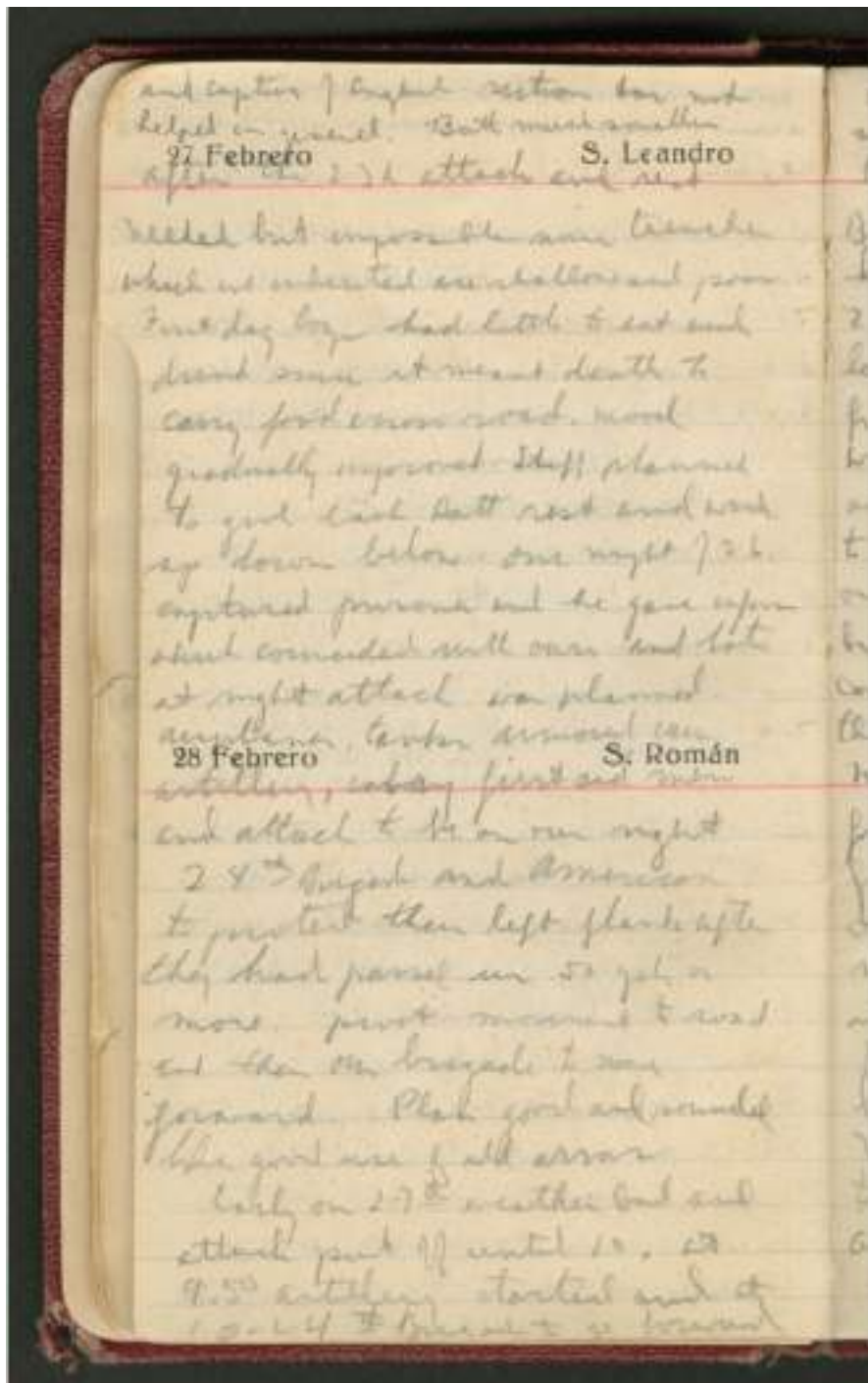
As noted before, Landis believed the claims that Daduk had been a pilot, but his resume apparently did not bear the scrutiny given him in the hearing of January 30. Some texts have said that Daduk was removed as Company commander of the 2nd Company just before Jarama "when he cracked up" or "lost his nerves". Eugene Morse, above, was the 2nd Company commander when in two weeks they will go to the Front. From Merriman, it is apparent that this swapping of Morse for Daduk happened quite early in training.

The notes page at the end of January gave Merriman the chance to catch up with other business and he notes that John Givney was removed from the battalion on January 30. No reason can be found in Merriman's diary. John Givney deserted in May 1937 and would be a problem for Merriman throughout the spring months. Givney will be injured in the Battle of Brunete on July 9, 1937.

§ § §

FEBRUARY

1937



February 1 – 2 ••• Hunting for New Quarters

1 Febrero

S. Cecilio

Slept late - talked about meeting held in Madrigueras last night. Copeman came from English to help us a day or two - gave lecture on anti-aircraft. Looked for new quarters - visited beautiful building to be used for aviators or hospital visited smaller ones and former Marquis house – talked two hours in office with men from Brigade Headquarters Mexicans - ate late in hospital.

2 Febrero

La Purificación de N. S.

Copeman stayed with us another day. Many discussions and suggestions. Several arrests for drinking one for supposed attack on woman in guard civil. Men sentenced five days disciplinary labor. Cox caused trouble and escaped caught. Late session about organization of Battalion. New officers being drawn out. Givney!!!

§ § §

Fred Copeman in his autobiography *Reason in Revolt* refers indirectly to the tools related to his anti aircraft lecture as mentioned by Merriman:

I concentrated on the Lewis gun, easy to handle and very light, and I knew all about. In the end, six of these guns were made serviceable, and either by design or by accident, I found myself in command of a small anti-aircraft unit..... The Lewis gun section soon became efficient. An old trick was to throw tin lids into the air from the trenches, the gunners having to hit them before they touched the ground. No small feat this, and yet every No.1 gunner within three weeks was able to hit the lids two at a time in the air.⁵¹



Fred Copeman and perhaps Bill Meredith, ALBA PHOTO 177-178032, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, 70 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012, New York University Libraries.



Lewis machine gun similar to the ones described by Fred Copeman and used for anti aircraft defense.

Merriman relates that he is shopping for new quarters for the Americans. He looks at buildings presumably in Villaneuva de la Jara. The size of the training battalion is having growing pains.

Merriman speaks of the feistiness of the men and the drinking that needed correction. Barry McLoughlin's *The Irish in Spain* relates:

As regards excessive drinking, there seems to have been a temporary ban on the sale of alcohol in the village {Madrigueras}, to which the men reacted by ordering café frio, a potent mixture of cold coffee liberally laced with rum. Fred Copeman, in his chortling interview with the Imperial War Museum, mentions a "punch-up between the Irish and the English late at night sent to the guardhouse trivial stuff", adding the erroneous comment that this was the reason that Frank Ryan took his men to the American Battalion. In fact the very opposite was the case, but "old Fred", for all his affability, was never a stickler for historical detail, neither in his memoir of the war (1948) nor in the interview he gave in 1978.⁵²

Several men are reprimanded and one deserts. "Cox" is very likely Thomas Cox Jr. He was born in Douglas, Alaska, and was a Native American. Two weeks after Merriman wrote this page, Cox would be in one of two trucks that accidentally drove into the enemy lines on February 16, 1937, moving to the lines at Jarama. Fifteen Americans and one Canadian were killed, and only one wounded prisoner survived, but had his throat cut by a band of scavenging Moors that night. Cox arrived in Spain on January 23rd 1937.

John Givney^a will continue to be a thorn in Merriman's side all spring. His transgression is not detailed here.

^a John Givney was born on May 13, 1893 in Liverpool, England. He immigrated to the US in 1916 and became a citizen in 1922. He worked as a seaman and lived in New York City. 45 years old, Givney came in the third group, sailing January 9, 1937 aboard the *Lafayette*. He served with the XV BDE, Lincoln BN, and was listed as having deserted in May 1937 to Barcelona. He was subsequently wounded in action during Brunete in July 1937 and returned September 13, 1938 aboard the *Aquitania*. Givney died July 21, 1974 in Liverpool and was buried in the Catholic Cemetery there.

February 3-4 ••• “Busy Day, Many Tales”

3 Febrero

S. Blas

Spent whole day in field. Had slept in hospital and whole company late. Laid on top of hill with glasses and noise makers and watched tactics and movement of Scott's Co. Food stolen by McDonald, Haywood or peasant. Have been bothered with cold. Scott's company moved well but slowly and day as a whole successful. Cleaning of barracks continued.

4 Febrero

S. Andrés Corsino

Pushed through final arrangements for Battalion Hdqtrs and arranged moving of hospital to new convent. Busy day many tales – {George} Hendrickson, Hathaway, Hedley and others. New quarters are beautiful & large. Late in day discontent rumbled over food. Officers Mess. Prostitute training – lost time – guard – political set up etc. I talked one hour at pol. meeting and Parker followed. General discussion hot. Announced organization of Batt.

§ § §

Extensive field maneuvers were conducted in the countryside surrounding Villanueva de la Jara. However, as William Herrick noted:

Two days later I was ordered by Seacord to observe a machine gun squad during maneuvers - without a gun. We were guarding ingress to the village at the narrow point where the road passed the fortress church.⁵³

The lack of available effective weaponry is often noted by the brigaders at this time. In their training at nearby Madrigueras, The British often used football rattles to simulate machine gun fire!

John Tisa also remembers:

The numbers of rifles allotted to our infantry was too few for the number of men. Those without rifles used broomsticks or canes to train and march with. It didn't matter, though, for those outdated and prehistoric rifles were not serviceable anyway. If you had tried to fire one, you would have risked having your head blown off. Fortunately, no ammunition was available.⁵⁴

Merriman notes the actions of Scott's No. 1 company on February 3rd. Composed principally of Irish and Cubans, it seemed to have worked fairly well.

What the "many tales" were leaves much to the imagination but one would guess that Merriman was finding out about the history of his new men. George Hendrickson (1906-1976) was once in the merchant marine, went over with the first 96 volunteers, and having been a trained radio operator on a ship ended up being



attached to Transmissions. He was with the Lincolns until May 1937 and then served as a wireless radio operator for the greater part of the war owing to his skills. He was solitary in an outpost on La Muela in Teruel at Christmas, 1937, operating his radio. He returned to the United States on February 9, 1939 with one of the last groups of Internationals to leave Spain.

George Hendrickson (ALBA 052, Tamiment Library, NYU, author's photo).

William Hathaway was from Downen Grove, Illinois. He was killed on February 27th, 1937 at Jarama. The only Hedley named in IB lists is Englishman John F. Hedley from Liverpool, who came over in December 1936, and left sometime in 1937. "Parker" has been identified as John William Parks, who was then commissar of No. 2

company. Merriman's final line was that he had "announced organization of the Battalion". This was to have dramatic repercussions, as will be seen over the next few days. It probably led to the "hot" discussions of the evening meeting.

Between February 3 and February 6, nine battalions of Italian Black Shirts and their mechanized forces had attacked the coastal town of Malaga between Gibraltar and Grenada. Defending the town were 40,000 Republicans led by Colonel Villalba. By February 7, the defenders and townspeople were in a mass exodus under fire up the coast. The Fascists took Malaga and reportedly shot over 4,000 people in the next week. William Beeching mentions that Norman Bethune, historically the most well known doctor in Spain, rushed south to Malaga when he heard about this exodus, Beeching quotes Bethune:

... the farther we went the more pitiful the sights became. Thousands of children -- we counted five thousand under ten years of age -- and at least one thousand of them barefoot and many of them clad only in a single garment. They were slung over their mother's shoulders or clung to her hands. Here a father staggered along with two children of one and two years of age on his back in addition to carrying pots and pans or some treasured possession. The incessant stream of people became so dense we could barely force the car through them

. . . it was difficult to choose which to take. Our car was besieged by a mob of frantic mothers and fathers who with tired outstretched arms held up to us their children, their eyes and faces swollen and congested by four days of sun and dust.

"Take this one." "See this child." "This one is wounded." Children with bloodstained rags wrapped around their arms and legs, children without shoes, their feet swollen to twice their size crying helplessly from pain, hunger and fatigue. Two hundred kilometers of misery. Imagine four days and four nights, hiding by day in the hills as the fascist barbarians pursued them by plane, walking by night packed in a solid stream of men, women, children, mules, donkeys, goats, crying out the names of their separated relatives lost in the mob. How

could we choose between taking a child dying of dysentery or a mother silently watching us with great sunken eyes carrying against her open breast her child born on the road two days ago. She had stopped walking for ten hours only. Here was a woman of sixty unable to stagger another step, her gigantic swollen legs with their open varicose ulcers bleeding into her cut linen sandals. Many old people simply gave up the struggle, lay down by the side of the road and waited for death.

We first decided to take only children and mothers. Then the separation between father and child, husband and wife became too cruel to bear. We finished by transporting families with the largest number of young children and the solitary children of which there were hundreds without parents.

And now comes the final barbarism ... On the evening of the 12th when the little seaport of Almeria was completely filled with refugees, its population swollen to double its size. When forty thousand exhausted people had reached a haven of what they thought was safety. We were heavily bombed by German and Italian fascist airplanes. The siren alarm sounded thirty seconds before the first bomb fell. These planes made no effort to hit the government battleship in the harbour or bomb the barracks. They deliberately dropped ten great bombs in the very center of the town where on the main street were sleeping, huddled together on the pavement so closely that a car could pass only with difficulty, the exhausted refugees. After the planes had passed I picked up in my arms three dead children from the pavement in front of the Provincial Committee for the Evacuation of Refugees where they had been standing in a great queue waiting for a cupful of preserved milk and a handful of dry bread, the only food some of them had for days. The street was a shambles of the dead and dying, lit only by the orange glare of burning buildings. In the darkness the moans of the wounded children. Shrieks of agonized mothers, the curses of the men rose in a massed cry higher and higher to a pitch of intolerable intensity. One's body felt as heavy as the dead themselves, but empty and hollow, and in one's brain burned a bright flame of hate.⁵⁵

February 5–6 ••• The Battalion Starts to Function

5 Febrero

Sta. Àgueda

Slept late due to cold and dealt with Mayor on several cases. Arose allotted quarters in new Hdqtrs – had several conferences – talked with Stern when Stern [got] up and went to Stember. Matter settled but I found unusual attitude in Stern. Made late rounds for checking and talked until late with Steve and some men in mess hall went to bed.

6 Febrero

Sta. Dorotea

Conferences and received new quarters for one section in old priest's house. Battalion starting to function. Talked with Co. Commander. Later looked for place to eat in town – visited some local coffee shops and to bed early. Trouble with guard posting and many details of written work.

§ § §

And so the training and organization of the Battalion continues. Merriman talked with Marvin Stern when Stern walked off on him. Marvin Stern was a 29 year old New York teacher who arrived on the first ship, the Normandie. Stern was appointed commissar of the Lincoln Battalion by Philip Bard who remained at the Albacete Cadres office to record and direct new men who would arrive in the town. The comment that Merriman had to deal with the Mayor of the town on several cases is explained by Peter Carroll in his comment on Stern:

Bard appointed another volunteer named Marvin Stern, a New York seaman [sic], who soon offended the local mayor by demanding to know why he had not yet collectivized the land. Argumentative and arrogant, Stern nearly came to blows with several of the men. Angry with his leadership, the Lincolns elected a political committee to bring their grievances to the

Brigade Command. Commander Vidal's response was to call them "naughty children".⁵⁶

A related comment on the unrest in the formation of the battalion was made by William Herrick^b:

One morning several days before we left the village, as we stood at attention outside our barracks, Commissar Stern introduced a plump, middle-aged, unprepossessing man named Sam Stember as our new battalion political commissar. Then Stern, to our utter astonishment, strode white-faced to an infantry squad and just like that became a simple rank-and-filer. Our heads whirled. There were no explanations. The Party leadership and its mystical ways.⁵⁷

The constant reorganizing, promotions and demotions is just one aspect of the International Brigades that is somewhat surprising to many. The personal rivalry and arguments between the men must have been a constant worry to Merriman, as one will see throughout his Diary. But as Merriman writes, "Battalion is starting to function", which can only be to the good.

§ § §

^b William Herrick was in the first group of Lincolns who entered Spain in December 1936 and travelled under the name William Horowitz. He also went by the name Bill Harvey. He was born on January 10, 1915 in Trenton, NJ. He served in the Lincoln Battalion where he was section leader in the Machine Gun Company. Herrick suffered a nearly fatal wound to the neck, and the bullet, which was never removed, was lodged near his spine. He would serve in support roles until he returned on September 30, 1937, aboard the *Normandie*. After the war, along with Robert Gladnick and Morris Maken, he attempted to form *Veterans of the International Brigades Anti-Totalitarian* and this resulted in his expulsion from VALB. He died January 31, 2004 in Old Chatham, New York.

February 7 – 8 ••• “A Rather Cruel Sport”

7 Febrero

S. Ricardo

Busy in morning – ran around and afternoon given off for men. Settled in new quarters men left to bull fight – there other fight started – in evening hunted for local restaurant and found all full. Fight around dance trouble bet. Irish and Cubans – drank a little with men & talked with 3 men from Moscow - orders out late.

8 Febrero

S. Juan de Mata

Went into field with Co 2 and back to meeting about Irish which laid cards on table – either act decently or to leave. Arranged changes in temporary leadership of Co 2. Judicial commission came and talked. Talk with Stember & Harris & decision on prisoner. Rode in truck to Madrigueras and found all left - Bridges in charge – talked and ate and retired late – rain during night – Madrigueras trouble.

§ § §

In the propaganda booklet, *The Story of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion*, written in the trenches of Spain, produced for supporters of the Battalion in the United States, the following passage recalls the bullfight on February 7th, and also that the Sunday before, a football match had been held between the Irish Section and the Dutch, who were part of the Medical Unit attached to the Lincoln Battalion.

One Sunday a football match was held between the Irish Section and the Dutch, which resulted in a draw since everybody played the game differently. On the next Sunday we were taken to see a bull fight at Motilla (del Palancar), a town near the base. The fight was gory and the matador not especially good. Since it was the first time most of us had ever witnessed a bull fight, it proved to be an odd and interesting

*day, though some of the boys expressed it as being a rather cruel sport.*⁵⁸

William Herrick writes about Ray Steele, who was mentioned by Merriman on January 28th as having been drunk and having broken a door:

*One man did get drunk publicly, but he was quickly hauled in and placed in the brig for the night. His name was Ray Steele, a merchant mariner who called himself a Wobbly. He was one of the few non-Communists in the battalion. Though Ray had a club foot, he could outrun anyone in the battalion. I thought I was fast, but he beat me by yards in a hundred-yard dash. We had a football that we passed around and punted to each other. Ray could kick beautiful spirals forty, fifty yards. He became one of the finest machine-gunners and soldiers at the front.*⁵⁹

It is possible that the prisoner is, in fact, Ray Steele and that Merriman and Stember need to come to some resolution on the penalty to be served. The Irish who have come to the American Battalion from the British remain difficult to command, no matter which Battalion they are in. Drink remains an issue.

Merriman goes to Madrigueras to meet the British, but the British had left Madrigueras for La Gineta on February 7th and then to the Jarama front. Scotsman Robert Bridges, from Leith, had been left in charge at Madrigueras. Bridges would die on the 27th of February at Jarama. Madrigueras was left in an apparent state of difficulty with the British departure and this may be due to rain.

Vidal recalls the orders to go to the front his memoir (translation by the author and apologies for mistakes from the French)⁶⁰:

The two following extracts from verbal recollection of the meeting of 28 January at the Etat Major gives an insight into the state of the Brigade nine days before departing from Albacete:

the following forces are ready

*1 English Battalion
 1 French Battalion
 2 Slav Companies
 1 Italian Company (in reserve - ultimately assigned to another brigade)*

It might also be possible to have one or two American companies and a Slav company to make up a Battalion was completed following. Telegraphed to Lukacs to have 33 Yugoslavs of his effectives.

Vidal goes on to include the orders of the day for February 7, 1937. They state⁶⁰:

I communicated to General Gahl {sic}, Commandant of the XVth Brigade, the tone of your communication. With his agreement, I alerted immediately the units of the XVth Brigade the ways that they could be ready to leave, at the latest by 10:00 on February 7.

The elements necessary to complete the Brigade and are actually missing are:

the complement of machine gun companies (24 machine guns for five battalions in place of the 40 machine guns allocated by the Ministry of Defense)

light machine guns

grenades

transmission equipment (radios, telephones, telephone wire)

materials for transport (the Base of the B.I. will donate a limited number of trucks and light vehicles. The brigade is missing 5 touring cars and an important number of trucks)

The Brigade has 5 Battalions of Infantry (3 International, 2 Spanish).

1 company of Engineers

a squadron of cavalry (2 sections of horse cavalry and 1 section of motorized cavalry)

Intendencia

Health Service

An Etat Major.

He includes the actual order for February 6⁶⁰:

The XVth Mixed Brigade (5th International Brigade) will leave on February 7 at the hours and fixed conditions that follow:

{Table paraphrased}

First Convoy (Commander Fort):

15th Battalion (French-Belgian) leaves Tarazona at 10:00 for La Gineta and boards the train at 11:00 for a 14:00 departure

16th Battalion (British) leaves Madrigueras at 10:00 for La Gineta and boards the train at 11:15 for a 14:00 departure

Second Convoy (Captain Alloca):

Squadron of Cavalry leaves La Roda, boards the train there for a 15h departure

Third Convoy (Captain Grebenerrov):

18th Battalion (Polish-Balkans-Italians) leaves Mahora for Albacete where they will board the train for undetermined departure time.

The Engineers, Etat Major, and Service Sanitaire board the train in Albacete for undetermined departure time.

Fourth Convoy

21st Battalion (Spanish) boards the train at Albacete for an undetermined departure time. {Note below that Vidal knew the 21st Battalion would not be going to Jarama at this time, but he needed to get them out of Albacete as they had billeted all over town and were causing Vidal problems with the locals. He wanted them in Pozo Rubio}

Fifth Convoy (Adjutant Duguet):

Transport Section (leaves by road).

The orders detail the number of trucks, rail cars, etc. in each convoy and are too extensive to quote here. He continues⁶⁰:

.... Particularly during the train trip, rolling stock (trucks, ambulances, cars) will be camouflaged. During the part of the voyage during the night, all lights including cigarettes and pipes are rigorously prohibited on the train.....

Men will be given two days supplies on leaving Albacete..... Each soldier will receive 150 rounds of ammunition with their rifles ... Each machine gun will receive 1500 rounds of ammunition.... The Chief of the Etat Major will receive funds for four days support for each soldier at 4 pesetas a day....

The order was signed by Vidal. He says "The departure of the two Battalions for their assignments was a spectacle that Albacete was not accustomed. The commander decided that some of the men would leave by vehicle, some on foot". The men marched 10-12 kilometers to La Roda and La Gineta for the trains. The 21st Battalion (Spanish) only went 8 kilometers and then disembarked to move to Pozo Rubio. The 24th Spanish Battalion moved to Mahora to replace the 18th Battalion in its quarters. The 24th and 21st would rejoin the XVth Brigade two weeks later at the front. Vidal describes in some detail the problem with the Spanish Battalions not obeying his orders and spreading themselves out in private homes and apartments in Albacete. The 600 soldiers became a logistical nightmare for the Base as there was no way to feed them and the sanitary needs (showers and toilets) could not be found in Albacete. Vidal needed to get them out of town, so he ordered them to the Front and then diverted them to where he could manage them.

Nowhere in the orders does it say where the front is or where they are going.

§ § §

February 9 –10 ••• Foresight and Hindsight

9 Febrero

Sta. Apolonia

Rose early ate with Bridges and Day in English mess. Rode in ambulance to Albacete. Visited Hdqtrs. left and bought materials for mapping. Met Cooperman ate and saw Platone & Vidal. Soon to move – chased money – visited hospital – saw Donaldson and to Vidal again. To move to forest. Ate with Cooperman and then to Salamanca to sleep. Saw Kerrigan – English to us.

10 Febrero

S. Guillermo

Arose at 8 chased trucks and food brought tools and after running after Intendant got two trucks loads and so home. Unloaded – listened to tales and visit of Vidal. Rumors rife about Malaga. Late session. Ate at local house – old fashion circle bread instead of plate wine & punch - toasts etc.

§ § §

After 77 years, it is somewhat easier to explain what is going on in Merriman's diary when we know now what is happening at the time and what will happen shortly. A new place will become monumental in the lexicon of the International Brigades, "Jarama". Between the 1st of February and the 10th, it became very clear that Franco's forces had begun a major flanking offensive against Madrid designed to cut the road between Madrid and Valencia. The lines at that point were west of the Valencia-Madrid road and Franco and General Mola planned an offensive to cut the road, sweep up to Alcala de Henares, on the road to Guadalajara outside of Madrid, and isolate Madrid completely. This would have ended the war. A map of the region will help the discussion for the next month.



Map of the Battle Front of the Jarama Valley, February, 1937. The initial objective was Arganda shown here and the ultimate objective was Alcala de Henares which would be under the legend box above.⁶¹

We cannot discuss the battles in this valley in any great detail here, but Merriman will discuss the events that most affected the Americans. Frustratingly, Merriman's diary does not talk about plans and movements but this is understandable. He was carrying a document that could be used by the enemy if captured. His discussions are mostly retrospective about things that could not be used against the Brigades if it fell into enemy hands. We will find out about events after the fact.

On February 5, six hundred Moroccan fighters under the command of General Orgaz of "the forces of the rebellion" (as the Spanish termed the Fascist army) attacked the little town of Cienpozuelos against the 18th Brigade of the Republican Army. The Republicans were overwhelmed and retreated. Cienpozuelos became a literal slaughterhouse with hundreds of soldiers and civilians killed including those who were in a mental hospital

there.⁶² Ciempozuelos was an atrocity of war. In this sector, some internationals had been supporting the Republican Army. It became clear that this Jarama river valley had to be defended at all costs and the road to Valencia could not be cut off. The discussions in Merriman's diary and the hurried pace of training were recognition that they would have to go forward soon.

If Merriman knew the situation by February 10, there is no evidence from the diary. Over the past week, Merriman had been putting out fires between the Irish and the British, the Irish and the Cubans, and the Irish and the Americans. The quotes from William Herrick, an American, on the previous days are among the many text references to the events, but the understanding of the French (Marty and Vidal) and Americans (Stember and Merriman) of the depth of the discontent may have been culturally limited. Rob Stradling in *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War*⁶² spends nearly a chapter discussing the historical problems between George Nathan⁶³, the British Commander in November 1936, and the Irish. Nathan, who was Jewish, had fought for the English in the Irish Rebellion and was a "Black and Tan". He had been involved in the taking of a town where two Sein Fein leaders had been killed. Nathan's ethnicity became the subject of the attack against him and he was replaced by Tom Wintringham in December. Stradling asserts that André Marty intentionally placed Nathan over the Irish "first, in order to show the battalion who was in charge; and, second, to divide and rule the troublesome Irish". He quotes Fred Copeman as saying "the Irishmen drank like fish, they would not take orders from Macartney".

Company 1 leader Bill Scott (the Briton Invar Marlowe) was also accused of being a British supporter (and even not really being Irish) and having him lead the Connolly column was now Merriman's problem. Frank Ryan, a Sein Fein leader, and now high up in the Brigades, had added to the rancor by writing a Daily Worker article in December about his colleague, Nathan. When it came out in December (and Stradling asserts that Marty brought it to a head by leaking this information to the Irish), Ryan had been with the British in La Rozas in Madrid and was away from the Irish who held a vote to separate from the British and go to the Americans. The vote was split 45-11 but the majority ruled and

they all went from the British to the Americans (to the relief of Wintringham). Stradling says that the Irish boasted that they had hauled machine guns up and pointed them at the British Headquarters to make sure they got their way on the transfer.

All this seems terribly wasteful of effort, given that, in Merriman's words on February 9, "Vidal soon to move". He notes that the Americans were "to move to forest", probably a reference to the Officer's Training Camp leaving Villaneuva de la Jara to Pozo Rubio which was a forested, secretive area to the east of the Albacete – Madrigueras Road⁶⁴. Expectations that the towns that they were training in would be bombed may have entered into this plan. Albacete would be seriously bombed in the third week in February 1937.

The Cooperman discussed in this section is Phil Cooperman, who came over with the first group of Americans and became Battalion secretary. Cooperman died in Spain (not known where, but it was after 14 March when Cooperman was in Guadalajara). Merriman says "to Salamanca to sleep" and this is the Hotel Salamanca in Albacete that had been taken over as a barracks.⁶⁵ His statement "English to us" is cryptic and would mean that the English would be coming to the XVth Brigade, but not Merriman's Lincoln Battalion, who would get only the Irish out of that group.

On the 10th Merriman returns to Villanueva with his booty and hears "tales". This is interpreted as people complaining about each other. He meets with Vidal and mentions "rumors about Malaga". We discussed the attack on Malaga in the exposition on the February 3rd diary page .

§ § §

February 11—12 ••• British Are Baptized by fire

11 Febrero

N. S. de Lourdes

Rose late with cough visited barracks – talked with Scott etc. trouble in air. Talked long with Stember - settled problems – Then came Wolf & Intendant with news of dinner for 1300. Saw church. To move soon maybe tomorrow Scott demanded to see them – resign squabble and Stember & I discuss is it inevitable? Must he go? Worked late & walked with Coop and ate in kitchen!!

12 Febrero

Sta. Eulalia

Scott trouble

In middle of night received message about coming inspection and need of firing etc. Rose early inspected barracks and prepared - went out to place enemy targets and on way back met two companies and took them over and so was tied up when Marty & others were here. Came in late and spent quiet evening although one man arrested after my talk to new men.

§ § §

On the 9th and 10th, Merriman gathered supplies and suggested that the Lincolns would shortly be moving "to the forest". On the 11th, he says "to move soon maybe tomorrow". The diary does not say that this move will be to the front, but we know that from history.

Problems with John Scott and Merriman continue. They talked on the 9th, but Merriman says that he spoke extensively with Stember about whether it was inevitable that Scott would have to be replaced as Company 1 commander. Scott must have threatened resignation "Scott demanded to see them -- resign".

Herrick comments on the *pecadillos* of some of the officers, and also the relationship between Merriman and Scott, whose real name was Inver Marlow, an Englishman. This is probably the fight that Merriman relates in the diary.



Poor quality photograph of John Scott from "The Book of the XV International Brigade" (1938).

Several fights broke out. Seacord was drinking more, as was (Gladnick said) Jim Harris, our commander. Adjutant Commander Merriman was partial to the infantry commander, Scott, two WASPs {White Anglo Saxon Protestants} on a hot tin roof. Scott was much liked by his men, as was Seacord by his.⁶⁶

Herrick's statement had this mostly wrong, if we are to trust Merriman's diary. There was no love lost between the two of them. Herrick's recollections were often second (or third) hand and here probably incorrect. On the 12th, Merriman again says "Scott trouble" and Merriman was in the field with the Lincolns in

training when Andre Marty visited the troops on the 12th. One may assume that Scott's complaint is that the men are just not ready to go to the front. Telling André Marty that would be dangerous to one's career. John Scott would lead his men into an attack on February 23 and be shot in the attack. Scott would lie wounded in the field for most of a day and men risked their lives to get him back to the lines and to the safety of the Health Service. Merriman's "Scott trouble" would be a short one as Scott dies on February 23.

Merriman relates that the Intendant (head of the Intendencia or supply depot) was preparing a dinner for 1300 men (approximately two battalions). In the Book of the XVth Brigade³ says "The day before we left Villaneuva de la Jara for the front a dance was held for the Americans in another old building [the church in the diary] adjacent to our barracks". German Lou Wolf is believed to be the commander of the Quartermaster Corps at Albacete at this time.

Art Landis^c says that Merriman received orders on the 12th that changed their destination from Pozo Rubio to the front.⁶⁷ As we will see shortly, he has the dates wrong by about two days. As of February 12, Merriman still is in training mode. They will move on the 14th of February.

The Book of the Brigade becomes very active on 11 and 12 of February. "On February 11, at sunrise, the rebels succeeded in capturing Pintoca bridge by a surprise attack" (this bridge is near Vaciamadrid in Thomas' map, see February 9). On the night of February 11, nearly 10,000 enemy troops started moving in the Jarama sector. The night of February 12, the enemy made their first assault on Pingarron Hill that was to be the high ground in the Battle for Jarama. Lieut. Honoré (Ernest) Galli with the Franco-

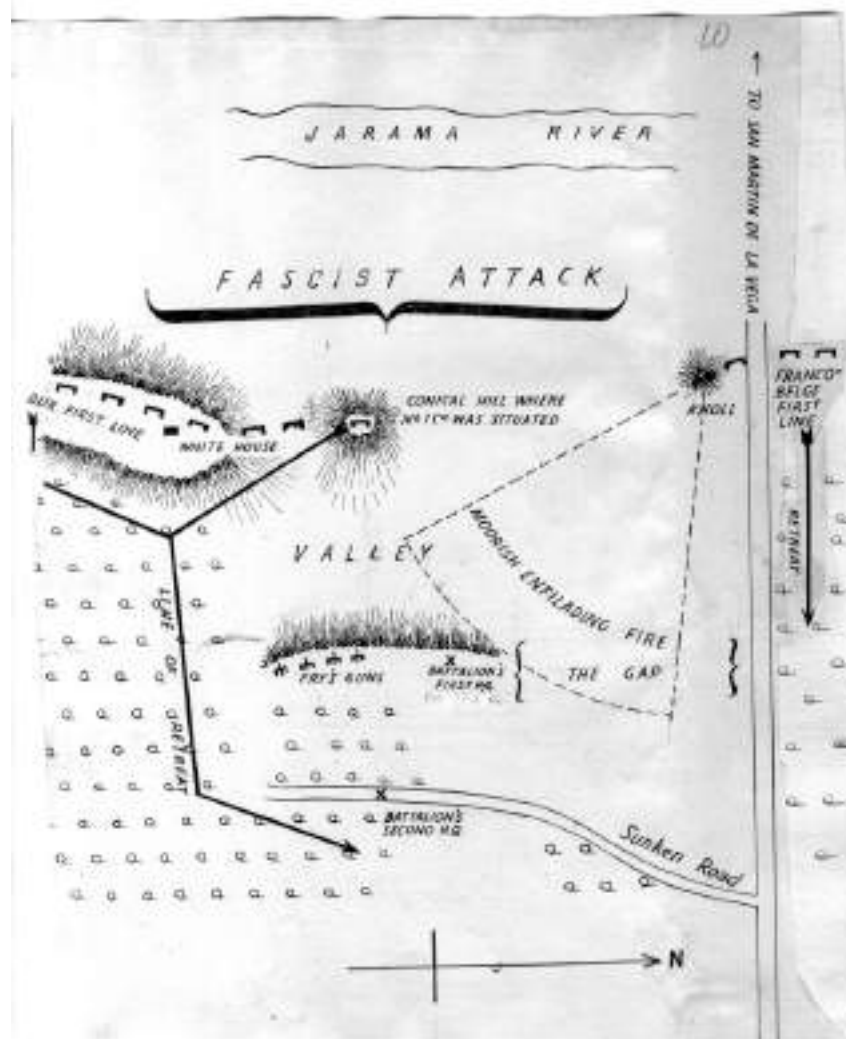
^c Arthur Harold Landis was born November 21, 1917 in Birmingham, Alabama. He sailed to June 12, 1937 aboard the *Georgic* and served with the XV BDE, Mackenzie-Papineau BN, Estado Mayor as a topographer. He returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. Landis's tapes of the veterans at the Tamiment Library are an invaluable resource. He died in January 1986 in Los Angeles, California.

Belge Battalion⁶⁸ says "February 11. We assemble to march to the front." Laza Wovicky of the Dimitrov Battalion says "February 12. Noon. We marched towards the olive trees, where the enemy were. The enemy saw us and opened out a violent machine gun fire against us. We spread into fighting formation. We advanced about 300 yards without firing a single shot".⁶⁷ The notes of the British Battalion staff say:

Early in the morning of February 12, we started out in lorries from Chinchón. We knew the front was near..... Captain Tom Wintringham commanded the Battalion. George Aitken⁶⁹ was Commissar. We had no maps, little knowledge of what was happening. We knew that the Fascists had advanced during the previous six days, that they had crossed the river Jarama, and that they were attempting to cut the Valencia-Madrid road. We believed there was a front somewhere ahead; we were reserve troops, we understood. Actually, as we discovered a few hours later, troops that had been in front of us had been brushed aside. The Fascist break-through was in reality a big push.⁶⁷

Richard Baxell⁷⁰ describes the events of February 12 in detail. The British moved up from Chinchon where they had left the rail transport that brought them to the front on the 11th and moved by trucks up to the San Martin de la Vega road. Just before the road was a cookhouse where the men dismounted and climbed the ridge to the west. Reaching the top with little trouble, they were fanned out along the ridge when they were given orders to move west into the Jarama Valley and to attack the fascist positions on the heights on the western side. The Fascists were well entrenched and had enfilading machine gun fire and artillery that made the British lives hell. This counterattack, which began in the late morning, had bogged down on "Suicide Hill" to the south of the line and the "conical hill" to the north side, both of which had machine gun protection. By 1400, the British had stalled and lacked machine gun support of their own by Harry Fry's machine gun company who found that their ammunition belts were loaded with the wrong size ammunition and were jamming the guns.

The British began their retreat later in the afternoon back up onto the plateau where they were silhouetted against the skyline and fell in dozens. The Moroccan Moors who were part of the Spanish Fascist Tercera attacked and "with astonishing speed over nearly two thousand meters of uphill ground."⁶⁹ The Moors were experienced troops and knew how to attack with limited cover and the inexperienced British were unable to stop their advance. A slaughter ensued and Tom Wintringham had difficulty constraining the situation from becoming a rout. General Gal ordered the British to hold at all costs. Wintringham did not know that Bill Briskey and Kit Conway, his field commanders were dead. The Moors took Suicide Hill with its white farm house.



RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 3/Delo 465/page 10, the situation at Jarama on February 12 and 13 on the east side of the St. Martin de Vega road. The first line of the Brigade had the high ground but was turned back towards the sunken road and the reserve positions. When the Franco-Belge retreated, the British were isolated out front. Also in *Book of the XVth Brigade*, page 69.

The situation turned late in the afternoon when Fred Copeman and Harry Fry were able to reload by hand the machine gun belts for Fry's Company and machine gun fire from Fry's five machine guns were ready. As the Moors assaulted the eastern ridge of the valley, Fry's company opened up and put nearly 1000 rounds into them in 3 minutes. Over half of the Moors fell in the barrage and the assault stopped.

The 600 men in the British battalion were down to 200 effectives by the end of February 12. Another 100 returned to the lines over the following days. Of the men who had left the hill, stories abound of those who were walking out to the east and had to be stopped under threat from General Gal, George Aitken and Jock Cunningham. Baxell says:

Another group of men was found hiding in wine vaults in the farmhouse behind the lines by Fred Copeman and André Diamant, an anglicised Egyptian now in command of No. 1 Company. Copeman and Diamant threatened to throw grenades into the vaults and almost one hundred men who had been hiding promptly revealed themselves.⁶⁹

The British inexperience would similarly be reflected in Merriman's troops in a few days. There was no lack of courage amongst these men but the shock of war was something for which they were unprepared.

§ § §

February 13—14 ••• Loading the Trucks for Jarama

13 Febrero

S. Benigno

Arose late because of cough and visited Barracks and talked to new men who are going into Company 2 in charge of Corona. At noon arranged changes and finished late in day. Meeting in evening – saw Steve and drank with some of the boys. Military meeting late which went very slowly. Celebration in town – late came Harris with tale which was false. He was drunk, told tales about meeting.

14 Febrero

S. Valentin

About to act on story of Harris, Stember & I decided he must go – But orders came through to move and that we did. Ready to go to new camp when order changed and Harris & I called captain first time by Vidal. Received orders in Albacete to go to front. In bull arena Mexican rifles – Harris drunk or slept. Marty came & Vidal, Kerrigan & Stember - Finally ready into trucks. Harris not in sight. Convoy at twelve – stragglers – Harris failed to show. In charge of Battalion led convoy. Led past Albacete.

§ § §

Adjustments continued to be made to the manpower in the three Lincoln Companies. Here Merriman says that Company 2 was left in charge of the Cuban named Arturo Corona.⁷¹ Merriman meets with Steve Daduk later in the day, probably to tell him he is out as commander of the second company. Merriman then attends the dance, which he was organizing on the previous days with the Intendencia.

His disagreements with James Harris continue to worsen and he accuses Harris of showing up at the meeting in the evening in a drunken state. The underlined “He” may indicate that Harris was accusing Merriman of drinking earlier. Marion Merriman Wachtel

clarifies what the dispute was about: "Harris returned to the camp with a crazy story about the men plotting secretly to have him removed from command. Bob checked out the story and determined it wasn't true."⁷²

On the 14th Stember and Merriman decided Harris was to be removed, yet nothing formally happened before the orders came to move up to Albacete to go to the Front. Stember may have decided to make a change but Vidal who was second in command for the Brigade obviously was not part of that decision since both Harris and Merriman were "given stripes" and called Captains. In the Bullring at Albacete, the Lincolns were spoken to by Marty, Vidal, Peter Kerrigan and Stember. Boxes of "Mexican rifles", nicknamed Mexicanskis, were distributed to the companies. As mentioned before, these rifles were of Remington manufacture, stamped with the Imperial Russian insignia from WWI vintage and came to Spain from a purchase made by the Mexican government. The rifles were packed in cosmoline grease and the vets of Jarama remember being told by Merriman "You have shirts, wipe them off".

Marion Merriman Wachtel fills in some details:

Harris was drunk when the heavy trucks rolled into the town's plaza. The men climbed aboard for the short ride to Albacete. There the Americans were told to assemble in the bullring. They shuffled about on the hard brown sand, talking, smoking, some sitting, others leaning against the wooden fence designed to separate the bull from the ring's spectators. Harris and Bob were called to the nearby International Brigade headquarters, where they were issued field glasses, compasses, and revolvers. When the officers entered the bullring, the men could guess that they were about to be told of their mission.⁷¹

Marty, the base commander, Peter Kerrigan, a British commissar, and Vidal inspected the battalion and told the Americans in emotional speeches about their new combat responsibility. There was talk of a Fascist breakthrough a few hours northwest of Albacete in the Jarama Valley, just south of Madrid.

.... Then, in the late afternoon, something happened there in the bullring to Harris. The stories vary. {Sandor} Voros^d, after interviewing Bob, wrote that "Harris became extremely unnerved and excited. He told Merriman that he was equally responsible with him for leading the battalion... Harris became more and more unnerved-- he grabbed rifles out of the men's hands saying he was a rifle inspector. It was obvious something was wrong with him and the men began to murmur that Harris was drunk. Battalion Commissar Stember, in consequence, ordered Harris to bed. Harris went away but came back after a while and fired his pistol off in the Guardian Nacional, then disappeared again."

Nearing midnight, the Battalion moved and "Harris was not in sight". Merriman maintained that Harris was drunk and slept through the departure. Harris accused Merriman of locking him in his room and leaving without him. What actually happened may be true in both cases. Clearly, Merriman did not want Harris in command at this point and for a unit going into combat, the stability of the leadership did not bode well for a successful first venture into combat. Now the Lincolns were on the move.

Over these two days, however, the British were deep in trouble. Their assault of February 12 on Suicide Hill at Jarama was repulsed and only machine gun fire held off the attacking Moorish troops that afternoon. On the 13th, the fascist assault continued on the British, Slavs and French. Tom Wintringham, forced into developing strategy with a greatly weakened British force, put Harold Fry's machine gun company up front and backed them up with Company 1 on the left and Company 4 on the right and further out, what was left of Company 3.⁷³ At daylight, two fascist Brigades attacked the XVth Brigade. While most of their attack focussed on the Slavic units of the XVth north of the San Martin

^d Sandor Voros (aka Alexander Wrought) was born on July 31, 1900 in Czegled, Hungary. An American citizen and a *Daily Worker* journalist, he arrived in Spain on May 7, 1937 and served with the XV BDE, Commissariat. He served on the Historical Commission that created the *Book of the XVth Brigade*. Many interviews were taken down by Voros in his own hand.

road, artillery pounded the British all day. In the afternoon, Burt Overton panicked and withdrew his company exposing the British flank. In short order, Fry's machine gun company was surrounded and 30 men were taken captive. The stories of the capture vary: one claim was that the Fascists fooled the British by singing the Internationale and another was just an error of the British thinking they were getting relieved by Spanish troops. The men taken prisoner would be released in a prisoner trade over the summer of 1937.

Overton, realizing the dangerous position he had left the machine gun company, charged to try to save their colleagues but the British machine guns were turned on them and only six of the 40 man company at that point survived. Wintringham was shot by the same machine guns. Overton's actions that day would lead to his ultimate demise in the Brigade as he fell into "a very nervous state". Charges were made that Overton threw a grenade into the Brigade armory to force a withdrawal. These actions would lead to a court martial of Overton later in the Spring.

On the evening of the 13th, Scotsman Jock Cunningham returned from hospital where he had been ill. He was able to rally about sixty British to hold the line. By the 14th, however, tanks were thrown into action by the Fascists and the withdrawal of the British was needed to save the men who were left. As they fell back, some men just kept going. A famous story of the British Battalion was the action of Jock Cunningham and Frank Ryan turning the retreating men and marching them back to Jarama singing the Internationale.² This became known as "the great rally".

By the night of the 14th, Spanish reinforcements arrived and would soon be followed by the American Lincoln Battalion. The lines held. By this point, 10,000 men had been lost by the Republic and 6,000 Fascists also fell.

§ § §

February 15—16 ••• “Willing to die for my ideas”

15 Febrero

S. Faustino

continued early in night to Morata {de Tejuna} and located General & received orders to bring up convoy. Got them and brought men in after stalling to allow them to fire new guns. Upon arrival in new town air attack Mexican planes did them up. Men ran and showed early weakness. Up into lines and shown position. Met Gal (Gen) and Nathan, Springhall – went to staff officers meeting and got plans of work. Worked all night without sleep.

16 Febrero

S. Honesto

Worked all during night and early morning – trenches - just before daylight panic - Cubans fired and Irish followed also wounded own men – took up new outline - Went to staff meeting of officers & Nathan gave word to be in reserve – talked to officers – Marion dear I love you! I am willing to die for my ideas – may I live for them and you!

§ § §

From Albacete, the Lincolns boarded trucks and headed northwest at midnight to the front in the Jarama Valley. Marion Merriman Wachtel noted that Stember had told Merriman that since James Harris did not show for the departure, Merriman was now in charge of the Lincoln Battalion. While the battalion moved forward to the front, Merriman stopped in Morata de Tejuña (he calls it what looks to be *Mortie*), a few kilometers behind the Jarama front where General Gal (Janos Galicz) and the Brigade staff were headquartered.

Merriman's note "allowed them to fire" is described in many books on Jarama. Each soldier was told to take five rounds and fire their weapons into a hillside. For some, it was the first time they had ever felt the recoil of a rifle. The Lincolns were welcomed with a



Photograph of the XVth Brigade leadership at General Gal's headquarters at Morata de Tejuña (Villa Fuentes de Venta), May 1937. Left to right: Allan Johnson, Vladimir Copic, unknown soldier (possibly the Cuban José Bridon, 24th Battalion), Harry Haywood, Marion Merriman, Col. Hans Klaus, Bob Merriman, and David Mates. ALBA PHOTO 177-196126, Tamiment Library, NYU.

bombing and strafing run from German Heinkel airplanes. Edwin Rolfe wrote:

It was the first time the Americans had come under direct fire. All of them stretched out full length, hugging the earth like experienced soldiers. The single lapse of perfect discipline occurred when one of the younger volunteers turned over on his back, nervously aimed his rifle skyward and took a single

*shot at the planes. The others remained silent... It was the first real lesson, the first clear indication of the necessity for rapid troop dispersal under fire. Before that, the men had tended to crowd together, seeking safety in close companionship.*⁷⁴

Merriman says that the "Mexicans" (i.e. Russians flying the stub nosed Chato fighter aircraft) chased the Heinkels off. Rolfe notes that the Chatos had two kills that day. Merriman says that the men ran and showed early weakness. The leaders of the Brigades wanted the men out of the trucks so they would not all be killed at once so the troops scattered to the two sides of the road.

Merriman would have known by the night of the 15th that things were difficult on the front. On February 12th, the British had been



flanked by Moorish troops and German Tanks. Company commander Kit Conway was killed as the British were caught in enfilading machine gun fire when they tried to advance to the bridge at St. Martín de la Vega. Jim Prendergast of the British Battalion wrote: "The Moors are sneaking up there on the left. Oh, where are our machine guns? ... I reach the hill-crest where "Kit" is directing fire. He is using a rifle himself and pausing every while to give instructions. Suddenly, he shouts, his rifle spins out of his hand, and he falls back".⁷⁴ Kit Conway passed away overnight in the field hospital.

*"Kit" Conway, Commander of the British Battalion on February 12 at Jarama*⁷⁵

The British had to retreat from "Suicide Hill" and between the 12th and the 14th of February, the Battalion strength went from 225 to 125.⁷⁶ They were able, however, to keep machine gun fire on their old positions. The situation was fluid over those two days with the French Edgar André Battalion, the German Thälmann

Battalion and the Polish Dombrowski's also in the line. The Thälmanns lost their commander and commissar killed, the Edgar André Battalion lost all of its officers, the Dimitrov commander was killed, as were most of the officers of the 6th of February Battalion.⁷⁵ Landis says that the XVth Brigade HQ Officers, the German Hans Klaus, the Croatian Vladimir Copic, the Bulgarian commissar Tabakoff, the Hungarian Chapayev and the English Captain Springhall all had to go to the front to rally the troops to hold their positions. The British had retreated back along the Morata road and were met by General Gal who told them that they had to go back. There were no reinforcements and they had to continue to repulse the enemy offensive "at all costs". Gal threatened the British with court martial. The British went back into the lines. The next day, Gal would go back to the British and apologize.

Moving up on the night of the 16th, the word reaches the other battalions that "The Yanks are coming". The Americans moved up into a reserve position in the secondary lines from "Suicide Hill". They dug in and would spend the next five days in those trenches. Merriman relates the news that the Irish and Cuban units in the Lincolns became disoriented and gun fire hit friendly troops.

From this, it appears that Herrick's unit may have been involved in the premature shooting and there is no reason to assume that Herrick embellished this unflattering story:

The third squad, with Kavorkian^e and Shimrak^f, was with me. Sudden shouts in Spanish, a couple of shots. It was dark. Joe's {Joe Gordon} voice. I ran over. We ain't got no passwords and these guys loom up. What the hell are we supposed to do? Two Spanish soldiers stood cursing, their fury

^e Vahram Kevorkian was single and from New York. He arrived in Spain on January 6, 1937, on the first group from the *Normandie*.²

^f Peter Shimrack was born August 17, 1910, in Dunbar, Pennsylvania, but a child he moved to Zumberak, Croatia. Also in the first group, he served at Jarama and Brunete in Spain and in WWII in the US Armed Forces. Peter died June 24, 2010.

*unchained. A Cuban comrade came over and straightened it out.*⁷⁷

Joe Gordon (real name Jacob Mendelowitz) was born January 27, 1914. He deserted from the US Army in order to go to Spain. Joe Gordon was a steelworker. Gordon, too, was in the first group with Herrick, Shimrack and Kavorkian. He will shortly lose an eye from being shot at Jarama, but he come back to fight at Brunete and get a leg wound. Repatriated in 1937, he returned to Spain in 1938, serving with the Lincoln-Washington Battalion in Company 1 and in the Plana Mayor (Headquarters for the Battalion). Joe Gordon joined the Merchant Marines in 1942 and was killed later that year when his ship was torpedoed on the Murmansk Run. He was the brother of Leo Gordon.²



Joe Gordon (left) and Elias Begelman, both of Williamsburg, in Brooklyn. ALBA Photo 11_0078, Tamiment Library, NYU.

The final touching sentences in the diary need no interpretation. Marion Merriman Wachtel wrote in her memoir "Bob knew that, come dawn, the Abraham Lincoln Battalion would be in the fight for its life".⁷⁸

§ § §

February 17—18 ••• “Long live”

17 Febrero **S. Rómulo**

Received orders to go into action and now sitting with Cooperman. Calm and hope men are. Afraid of some officers at last moment. The actual fighting with weapons is the highest stage a real communist can ask for. About to lead first Battalion of Americans in this war. Life has been full because I made it so. May others live the life I have begun and may they carry it still further as I plan to do myself. Long live Communism!

18 Febrero **S. Simeón**

Long live the Soviet Union! Men may die but let them die in a working class cause. Men die and mean to die (if necessary) so that the revolution may live on. They may stop us today but tomorrow we still take up the march.

§ § §

Merriman's diary does not tell us much on these two days except that he was writing an epitaph for himself. Much has been said about Merriman not being a member of the Communist Party but these lines in the diary would indicate that he is at least supportive at this point of the ideology of communism. Merriman wrote in his own biography, filed with the Brigades, that he had applied to join the Spanish Communist Party in January. Perhaps here he is telling us that he is a "real communist".

By the 17th, the Americans had seen action at Jarama but Merriman does not describe it here. Hundreds of books have been written about the American involvement in Jarama and Art Landis writes nearly two chapters of *The American Lincoln Brigade* on the action in February.⁷⁹ Using his research, we can sketch what happened on these two days. The actions of the 12th to 15th of

February had resulted in the decimation of the French, German, and English Battalions.

The Americans who were in the trenches on the night of the 16th had already had a disaster of their own. Two trucks moving to the front had misjudged the position of the International Brigade. Carroll described the event:

Riding in the first truck was a 25-year-old-graduate of Indiana University named Walter Grant..... Grant rode in the darkness in the back of the lead truck toward the Jarama front. Unfamiliar with the landscape, he probably did not realize that the driver had missed a left turn. The driver of the second truck blindly followed his mistake. Inside the third vehicle, an ambulance, rode Dr. William Pike, a volunteer with the American Medical Bureau, who noticed the road to the left. He ordered the driver to stop, then directed the convoy on the proper course. The Lincolns never again saw the missing trucks. But fascist documents indicate that the two trucks continued in the wrong direction until they came under enemy fire. The first truck was shot off the road; the second crashed into it. The survivors took refuge in a small gully, but they were easily overpowered. Walter Grant and about twenty other Americans became the first of the Lincoln casualties. Also lost were all the Battalion records.⁸⁰

Landis says that many on these trucks were on a list of prisoners as late as 25 December 1937.⁷⁹ Landis notes that none were repatriated so either they died at the scene, were executed after, or died in prison. Accusations of treason on the part of the drivers was claimed by General Gal, but since the drivers were amongst the dead, it is likely to have been "fog of war", a simple mistake.

On the 17th the Fascists attacked along a broad front. In the south, on the 16th, the Irish O'Duffy Bandera⁸¹, who were fighting for the Fascists, saw their first action at Ciempozuelos. It was in this action that they were shot at by their own Spanish troops. Fortunately, their positions were so far south, they did not come into contact with the International Brigade or it would have been the Irish, Americans and British shooting at the

Irish.⁸² Instead in the attack on Ciempozuelos, the O'Duffy Bandera bogged down in the mud trying to cross the river and were generally ineffective. Little more will be said about this group although they did see some action later in March, 1937. By June they were being repatriated back to Ireland, partly because Franco did not respect the ability of O'Duffy or his troops.⁸³

The Americans occupied positions on both sides of the paved road Camino de St. Martín de Vega. The 2nd Company was the furthest left, the first company was nearest the road and the Cubans under Rodolfo de Armas were further to the north across this east-west road. On the 16th, the Americans had their first battle casualty, Charles Edwards, an observer, was hit by a sniper's bullet. Within an hour, Misak Chelibian was killed by artillery shrapnel. But for raw recruits, the Lincolns had been placed well into the old positions of the Dimitrov Battalion. Landis reports about 12 wounded in addition to the two deaths above over the next two days and that the Lincolns had dug in deeply.

Another excellent summary of the Battle for Jarama can be found online on Robert Colodny's "The Struggle for Madrid".⁸⁴

§ § §

18 – 19 February ••• Lincolns See First Action

~~19~~Febrero

S. Gabino

18 - Early in day air raid – bombs just missed us and how close Edwards killed by bullet thru head while scouting. Was bawled out for not keeping men down by Gen. Gal - Later in day another raid and came even closer. Some fight in air. We are definitely located. Went to inspect trenches after dark and artillery started on us. Plenty tough and lost one man. Chelibian killed by shrapnel. Occasional firing and during night cross fire. Harris out.

19 - Great changes in Battalion set up Nathan out – Chopick {Copic} in - Klaus Chief of Staff General to division. Harris sent to hospital and got back - Steve Daduk cracked up and I recommended him to rest home. Adjutant is now Seacord. Constant changes. Men ate well & Irish taken out to sleep and one wounded. Quiet night altho earlier carried out evacuation when planes sighted and Copic gave me hell altho Klaus said to do it. Slept much.

§ § §

The end of the entry for February 17 and 18 discusses the first paragraph above. The only addition information we have not discussed from that paragraph is "Harris out". James Harris, who was Merriman's commander in training, had become increasingly unreliable. Merriman had said on the 17th "Afraid of some officers at the last moment". We see why here. Harris "missed the bus" when leaving Albacete, somehow got a ride to the front and arrived by the 18th. Peter Carroll describes for us the sad episode with Harris:

By the end of the first day, Harris had to be sent to a hospital; Daduk "cracked up" and went to a rest home; and the brigade command bawled out Merriman for not keeping his men down. Two days later, Harris returned, reclaimed his rank,

and led the men on a bright, moonlit night across the Republican trenches into no-man's-land for night maneuvers. Whatever the commander's intentions, the march soon deteriorated into a rambling procession, interspersed with desultory fire from enemy lines and a raging quarrel between Harris and Merriman. The latter apparently prevailed and brought the men back to their lines. Harris, "still abnormal", according to Merriman's diary, went by ambulance the next day to a hospital, never to return to the battalion.⁸⁵

The stroll became derogatorily known as the "moonlight walk". It can have done nothing for the confidence the men had in their leadership. The concern Merriman had for Steve Daduk in training bore out and he was removed from the Front from a nervous breakdown. He would return in September to the United States to promote donations for the Lincoln Brigade.



Vladimir Copic. Harry Randall Photo Archive (ALBA Photo 11-0939), Tamiment Library, NYU.

The leadership changed again with George Nathan of the British removed and replaced by "Chopick" (in Merriman's diary, also occasionally "Kopich"). Vladimir Copic spelled his name as Ćopić (which would be pronounced Chopich and it was translated this way into Spanish). Copic was born in Senj, Yugoslavia (thus his nickname Senjko) and was a Yugoslavian member of the Communist Party since 1918. Copic arrived in Spain on January 27,

1937, directly from Russia where he taught at the Lenin School. Harry Haywood recalled that Copic was in the class before his in Moscow (he called him "Sanko").⁸⁶ Copic will remain the commander of the XVth Brigade until late Spring of 1938 and is integral to the story here. His biography can be found in the Volunteer for Liberty⁸⁷ newsletter of the Abraham Lincoln Brigades. Copic had a dominating personality, believed in formal European command styles, and was a shameless self-promoter. No one person has more photographs taken of him in the Spanish Civil War, as the Bosnian Serb Vljako Begovic (known as Stepanovitch or Stepanovic in Spain) followed him around and served as his biographer/photographer. Begovic was editor on Copic's diary of the war which was published in 1971. Copic would be executed in Moscow on April 19, 1939, at the end of the Spanish Civil War.

Photo of Hans Klaus (identified as Klaus Becker in many ALBA photos but believed to be Colonel Klaus or Claus), ALBA PHOTO 177-177038, Tamiment Library, NYU

Hans Klaus was named Chief of Staff for the XVth Brigade. Merriman advanced Doug Seacord, the Commander of Company 1, to be his Adjutant at the Battalion Plaza Mayor (HQ), which was placed in the middle section of trenches at the front.

On the 20th of February, Merriman lost his diary and only found it in mid-March. He gave the diary to someone to hold for him because action was picking up and only in March was it returned to him. The diary was probably left at Brigade Headquarters.



20—24 February ••• Lincolns Go Over the Top

20 Febrero

S. Nemisio

I am now writing this on the 13th of March after a long period during which we were in the front lines and after when the diary was lost. About 20th in the evening we received orders to move forward to support Thaelmann Batt. We formed on Co 2 and Klaus was ready to lead us. In the midst of this Harris showed up acting as if in command. He was still abnormal and talked

21 Febrero

S. Félix

loudly and accused me of having him confined in Albacete. Confused men and his talk about placing the artillery under order of Marty etc. out of question. He talked about importance of position to which we were going etc. Led with Klaus and counteracted my orders so that we lost one company entirely. Great men some still thought him in command and finally Stember and I went with Klaus and found quiet sector and so allowed us to return. Harris told to stay behind and only showed up once although he woke people during

22 Febrero

S. Abilio

night below and warned about fascists and directed who armies in front of other people etc. Decided to send him back to hospital.

Another time later ordered to move up to old Dmitroff {Dimitrov} position men there and then order came to go back again. About 21 we moved to old Dimitrov Position in reserve with orders to leave without packs or blankets. First bad one of Wattis, no such order ever came from the General staff.

23 Febrero**S. Pedro Damián**

since we only went to a new reserve position. Never did get all packs and blankets back for the men. On the 23d we received orders to move across road and support the 24th Br. Spanish and later we advanced between them and road - forced place for ourselves and moved forward while tank (ours) burned and exploded throwing plates and shells all over - Scott worked well. He and Morin wounded and Scott later died in hospital. Van Briggs {Armandus Van den Berghe} badly wounded. Henry in charge of Co. 1. Called to meeting before we finished advancing.

24 Febrero**S. Modesto**

and Seacord in charge. 24th Br. and Dimitrov on left refused to move up and we had to withdraw slightly and Spanish labor battalion helped us dig in until firing stopped them. We could have broken thru that night if we had been given support. Decided to have us move into Dimitrov trenches across the road. Pick and I went to trenches and located our new position and went to end of trench. Found one

§ § §

February 23, 1937

Some dates in 1937 just have to be written larger than others. While Bob Merriman reveals to us what happened on this date from his catching up in his diary in March 1937, we will try to maintain the flow through the dates in February 1937. The first pages above give his comments about what occurred on February 20th. In the posting of 19 February, we reviewed the "moonlight march" discussed in these first two diary pages, where Commander James Harris showed up at the trenches and retook command, leading the Americans off into danger in a march into no-man's-land in the middle of a moonlit night.

Robert Gladnick was with the Lincoln Battalion at Jarama. He would become disgruntled with the Lincolns and because of his Russian background, he would serve as a translator and later as a driver of tanks in a Russian Tank unit. At Jarama, he claims he translated for the American leadership with commanders in the Brigade who were more comfortable in Russian than English. After the war, Gladnick became an active anti-Communist and testified at legislative hearings during the McCarthy period naming names of a number of Lincoln Brigadistas. Gladnick wrote a memoir that has not been published but resides in the Hoover Institution Archives. He says: ⁸⁸

Their argument {between James Harris and Lieutenant Colonel Copic} started when Copic the Croatian delivered his opinion of what he thought of Americans. "You Americans come to Spain to make a Social Revolution but I'm telling you that you will have to get off the dramatic stage & learn to die. Now at the front, you'll have to learn how to take casualties. You will do as I say -- in a day or so you will attack the Moorish positions in front of you & you'll do it as brave men -- like the Hungarian & Franco Belge battalion -- You will attack in broad daylight" - He then pointed his finger at Harris and shouted "I'll not hear anymore of your crack brained plans to attack in the dark at night. You Americans must learn what it means to have guts & fight like our European comrades do & learn to die like men." I thought what an inspiring message to give new men about to go into their first combat -- Harris was not the least impressed. He told Copic "I've done some personal reconnaissance at the front & I know that an attack in daylight over open terrain would be suicide - - even an attack under the cover of darkness would lead to 20-25 percent casualties-- but at that price we can take their trenches -- a daylight attack will not result in capturing the Fascist lines, only huge casualties for the attackers -- I will not lead such an attack. Just tell me what is your objective & I will carry it out but not by a stupid suicide attack -- "

Copic shouted at him "You'll see who is in command here" -- Harris walked out and I followed outside Harris told me "the Old Bastard won't be happy until he kills all the

Americans". That evening Harris ordered the men on a night maneuver behind our lines -- just as he did a few times back in Villanueva de la Jara. As an old sailor, he told the men to orient themselves on some of the celestial features.

Next day Merriman & Commissar Bender started a campaign denouncing Harris as a lunatic with his head in the clouds -- a day later Harris was removed from command and Merriman was appointed in his place -- Now I would like to write a few words about Harris -- Harris was not his real name as on the Motor Ship Normandie. I saw his passport issued to him under his true Polish name—

The midnight maneuver has been called Harris' Midnight March or Stroll. Some men got lost and Merriman says that he, Stember and Hans Klaus went out after the men, found them and led them back to safety. Clearly, this event was viewed quite differently by Gladnick and Merriman, but in any case, Harris had sealed his fate earlier in disagreeing with Copic. People who disagreed with Copic generally did not fare well in Spain. Harris' actions prompted his removal from command and they sent him back to hospital. He would not command the Lincolns further. He would later serve with the Company 3 of Polish Dombroski Battalion at Fuentes de Ebro in October of 1937. His fate is later revealed when discussing that battle.



Clarence Wattis, later a Captain, from the Book of the XVth Brigade.⁸⁹ He was a Lieutenant at the time of the Jarama attack.

In the February 22nd space in the diary, Merriman talks about the orders given to move forward to the Dimitrov positions (Merriman spells it Dmitroff in the diary but we will convert this to conventional modern spelling) and not to take packs or bedding. This was a big mistake and Herrick complained in his book that the night was cold and they froze from

not having their overcoats and packs. Merriman admits that this was a mistaken order and upon checking later, no such order had ever been given to leave their packs and blankets behind. He blames the command error on Lieutenant Clarence Wattis. He would hold bad feelings against Wattis until quite late in 1937 because of several errors that were attributed to Merriman by the men.

When the Lincolns moved up, one company got lost. There was heavy machine gun fire. Landis confuses the lunar cycle (it was near full, but may not have risen at this point) and says

This night, like the night of their arrival, was pitch-black. Because of this, one section of the Machine Gun Company got lost. There were the last of the three companies to enter the trenches but they missed the entrance. ... [in the words of the section leader, who was quoted anonymously:] "Suddenly we heard strange voices, a muted garbling in a language we didn't understand. We decided to play it safe and crawl along on our bellies; only now we had reversed direction and were heading back toward the road. We had crawled this way for just a short distance when suddenly, as if a curtain were being raised on an opening performance of a Broadway show, a round of extended and hearty applause shattered the stillness of the night. We looked up to see a long line of what proved to be International Brigaders sitting on their trench parapets. They were pointing at us and laughing uproariously, while never ceasing to applaud. There were thirty of us and we got to our feet slowly. To say that we were embarrassed would be the understatement of the year. Our thirty faces glowed bright red as we nodded recognition to the laughing Frenchmen, for that's who they were: a rifle company of the 6th of February Battalion. We marched sheepishly back to the road, where Lieutenant Seacord and others were looking for us".⁹⁰

On the 23rd, the Lincolns were ordered to attack. The plan was that the Dimitrovs on the right and the Spanish 24th on the left were to attack in unison. The Lincolns were facing an enemy that was dug in at a distance of 600-700 meters. The orders to attack

came for later in the day, 3:00 pm, which left little daylight to cross such a distance against heavy fire. The Book of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade says "The 1st Section of the 1st Company led the charge. The Irish followed the Cubans, and finally the second company advanced on the right." Rudolfo de Armas y Soto (who is saluting to the right of the flag to the photo on page 31) was the first killed, hit immediately by three bullets. Charles Donnelly of the Irish was killed. Captain Scott was hit by three bullets. He was wounded and lay in the field until later in the evening when by heroic efforts two stretcher bearers were able to remove him back to the lines, but not before being hit themselves. Scott would die in hospital.

Merriman says in the diary that the Spanish 24th Battalion did not advance. If they had, he said, the Americans would have broken through the Fascist lines. Nevertheless, the Americans reached positions in the olive groves below the Fascist trenches where they could reach those trenches with grenades. They could not advance further and the push stalled in the evening. By 10:00 or 11:00 pm the orders were given to pull back to the original lines. Merriman had been called away to a meeting.

Merriman mentions some new Americans. Morin was probably Francois Xavier Morin² who sailed from the US on January 23 and died from his wounds. Morin was 50 years old. He also mentions a "Van Briggs" who was wounded and this is likely a misspelling of Amandus Van den Berghe. He says that Company 1 was taken over by "Henry" and this is William "Bill" Henry of the Irish Connolly Centuria which was part of Company 1, and is mentioned in Landis.⁸⁹

At the start of the day, the Lincolns numbered 373 men.⁹¹ Making the best of an attack which took no new ground and caused many serious casualties (20 dead and 60 injured⁹¹, a casualty rate of 1:4), it is easy to say that it was not a success. The Lincolns dug in by the 24th of February in shallow trenches that did not provide much protection. Joe Gordon was hit in the eye by a sniper's bullet in these shallow trenches.⁹¹ Merriman mentions "Pick" who

was Robert Carl Pick.[§] Pick would be dead in four days in an incident we will cover later.

Like most of the Jarama battles, disagreement exists of the importance of the Lincoln attack. Robert Colodny notes that on the 24th of February, the Spanish 24th did indeed attack and take the heights of Pingarron, the hill to the west. But it did show that the Americans were willing to charge into withering fire, with rifles and bayonets. It gave the Lincolns a reputation of being troops who would be called upon again and again to attack "as shock troops".

[§] Robert Carl Pick was a 23 year old German American from New York who had been in the Young Communist League (YCL). Another member of that first group aboard the *Normandie*, he served with Company 2 of the Lincolns. Pick and Joe Streisand were wounded placing an aviation signal at Jarama. Both Streisand and Pick would die in hospital from these injuries.

25—26 February A Short Calm before the Storm

25 Febrero

S. Matías

{Found one} of our men there and sent him with word to bring all men across road into trench. Instead all men withdrew and left gaps and Dimitrov men withdrew and left. Pick and me with 800 meters of trench and open space and only a few hand grenades. Pick finally had to go and finally I went thru olive orchard. Found men all in rear and Pick leading them to trench. Lucky no men lost. Never found out who gave the order to retreat. Moved into trench and started to dig across road on left to set up supply base connection. Dimitrovs had lost 30

26 Febrero

Ntra. Sra. de Guadalupe

men here and yet had never dug a trench. First day hard and several men lost. By second day labor battalion had improved situation and we were better off. Moved Battalion Hdqtrs into front line. Stember went below and caused talk. At meeting of staff Franco-Belge Battalion criticized for not advancing when English did. In general Brigade has had bad time numbers small and enemy heavily armed with machine guns. Tough front and long retreat (2 km).

§ § §

Merriman continues to relate the movement of men into sheltered positions after the attack and withdrawal of February 23. Recall that the men took up positions previously occupied by the Dimitrov Battalion who were supposed to attack on a flank north of the Lincolns. Merriman said on the previous page that the Spanish engineers (zapaderos) had helped in digging better trenches in these positions but they were shallow in the rocky ground and did not provide enough protection from snipers. When the Dimitrovs moved south to occupy positions

previously held by the British, who had been badly battered from the 21st through 24th, Merriman thought they had pulled out. Apparently some of the Lincolns followed them into these new positions and the command post of the Lincolns was left exposed with only Robert Pick and Merriman there with some grenades. Pick went to gather up the men and Merriman must have left the trench completely unoccupied. The Lincolns were mustered again and put into these trench positions. They were very fortunate that the fascists did not realize that a long section of the front was open or they could have pushed right through to the second lines and the Morata-Chinchon road intersection.

Landis⁹³ describes these positions as a combination of shallow trenches and sandbags which crossed the macadam road to St. Martín de Vega as well as a sunken dirt road that was about level with the height of the bottom of the trenches. There was a stone hut that was used for machine guns for which the Lincolns now had six working guns which could cover their front to the Fascist lines some 200 meters distant. When men tried to cross the sunken road to go north or south, they were exposed from the knees up.



The author (left) with research colleague Marisa Biosca Gonzalves at the remains of the stone hut (or fonda) at Jarama (author's collection).

12 men were shot over the next two days "of rest" from snipers, including Alonzo Watson who was the first African American to be killed in Spain. Even bringing food across these roads to the trenches was dangerous. From the Book of the XVth Brigade:

How Bob Norwood Died

Because the Lincolns moved so much and the kitchen staff was just beginning to get properly organized they received hardly any rations for three days. On February 24, a huge bowl of coffee was sent through the trenches. Each man took his share and passed the bowl to others. When it got to Bob Norwood and a group of his comrades who happened to be chatting together, he got his cup and dipped it into the bowl with great eagerness. As he raised from a bent position with cup in hand, he said to his comrades around "Come on boys, dig in, I got mine." At that very moment an explosive bullet struck him in the head. He fell face down into the coffee... his brains seeped into it.⁹²

On the 25th it rained and keeping dry was the order of the day. The sun came out again February 26th, Merriman, Seacord and Stember were called to Morata. The line "Stember went below and caused talk" is cryptic. The photograph above showing the stone hut is about 30 yards from the sunken road, which actually runs southwest-northeast along a ridge of high ground. Behind the Brigade to the east, the land falls away gradually to the Chinchon-Madrid Road. On this road was the cookhouse and Brigade command post (the Estado Mayor). Rising up from the Chinchon Road intersection towards Morata, General Gal's headquarters could be found in a large hacienda (now called Fuentes de Venta), which had been confiscated.

Merriman would later describe the events of the 23rd as a "scandal". It is possible that Stember returned to the Brigade Headquarters and tried to place blame of the inability to move forward and hold positions on the French and Belgians. We have seen that Merriman has tried to blame the 24th Spanish Battalion and then the Dimitrovs. Little blame could be placed on the British Battalion, who were literally decimated. General Gal and Colonels

Klaus and Copic rarely hesitated in placing blame on commanders who did not achieve their objectives. Especially young and untested commanders like Merriman.

February 27-28 ••• “The Commanders Say Attack!”

27 Febrero

S. Leandro

and capture of English section has not helped in general. Battalion much smaller after 23rd attack and rest needed but impossible since trenches which we inherited are shallow and poor. First day, boys had little to eat and drink since it meant death to carry food across road. Mood gradually improved. Staff planned to give each Battalion rest and wash up down below. On night of 26 captured prisoner and he gave information which coincided with ours and late at night attack was planned. Airplanes, tanks, armored cars,

28 Febrero

S. Román

artillery, cavalry, first aid men and attack to be on our right 24th Brigade and Americans to protect their left flank after they had passed in 50 yds or more. Pivot movement to road then our brigade to move forward. Plan good and sounded like good use of all arms. Early on 27th weather bad and attack put off until 10. At 9:50 artillery started and, at 10, 24th brigade to go forward

29 Febrero

S. Oswaldo

we waited – without promised MGs without telephone – artillery going to left and not helping us or 24th Brigade either. Armored cars behind hill, no tanks in evidence no horses 24th failed to move forward. Ceiling low, no planes. Finally Klaus near front sent word for us to advance. Wattis, the suspicious one, came forward again to our trenches. Some wanted to shoot him as they did Comrade Harris on the 21st. Finally got thru telephone by ourselves and established bad communications. Stated several times that 24th had not advanced

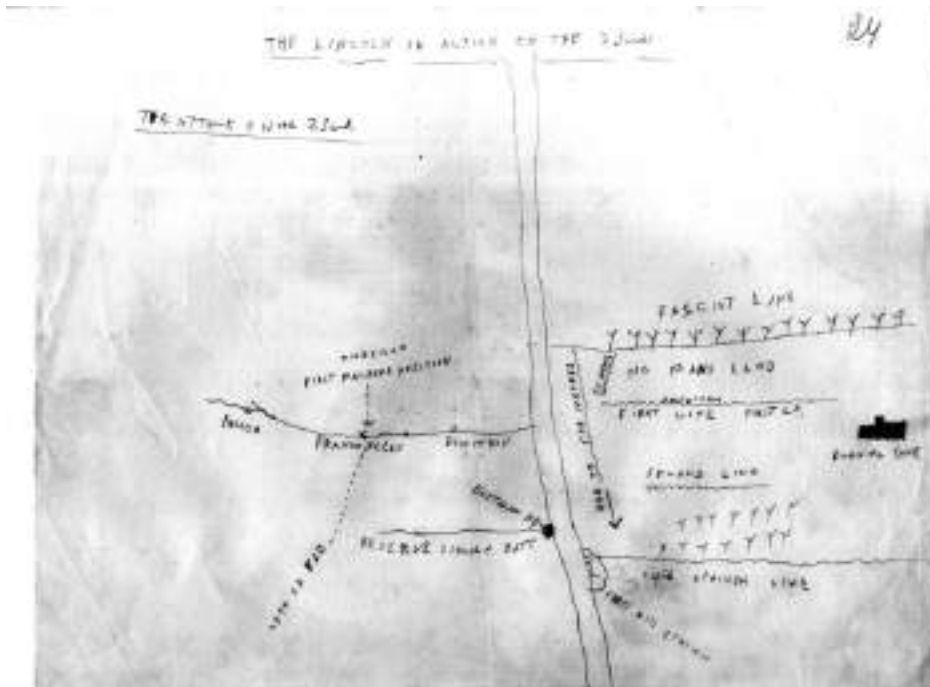
NOTAS

MG fire on our boys too heavy for any action. Plan of attack fell to pieces all along the line. Our boys plenty brave – runners went one by one. Great boys and it grieved me to see them go. Copic finally phoned me and bawled me out for failing to move at 10 o'clock. I said the 24th had not yet moved and he said that they were ahead of us 700 yds and we were seeing their second line. He gave us 15 minutes to make up this distance. He was never more wrong in his life. We had put out our airplane signal – Joe Streisand lost during this and the order was to put it in our most advanced position. After call from Copic I observed signal of 24th Brigade and it was 100 meters behind our trench even yet. Nothing to do since our boys in field and out of runners. 3 planes came instead of 20 and didn't do much. No runner so I passed on signal to advance to try and break thru. Saw Springhall coming toward me when I climbed up passed on signal and was wounded. Muro dressed me and I gave word to leader of Franco Belges to move some men in our trench to back us up. They did this – Saw Cunningham and Hans and Pike. English tried to advance but

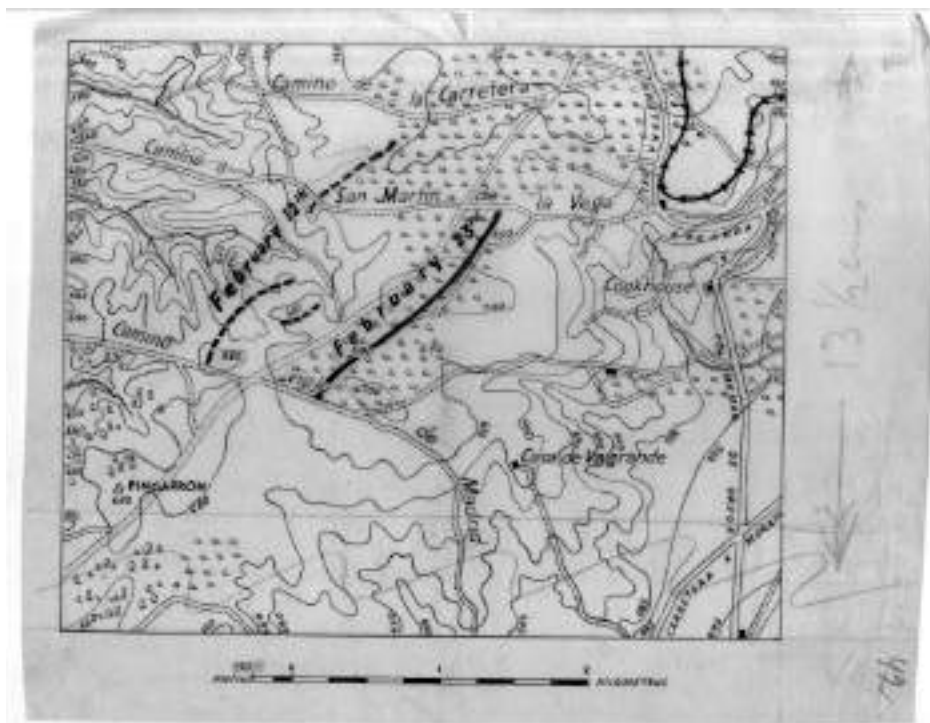
§ § §

As we noted for February 23, there are days which live in the memory of the International Brigades and February 27 is a very important one. Below are hand drawn maps of the Jarama Front from 1937 and in the Moscow RGASPI Archives stored at the Tamiment Library Microfilm collection. One gets a feeling for the level of military intelligence that was available to the commanders in the field of the enemy position during these early Jarama battles.

1937 was not a leap year but the diary had a February 29th page.



Hand drawn topographers map of the Jarama battlefield RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 3/Delo 465/page 24. The line to the left of the road is just behind the sunken road. North is to the right in this diagram and the top is roughly west.



NYU Tamiment Library Moscow Archives Fond 545 Opus 3/Delo 465/page 42. A map to scale of the front as it was pushed back from February 12 to February 23. The February 23 lines are just east of the "sunken road". The attack of February 27 by the Americans was from the north and south sides of the St. Martin de Vega road. North is to the top of this map and it is rotated 90° from the previous one.

The attack of February 23rd revealed that the Nationalist positions were actually weaker than they appeared earlier in the month. The lack of a Fascist counterattack after the losses of the 23rd by the Lincolns gave information that the ranks of the Fascists were not manned in depth and that a counterattack by the International Brigades could be successful in relieving the siege on the Valencia road. Merriman says on the first page that captured Fascist soldiers gave information that strengthened the International Brigades' resolve to counterattack again. After the short rest of the 24-26th, a counterattack was planned for February 27.

Whole chapters have been written about this day and it is impossible here to give a comprehensive summary of the attack. Merriman notes on the 28th of February page (written on March 13) that the counterattack was to begin at 10 AM with artillery support. The Spanish 24th Battalion was to attack the Fascist high ground on the Lincolns' left flank. On the 29th February page, the litany of failures of the plan are listed by Merriman -- no artillery, no tank support, no advance by the 24th, no machine gun support, and most importantly no telephone communications. When planes did arrive, only three Loyalist planes came and made a perfunctory pass, not the promised 20 or 30 airplanes.⁹³ The poor communication between Merriman and Colonels Copic and Klaus will be a crucial factor in how the day turned out. What Merriman and the Americans saw was withering machine gun fire from the Fascist positions and none of the promised support. The Americans did not attack on schedule.

Instead, Merriman says that "Wattis, the suspicious one, came forward to our trenches". Merriman's distrust of the leadership was apparent and their orders to advance into an obviously hot fire area became an issue. Klaus ordered the advance and then Wattis came forward to order the men over the parapets. *Landis:*

Merriman called Brigade headquarters and demand to speak with Copic immediately. Edwin Rolfe describes the ensuing conversation: "There was a long debate actually, in the course of which Merriman maintained firmly that if the Lincoln Battalion was to go over it would draw ferocious and

*impassable fire, since the Spanish brigade was in no position now to provide covering fire, or to draw enemy fire away from the attackers. The argument veered back and forth. Finally Merriman was over-ruled. The order remained: Attack! It was then almost noon.*⁹³

Copic ordered Springhall⁹⁴ and Wattis to go to the American lines and get them moving. Copic was convinced that the Spanish were 700 meters ahead of the Americans and the Americans were not providing support when in fact the Spanish had attacked, were immediately repulsed with dramatic losses and were actually several hundred meters to the Lincolns' rear. Springhall and Wattis joined the Americans and took them over the top with covering fire given by the British and Dimitrov machine gun companies. Within seconds of going over Springhall was shot in the face. Merriman advanced several steps before taking a bullet which shattered his shoulder. Douglas Seacord did not make it 50 meters before he was killed. William Henry, who we just met in yesterday's diary page, was killed almost immediately, his body riddled with bullets. American Sid Levine, who was in Henry's company, was told by his Corporal T. T. O'Brien to look over at a tree nearby. Henry's body was propped up against a tree and the top of his head was missing. Levine said that was the first dead man he had ever seen.⁹⁵ Next to Levine, American actor John Lenthier was also killed with a stomach wound as part of that Irish Company in the Lincolns.⁹⁶

Within a short time, nearly half the Americans who went over were dead. The Fascist positions had at least three positions with enfilading (crossing) machine gun fire. There was nowhere to hide. Only two officers, Marty Hourihan and Robert Thompson were not hit. Lieutenant Bill Wheeler was hit and describes Wattis as walking up to him in the olive groves and tapping him with his swagger stick and ordered him on. William Wheeler described Wattis as "the perfect English officer". Milton Rappaport from New York made it to ten meters of the Fascist lines before he was cut down holding a Mills bomb (grenade) in his hand.

The courage of the Americans on the 27th could not be questioned. The afternoon brought rain and the men that survived

crawled back through thick mud. Many of the dead and wounded would be brought back to the lines over the next few days.

Merriman says that Joe Streisand was killed putting out a "crossed T" airplane signal pointing to the Fascist positions. Robert Pick was also shot trying to put down these guides to the aircraft. Landis says:

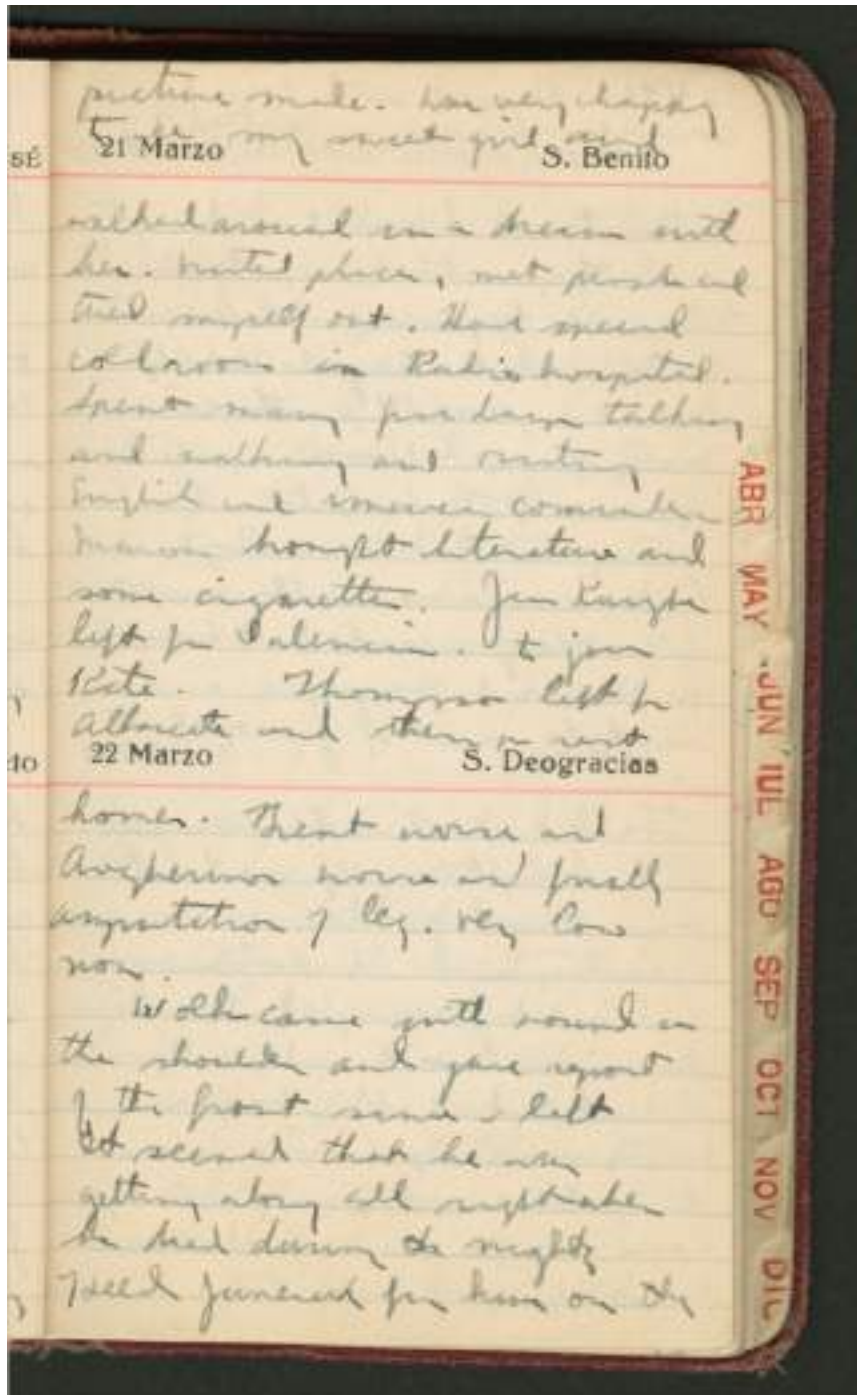
The makeshift aviation signal was then hastily put together with pins, cords, anything that would hold it for the time needed to spread it on the road. The signal was in T form and was to be so placed so the vertical line of the T pointed towards the Rebel Trenches... Streisand took one section of the T and Pick took the other, with the leg folded over. Pick then dashed across the road, spreading out the base of the T-signal between the Lincoln and Spanish positions. When that was done, he ran back across the road in an oblique direction, dragging out the length of the T-signal so that it pointed west, towards the Rebel trenches. In the very act of laying it down he was shot through the chest and stomach. Joseph Streisand ran to help him, and both of them became the immediate target of concentrated machine-gun fire. They were shot down before the eyes of the men of the Second Company, and were literally cut to pieces where they lay by additional bursts of fire.⁹³

The attack of the 27th did not succeed in breaking the Fascist lines and both sides settled into a war of attrition where neither had the manpower or inclination to launch another assault for several weeks. To the extent that these attacks proved to the Fascist leaders that the International Brigades intended to fight for every piece of ground and not to allow Madrid to be surrounded, the attack was important. It also proved to the Loyalist military leaders that the Americans were willing to fight and die for Spain. The cost was high and Merriman was one of the losses of the day. He would spend the next month in hospital. He had his wounds dressed by "Muro" (possibly John Giuseppe Muso, who went to Spain in the first group on the Normandie). To his credit, Merriman tried to stay in the field to support his men, but he was removed by ambulance.

Cecil Eby⁹⁷ claims that the Americans blamed Merriman for this attack. William Herrick said that the men called Merriman "Murderman". This epithet appears only to be from Herrick and some of the disgruntled soldiers and later anti-communist veterans. The history and documentation in the Moscow Archives shows that Robert Merriman tried to resist making the attack of the 27th and Vladimir Copic and Hans Klaus were insistent about making the assault.

§ § §

MARCH 1937



March 1—2 ••• “In Colmenar, a butcher’s shop”

1 Marzo

S. Rosendo

many killed and returned. 2nd time they refused to go forward. Seacord had been killed and no one left to take command. Cooperman took it over with Thompson 2nd. Had tough time getting out of canyon – saw Stern and others. Rushed to Colmenar {de Oreja} even though I wanted to stop and have it out with Copic. In Colminar a butcher shop. People dead in stretchers in yard. Had to sit up – Pick in front of me badly wounded and on stretcher. Heard that Springhall had gotten

2 Marzo

S. Simplicio

it. At the same time went to operating room. Pulling bullets out of man who had become an animal – Viennese girl – swell real stuff – Several doctors operating on stomach exploring for bullets. While others died. Question of taking of those who had a chance at all. Attendants put arm on board and I wanted to eat took revolver and glasses. Finally told that Springhall was waiting for me and we were going to the

§ § §

The previous page of this free form section of the Diary ended with:

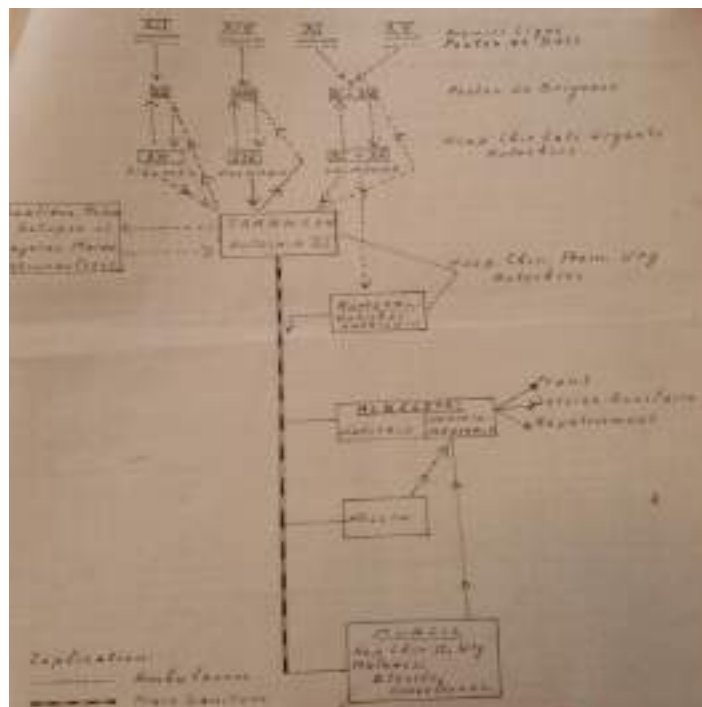
“Musso dressed me and I gave word to leader of Franco-Belges to move some men in our trench to back us up. They did this – Saw {Jock} Cunningham and Hans {Klaus} and {Dr. Edward} Pike. English tried to advance but” and now “many killed and returned”.

Merriman relates that Doug Seacord had been killed and in the absence of commanders, Phil Cooperman took over the Battalion Command with Bob Thompson second in command.

Merriman says in the diary that he wanted to stop and have it out with Copic. Wachtel and Lerude expand, perhaps somewhat dramatically, with:

Even then, however, he demanded they make one crucial stop. He wanted to have it out with Copic, although his senior in military command and rank, for having ordered the Americans into the bloodbath. The stretcher-bearers carried Bob to the commander's makeshift headquarters. Copic, declaring Bob too weak for any conversation but probably knowing exactly what Bob had on his mind, refused to see him; the stretcher bearers carried Bob off to the medical unit.⁹⁸

Actually, he was taken, obviously by ambulance, to a hospital in Colmenar de Oreja, about 10 miles south of Morata de Tejana and two miles south of Chinchon.



Hand drawn diagram of the relationship of the mobile hospitals to the surgical hospitals in Tarancon. The XVth brigade was treated in Colmenar. Image credit: Vidal Gayman, memoir. BDIC Library, University of Paris XI, Nanterre, France

The British Rolls of dead from Jarama list Henry Bonnar who died in "Dow Hospital, Colmenar de Oreja". The hospital was run by Belgian Doctor Rene Dumont. The hospital was in the Convent of the Incarnation (in Spanish, El Convento de la Encarnación del Divino Verbopertenece a las monjas Agustinas).⁹⁹



Merriman documents that he was in the Colmenar hospital with Robert Pick (who was shot while putting out an aircraft signal) and he heard that Dave Springhall of the British Battalion had been shot in the face. Merriman tells how his arm was splinted and put on a board. Marion Merriman Wachtel says that the cast that Merriman was put in was made of common building plaster and, therefore, was extremely heavy.⁹⁸ She continues with what she found out later:

Bob broke and cried when he was informed his runner, Pick, had died in the hospital. He knew the chances of survival in the field units were slim. The doctors and nurses worked valiantly, but the units were really first aid stations, not well-equipped battlefield hospitals. They lacked painkillers, so the miserably wounded reacted ferociously to the undressing of their wounds.⁹⁸

Much has been made of the attack of 27 February and some of the worst insinuations come from Cecil Eby¹⁰⁰, who says that after the attack, the Americans mutinied, were caught and Copic threatened to try and shoot every tenth man. He goes into a poorly referenced story about this tribunal which had Colonel Hans Klaus as the "prosecutor". He says that only because the Czech Copic was trying a Russian-born American "deserter" that a Russian Tank commander named Pahlev intervened and kicked Copic out of his own trial. The veracity of this story is not documented by references other than footnotes which say 400 Americans

mutinied.¹⁰⁰ This would be impossible since there were barely 400 Americans at Jarama. It would have been a tremendous rush for those leaving New York before February 1 (398 in all) to make it through training and to Jarama.¹⁰¹ The Ship Lists document that by February 10, 540 Americans had sailed from New York to Spain. Those on ships on February 17 and 20 could not have plausibly made it to Spain let alone get through training. Landis says that there were 40 dead, 200 wounded and only 60 left in the trenches at the end of the day.¹⁰² This count sounds nearly complete. Carroll quotes Merriman as listing 263 men in the line at the start of the attack on February 27 and 150 remaining the next day.¹⁰³

It is difficult to know what to make of Eby's account. Clearly, Copic was responsible for the attack of the 27th of February and Merriman placed the blame of the losses on him. Copic does not discuss anything about the 27th other than to say from his Diary:

"27 - The XVth Brigade counterattacks on the Jarama and demonstrates to the Fascist invaders that it is prepare [sic] to resist and counterattack at any given moment by order of its high command" ¹⁰⁴

§ § §

March 3—4 ••• “Wounded. Come at Once”

3 Marzo

S. Hemeterio

American Hospital in Romeral {de Toledo in Ocaña}. Nightmare of ride. Lost way 3 ½ hrs going had to give up gun etc. English comrades held up my arm while I laid in floor of ambulance. Springhall could talk that surprised me since he was shot through the head and jaw. Finally arrived and heard English and saw fine clean new hospital. Immediately ate while on stretcher and went to bed. During night others came in and Morse was operated on. Coming along.

4 Marzo

S. Casimiro

Finally transferred to Alcazar. Another bad trip. Had sent telegram to Marion by Wolf who went to Madrid. Springy stayed at American hospital with Rosy {believed to be Joseph Rosenstein, WIA, Jarama}. Refused us at Alcazar de San Juan and loaded us on hospital train. Finally order came thru to unload all I.B. men which they did. Damn it! Stayed in hospital – phoned Vidal next night left on hospital train and got

§ § §

Merriman would be transferred to Romeral de Toledo, just south of the town of Ocaña, not far from the Jarama Front¹⁰⁵. From the diary entry on March 1-2, Romeral hospital is still a mobile surgical hospital and would have been used as a triage unit for those who would be sent Tarancón's surgical hospitals, if they were lucky. Nelson's book says that the hospital was on the Aranjuez-Albacete Road (probably taken from Arthur Landis' reference), which El Romeral is not. El Romeral is on the current CM-3000 road. His 3½ hour drive covered a present day 64 km from Colmenar de Ocaña (via the A40/A4/E5). Then he would have been on regional roads. From the hospital description, it was in a newly built school for girls.



Medical team at Hajar in December 1937. Dr. Edward Barsky is second left and Dr. Weiss is third left. Source: ALBA PHOTO 11-0068, Tamiment Library, NYU



Norman Bethune in Valencia with his mobile transfusion unit.

The American hospital described by Merriman was led by Dr. Edward Barsky of New York. In the future diary pages, the International Brigades Medical Services will be described in more detail, but Spain was noted as the first war where medical hospitals were at the front. Ted Allan and Sydney Gordon's *The Scalpel, the Sword*¹⁰⁶ is an intriguing account of Dr. Norman Bethune, whose innovations in front line blood transfusions saved countless lives in the war.

Art Landis quotes from two letters from nurses who served at Romeral, Mildred Rackley and Frederika Martin. Rackley said:

We are now settled in a new schoolhouse, with no sanitary facilities... a very feeble electric line, no telephone, no water and a pretty awful road ... On the third day the patients began to pour in. We got forty the first day...

The roads for six kilometers on either side of us were so bad that it would have killed a patient to have him taken over them in an ambulance.¹⁰⁷

Rackley said that they convinced the *Alcalde* (Mayor) to mobilize 1000 villagers to fix the road the next day.

Some old and some new names are mentioned on this diary page. Dave Springhall went to El Romeral with Merriman. Eugene Morse was the commander of the Lincoln 2nd Company at Jarama and was wounded in the action of the 23rd of February. Springhall remained at El Romeral with "Rosy" who is believed to be Joseph Rosenstein^a, who was also wounded at Jarama.

Merriman was bounced from hospital to hospital. He wanted to get to Alcazar de San Juan but was loaded onto a hospital train. He was unloaded and admitted to the hospital. Alcazar de San Juan is 80 km west of Tarazona de la Mancha, the Lincolns training base. It is on the train line that runs through El Romeral so it would have been a modern-day 45 minute train journey to get to Alcazar. It was here that he sent the telegram to Moscow to have Marion Merriman join him in Spain. She says:

At the hospital, the battle still blazing in his mind, Bob settled back to rest as best he could. But rest would not come easily as he wondered who from his command had survived, who was wounded, who had been killed, why Copic had demanded the Americans take the hill, and why Copic had overruled him when he reported that the attempt would lead to slaughter. It was there, in the hospital, that Bob dictated the cable he sent to me in Moscow: "Wounded. Come at once."¹⁰⁸

^a Joseph Rosenstein was born April 7, 1915, in Detroit, Michigan. Rosenstein was a very recent arrival in Spain showing up on February 14, 1937. Wounded in action on February 27, 1937 at Jarama, he returned to the Lincoln BN and was in the Commissariat during Quinto and Belchite. He was later transferred to the 35th Division Estado Mayor as a driver and wounded a second time when his vehicle was strafed. During the Retreats of March and April, 1938, he was killed in action.

March 5—6 ••• Merriman is evacuated to Murcia

5 Marzo

S. Gerásimo

off at Albacete. Went to hospital where nurses were worst in Spain. Made trip to Etat Major and had long talk with Vidal and Platone. Asked to make report on same afternoon and dictated it to Marty's sect. Brodsky came. Donaldson – Harris couldn't be located. Late at night Kerrigan came back from front and told about resolution passed and boys out of the line. He made report also which sent to Valencia with mine. Discussed and then late at night he

6 Marzo

S. Olegario

decided to send me by ambulance to Murcia. First one too bad finally got one new one which was still not good. Bulgarian from Moscow suffered much. Arrived at 7 in the morning in Murcia.

March 25 {probably the date when he wrote this recollection}

I had great difficulty in locating a bed and pillows and fell asleep one half hour before they decided to dress and set my arm in a plaster cast.

§ § §

Merriman only spent one night at Alcazar de San Juan Hospital and then asked to return to Albacete. There he met with the Brigade leaders Vidal and Platone. He was asked to write a report on the events of the 23rd and 27th. In the endnotes section, this report is translated from the French in Vidal's memoir.¹⁰⁹



Merriman said that Commissar George Brodsky^b had arrived at the American base and he met him at Albacete. Brodsky was one of the men interviewed by Sandor Voros who was one of the lead writers for the Book of the XVth International Brigade. There are interesting interviews taken by Voros and after the war Voros was clearly anti-Communist so his writings later in life in his book "American Commissar" can be read with that consideration. Voros relates in a somewhat long excerpt:

At that time I merely noted those stories, suspending judgment until they could be authenticated by filling in that six-month gap in the history of the American volunteers that elapsed between their arrival and mine. That was difficult, for no official records were kept of that early period. Luck finally led me to George Brodsky who had been denounced to me by most of those early arrivals as the worst example of the behavior of Party leaders and commissars in Spain.



When I located him, George Brodsky was being kept in seclusion by the party awaiting repatriation. I found him a broken old man although barely in his thirties. He wouldn't talk to me at first, he had been pledged to secrecy. When I finally induced him to confide in me, he not only talked, he spilled over.

^b George Brodsky was born April 15, 1901, and worked as a printer and artist in New York City. He arrived in Spain on February 24, 1937 and served as the Commissar at Tarazona de la Mancha, where he was generally ineffective. He returned to the US on October 16, 1937 aboard the *De Grasse*. Brodsky died November 8, 1999.

His account was not quite coherent - he was still unnerved by his experiences, his eyes would dissolve in tears from time to time as he pleaded for my understanding ... Brodsky had found himself right in the middle; the Americans were blaming him for their treatment by the French, while the French command held him responsible for the rebellious behavior of the Americans. As ranking party member Brodsky next was appointed Albacete Base Commissar for all Americans who were now arriving daily in Spain. The French command in Albacete showed themselves equally discriminatory against Americans, keeping them on short rations, which demoralized the Americans even more. Brodsky again was in the middle. The Americans raised demands and insisted on conditions which they expected Brodsky to enforce with the I.B. Command, with whom he carried no weight. The I.B. Command in turn, disgusted and contemptuous of those "spoiled cry-babies," those "arrogant Americans," held Brodsky responsible for their conduct. Considering them of little worth, they decided to disperse the Americans, to use them as replacements for other units, the British and Irish particularly; thus denying them the opportunity to serve in units of their own under their own command. (It was the story of General Pershing versus Field Marshal Foch all over again, but Brodsky was no Pershing nor did he have Old Black Jack's political backing.)...

Worse still, the party had sent them overseas without assigning to them even a single leading party member with sufficient organizational experience who would have commanded their respect. In short, they were leaderless, which gave rise to immediate factional groupings. Thus the unity of the group was destroyed from the start ...

Had Brodsky been an experienced party leader, had he been entrusted with authority to represent the Central Committee of the United States, had he been given a "silk ribbon," he could have taken a tougher stand, because ultimately all those matters were decided by the party. As it was, the existing situation was permitted to worsen and a number of Americans had actually been detached and sent to other units.... The story

culminated in the Americans being sent to the Jarama front without training, under a makeshift and inexperienced command, which resulted in the death of a disproportionately high number of them right at the outset of the battle. The surviving volunteers again blamed Brodsky for that and cried for his head.¹¹⁰

Merriman also met with Alec Donaldson and tried to find out where Harris was. He did not find him. Later that evening Peter Kerrigan¹¹¹ of the British Battalion returned from the front and revealed that the Americans were out of the line and had passed a resolution. This was a problem for the Americans because it expressed lack of confidence in the Brigade leadership.

Landis relates this:

Robert Klonsky, one of those who had been in Spain approximately seven days, says that when he and other wounded men made it back to the trenches, their general reaction to what had happened was one of rage and anger, rather than demoralization. Some leaned against the parapets and cried tears of futility, anger, and frustration. Others wandered aimlessly through the trenches, cursing the "bastards" and "idiots" who had forced the attack. One source gives information as to the whereabouts of Battalion Commander Stember during the attack {Voros' book says that Stember was in the cookhouse purportedly solving problems there}. Stember did not go over apparently, and when men returned after some hours in the open field and olive grove, Stember, at luger point, ordered them back from the parapets. Needless to say, his authority was ignored.¹¹²

Again, one can rely on Cecil Eby to get to the heart of discontent within the Lincoln ranks:

On March 1, Lincoln survivors gathered under a cliff behind the lines in a rump parliament selected a slate of new officers. Although opposed by the brigade officers, who "tried every trick in the book to stop the meeting", they settled on

Arthur Madden, a steelworker from Gary, Indiana, as co-commissar to neutralize Stember. As commander they insisted upon being led into the next battle by one of their own, even though after canvassing everyone present, they found no one qualified to lead. The stormy forum lasted for a half a day before they picked a compromise candidate, Martin Hourihan, a former seaman (purser's section) who had had a brief stint (as a clerk) in the U. S. Army. He could serve as Captain Van den Berghe's adjutant while learning the ropes. Outrage displaced fear as the reigning mood of the battalion. They voted to petition Brigade for their immediate removal from frontline service (with some men returning home); two weeks of military training under real officers rather than "self-elected amateurs"; courts-martial of those responsible for sending untrained men into battle; and permission to contact the central committee of the CPUSA (called by one skeptic "like nothing so much as a child crying for its mother"). Five men carried the petition to Colonel Copic, who passed it on as American insubordination and mutiny.¹¹³



This undoubtedly was the "resolution" discussed by Merriman. Eby continues by discussing the observations of Dr. John Simon who found the men dangerously depressed. Simon had to post guard over one Lincoln who was suicidal. Eby says that this Lincoln was Andrew Royce, who we have come across before. Royce, who was prone to drinking too much, worked from the rear until the battles of the Ebro in the Spring of 1938.

Dr. John Simon of the Lincoln Battalion. Source: ALBA Photo 11_0157, Tamiment Library, NYU

March 7—8 ••• Merriman meets a phony

7 Marzo

Sto. Tomás de Aquino

They had no plaster {of} Paris so they used building plaster which is very heavy. I was so tired and worn out that I almost passed out but not quite.

After this rested for a few days. Got an idea of the comrades of ours who were here. Met Bennett who had told me before that he was a relative of Milly's. I sent

8 Marzo

S. Juan de Dios

him out to buy some odds and ends for me and he did not return the change immediately and instead contacted some American business man here and phoned the US Embassy in Valencia and told them he was here and wanted to return. They mentioned cruisers and said they would send a car for him.

§ § §

Merriman says that he met a "Bennett" who claimed to be related to Milly Bennett. The only Bennett in the Lincolns at this point was Thomas Edwin Brown Bennett.^c It is unlikely that he is related to Mildred Bennett since she was born Mildred Bremler who later became Mildred Mitchell and then Mildred Bennett (as a *nom de plume*). An Ancestry.com search on Milly Bremler and Thomas Edwin Browne Bennett shows that they are not related to three generations before their birth. Perhaps it was just a means of befriending Merriman by saying that they had someone in common.

^c Thomas Bennett has very little on his background in his file. He was from Washington DC and had 2 years prior military service. He arrived in Spain on January 30, 1937, and by early March was seeking a way to get the US Embassy to get him out. He was suspected of being a US Government plant.

Merriman explains that Bennett took what small change Merriman had and instead of buying him items made a phone call to the US Consulate to try to get out of Spain. Merriman mentions that Bennett spoke of "cruisers", probably a potential way out of Valencia. In March 1937, the American Embassy had been contacted by five potential American deserters. Three names are known. On May 13, 1937, Thomas Bennett of the address listed in the ALBA list returned to the US on a Certificate of Entry on the Normandie. It appears that Thomas Edwin Browne Bennett got out of Spain early which was very unusual. The US Embassy did little for other deserters who showed up at their door. They certainly didn't send cars across Spain to Murcia to pick up the average Lincoln soldier who wanted to go home. In 1940, Bennett's occupation was "messenger for US Government" on the US Census in Washington. A very curious fellow and we will see Merriman's curiosity piqued in the next two days of the diary.

§ § §

March 9—10 ••• “Jesuits”

9 Marzo

S. Paciano

“Jesuits” word used by Bennett about communists. Send report about him to Albacete for chance to return home. Celia Greenspan is here and expected to work in laboratory but has taken up nursing since only a microscope of the lab appeared. She makes Bennett uneasy. She knows what he is.

10 Marzo

S. Melitón

Thompson here and saved the day since we had much in common and talked and explored the town together. Springhall finally arrived and looks much better. Brodsky sent thru some papers etc. which cheered up the boys and we saw our first Daily Worker.

§ § §

Merriman continues to discuss "Bennett" who we have identified as Thomas Edwin Browne Bennett, who left Spain in May 1937. He must have had suspicions about Bennett since he was writing a report back to the Brigade leadership about having him sent home.

Since 2014, the RGASPI archives have made many of the personnel files of the Brigadistas available online. Merriman's letter is in Bennett's file:

Dear Comrade Brodsky:

I want you to take up the case of Thomas Bennett who has been in the hospital several days longer than most of us and whose nerve and spirit is entirely gone.

He claims he came with the understanding that a volunteer could serve as long as he liked and then leave. He paid his own way over and wants to pay his own way back.

He has not heard from his wife while here and now says he will join her at any cost. He would like to do it through the proper channels if possible, but says he will do it any way possible if not. He is no use as a soldier and never has been. I do not object to his leaving but do not like to see the precedent set for such cases. Others would want to do the same thing.

The case is complicated by the fact that he has contacted the U.S. Embassy in Valencia and they are going to send a car for him if he doesn't arrange it officially. He would then go home on a cruiser. I am not familiar with the procedure in such cases. Please talk to someone about it. Peter Kerrigan would be a good one to ask.

I haven't found the names of all who left last night because the local people are highly insulted that I should insinuate that their system is no good. Here I know left:

Seigel, Dent, Horowitz, Ehrlich.

Please see about getting me some money. I have spent all I had in buying sweets, etc. for our boys. I am almost broke and won't be able to buy anything for the new ones.

Comradely, Merriman¹¹⁴

Merriman misstates some names here. The likely comrades named were Samuel Siegel, Canadian Walter Dent, William Horowitz (who is Bill Harvey or Bill Herrick), and Rubin Ehrlich.

Brodsky was placed in a difficult position because he personally had received threatening letters from Bennett about him deserting and taking Briton Cyril Sexton with him. Wally Tapsell, the British Commissar, ordered the arrest of both Bennett and Sexton on suspicion of imminent desertion. There is nothing on Sexton's file to show that he ever was arrested and his reviews were entirely complementary until his departure in 1938. Interestingly, in

complementary until his departure in 1938. Interestingly, in Bennett's letter to Brodsky, he is suspicious of the US Consular Officer Davis and says "He knows I am in Army Intelligence and he thinks I am here on a mission and winked at me".¹¹⁵ Proving Brodsky was also a person that Bennett could trust, he would never have revealed this unless he had told Brodsky that he would be working as a double agent.

Merriman also notes that Celia Greenspan "knows what he is". Bennett has also been in contact with Kate Mangan Kurske, a Daily Worker correspondent in Valencia and he left her name as his contact point. We will see in the next month that Kate Mangan Kurske was in Albacete looking after her husband, Jan Kurske, who was also injured at the front.

Bob Thompson also came to visit Merriman and provided some companionship. The injured Dave Springhall made it to Murcia from Colmenar hospital and Merriman says that he looks much improved. George Brodsky came through with some copies of the Daily Worker as reading material.

§ § §

March 11—12 ••• “Murcia is an interesting town”

11 Marzo

Sta. Aurea

Kerrigan finally came up late at night with Harry Pollitt. Didn't see Pollitt but saw Kerrigan the next day and heard some more about the front. Stember seems to be losing his grip. Reports we sent in seen by Pollitt in Valencia. Talked about uniting English and American Battalions. OK by me.

12 Marzo

S. Gregario Magno

Sent word to Albacete Brent (Canadian boy) badly hurt and paralyzed in our ward. Great sport and very brave.

Murcia is an interesting town. At present all the parks are torn up because they are building air raid shelters underground

§ § §

Merriman continues to be at Murcia for the rest of the month of March although now he is mobile and is able to walk around the town to see it. We know that Murcia had considerable damage in 1936 at the beginning of the Civil War and by the end, the skyline was unrecognizable. Many of the buildings that Merriman would have seen in his stroll around town have since been torn down, but one nice view from Google's Panoramia™ viewer allows us to still go there today.



Murcia today

News from the front was not good. Merriman heard that Stember had lost control at Jarama and the story of him waving his pistol around to get control must have been relayed to Merriman by Peter Kerrigan. Merriman says the story got to the leadership of the CP in Valencia and it forced Harry Pollitt, General Secretary of the British Communist Party to intervene. Merriman says there was even discussion about combining the British and American battalions and Merriman did not object to that. Since hundreds of Americans were pouring into Spain at the time, that combination of battalions did not take place.



*Harry Pollitt speaks to troops.
Source: Moscow Archive Photos,
ALBA PHOTO 177_179055,
Tamiment Library, NYU*

Merriman mentions "Brent" from Canada. Brent is not mentioned in three authoritative texts concerning the Canadians in the war: Victor Hoar (Victor Howard)¹¹⁶, William Beeching¹¹⁷, or Mark Zuehlke¹¹⁸. Michael Petrou¹¹⁹ published an authoritative list of the Canadians in Spain and has identified Jack Brent of Cobourg, Ontario who was born in 1912 and survived the war. Jack Brent was George (Geordie) Dickie¹²⁰ of Scotland and he can be found in web accounts of his time in Spain. The town of Whithorn in Scotland honored him in 2005.¹²¹

Jack Brent was a leader of the International Brigades Memorial Trust and even had a book written about him.¹²² Larry Ryan of Toronto who was also in the Lincoln's Number 2 Company about that morning on February 27, 1937 said about Jack Brent:

Almost before Company One is out of the trenches, we are up, on the run, dive into the trench, so shallow that one crouches to lay a rifle on the parapet. In the gathering darkness, we glimpse the comrades ahead, in waves they go up, down, up, run down ever ahead. It is but a pause before we follow. Out across the field, a few shells are bursting ahead of us, or are they grenades? We are still too green to know...As we go over the top one of our tanks is hit, bursts into flames and is now a flaming torch at our backs, silhouetting us against its brilliance. The enemy has machine gun nests which sweep in a v-shaped crossfire. The blaze of the tank is fading and if you hug the earth they can't see you. In an answer to the agonized cries of 'first aid, first aid' which pierced through the tortured night, the stretcher bearers flit through the gloom, picking up the wounded and as they bear them away, appearing momentarily like shadows, the machine guns spew laden death and the shadows crumple.

Answering just such a call Jack {Brent} went to rescue a wounded comrade. As he bent down to pick him up a rapid burst of machine gun fire cut him down, immediately after he was shot, he was dazed and his legs paralysed. He crawled first toward the enemy lines, but realizing his mistake he got back to his own lines in spite of enemy fire. He had been in Spain only a few days, and the action took place three days after his 25th birthday.

Jack Brent would not live past his 39th birthday. In a book release for *Geordie's Story* by John Dickie, a nice homage for Jack Brent is given in video.¹²³

§ § §

March 13—17 ••• Waiting for Milly and Marion

13 Marzo

S. Ramiro

{building air raid shelters underground} covered with cement so that a direct hit will not hurt anyone. Main two streets narrow no auto traffic and crowded except during siesta between 1 and 4. Good sized river here and series of dams. Cement industry here and much rope made. Beautiful mountains in distance and whole valley

14 Marzo

Sta. Matilde

an oasis of green trees, mostly lemon and orange and scattered with houses. Reminds me of Africa. Received telegram from Marion & Milly and expected her for days. Thompson and I went to the station for several nights expecting her to come in. Had trouble getting taxis etc.

15 Marzo

Sta. Madrona

Murcia was a rich city and they say it is still infested with fascists. Many sidewalk cafes and few restaurants. Fine glassware here and modernistic lamps and fancy fittings. Fine market here crowded in the mornings. Bought new glasses since number of lenses lost when the train officials lost my

16 Marzo

S. Heriberto

documents. Glasses cost 28 pesetas and not too good. Very tired after short walks and manage to get from one café to the next. Bennett left for Albacete. Comrades scattered more now and while 55 were here for a while only 35 are here now.

Saw {Dr.} Neumann here on several occasions he is {busy...}

§ § §

March 14 arrives and Merriman is isolated from Jarama. He spends time with Bob Thompson and Thomas Bennett, who leaves for Albacete from Murcia. While Merriman waits for his wife at the train station, the war had not stopped to wait for Merriman.



David Mates (left) and Major Allan Johnson (right). This photograph was taken at Fuentes de la Venta at Morata de Tejuña just east of the Jarama lines. Source: Moscow Archive Photo 177_191047. Tamiment Library, NYU

But first, we introduce a new Lincoln. James Allan Donald McNeil (Allan Johnson) arrived in Spain and took over command of the XVth Brigade operations in the field. Johnson had a strong military background (a graduate of the United States War College, General Staff School and a regular Captain in the Massachusetts National Guard).¹²⁴ Johnson was an excellent strategist and wrote several articles in the 1937 *Volunteer for Liberty* on how to protect troops from aircraft and how to build effective fortifications. His arrival was crucial given the decimation of the Brigade leadership on February 27th. The Brigade "found" Johnson in Figueras on the evening of the 27th and rushed a car across Spain to pick him up and bring him to the front. Johnson immediately assessed the state of the Brigade and personally made trips back to Albacete to replace the worn Maxim machine gun barrels with usable equipment.¹²³ He improved the Brigade trenches so that they could be defended.

On the 14th of March in a state of dying interest on the Madrid front, the Fascists took one last attempt to cut the Chinchon-Morata - Titulcia road. Using Italian two-man Fiat tanks, they rolled up a section of line on the left flank of the Brigade and chased out the Spanish troops holding that flank. Eby says:

In the afternoon of March 14 the front suddenly erupted again as Moors, proceeded by Fiat tanks, stormed the trenches south of the XVth Brigade, an episode recorded in brigade lore as "the Battle of Dead Mule Trench". That section was lightly held by skittish quintos (conscripts) of the La Passionaria Battalion, who panicked and fled. The contagion spread to the next sector, occupied by the British Battalion... {the Brigade leadership was in a meeting with Copic in the rear and the labor battalion held the Moors} Within minutes Captain Jock Cunningham, the ferocious, bushy-browed commander of the British, came dashing up the hill shouting, "You bloody Yanks! Goddamn you -- we won't leave you in the lurch!"...Close behind came Fred Copeman.... Grabbing handfuls of Mills bombs, a mixed force of Americans and British stormed down the length of the trench, flushing out the Moors in fine style. One man would toss a grenade into a blind corner of the trench zigzag, and the others would quail-shoot the Moors who tried to scramble out. The enemy ran out of grenades in the nearly subterranean fighting and never caught on that their opponents were only a patched-up raiding party, and not a full battalion. The counterattack ended when Cunningham found the trench blocked by a dead mule and scrambled up on the parapet in full view of the enemy, where he caught a machine-gun burst that somersaulted him into the trench, his chest and arms spurting blood like a pump.¹²⁵

Copeman took Cunningham back for help and Lieutenant Wattis continued to pick off Moors who piled up in the no-man's-land as they retreated. The Moors continued to hold that section of trench for some time, but proceeded no further into the Brigade lines. The Brigades Russian T-26 tanks overmatched the small Fiats and dispatched them. The Russians, according to Eby, called the Fiats "patrol cars" and their two man crews the "riot police".¹²⁴



(left) Jock Cunningham. ALBA Photo 177_179053. (right) Fred Copeman on the right with Yugoslav Commander Chapayev on the left of the photo. ALBA Photo 177_179054. Tamiment Library, NYU.

Eby describes an incident that was to become famous over the next year, with Robert Raven speaking to Philip Cooperman....

Suddenly we ran into four soldiers who we thought were our own, but their helmets and clothes proved them to be fascists. They tried to capture us. We tore away and ran back thirty meters and grabbed some grenades. My Canadian comrade opened the lever of his grenade and handed it to me, which he should not have done. However, I crawled up towards the fascists under cover and was about to toss the grenade when there was a terrific concussion in front of me and I felt my face torn off. Naturally, I dropped the grenade [which] exploded at my feet filling my legs with shrapnel. My comrades must have retreated again and I kept crawling blindly, dragging my body through those trenches calling "Comrade, Comrade".¹²⁴

Robert Raven would recover. He was, however, blinded in both eyes. Raven would return to the US to lead appeals for support for the Internationals.

March 17—21 Harris Returns and Marion Arrives

17 Marzo

S. Patricio

busy these days. Found one Cuban working on farm. Harris came up from Albacete to talk over things with me. He is better but still not clear and found rich fascist here in his mind's eye. Big rich home and servants, etc. He bought stripes but is afraid to wear them since he doesn't know if he lost

18 Marzo

S. Gabriel Arcángel

his commission or not. Sent here as Political Commissar and to go on soon to Benicassim. Thinks he still must be officer since no trial was held, etc. Finally left after threatening to join Spanish Battalion here. He is still bad and Neumann later found some of his documents in a local cafe on the table.

19 Marzo

San José

Neumann saw him later in Benicassim and said they are going to send him home.

Met Overton again who is wounded in the arm. At first he was a great pain but finally cooled down and is better. Proud of record as a soldier but others don't speak so well of his time at the front. Many

20 Marzo

S. Niceto

different stories. He is against everyone in his Battalion except Overton. Moved to Radio hospital on river - spoke to directress and she promised room for Marion and me when Marion arrives.

On March 16 Marion came in morning met her and went immediately to have x ray

§ § §

Merriman continues to describe Murcia in his diary but notes that James Harris has returned and they talked. Clearly, this episode affected Merriman significantly and he seems really to care about Harris' welfare. But Harris still shows signs that he is not really past the paranoia that affected him in Albacete and Jarama. He makes statements about Harris "finding a big rich fascist in his mind's eye" and we are to wonder if this was someone in town or Merriman himself. "Harris bought stripes" means that he had purchased the insignia of a Captain for his uniform but he was uncertain if he still had his command. Wearing stripes when you were busted would certainly put you in jail.

The Command must have felt Harris was ok if he was sent back to Murcia as a commissar, but it would have allowed him to serve while also being watched by medical staff. "and to go on soon to Benicassim" would put Harris in the rear in a convalescent hospital on the Coast. Merriman notes that Dr. Neumann found Harris' papers left in a café. Clearly they were concerned about his stability and perhaps whether he was considering desertion.

The next page of the diary reveals that Harris was examined at Benicassim and the word was that he was going to be sent back to the US. Later in the diary in October, however, Harris is still in Spain and he has joined to the XIIIth Dombroski Battalion as a company commander. There is evidence from the RGASPI archives that Harris again panicked under fire at Fuentes del Ebro and he was executed by the command of the XIIIth Battalion on October 14, 1937.¹²⁶ It is quite sad that Neumann did not carry out the order to repatriate Harris. It could have saved him.

In Murcia, Merriman meets up again with Bert Overton¹²⁷, who was a Company commander of the British at Jarama. Merriman picks up on the problems with Overton, who is defensive of his record. Overton was suspected of retreating at the front and leaving the Lincolns exposed. James Carmody, scholar of the English Battalion, made the following observation:

Bert Overton was Company Commander of 4th Company. Overton panicked and shouted the company was surrounded. He led the charge to the rear and threw a grenade into the Battalion Ammo dump in order to make the Battalion retreat, since they would have no Ammo. Albert 'Bert' Overton was a former Welsh Guardsman.¹²⁸

Merriman says that Overton was critical of everyone in the British Battalion, except himself. We will see later in the diary that the Overton situation comes to a head with Overton being formally charged and court-martialed. At that time, Merriman was really interested only in getting Overton's officer's cap. Overton would be ordered to the front in Brunete in a work battalion, which was tantamount to a death order as building trenches out front of the front lines was the most dangerous occupation that a soldier could have.

Merriman's wait for Marion was about to end and he arranged for rooms for her at Radio Hospital in Murcia. This hospital is said to be on the river. Marion Merriman arrives in Murcia on March 16.

§ § §

March 21—24 ••• “Happy to see my sweet girl”

21 marzo

S. Benito

{xray} picture made. Was very happy to see my sweet girl and walked around in a dream with her. Visited places, met people and tired myself out. Have special cold room in Radio hospital. Spent many fine days talking and walking and visiting English and American comrades. Marion brought literature and some cigarettes. Jan Kurske left for Valencia to join Kate {Mangan}. {Bob} Thompson left for Albacete and then in rest

22 Marzo

S. Deogracias

homes. {Jack} Brent worse and {Constantine (Costas)} Avgherinos worse and finally amputation of leg. Very low now.

{Robert} Wolk came with wound in the shoulder and gave report of the front since I left. It seemed that he was getting along all right when he died during the night. Held funeral for him on the

23 Marzo

S. Victoriano

24th. Buried with French Comrade. Service in Canteen of International hospital and went thru street on foot and then rode to graveyard. Special circle for International Brigade. Wolk buried in no. 14 in the circle. Many flowers – Harris spoke at grave and I in hospital. His money went to Secorro Rojo. {Marion} Greenspan came in the night before the funeral and brought papers and magazines and went to part of funeral.

24 Marzo

S. Timalao

Talked much with Greenspan and brought myself up to date on internal politics.

Cachin is head doctor now and much over worked. Hospital here is not good and greatly understaffed in all phases. Finally new surgeon came to our hospital. And x-ray ready soon. Must make full report on condition of hospital.

§ § §

Showing as much emotion as Bob Merriman could, he says his sweet girl, Marion Merriman, arrived from Moscow. She would be in Spain for the next seven months. She related her reunion with her husband:

Despite the war around us, being with Bob in Murcia made me happy. We stayed together in his room in the Hospitale d'Internationale. One morning as I awoke a wild wailing reached through the corridors into our room and terrified me. Bob, too, was awakened. He saw my fear, reached over to calm me, then broke into laughter. Don't be alarmed, he said. It was only the maid out in the hall singing flamenco. I'd never heard the eerie, wild Spanish music before. But I grew quickly to love it.¹²⁹

Marion's book is often personal but no passage so exceeds her own diary which she started to keep at Murcia. She said:

But what do I know other than my feelings? Rushing, exalting, changing in moments like these. People. Bob who made this possible for me, for whom nothing is humdrum, routine or ordinary, who knows the reasons and facts better than I, who I follow joyfully because I love him and believe in him.¹²⁸

Merriman mentions Jan Kurske. Kurske was also in hospital in Murcia at this time. He says Jan returns to Valencia to meet with "Kate". Kate is Kate Foster Kurske, a reporter in Valencia, and Kurske's wife. Kate later became Kate Mangan and she and Jan Kurske left an unpublished manuscript.¹³⁰ Merriman mentions that Bob Thompson left for Albacete and then for "rest home", perhaps for some "R&R" (rest and relaxation).

In the hospital, Jack Brent is still bad (we discussed him previously and he will live with this injury for the rest of his life). The Avgherinos is Constantine (Costas) Avgherinos.^d He was wounded in the leg on February 21, 1937, with the British Battalion. Obviously, by March 25, the wound was infected and his leg was removed. Antibiotics to stop gangrene in wounds were rudimentary in Spain.

American Robert Wolk^e had been placed in charge of the Irish and Cubans who had been combined into one company after the losses of the 27th of February. In the description of the fighting on the 14th of March, Landis says:

When word reached Captain Hourihan that the Spaniards were retreating, he, together with {David Everett} Jones, the Battalion Commissar, and Robert Wolk, Adjutant of the First Company, assembled a number of riflemen and went immediately to the threatened sector... Since the bulk of the assault had been directed farther south and around the side of a long hill, the Americans sought only to secure the area they had occupied. Hourihan handled the deployment of his men skillfully, and casualties were held to a minimum. Only one man is known to have been killed. His loss, however, was felt strongly by the men. He was Robert Wolk, the ex-Navy man and Adjutant of the First Company.¹³¹

^d Born in 1912, Constantine Avgherinos joined the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1934. He joined the British Battalion after his arrival on 10th of January 1937 (British Battalion Identification Number 140). Wounded on the same day as his brother, Heracles/Hercules, Constantine Avgherinos was less fortunate; fever and complications set in during his convalescence although the wound was not that serious. He died in Pasionaria Hospital in Murcia, two months later on April 30, 1937. (Alan Warren, private communication)

^e Robert Wolk was 37 years old, with prior military service in the US Navy. Arriving in the first group of Americans, he became adjutant commander MG Company and after the attack on February 27th, he was promoted to Adjutant of Company 1. He was wounded on March 14, 1937 at Jarama and died in Murcia hospital on March 25, 1937.

Wolk came to the hospital with a shoulder wound. He was talking when he came in but died overnight. Merriman notes that there was a funeral outside of the hotel and Wolk was buried in Murcia's graveyard in a "Special Circle" for the international Brigade. James Harris represented the Internationales by speaking at the funeral and Merriman would make a similar homage in the hospital. There is a photograph (found in NYU's Tamiment Library and presented here for purposes of continuing this discussion) of the Pasionaria Hospital in Murcia.



Pasionaria Hospital in Murcia in 1937. Photograph taken by Fredericka Martin as part of her collection. Source: ALBA Photo 1:5:3:2, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives. Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, 70 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012, New York University Libraries

The hospital building itself has not changed significantly and here is a Google Maps™ street view of the same building today.



The Pasionaria Hospital today. It is on the Paseo Teniente Flomista. It is now a high school. Source: Google Streetview®.

Marion Greenspan was working in the Brigades Office in Madrid and came to visit and probably interview Bob Merriman. A newspaperman, Greenspan would know a good story when he saw it. And he boosted morale by bringing recent copies of the Daily Worker. A difficult name to read in today's diary entry was Dr. Cachin. Dr. Cachin was one of four French surgeons with Drs. Catalette, Chrétien and Cordière.¹³² Cachin apparently became the lead doctor at Pasionaria Hospital.

§ § §

March 25—26 ••• “I Caught Up on the Diary”

25 Marzo

Anunciación de Ntra. Sra.

Rosy and other boys cheered up by Marion. Had a meeting on the 25th in Radio hospital about general running of the place, etc. Went off all right. After met Ryan, English torpedo man in Spanish Navy in Cartagena. Brought cigarettes and wants to visit boys – fine chap. Ate late with Greenspan and away to pleasant dreams – must stop because I caught up the diary.

26 Marzo

S. Teodoro

Spent much time these days with Greenspan. Marion visited the sick comrades with candy, flowers and reading material.

Some news came through from the front by boys coming in. Met Gladnick who talked too much about his new school, etc. X-ray finally set up altho

§ § §

Merriman used the pages from 27 February to March 25 to catch up what he recalled of that period. He wrote most of it while he was in the Pasionaria and Radio Hospitals in Murcia. From this point on, entries will again be generally synchronized with the dates of the year.

On the 25th, Merriman mentions "Rosy", Marion and Greenspan, three names that we have addressed previously. Rosy is believed to be Joseph Rosenstein, who was wounded along with Merriman at Jarama.

In a confusing sentence, Merriman says he "met Ryan, English Torpedo Man in the Spanish Navy at Cartagena". Barry McLoughlin suggests that this is not Frank Ryan, who was

introduced on February 17-18. Frank Ryan was also wounded at Jarama. And Frank Ryan was not a torpedo man in the Spanish Navy. It is suggested that the man being discussed is Joe Ryan of Limerick.¹³³ Merriman calls him a "fine chap". McLoughlin discusses Joe Ryan in some length. He served in the same company as Bert Overton and it may be the connection with Overton and that introduced Ryan to Merriman. Ryan was young, just 19 years old when he came to Spain. Disenchanted by May 1937, a decision had been to remove him from Spain and he returned to England in July 1937. Joe Ryan (seen with Frank Ryan's arm around him in a newspaper memoir¹³⁴) was indeed a sailor and actually was killed in a torpedo attack on the HMS Dunvegan Castle, which was sunk off Ireland in 1941 (not 1940 as in the link).

William Herrick (a.k.a. William Harvey a.k.a. William Horowitz in Spain), who was also wounded with a bullet in his neck that lodged near his spine, helps paint a picture of the Pasionaria Hospital and a part of this diary page:



William Wheeler. Photo ALBA 11-0243. Tamiment Library, NYU

So went the days in sunny Spain. I would lie in my cot until mid-morning, be washed by my Spanish nurse ... my commander {Merriman}, Robert Jordanesque in his winglike cast, would stroll past, give me a cool nod, continue on, followed by Bill Wheeler, muy simpatico, one of the infantry company adjutants who would stop a moment to chat...

Robert Gladnick is mentioned in the diary at this point. Herrick continues with his stories of Murcia:

Early one afternoon, heavily involved in a tumultuous encounter with one of the whores {Herrick frequented the local red-light houses}, I heard someone laugh in the adjoining room, a booming voice familiar voice speaking Spanish with a Russian-American accent, and sure enough it was Bob Gladnick. He was wearing a beautiful Harris tweed suit, and carried a side arm on his hip.

Are you Cheka {the Soviet Secret Police} now? I asked.

He laughed his booming laugh. Gladnick was not a shy man. He was now, he told me, an interpreter and tank man with the Russian Tank Corps in Spain. He hobnobbed with generals and leather-jacketed political commissars. Right now he was stationed in Archena, the Russian tank base.¹³⁵

Gladnick had been assigned by Marty Hourihan to the Russians to be an interpreter since he was Russian by birth. That evening, Gladnick and Herrick drank their way through the town until Gladnick was poured back on a train to Archena. Clearly, Merriman did not appreciate either the Russian base or the Russians being discussed in public. The code word for Russians was "Mexicans" and Gladnick clearly was one who did not use coded words. It is likely that this event worked against both Gladnick and Herrick in their future in the Brigades.

After the war, Robert Gladnick became strongly disenchanted with the Veterans association of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion and he, along with Morris Mickenberg (a.k.a. Morris Maken) and Herrick, founded a counter organization to the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion (VALB).

§ § §

March 27 – 28 ••• “The Nurses Strike...”

27 Marzo

Sta. Lidia

only fluoroscope worked at first and many fellows examined after long delay. Cachin examined arm and says it is ok. Another three weeks and the cast can come off. Heard word from Harris thru doctor. Attended an interesting political meeting in our Radio. Our political commissar OK. Girls in ward 10 and one other went on small strike because doctor had not been

28 Marzo

S. Juan Capistrano

around for 5 days and because head nurse yelled etc. Got some action but was branded a political error and caused much excitement. I am inclined to agree with Dora and the strikers. Went to one fine meeting which the local anti-fascist women gave for the 20th Brigade, now in Murcia. Large theater crowded and real revolutionary enthusiasm with spontaneous cheers and even entertainment.

§ § §

Robert Merriman was involved with his own recovery at this point and he notes that a new x-ray machine was installed at the Pasionaria Hospital on the 27th of March. However, only the fluoroscope facility was working and apparently it was not taking films at this point. With a fluoroscope, the patient is placed in front of an x-ray source and the image is viewed on a fluorescent screen. Fluoroscopes exposed everyone in the room to x-rays and are rarely used today. Nevertheless, Dr. Cachin gave Merriman the good news that he was healing and that his cast could come off in a few weeks.

Merriman discusses a strike by the nurses in the hospital apparently led by a "Dora". Dora is a bit of a mystery. There

were several Doras in the Service de Sanidad. Dora Moldovsky Ettleson was in the American Medical Service. She did not arrive in Spain until May 1937 so it is not her. There are two additional "Doras" noted in Fredericka Martin's papers: Dora Donda and Dora Sukalkis. The RGASPI Archives (545/6/48) note that Dora Donda was in the Central Hospital in Murcia at this time and Dora Zaydorf, a Yugoslavian nurse, was in Casa Roja Hospital. Dora Sukalkis actually came to Spain too late to be the Dora here. It is likely that this is Dora Donda.

There are some excellent studies of the American Medical Bureau in Spain. The Fredericka Martin collection is extensive, with nearly 10 m of file boxes in the Tamiment Archives. This remains a fruitful resource for research on the men and women who worked in the hospitals.

Merriman says that the nurses in the hospital went on strike because the doctor in charge had not shown up for five days and the head nurse had yelled at them. Recall that the Lincolns and the personnel who accompanied them were generally from union backgrounds. Like the Lincolns themselves at Villaneuva de la Jara, the Americans were strong-willed in standing up for their rights and used to frankly arguing out positions. Merriman says, while he agreed with their grievances, this strike was a "political error". Like the men standing up against the command structure at Albacete, Americans had a difficult time adjusting to a military command scenario. There was resistance to saluting officers. There will be future events in the diary where this dichotomy between "rank-and-filism" (i.e. a proletarian stance) and a military structure will arise again and again. The Europeans expected that military command would be obeyed and that attitude will win out over the next year and a half. It did not, however, mean that the working-class Americans were happy with it.

About the evening meeting with the local Murcia women, Marion Merriman Wachtel recalls:

The theater was very crowded with townsfolk, who broke into spontaneous cheering for the soldiers. Guitarists strummed

their mellow chords and flamenco singers wailed and chanted into the evening. The soldiers were young and they looked it. Most were in their late teens or very early twenties.

It was a great evening, a real demonstration of the people on the move," Bob said as we walked back to our room in the hospital in the hush of the Spanish evening. "Those", he said, "were the peasants of Spain, not like those slick-haired fellows in the dark glasses at the sidewalk cafes"¹³⁶

§ § §

March 29—30 ••• Readyng to Return to Albacete

29 Marzo

S. Eustasio

soldiers all young. Speeches made by all Murcia officials and leader of the brigade. Commandant of the Brigade made hit by referring to former commandant who was killed and whose relatives were in the theatre. He ordered the men to their feet and he ordered them to salute. Great meeting and gave one the understanding of the spirit of the masses on the move. Real peasant and proletarian stock and none of these slick haired boys who wear dark glasses and fill the local cafes. Spirit great! Play followed which was not as good. In one place the Brigade had helped the

30 Marzo

S. Juan Clímaco

peasants with their crops – great stuff politically.

Started to make arrangements to leave Murcia. Talked with head of the hospital Neumann and told him my complaints he seemed to want to do nothing. Not impressed by his ability promised ride in the morning but it did not come thru. And I think it was no accident. Spent the day 31st and after they messed up the papers we

§ § §

Merriman finishes his description of the fiesta and play that they attended in Murcia. His previous page says that it was for the 20th Battalion of the 86th Brigade (not the 20th Brigade). Americans and Britons had been assigned to that unit as their strength grew and sufficient forces were at Jarama. Richard Baxell describes this unit:

Whilst the main British contingent making up the British Battalion remained on the Jarama front until May/June 1937,

a small group of new arrivals and those recently released from hospital were formed on 15 March into No. 2 Section of an Anglo-American company in the 20th Battalion of the 86th (Mixed) Brigade. On 20 March the brigade was sent to the Pozoblanco sector, about 50 miles north of Córdoba in southern Spain. A novel form of attack using a train, behind which the battalion followed on foot, was abandoned when the train came under heavy artillery fire and was forced to retreat rapidly into a tunnel. The Anglo-American section was then transferred to the Chimorra front, in the same sector, positioned high in the peaks with virtually no cover, forcing volunteers to build piles of stones to shelter behind.¹³⁷

The name of the dead commander of the 20th Battalion, whose family was in Murcia at the fiesta, is not known. It should be noted that it was common to have fiestas before the departure of a unit into a battle situation so this may have been the point at which men of the 20th Battalion came through Murcia. Robert Stradling says in his book on the Irish:

The English-speaking company in the new battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Robert Traill, a young Cambridge graduate who had been training as a Comintern agent in the Lenin School in Moscow as the war broke out. Traill... arrived on board a Soviet supply ship and spent several months in the Republic's Officer Training School in Valencia.¹³⁸

Robert Traill was from Radyr, near Cardiff, Wales, according the International Brigades Memorial Trust roll of the dead, he was killed in Brunete in July 1937. Robert was married in the fall of 1935 to Vera Goutchkoff in Moscow.

Landis¹³⁹ gives considerable information on the 20th Battalion and names, which will be of interest over the course of the diary, got their start in Spain in the 20th. Landis says that Traill was actually the Battalion Commander and the Brigade commander was a Captain Aldo Morandi. The others include Irishman Peter Daly^f of

^f Peter Daly, <http://irelandscw.com/ibvol-Daly>

the English Company, Rollin Dart^g who commanded the American 2nd Company, John Gates^h who was the Company and then Brigade Commissar, Maury Colowⁱ, Arthur Munday^j, and Al Koslow^k.

^g Rollin Jones Dart was born on March 18, 1906 in Boston, and graduated from Boston University with a BA. He had prior military service in the US Army as a pilot for 3 1/2 years. He arrived in Spain on February 24, 1937 and was Company 2 Commander in the 20th Battalion on the Cordoba Front. He transferred to the XV BDE in August 1937 as Commander of Co. 2 in the Washington Battalion. He became a Brigade Staff officer and returned to the US on October 25, 1938 aboard the *Ile de France*.²

^h Johnny Gates was born Israel Ragenstrich on September 28, 1913 in New York. He attended City College of New York on a scholarship and became a Communist Party Organizer and Party Functionary in 1933. He arrived in Spain on February 16, 1937, and went to the 86th BDE as Brigade Adjutant Commissar. Later he became Base Political Commissar and XVth BDE Commissar for with a rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. He served in WWII in the 6th Armored Division, 59th Armored Field Artillery but was transferred to 209th Field Artillery in the Aleutian Islands. Gates edited the Daily Worker in the 1950's. He died on May 23, 1992 in Miami, Florida.²

ⁱ Maury Colow (Morris Kolow) was born September 13, 1917, Brooklyn, New York. He was a student when he went to Spain and followed Rollin Dart into Company 2 of the 86th. He returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. Colow served in the Navy from 1943-1945. He died on January 9, 1993 in Woodstock, NY.²

^j Arthur Munday was born on July 12, 1915 in New York City. He also commanded an American Section in Company 2 on the Cordoba Front. Wounded five times in Spain, Munday served at Cordoba, Brunete, Quinto, Belchite, Teruel, Retreats and Ebro Offensive. He returned to the US on December 15, 1938 aboard the Paris. In WWII, served in the US Army Infantry in France and Germany and rose by rank field commission to Lieutenant. Munday died in January 2000.²

^k Al Koslow was born June 15, 1909 in Brownsville, Brooklyn, New York. He was an Organizer for the Unemployed Councils in Brooklyn with no party affiliation. He was a stretcher bearer on the Cordoba Front. He would be wounded in action on April 18, 1937. He returned to the US in September 1937 aboard the *Ausonia*. In WWII, he was in the 475th Truck Regiment, of the US Army in stateside service; Koslow died in 2007.²



(left) Rollin Dart, ALBA Photo 11_0636, (right) Johnny Gates, ALBA Photo 11_0972, Tamiment Library, NYU

Joe Monks discusses the 86th Brigade in his text *With the Reds in Andalusia (1985)*, which covers the British involvement in this unit.¹⁴⁰

Merriman has been given a pass to leave the hospital and to return to Albacete. He expects a car on the 30th or 31st of March, but the vehicle never materializes. Merriman says that he speaks with the "head of the hospital" and the name is unreadable. Herrick says in his book that the head of hospital was Dr. Catalette¹⁴¹ but he was replaced by two Germans, Dr. Lang and his wife. Nicholas Coni¹⁴² says that the head of hospital was a Polish woman doctor at this time. It remains to determine the spelling of that name in the diary, since neither of those two suggestions fit Merriman's handwriting. The Polish woman doctor had been having an affair with James Harris according to an inference made earlier in Merriman's diary.

§ § §

March 31 ••• Stember Leaves Merriman a Lecture

31 Marzo

Sta. Balbina

got them and got away late that night just before the train left for Albacete. Train crowded and Marion forced way into 1st class cabin. Slept sitting up and arrived in early morning in tired condition.

Notes: article by Stember in papers of 15th Brigade, Title Single Command.

“Those who challenge the military or political authority of company, battalion or brigade commanders are self seekers who are no less guilty than the deserters who have been sentenced to hard labor in the labor battalion at recent trials. The challenge manifested itself in the formation of committees which made demands on the brigade as if they were framing demands against the capitalist class; in a form of disruption that tends to demoralize the ranks of the honest soldiers who volunteered and have a mandate from the working class at home to defeat fascism at all costs. We have learned by bitter experience that wherever committees dominate and endless discussion follows, there the gates are thrown open for fascists to enter. The descriptive elements hide them within such committees. In the American battalion such a committee flared up recently and for a short time demoralized the battalion until finally order and discipline as re-established. But these traitorous elements are waiting for still farther opportunities. There was no punishment meted out but if these disruptive elements try to do their work again severe measures will have to be taken against them. The comrades who have pledged themselves to fight against the fascists hordes will be ever vigilant not to fall prey to these disruptive elements but to isolate them and to hand them over as traitors to the Judicial Commission of the brigade. Our slogan must be, No Traitors In our midst, one unified single command. We will then be on the road to victory towards fascism.”

“Came out 12 days after written when all was forgotten”

§ § §

Other than their final release from Murcia and the train ride from Murcia to Albacete with Marion, not much new information is given on this page of the diary by Merriman.

He did, however, feel that the "lecture" given by Stember, and left in the files of the XVth Brigade, were worth transcribing in a careful hand. The comment at the bottom says that this was published 12 days after Stember wrote it. Merriman says "all was forgotten" but that is not true.

Recall on the 27th of February, Stember had gone back up into the lines to put down a rebellion of the men who felt that they had been sent into a slaughterhouse. Stember ordered the men forward at the point of a pistol and was not successful in restoring order since the men hooted him down.

Cecil Eby picks up on this note as evidence that American mutineers were tried and sent to a labor battalion.¹⁴³ Eby says that the missive was run off on a mimeograph and put into the Brigade official newsletter and quotes "Notre Combat" (the French version of Our Fight newsletter) as the source. Eby says "The Lincolns merely scoffed at the leaflet -- so much "ass paper".¹⁴² Eby quotes Harry Fisher in his book *Comrades* " 'That son of a bitch Stember', wrote a recruit. 'If he ever comes back here, we'll shoot him' ".

Peter Carroll picks up the story further:

And the men never forgave Stember for remaining in safety far from the front. Twelve days after the protest meeting, their anger exploded when Stember published an article, "Single Command," in the brigade newspaper Our Fight. ... He warned that a recurrence by these "disruptive elements" would result in "severe measures". Outraged by this threat, the men voted no confidence in their commissar, forcing him from his post. "The [political] commander," the Daily Worker would announce a few months later, "was sent back" to the United States "on the vote of the battalion to tell of their needs and to make the American people understand what they are fighting for." Such gross distortions rankled the men in Spain, but none would threaten the Republican cause by exposing Stember's weakness.¹⁴⁴

APRIL 1937

In morning translated lecture on Leonora
by a man, well received, then to movie house
at 12. Road out almost with heavy escort (Mexican
and with 200 that major arranged with Schulz
to see for two of com. from the head to ladder and
met Nelson and then discussed who was to go.
Major typed speech and we went back to E. M.
Got car - salary conductors including Mason
and Laurens, Hayward. Left at 5 for Morote.
- Haydon car. and new route and arrived about
10 o'clock at night for home. etc. fully fed and saw
Jany etc. Kelly, long rest from there to line. Royal
Widger met latter part. Johnson, New Kopye
at Haydon's Cooperman. Frank little was not killed
with talk to you favor those major. Killed over 27
highly pleased change else for everything was
till long incipient rebellion among friend team
to Morote to sleep and talked with Johnson. old
story of factionalism and fight, but Kopye and then
Johnson wants an English speaking brigade. Copye
may be the best. talked with Copye. Johnson
saw there was except Kibben on situation
but trying to help control. discussed Harca and
vaine mistakes. rest in early stage. I left
on own high. Johnson thanked me for
what I had done here. matter up on car - change
do but nature unknown yet. Common place
of note Hayward and Laurens - Nelson
24 April (NOTE 1937). Fidel de Sigmaringa.
Protecting fr. com. with us early. went to Berg
Widger etc. a large breakfast. Had picture talk
with the general copye etc. talked lunch camp
and with gear box of food. Got order Virginia
Johnson with us to front line. red built by
you the boys - gave letters - note note of paper
ended to write for boy. history. Calorshi
demoted in fact. Saw day out's trench
scope. new along bombs etc. walked
the entire line. In Donald in charge
and doing well. spirit of men not low but
moody and tired. Soviet propaganda
had come over leaflets. met Cooperman who
wanted such work on my speaking Brigade
so you found by paper in position held
by us in the attack of the 23d. Saw Corrons
all roads. now in Eng. Batt. and I go. go.
Left for Madrid. ate Grand Via Hotel.
Met Icline, Josephine, Herbert, Hemmington
Cor Parsons, Pizarro, Greenman and
but Franklin. arranged talks for radio.
Very hectic took my speech to B. & T. talk
not in - sent to cloud institute. called
Muelle and pushed him up at Rio
Hospital etc. - mixed up speech and sleep.

April 1--2 ••• Hello, Albacete, Again!

1 Avril

S. Hugo

Hello Albacete again.

Parked luggage at Hotel Regina and waited for coffee shop to open. Ate with Lamotte and walked to Post Office and found it enlarged and moved downstairs. Cadres office now in Banca España. Met Neumann and walked with him downtown and met Brodsky and Stember went with them to Vidal who was just leaving and promised to see us in afternoon. Talked with them and then left for lunch. Marion sick and stayed in bed. Met Harris and the Polish woman doctor. What a lunch. Went back in afternoon to Vidal and received well

2 Abril

S. Francisco de Paula

and told about being put in charge of officer school by Monday. Talked with Brodsky and Stember. Sam Winkelman.

April (2) Rose late because sick and couldn't locate Brodsky and Stember. Marion met Harris and visited new post and room in R. R. station which is run by my good comrade who speaks Russian. Later in day received word that we had a car and went to meet Tapsell who is doing Kerrigan's work. While visiting saw Marty and retenue. Met Rodman & Mike {Koltsov} from Moscow. Marion talked with Rodman

§ § §

Robert and Marion Merriman returned to Albacete from Murcia after an overnight train ride. They arrived before businesses opened and had to wait for the café to open and he says they ate

with Pierre Lamotte^a at the Intendencia. Merriman had already met Pierre Lamotte who ran the Armory in Albacete and came to like the man. Merriman will misspell Lamotte's name multiple times over the next few diary pages (sometimes as "Larmore").

We have already met the people that Merriman contacts. Neumann, Stember, and Brodsky all were in the Brigade leadership at this point and Merriman had to check in with them and with Vidal to get his next assignment. It is believed that Neumann is Dr. Rudolf Neumann who was said to have co-founded the International Brigades with Andre Marty.¹⁴⁵

James Harris pops up again briefly in this diary segment and the woman Polish doctor is clearly a friend of Harris, who is Polish. Serving as a doctor in Murcia, on April 2nd she is in Albacete. We will meet her again on April 10. In the afternoon, Merriman learns that he is to lead the Officers School in Pozo Rubio. He mentions speaking again with Brodsky and Stember and then speaking to a Sam Winkelman. Winkelman does not appear to be an American or Canadian. He could be British or German.

Significant socializing took place on April 2 and Merriman notes that he landed a vehicle. Marion, who had been about the town with James Harris, joined up with Robert and they met Wally Tapsell, who had taken over after Peter Kerrigan was wounded at Jarama. Later they meet with Andre Marty and "Rodman and Mike from Moscow". It is not known who Rodman is. Mike is likely to be the reporter Mikhail Koltsov. He appears to have known the Merrimans in Moscow, since Marion chatted with Mike for some time and, as we will find out on the next page, was likely being interrogated.

^a Pierre Lamotte was born August 7, 1884, in Seattle, Washington. He is said to have attended the US Military Academy at West Point and served in WW I in the French Army 1916-18 and the US Army 1918-23 as a Lieutenant. He arrived in Spain on January 10, 1937, and became Commander of the Garde National, which held the Intendencia. He was arrested in the summer of 1937 for misuse of funds and imprisoned. He was freed after the Nationalist victory and returned to the US on February 9, 1939.

April 3—4 ••• Marion Merriman Gets Vetted

3 Abril

S. Benito de Palermo

who tried to pump her for information without success. Left in flurry. Marty met Marion with army coat around her shoulders. Asked her who she is and where she works and lives. Tells her about rule of clothes and women. Marion said, "I guess I'll freeze then." Rode to Madrigueras and ate late and sat in on last of Battalion conference and then to bed in bed of one of the military instructors. April 3. Rose for parade and started out with men for drill but had to rest and ate at peasant's hut. Watched diamond formation and returned on manure cart to town. Ate lunch twice

4 Abril

S. Isadoro

once with men and once with Spanish family into which a Belgian {lieutenant} had married. Talked with Amlie late in afternoon and Marion & I ate in church with the men. Returned early after meeting some of the new comrades who had just come in from Albacete and the U.S.

(April 4) Went to drill field. New companies formed and watched auto rifle drill, (new Mexican) and talked with Commandant Clare {Clerc} and met Dr. Taylor.

Ate lunch at officer's mess and went to meeting at two. Engels, {Hans} Amlie, Tapsell, Stember and I talked. Kids performed. Left at 9³⁰. After long talk with Amlie and then car 25 minutes was back to Albacete {cf. April 5 page}.

§ § §

Robert Merriman will now settle into the routine of being an instructor at the training bases around Albacete (Villaneuva de la Jara, Madrigueras, Tarazona de la Mancha, Quintanar del Rey,

Villar de Pozo Rubio and others). The diary for April 2 flows over onto this page and he finishes the story of André Marty questioning Marion on where she got her military greatcoat and reminding her of the "dress code". We can be sure that Marty would not have been impressed by that retort.



Instructors at Tarazona de la Mancha in June 1937. From left to right: Peter Hampkins (American), Edward Cecil-Smith (Canadian), Wallace Burton (American), Mirko Markovich (Yugoslavian), Walter Garland (American) and Hans Amlie (American). Photo from the Milly Bennett Collection, Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

Hans Amlie is now Commander of the Lincoln Battalion and Merriman will be working with Amlie until the Fall of 1937, with frequent chafing between their personalities. Hans Amlie was a very interesting character and was the brother of Republican Congressman Tom Amlie of Wisconsin. His biographies¹⁴⁶ say that he was a Socialist when he came to Spain (he arrived on Mar 17, 1937) but when the Eugene V. Debs Column of the American Socialist Party could only draw 25 volunteers, Amlie joined the Communist Party in Spain. In an interesting confluence of personalities, the American reporter Milly Bennett lost her lover, Wallace Burton (see photo above) in Spain at the battle of Belchite. Milly had spent some time in China with Wallace's twin

brother Wilbur Burton who wrote for the Baltimore Sun newspaper. When Milly Bennett was the lead reporter for the Chang Mei news bureau in Peking (Beijing), Wilbur Burton replaced her when she moved down to Hankow to be more in the action. Her biography, "On Her Own",¹⁴⁷ reads like a Dashell Hammett mystery story. In Spain, after Wallace died, Milly became the lover of Hans Amlie and they married in Barcelona in December. They returned together to the US in January 1938. Amlie would tour the US making whistlestop speeches and raising a few hundred dollars at each stop. It ended with a large rally in New York City sponsored by the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Amlie would take a job managing in a migrant labor camp in the 1940's and died in 1949 in a tragic accident when he was suffocated by sewer gas cleaning out a cesspool in the camp.

Three additional names are added to our cast in this installment:



Commandant Clare (who is Captain André Clerc), Dr. Taylor and Dave Engels^b. André Clerc was on the Cordoba front and was injured. Returning to Albacete, he was made Captain and assigned the Command of Madrigueras. Clerc had a falling out with the Communist Party in Spain and resigned from the Party there. Clerc will be killed in action at Fuentes del Ebro on October 16, 1937.¹⁴⁸ Merriman has lunch with Stember, Tapsell and others at Madrigueras.

Wally Tapsell, British Commissar at Albacete, ALBA Photo 11-1292, Tamiment Library, NYU

^b Dave "Mooch" Engels was an organizer in the NY State Committee of the YCL. He arrived in Spain on March 17, 1937. He was a Section Leader and then Commissar for 1st Company of the Lincolns, succeeding Wallace Burton when he was killed at Belchite. He had line service at Jarama, Brunete, Quinto, and Belchite.

April 5—6 ••• Grumblings about Merriman's Job

5 Abril

S. Vicente Ferrer

Saw Brodsky and talked with Winkler about Marion. Stember and I went to Garda National and met Lamotte who has done fine work and is a real character. Ate lunch in mess hall he developed and saw Jacobs and Hagileou, Begelman, Madden and others. Grumblings "one or two of them may object to you being in charge. Better tell them Vidal has sent you." Stember. Stember told story of political set up in Battalion after I left. Took Marion to work in Cadres office after lunch. Winkler says ok and she is one of very few women to work in B. I. Saw Vidal for a minute – discussed with Platone concerning school. See certain real difficulties and lots of work ahead. Material tomorrow in two or three languages. Received letter from Chicago which is reproduced on day of Nov 1st. Ate dinner with Brodsky and Marion.

6 Abril

S. Celestino

Visited Guard National – met Cunningham and tried to talk with Rochefort – snotty. After lunch saw Platone – and Russian Officer Milutchevitch – got some material and document about the school and Anglo-American section. Told about meeting. Saw Walsh who had returned from Villanueva - tales about Corona. Fogarty and fake bills. Went to meeting and was on the presidium. Vidal, Marty and others spoke – songs, etc. New era of B. I. to teach Spanish etc. Marty told about unity & meaning for world proletariat. Ate late at Intendencia with Lou Wolf. Met Miss Arnold who translated for me at meeting.

§ § §

Robert Merriman is now settled back in the region of Albacete and will take on the role of Commander in the Officer's School. In this

role, he will meet literally hundreds of "old" and "new" International Brigaders and he will note the name of nearly everyone he meets in his diary. Interpreting who they are is often not easy and, it should be noted, the transcription is still imperfect. As noted on the previous diary page, Hans Amlie has taken over the Command of the American Training Base at Villanueva de la Jara. It is 25 minutes by car from there to Albacete.

Merriman meets with George Brodsky who is the Brigade Commissar at this point. Brodsky warns Merriman that he will not be a popular choice as Commander amongst the men. Merriman tries to land a position for Marion in the Cadres Service which is led by Peter Winkler, the Chief of Personnel in the Cadres Service. This effectively is the Communist Party office where CP members from the various nations will check in at Albacete and be given assignments. We see that Marion is given a clerical job in the Cadres Office and she will be an insider at Albacete until Fall of 1937. She describes her new job:

As a member of the International Brigades myself, I was assigned to the headquarters in Albacete, where I took up office duties. I rewrote stories for the daily newspaper published for the volunteers. And I continued to help the men write letters home. I also dealt with some of the letters that came to us.¹⁴⁹

Marion goes on in her book to share a letter sent by a worried mother to Commander Merriman, trying to get her son home.



Merriman also meets with Samuel Stember who apparently is both responsible for the Intendencia, the Brigades supply depot, food store, and mess hall. Pierre Lamotte was listed as Commander of the *Companie des Renforts* (Reinforcement Company) which was the holding company for people passing into or out of the training bases.

Pierre Lamotte, Source: RGASPI Archive, Moscow, 545/6/929

Merriman starts dropping many names. Jacobs^c, Hagileou^d, Begelman^e and Madden are all new to the diary. John Hagileou (Merriman spells his name "Hegelos") was the Mess Sergeant. Madden is Arthur Madden^f who was Battalion co-commissar with Stember at this point.

Merriman says he met with Jock Cunningham of the British Battalion and tried to talk with a "Rochefort" and this is René Rochefort.¹⁵⁰ Lieutenant Rochefort was noted as laying out the course for maneuvers on April 2 in the Orders of the Day.¹⁵¹ Vidal noted in those orders that Commissar General del Vayo and all the Brigade and Battalion Commissars would be visiting Albacete and later the training camps including Pozo Rubio and so everyone was given precise orders for the day.

Merriman met with Felice Platone¹⁵² and notes the name of a Russian who was written in the diary as Millukich. This was Comrade Milutchevitch, who was the Chief of the Group "cantonné" (housed) at the Gotta de Leche Hospital in Albacete.¹⁵² Merriman

^c George Jacobs, from Milwaukee, had a prior six years of military service with the US Marines, and then became a seaman in the National Maritime Union (NMU). He was in Section 1 of Company 1 at Jarama. Jacobs did not receive the word to withdraw after the attack on 23 February. He and Jack Lenoris attempted to return to friendly lines the following morning but Lenoris was killed in the attempt. Jacobs rejoined the BN and served at Brunete.

^d John Hagileou was born in Kalymnos, Greece but lived in New York prior to coming to Spain with Jacobs. He had nine years of prior military service and was made Alvarez (effectively Staff Sergeant) in charge of the quartermaster's stores. He became increasingly disenchanted and by January 1938, he made charges that the money being raised for the Brigades was being stolen by party members in New York City. This led to his dismissal from the Party. Hagileou returned to Greece after the war.

^e Elias Begelman was born on August 24, 1912, in Riga, Latvia (his photo is shown on the February 16 discussion). Begelman also had 7 years prior military service. He came in the first group in 1936. Begelman served as a translator and interpreter for Brigade headquarters (he spoke eight languages). He returned to the US on October 1, 1938 aboard the Paris. He served in the Armed Forces in WWII and died in 1959.

^f Arthur Madden from Omaha was 37 years old in Spain. He served at Jarama and became co-commissar of the Lincolns after being elected by the men over their displeasure with Stember. Madden went to officer's school but ended up a sergeant. He was killed August 1, 1938 in the Battle of the Ebro.

met with William Walsh who arrived at Albacete with a group of six Americans on April 6.¹⁵³ Arturo Corona[§] was a Cuban who commanded Company 2 at Jarama.

As Commander, Merriman would have discipline cases landing in his lap for the next year and he did not reveal in his diary the details of these cases but just made notes for himself when they occurred. "Fogarty and fake bills" is similarly cryptic. Eugene Fogarty was a Canadian who served in the Medical Service. Michael Petrou got to the bottom of this mystery in his book, *Renegades*:

Unlike Bethune, however, not all Canadian doctors had respectable careers in Spain. Eugene Fogarty worked as a medical officer in the 17th Battalion at a hospital in Villaneuva de la Jara. His personnel file lists his citizenship as Canadian and indicates that he claimed to have a degree, presumably in medicine, from McGill University in Montreal. But reports on Fogarty conclude that he "is not a physician and did more harm than good". His file records numerous complaints aside from the most serious one of impersonating a doctor. He reportedly worked privately but drew pay from the International Brigades, he married a local girl and charged his wedding expenses to the International Brigades, he made enough money from his fraud to live in comfort, and he was a drug addict and trafficked in narcotics. Fogarty was dismissed from the International Brigades, but stayed on in Villaneuva de la Jara before disappearing sometime in the summer of 1937. A search of records at McGill University revealed no trace of Fogarty ever having attended medical school there.¹⁵⁴

The next sentence says that Merriman attended a high level meeting with Lucien Vidal and André Marty, whom we have met before. The sentence appears to say that Merriman "was on the presidium" perhaps meaning the dais at the front. It also could

[§] Arturo Corona was a Cuban student living in the US. He came to Spain in January 1937, served at Jarama as a section leader and may have deserted. By April 1937, he was back in the Lincolns but was accused of stealing money from an FALB fundraiser in the US. He would be in the British Battalion in May 1937.

read "meeting on war on the presidium", perhaps being more a serious discussion about the Communist leadership battles in Moscow at this point. The rest of the paragraph would tend to support the lighter, first interpretation.

Merriman ends a long busy day by eating with Lou Wolf. A Miss Arnold is introduced as his interpreter. Lou Wolf is not on the Lincoln list nor is Miss Arnold.

§ § §

April 7—8 ••• ¡Salute Pozo Rubio!

7 Abril

S. Donato

went to see Platone – talked a minute with Vidal – tried to get speech of Marty & Vidal. Went to Guard Nacional and found young students maturing and men had visited Winkler and complained. Went to camp with boys – **Salute Pozo Robio!** Home of our first officer training school. Attended the meeting of section heads and then had meeting of comrades who spilled their trouble plenty. New place and new head of school quieted most of them down and all started well. Men volunteered for K.P. and guard and conventional mapping signs discussed in evening. Heavy day because of new camp and legitimate low mood of the men. Vidal & Platone came for a minute and left. Officers mess established. Late to bed after session with Hampkins.

8 Abril

S. Dionisio

Arose early after sleepless night on two lumpy mattresses. Gymnastics & mapping men sent in all directions. River and village located. After lunch received 2 heavy maxim machine guns and Spanish lesson was given by Guiven. Vidal, Col. Dumont, Winkler arrived had conference about double system of schools, one for under officers and other for commissioned. Officers who wish to raise qualifications. After conference appointed Garland head of school and came to Albacete. Met Walsh and Epstein and went up town shopping with Marion. Saw Jock Cunningham while eating.

§ § §

Over the next few months, Merriman will have difficulty squeezing all that he wants to remember into a diary with a half page per

day. His hand will become smaller and smaller and more difficult to read.

He finishes his report on being in Albacete and meeting with Vidal and Marty about the new camp at Pozo Rubio. Pozo Rubio is searchable on maps by typing "Villar de Pozo Rubio". The camp is in the trees to the east of the buildings. It is remarkable that Pozo Rubio is even mentioned in the diary since the location of the Officer's School was a big secret at this time. "Maximville", a photo from the Tamiment's Russian archive below, is believed to be at Pozo Rubio. Pozo Rubio was designed to have two schools, an Officers training school (OTS) and a Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) School for Sergeants and Corporals (Cabos), a communications training school and an anti-gas training unit. As of March 26, 1937, it was dominated by men from the 11th Brigade. The complement of the school was:¹⁵⁵

School\Brigade	11 th	12 th	13 th	15 th	129 th
Captains	7	0	1	1	2
Lieutenants	37	11	11	5	13
Transmissions	21	11	12	10	10
Anti-gas	7	6	6	0	5



"Maximville", believed to be at Pozo Rubio, the Officer's Training School. Source: ALBA Photo 177_178029, Tamiment Library, NYU.

Merriman admits that the morale was low amongst the Brigadistas. For the men who were chosen to be officers, moving to a camp in

the woods in pup tents rather than beds in barracks in Villaneuva de la Jara or Madrigueras probably didn't seem like a promotion. It is ironic to think that Merriman spent time himself at Tahoe City, California, in a logging camp that probably had similar amenities. Many Americans had also been in work camps in the CCC . And no matter how Merriman tried to frame this, his own return nightly to Albacete to a hotel room with his wife and with an Officers Mess would start to wear on the Officers-in-Training. Additionally, the leadership of Brodsky was a serious issue about this time and Merriman had to win over the respect of the men who were senior enough to be considered for Officer Training. It appears that by the end of April 7, he had begun organization of the men.

Merriman mentions Peter Hampkins^h who stayed at the school for some time in 1937. Another name, "Guiven", is not certain. Walter Garland is also seen in the same photo with Hampkins in the April 4 discussion. It appears that Garland was made head of the Officer's School and he probably reported to Merriman. Colonel Jules Dumont¹⁵⁶, who had been the Commander of the *Commune de Paris* 14th Battalion, was Commander of the Albacete training base in February. He is mentioned in an essay by Bernard Knox.¹⁵⁷ And there is a film clip of Jules Dumont speaking to the CGT in 1938.¹⁵⁸ Jules Dumont was executed by the Nazis in France in 1943.

Merriman mentions Walsh again (who was head of the NCO school) and "Epstein". The only Epstein in Spain at this time was David Epsteinⁱ. He and Marion Merriman met again at Albacete and Merriman ate dinner with Jock Cunningham of the British Battalion.

^h Peter Hampkins was born in 1896 in Kenosha, Wisconsin. He attended OTS first class and ended as XVth Brigade Paymaster as a Lieutenant. He was killed in action March 1938 in Belchite during the Retreats, believed to have been captured and executed. Hampkin's photo is shown on April 3-4.

ⁱ David Epstein was born in October 1913. He had one year prior military service. His profession was as an artist in New York City. He arrived in the first group of Lincolns but his service in Spain is still a mystery. In WWII, he served in the Merchant Marine. David Epstein died December 5, 1996.

April 9—10 ••• Outfitting Pozo Rubio

9 Abril

S. Hilario

Met Lambert and Hagileou. OK'd transfer of Epstein & Walsh. Shopped and spent all my money. Met Comrades on Central Medical supply. Went to Guard National met Stember, Lamotte had mattress ordered for cast and me. Talked with many of the boys and next to Etat Major. Talked with Platone and got some technical equipment and a new revolver from Vidal's secretary. Met Olorenshaw and made arrangements for him. Ate with Marion & Lambert and to Guard National for trucks. Waited and finally stole one loaded it with guns and picked up 7 new comrades. Ready to go when {Solomon} Rose, {Al} Edwards came and had to stay and have talk with Al Edwards about front, etc. Left at six and arrived home 6³⁰. Discussion in evening about work. (Bummed 100 p. from Com. Platone)

10 Abril

S. Pompeyo

(Harris' Polish Woman Doctor came) Lecture by Olorenshaw on group in French system and field practice with Lambert. Spanish lesson in afternoon with machine gun stripping during alternate periods. In siesta hour talked to older men about higher school. In evening a political meeting Robbins, Crook, EC Smith nominated for political Commissar. Crook elected. Men grand and meeting continued later. Old men had lecture on M. G. emplacement.

§ § §



*John Hagileou: (Evangelos Hadjilachus)
Source: RGASPI Archive Fond 545/Opis
6/Delo 415, Moscow, Russia.*

Merriman spends the next two days organizing the Officer's base at Pozo Rubio and "goes shopping" in Albacete at the Guard Nationale, which serves as the supply depot. He meets with Lambert and John Hagileou. Hagileou was the Sergeant in the Mess at Albacete. John Lambert was an instructor in Tarazona. He was reputed to be very experienced on the Bren Gun. John Lambert would desert Pozo Rubio later that spring and be arrested.

David Epstein and Walsh (see April 5-6) were approved to move. Walsh ended in Company 3 of the Lincolns during the Spring and went to the Artillery later.

Merriman must have found a good mate in Pierre Lamotte who picked up a new mattress for Merriman's mending arm with its heavy plaster cast. Merriman is clearly in a position to move people around and Arthur Olorenshaw was approved for transfer to the school. Olorenshaw is a member of the British Battalion and will, by the end of his tour in Spain, write reviews many senior members of the Brigade Staff for their "reliability".

Merriman learned about the "requisitioning" process in Spain. He says he "stole" a truck to get his materials back to Pozo Rubio. Brigadistas frequently told how they "organized" a truck when they needed one.

Merriman introduces us to Solomon Rose^j and Al Edwards^k. Sol Rose arrived in Spain on March 28, 1937. He will go on to be an

^j Sol Rose (Sol Rosenblum) was born July 30, 1909, in New York City. He attended Columbia University for one year and North Carolina University for two years. He served as an adjutant in Company 3, Lincoln Battalion and was wounded in action on July 9, 1937. Rose was released from the hospital on

adjutant in the Brigade by the end of 1938. Edwards is clarified by his first name in the diary and he will serve as a mechanic in the Republican Air Force. There is another possible Edwards in the International Brigades at this point and this is Lionel Edwards, a Canadian who made Captain by 1938.

Merriman mentions James Harris' "Polish Woman Doctor" again. That story is difficult to flesh out. Harris himself was Polish and we have been unable to determine his real name. Perhaps figuring out this woman doctor (who was said to be in charge of the Pasionaria Hospital in Murcia when Merriman was there in March) will help in finding out more about James Harris. There was a photo of her in *Our Fight* (the magazine published in Spain) in an April issue of the magazine.¹⁵⁹



Une doctoresse active de l'hôpital de Murcia vient visiter notre Brigade.
A lady doctor of the hospital at Murcia comes to visit our Brigade.
Una camarada doctor del hospital de Murcia viene a visitar nuestra Brigada.

This diary segment ends with the election of the political commissar for the Pozo Rubio Officer's School. Names that Merriman mentions are Al Robbins (possibly Robbie a nickname John Quigley Robinson¹, one of the more popular members of the Brigades). EC Smith is Canadian Edward Cecil-Smith, who would

October 8, 1937, was sent to Albacete and served in the Personnel Office. He returned to the MacKenzie-Papineau Battalion as adjutant and was killed in action in October 1938 during Ebro Offensive.

^k Al Edwards was born on February 13, 1913. Edwards was a pilot but worked in the Republican Air Force as a mechanic.

¹ John Quigley "Robbie" Robinson was born on October 26, 1897, in Belfast, Ireland. He had four years of prior military experience in WWI with the British Army Cavalry. Robinson was a seaman and active in the National Maritime Union. He would have considerable influence with the more than 200 sailors in the Lincoln Brigade. Robbie would join the Lincoln-Washington Battalion machine gun company as Commissar at Brunete. He was promoted to Battalion Commissar at Quinto and Belchite and Fuentes del Ebro. In the fall of 1937, Robinson ran into a six month limitation on his visa and had to return to the US to maintain his residency. In WWII he served in the Merchant Marines. He died September 20, 1995.

become commander of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion by the end of the year. Smith is shown in the line up of Pozo Rubio commanders in the April 4 entry.



John "Robbie" Robinson, November 1937. Source ALBA PHOTO 11-0645, Tamiment Library, NYU.

Englishman David Crook¹⁶⁰ (no s in his last name) left Jarama on April 6, 1937, and returned to Pozo Rubio to be an instructor. David Crook's autobiography is available on the web.¹⁶¹ David Crook is believed to have been in the Security Service by May of 1937 and was used as an undercover operative to infiltrate the POUM (*Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*) leadership in Barcelona. Crook was implicated in the arrest of POUM head Andres Nin in the summer of 1937. David Crook would go to China after Spain and taught there until his death.

April 11—12 ••• Merriman Continues to Heal

11 Abril

S. León Magno

Rose early and instruction was held until eleven. Lecture by Lambert on musketry - Discussion of Marty speech after this. Rainy weather and no trucks to Albacete because of sending in guard to Albacete. After lunch walked to rifle range with Lambert and Olorenshaw - fired new Mauser revolver. Came to Albacete - Met Marion, Brodsky and Stember - walked in park meeting many comrades - including Adolph from Murcia and one very amusing real Mexican Comrade. Read in evening with Marion.

12 Abril

S. Constantino

Went to hospital for X-ray and had use of portable one in SRI {Secorro Rojo Nacional} No 1. Bone coming better - doctor to give opinion later. Saw Dr. Telge and then went to see Vidal & Platone. Learned that should I come to Court Martial of Justas {Justice, see below} if in town tomorrow. Rode out to camp after lunch with Marion, with Vidal wife and Platone. Vidal lectured on map problem given to Slavs and German advance guard problem. Boys fired on range.

§ § §

Bob Merriman has settled into the routine of leading instruction at the Pozo Rubio Officer's school. Lambert was introduced in the previous diary page and he is now training rifle skills, musketry (using a manual from WWI)¹⁶². The discussion of the speech probably refers back to the speech given by André Marty given on April 9 during the visit of del Vayo and other Brigade Commissars. We have met Brodsky, Stember, Vidal, Marty, Olorenshaw on previous diary pages.

After spending time on the range with his new Mauser pistol picked up from Vidal's office, Merriman traveled down to Albacete to eat and meet with Marion, Sam Stember and George Brodsky at the Brigade command. Adolph from Murcia is probably Lt. Adolf Ramek, Administrator of the Universitat Hospital in Murcia. Merriman makes a humorous remark that he met a "real" Mexican. We recall that Russians were called Mexicans but this man must have been from Mexico. The assumption that all "Mexicans" were Russian is also an error. The RGASPI files reveal that many "Mexicans" were from Eastern Europe and just came from "Mexico" meaning that they had been in the Soviet Union prior to coming to Spain. Vladimir Copic was called a "Mexican" on one list.

On the 12th, Merriman got his shoulder x-rayed and he is healing. Dr. Telge is shown in a photo from the Fredericka Martin Collection at Tamiment. Dr. Telge is Tsvetan Angelovich Kristanov. Hugh Thomas writes:

*Another Bulgarian Communist, Tsvetan Angelov Kristanov, who had long been an emigrant in Russia, ran the medical services of the International Brigades under the appealingly Scandanavian nom de guerre of Dr. Oskar Telge, with a staff of many nationalities under him, while Marty's wife, Pauline, acted as inspector of the hospitals.*¹⁶³



Dr. Oscar Telge (Tsvetan Kristanov) Source: Fredericka Martin Photo Archive ALBA 001: 1:1:31:1, Tamiment Library, NYU.

Telge was also listed in the RGASPI files as a "Mexican".

The next sentence is a difficult scrawl and reads as if Merriman is setting a reminder that there will be a Court Marshal of a Mr. "Justas" and that Merriman has been advised to attend the court martial. In Madrigueras, Englishman James Robertson Justice was court marshaled and returned to England. Arthur Olorenshaw left the following report in Justice's personnel file¹⁶⁴:

Madrigueras, Feby-March '37. Pure adventurer. Expelled from Spain in April after being degraded. Had been made provisional Town Commandant at M{adrigueras} and there, was thoroughly disruptive in causing great deal of anti-French feeling which culminated in several fights. Whether this activity was deliberate or not I am unable to say definitively. He has served in the International Police Force in the Saar Valley and was subject of an international incident when he discharged a revolver into a crowd of Germans when drunk, wounding several.....



If the name James Robinson Justice sounds familiar, it may be because Justice would later be a character actor and star in the Doctor in the House series of movies. Justice was accused of drunkenness and use of heroin in Spain.

Merriman clearly says on these diary pages that Marion and he rode out to camp with Platone and Vidal's wife. This is the first indication that other members of the command had their families in Albacete. Vidal lectured on a "problem" given to the students in the school. Frequent references to these problems will be given over coming months and the technique was to set up a goal (reaching a bridge, finding locations on a map, digging a trench, infiltrating, laying down transmissions, etc.) and setting the companies loose on the problem. The lectures after would review their degree of success in accomplishing the task and often the results showed the problems set were not easy.

§ § §

April 13—14 50 New Americans Arrive at Albacete

13 Abril

S. Hermenegildo

Worked on chau chau {ChauChat} gun and light machine gun. Some Spanish. Crook went to Albacete bought much stuff for men. We raised 800 pesetas for radio but set not bought yet.

In afternoon all went onto pea shelling duty. Jacobs disappeared again. Madden, Petrie, Suarez and Bodholt sent to Albacete. Plan for night firing problem but called off because it held up too much traffic.

14 Abril

S. Valeriano

Late Reveille - clean up barracks and yard. Lectured on topography until noon. Platone arrived with Base Political Kommuccyr {Цоммиссар; Commissar} Kercher {Kirtchoff}. After lunch they both gave talks. Men then gathered things and we moved into Albacete to stand 3 days guard. Met about 50 new Americans in Guard Nacional and set 13 men for Etat Major 20 for RR Station and 7 for night patrol. Marion and I ate at Hotel Regina.

§ § §

Between the 10th of March 1937 and the 10th of April 1937, the effort in the US to staff the Lincoln Battalion really took off. Over that month, men came to Europe on the SS Queen Mary, Washington, Ile de France, Berengeria, President Roosevelt, Manhattan, Amsterdam, Paris, Ausonia, Vollendam, Aquitania, President Harding, Brittanic and Rotterdam. The number of known Lincolns on the ship manifests went from 769 men to 1158 or nearly 390 men in one month (Chris Brooks, private communication).

Bob Merriman continued his effort to produce weapons and supplies for the OTS (Officer Training School) in Pozo Rubio. They had set aside 800 pesetas (about \$50 US) for a radio transmitter. He was able to get Chauchat Machine Guns¹⁶⁵. These odd weapons from the First World War were known by that name because of the distinctive "Chau Chau" sound that the machine guns made when they were fired. An excellent book by Richard Slotkin on the Lost Battalions of World War I¹⁶⁶ describes how Chauchats were used to signal between units of the Pershing-led 77th New York Division because no other weapon made that sound when fired. Slotkin's book is also good background reading because it deals in detail with the integration (or lack) of African-Americans into the US Army in World War I. Spain would be the first war in which African-Americans held equal footing to whites.



Angel Hernandez Gallego and Arthur Madden, the shortest and tallest men in the Lincoln Brigades. Photo ALBA 11-1068. Thanks to Alvah Bessie and Dan Bessie for the identification of this photo.

Merriman notes some new names here. He says Jacobs went missing again and this is believed to be George Jacobs^c. Arthur Madden, Edward William Petrie¹⁶⁷, Louis Suarez Pineiro^m and Bodholt (this is perhaps Carl Bradley who had just arrived under the name Raphael P. Bodkinⁿ) all had just arrived

^m Luis Suarez Pineiro was Spanish-American. He had 4 yr prior military service. Suarez was in the first American group and served at Jarama in Company 2 and then Company 4, the MG Company. He was also at Brunete. Suarez was on the roll of the men in the French Concentration Camp at St. Cyprien in January 1939 and his return to the US is unconfirmed.

ⁿ Carl Bradley was born Philip Bodkin on February 22, 1903, in Newport, Kentucky. He was a steel worker and Arrived in Spain on March 30, 1937. He served with the XV BDE, Lincoln-Washington BN; 24th BN as Commander of the American Company and finally as a Brigade Staff officer at Belchite. He returned to the US in November 1937. His death was reported as 1970.

in Albacete. Petrie is a Scot who came from Vancouver, British Columbia. Petrie became demoralized and did not have good ratings when withdrawn in October 1938. Madden had blown up at André Marty about the needless deaths at Jarama. As a reply:

{Jean} Barthel appointed Arthur Madden battalion commissar to share responsibilities with {Sam} Stember, whom he hated; the two would fight constantly until Madden was sent to officers' school.¹⁶⁸

Madden as Commissar forced an enquiry into the behavior of George Wattis at Jarama.¹⁶⁹ The enquiry led to Wattis being exonerated, but likely did not further Madden's career. He spent much of his time over the next year in the Autopark, and was killed in fighting on the Ebro.

Merriman says that 50 new Americans showed up at Albacete on April 14. The list of those men exists as RGASPI 545/6/838/pp 113-114. Notables in this group were Philip Detro, who would be a Lieutenant by the end of the year, Abraham Lewis, a party official who would become a "responsible" for the Americans, John Murra, who would contribute significantly to the recording of Brigade records, and Louis Secundy who would become the head of the Autopark. More on them will come in later discussion.

Felice Platone showed up to give lectures and have lunch at Pozo Rubio with Albacete Base (Brigade) Political Commissar Kirtchoff. Merriman will lapse into the Russian he learned in Moscow as over the next few days he will spend time with Russian pilots and comrades who he knew in the Soviet Union. The almost undecipherable "Kommuccyr" is his transliteration of the Russian word for Commissar. Merriman dined and spent the night with Marion at the Hotel Regina in Albacete.

April 15—16 ••• “Men from the Old Country”

15 Abril

S Teodoro

Arose 6³⁰. Guard Nacional at 8 o'clock. Marched men to school near Etat Major where I gave lecture on mapping and use of instruments. Good interest. Ate lunch with Marion and Burton, at 2 met Instructor from the old country who gave us a fine lecture on the light machine gun. Men liked it very much. Also gave us Spanish system of organization and tactical use of the weapon in offense defense and in case of smoke and night firing. After lecture went with Comrade to his guarded apt. Shared with a few others of his kind. Rich hand worked wood inland tables, etc. Met Commandant Milutchevitch and drove out to air port and then to rich landowners estate 40 rooms and a large estate surrounded by a high wall. Large trees and garage, etc. Place now filled with thousands of leaflets to drop across the enemy lines, 4 copies enclosed in papers. Returned after planning time of lecture by aviation tomorrow. Met Kirtchoff and then to hotel - Secundy came for dinner and after M. & I spent a quiet evening at hotel home.

16 Abril

S. Toribio de Liébana

Met young aviator from the old country at 8 o'clock. He lectured until 12:30 about planes - bombers pursuit both enemy and our own. He has been here long time and on many fronts. After lecture walked up town with Garland and ate with Marion. During lunch Donley & Cleaver came to talk. Lectured on maps in afternoon and went to show with M. & Al Robbins. After show walked over to Cerca Mercantile and heard last questions being answered by Bill Gallacher CP MP from England. Received order to have 12 men at funeral of Lt. Moreno tomorrow at 3. Met Gallacher and had dinner with M. & Al Robbins.

§ § §

Robert Merriman had taken the men to Albacete for three days to stand guard duty. They would also be in Albacete as an honor guard for a funeral on the 16th. When in Albacete, Merriman stayed at the Guard Nacional, which was the supply depot for the Brigades. The *Etat Major* (French, in Spanish it will be *Estado Mayor*) is the name used for the Brigade Headquarters. The *Plaza Mayor* would be the Battalion Headquarters and often was near the front lines. Merriman ate with Marion Merriman and Wallace Burton in Albacete. Wallace Burton, as we have described, knew Marion through Milly Bennett, for whom his brother, Wilbur, worked in the China News agency Chung-Mei in Beijing in 1927.

Merriman says that instruction on light machine guns was given by someone from the "old country". He will refer to Russians as "Mexicans", "men from the old country" and "others of his kind"... rather obvious references to Russians without using the word Russians since the Soviet Union was not supposed to have advisors in Spain at this time. This description of the headquarters of the fliers from Russia who were dropping leaflets at this time is quite illuminating. He said he put four copies in his papers but these are lost to time.



Merriman says he had dinner with "Kersher" (Lucien Vidal gives the correct name as Kirtchoff and says he is the Base Commissar at Albacete¹⁷⁰) and Louis Secundy^o, who would become an important officer in the Battalion. Secundy was integral in leading the Autopark, and when transportation needed to be mustered, Secundy was the

^o Louis Secundy was born October 6, 1908, in Brooklyn. Secundy served with the 7th Cavalry, US Army in 1926. Within days of his arrival in Spain he was Chief of the Auto Park in Albacete. He served on the line in Company 1 of the Lincolns and Plana Mayor during the Ebro Battle. He returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the Ausonia. Secundy died January 16, 1989.

man to see ... clearly an important person for a field commander to know.



On the 16th, Merriman introduces new names in the diary. Donley cannot be Charley Donnelly who was in Section 3 of Co. 1 of the Lincolns at Jarama and was Irish. Donnelly fell at Jarama. Cleaver is Lewis Cleaver from Merseyside, Liverpool, England. Bill “Gallagher” was actually Willie Gallacher¹⁷¹, Communist MP from Scotland.

William Gallacher, Communist MP from Scotland, Source: Wikipedia, used under Creative Commons License

Merriman finishes the day by having dinner with Marion, Willie Gallacher and Al Robbins^p. He orders twelve men to stand as honor guard for Lieutenant Moreno who was killed. Pedro Moreno was originally born in Italy but volunteered from Cuba. He was unable to see front line service but was sent to the 12th Battalion to carry out “auxiliary service”. On the Etat Major list for the 12th Brigade, there is a Lieutenant Pedro listed as the Chief Liaison Officer. The details of his death are unknown.¹⁷²

^p Al Robbins (real name Isidore Cohen) was born December 4, 1909, in NYC. He spent three years at the City College of New York and was in the ROTC there. He arrived in Spain on March 17, 1937 and served with the Washington Battalion as a Lieutenant. He was wounded in action at Brunete. Robbins returned to the US on July 2, 1938 aboard the *President Harding*. In WWII, he served in the Navy. Robbins died January 17, 1987 in the Bronx, New York.

April 17—18 ••• A Funeral for Lieutenant Moreno

17 Abril

S. Aniceto

Met Aviator José Mexican at 8 o'clock and he gave 4 ½ {hour} lecture on aviation in Spain and formation etc. I translated. Boys very pleased. In afternoon men excused who wanted to. Set funeral guard for Lieut. Moreno which required practice in French manual of arms. Went to Platone and tried to settle hotel bill. Refused at treasury office, no reduction. Met men at 6 and piled in. Black (?) drunk and also Burton. Returned to camp to bunks with no lights & no bed
Confusion galore

18 Abril

S. Eleuterio

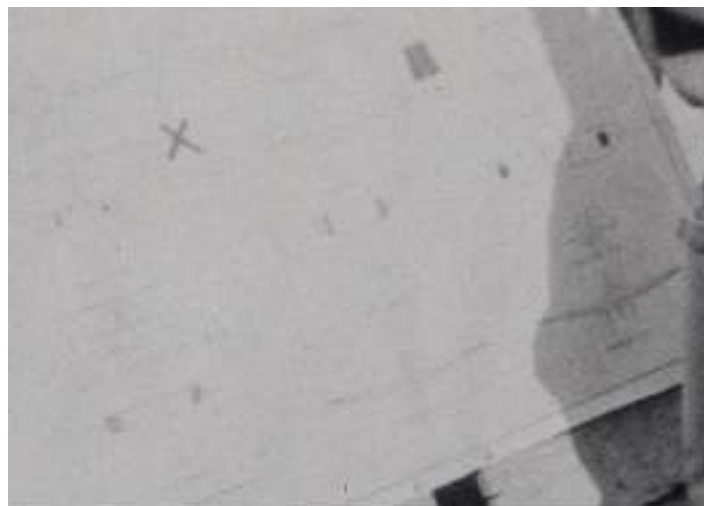
Lectured on topography - no office as yet. Lambert prepared dummy for bayonet practice and also Cleaver & Olorenshaw made map boards. One group mapped castles. After lunch gathered in equipment and went out to act as troops for the 15 French comrades taking examinations from Platone. One problem in defense and one in offense. Gave lecture in evening on map instruments for those behind.

§ § §

Merriman says that the OTS took advantage of his contacts made with the Soviet pilots to get training from José who is likely General Ivan Ivanovich Kopets¹⁷³. Kopets had two confirmed kills as a pilot and 3 shared kills. He would commit suicide in June of 1941 after returning to Russia. On the photo below, Comrade Cyrano of the Franco-Belge Battalion has an instruction board on his right. Also shown below is what is on the board. It is a lecture board on aviation. The board describes how to identify planes, insignia, etc. Probably similar to the lecture heard on April 17, 1937.



Soldier posing in trench with instruction board to his right. From "Notre Combat - Our Fight": "Our Comrade Cyrano in the Franco-Belge Trenches" PHOTO ALBA 177_178009, Tamiment Library, NYU



Blowup of 177_178009 showing aircraft profiles and insignia. These appear to be German single wing aircraft.

Merriman conducted instruction in the French Manual of Arms for a funeral held for a Lieutenant Moreno. Merriman would use the Officers in Training at Pozo Rubio for this honor guard for Moreno in Albacete.

Merriman spent time in the afternoon trying to clear off his hotel bill but could not get a reduction in rate. In the evening he went out with the men and it appears that a "Black" or perhaps "Bloch" got drunk as did Wallace Burton. Jack Black of England was in Spain at this time.

On the 18th, the topic of the day was instruction in map enlarging and reading. Louis Cleaver and Arthur Olorenshaw led that instruction. Merriman is still waiting for an office at Pozo Rubio and he took out a squad of troops to oppose the French troops who were under instruction by Platone.

§ § §

April 19—20 ••• Merriman Practices His Russian

19 Abril

S. Cavo

Cleaver left too sick to work. Rose early - at 8 fell in for parade. Had chalk talk about examination given to the 15 French comrades yesterday. Lasted until noon when I arranged with a "ТОБ" {Russian for comrade} who is going to lecture on liaison on the 23rd. In after noon one group made maps near the castle and Lambert prepared range for distance judging. Went to visit spot for firing problem tomorrow and arranged for guns, etc.

Ate dinner with Mexicans {Russians} and on suggestion drove into Albacete and met Marion on stairs.

20 Abril

S. Sulpicio

Received definite news of radio talk. Waited for car to take me back - late in getting back. Left at 8 o'clock for the far range fired L.M.G. Maxim and rifles did some panoramic mapping. After lunch did Spanish & Bayonet fighting and held political meeting - Good discussion and lively response. At dinner talked about tactics with Mexicans Vidal came and Platone as well. Slavs returned from guard late and had to sleep on tables and in wood.

§ § §

These two days were rather routine for Merriman. Instruction continued at the OTS in Pozo Rubio. Louis Cleaver is ill so he cannot continue instruction. In a few days he will leave Pozo Rubio and be repatriated back to England.

Merriman is spending considerable time with the Russians who are in the area and is dining with them. He arranges for them to lecture to the students at Pozorubio and calls one of them by a Russian word. Merriman's hand is hard enough to understand in

English but in Russian it is really tough. It looks like a script version of the printed "тов" which is Russian abbreviation for "tovarich" or comrade and would fit in context.

One group at Pozo Rubio made maps near the "castle". Palacio Pozo Rubio still exists and is just off the Pinares de Jucar Road northwest of Albacete.



Palacio Pozo Rubio which is about 300 m from the road and from the camp at Pozo Rubio which was in the woods to the right. Source: Google Earth.

The "castle" is Castillo de Pozo Rubio and is likely the building used by the Russian pilots discussed in the diary. It is unconfirmed if there was an airstrip at this location but the land would have been receptive to one. Camp Pozo Rubio was on the opposite side of the now paved road and the "woods" in which the camp was hidden is now home to a very modern subdivision of well to do homes.



Castillo de Pozo Rubio, Villar de Pozo Rubio, Albacete. Courtesy Panaramio.

With the arrival of a group of Hungarians over the previous two weeks, a new group of Officers for the Dombroski Battalion of the 12th Brigade is being trained. The 12th Brigade took losses in the Battle of Guadalajara in March and restaffing was urgent. Vidal has taken an active interest in the "Slav" group and it is likely that this is the 13th Dombrowski Battalion.

Merriman says that he finally received word on his "radio talk". In a few days, Robert Merriman will be invited to Madrid to make a speech on radio to the American audience. This speech will become time consuming over the next week for Merriman.

§ § §

April 21 – 22 Merriman Rolls the Dice and Wins

Abril 21

S. Anselmo

~~waited for car to pick me up wrote a little~~ {struck through}

Early lecture on French formation

Later Comrade Lambert took men out into field for distance judging etc. at noon met with Milutchevitch and decided to complain to Marty or Vidal. Went in right after lunch - met Platone & Vidal came in. He got sore and accused Milutchevitch of disobeying rules and us in general. Cooled down and called meeting for evening to which Platone came. After leaving Hdqtrs went to Marion - met Haywood and talked about Broadcast Madrid. Returned and found Bob Thompson. Lecture finished on maxim and finished up with map enlarging. Meeting a quiet fight with Platone stating what was expected from us. Camp conditions ordered improved immediately. Talked with Bob in the evening. Shot craps & won.

22 Abril

S. Apeles

Moved quarters early in the morning and finished up with a lecture on tactics. In talk discussed sending of officers to front. Finished up on maps after dinner worked on speech. Talked with Stone boys and went to bed late. Good day.

§ § §

Merriman is wrapped up in command politics at this point. Bogdan Milutchevitch (Vidal's spelling Malychitch; Merriman wrote Millicich) is now an instructor at the base, since Merriman repeatedly met him while talking to the "Mexicans". Miluchevitch, a "Mexican" himself, has raised the ire of Merriman and he went to Albacete to complain about him to Vidal and Marty. Clearly, Vidal and Platone sided with Merriman and meeting was set up to resolve the issue. This calmed

Merriman down. In the Base Records of April 19, 1937, we find the following note:

Report N° 940: MILUTCHEVITCH BOGDAN is sent to the Work Company and reeducation for two months and special surveillance. Cause – indiscipline, demoralization, disrupter (desagregateur), stealer of chickens and sheep, bad behavior with the commander, frequently absent from his unit, frequent drunkenness, grumbler and imitator.¹⁷⁴

Vidal has spelled this comrade's name differently on different memos, but it appears this is the same man. There was a review of his service done by Edo and Vlasov.⁹

Merriman met with Marion and Harry Haywood to discuss topics on the upcoming speech that Merriman will make in Madrid in

⁹Review of Milutchevitch by Comrades Edo and Vlasov in 1941 (Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 1528/p37. (Translation courtesy of Natalia Sadovnikova)

720. Milutchevitch Bogdan – the Croat.
 Born at 1909.
 Mechanic.
 Arrived from France.
 Nonpartisan.
 Soldier.

From his past we know only that for 10 years, from 1926 to 1936, he was in French Foreign Legion in Africa and had the rank of Sergeant. Arrived in Spain 8th December 1936 from Toulouse and was sent to the 14th Brigade, to the 9th Battalion. At the front Andujar was twenty days and later was transferred to the 12 Brigade of the Battalion "Dombrovsky". Was at the Jarama front with the battalion. Was punished several times. 7th April 1937 was arrested for the theft and drunkenness, and because several times he left his military unit without permission. 11th April 1937 the judicial commission of the International Brigades sent him to a penal company. At 1938 was sent to the Battalion "Divisionario" of the 45th Division. In Battalion his behavior was bad again, he was undisciplined and did the destructive work. After evacuation of International Brigades to France he was in a concentration camp Argeles.

9th May 1941
 Edo
 Vlasov



Harry Haywood, Image Source: ALBA Photos 177_179056 (also 177_196197), Tamiment Library, NYU

May. This adds some aid in interpreting the "radio talk" comment on a prior day posting. Harry Haywood was a leading US Communist Party member with a long history of fighting for worker and African-American rights. Haywood had a difficult time in Spain and was thrust into political fights between Internationals who were contending for IB leadership. Haywood attempted to support the American troop's interest but it cost him personally and he was withdrawn early.¹⁷⁵ Bob Thompson^r is now at Pozo

^r Robert George Thompson was born June 21, 1915, in Grants Pass, Oregon. Thompson served with the Lincoln Battalion at Jarama and was injured and in hospital with Merriman. He went to OTS and then was the Commander of the third North American Battalion, the largely Canadian Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. He served at Jarama and Fuentes de Ebro. He may have left Spain in the Fall of 1937 on CP business and he returned to the US on August 13, 1938 aboard the *President Roosevelt*. In WWII, He was in the US Army and was decorated for bravery during the Buna Campaign in Borneo. He died on October 16, 1965, and after a long fight with the Veterans Administration, he was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Rubio as an instructor and he will be frequently mentioned as new Battalions are formed over the coming months. Thompson and Merriman would be quite close comrades over the next few months.

On the 22nd, Merriman's duties were routine although he talked to the Stone boys. Of all the "Stones" in Spain (and there were six in the Lincolns), Samuel Wesley Stone, Jr. and William Carl Stone were not yet in Spain according to the sailing lists, Harold W. Stone was in Transports, and the other three are brothers, Sheer Isaac Hershkowitz (Joe Stone), Sam Hershkowitz (Sam Stone), and Herman Hershkowitz (Hy Stone), who did arrive on two ships in February. It is likely that he spoke with the three Hershkowitz brothers.

The interested reader will wonder "Isn't there still a war going on?" At Jarama, the two sides had settled into a stalemate position and neither was doing more than probing and sniping with the occasional mortar, artillery and aircraft attacks. In the south, the front along the Cordoba-Pozoblanco line also had settled and the 20th Battalion had several groups removed from the line in April as the fighting waned. A very good discussion of this front can be found in an article by Joe Monks that has been posted online.¹⁷⁶ Franco had not gone to sleep, however, and on March 31 he moved forces north to start an offensive to clear the Basque region of Republican forces. 50,000 troops were deployed against 45,000 poorly armed and unsupported Basque troops.¹⁷⁷

The Nationalists had a new cruiser named the *Canarias* which sunk supply vessels trying to resupply Bilbao. The offensive started in the east and took until October to finish off the Republican forces in the north. In the meantime, Franco was very thin in the south and a decisive push to cut his supply lines likely would have severely delayed his plans to take Madrid and the Republican led areas. Unfortunately, no offensive would be undertaken by the Internationals until the beginning of July, in the heat of the Spanish summer. This was clearly an opportunity missed by the Loyalist Armies, but they were consolidating strength over these three months.



From the cover of Harry Fisher's book "Comrades": In the front (l-r): Bienvenido Domínguez (Cuba), Jack Schulman, Joe Azar and Julius Deutsch. In the rear (l-r): Joe Stone, Mome Teitelbaum, Sam Stone, Robert Zimmer and John Murra.

Over the spring of 1937, Franco and the Fascists were eliminating Basque opposition and, in four days, the name of a town which will forever be tied to the Spanish Civil War will be a topic for discussion.

April 23—24 •••The Merrimans Speak to America

23 Abril {very dense hand}

In morning translated lecture on lesson given by a Mexican. Well received. Orders to move men in at 1³⁰. Rode into Albacete with Liaison expert (Mexican) and went to Etat Major. Arranged with Schalbroeck for car for two of comrades from U.S. Went to Cadres and met Nelson and others. Discussed who was to go. Marion typed speech and we went back to E. M. {Estado Mayor} Got car - salvo conductos including Marion and {Bill} Lawrence, Haywood {See October 5}. Left at 5 for Morata in Hudson car. Took new route and arrived about 10 o'clock at white farmhouse. At bully beef and saw Tanz etc. Kelly. Long. Went from there to new Brigade Hdqtrs met Wattis first. Johnson, Klaus, Copic, Stepanovitch, Cooperman. Drank a little wine and talked. Wattis tried to gain favor through Marion. Talked over 27th. Copic blamed everyone else for everything even told about incipient rebellion among French. Came to Morata to sleep and talked with Johnson. Old story of factionalism and fights between Copic and others. Johnson wants an English speaking Brigade. Copic may be the head. Aitken with Copic. Johnson says these men except Klaus are amateurs but trying to keep control. Discussed Harris and naive mistakes of party in early stages. Fight on our hands now. Johnson thanked me for what I had done here. Matter up in air – changes due but nature not known yet. Discussed placing of Mates, Haywood and Lawrence & Nelson.

24 Abril *Fidel de Sigmaringa* {Says "Note Nov 21"}

Protesting French comrades woke us early. Went to Brig Hdqts. Ate a large breakfast. Had pictures taken with the general Copic etc. talked with Cooperman and Wattis gave box of food. Got order - bringing Johnson with us to

front lines. Road built by Americans. Saw the boys, gave letters - wrote note for paper asked to write for brigade history. Koloski {Kolowsky} demoted in fact. Saw dugouts - trenches saps. New long bombs - etc. Walked thru entire line. McDonald in charge and doing well. Spirit of men not low but moody and tired. Fascist propoganda had come over - leaflets. Met Copeman who wanted me to work on English speaking Brigade. 200 yds gained by saps in position held by us in the attack of the 23rd. Saw Corona all roses. Now in English Battalion. Head of company Spanish. Left for Madrid. Ate Grand Via Hotel. Met Kline, Josephson, Herbst, Hemingway, Dos Passos, Pitcairn, Greenspan and Sid Franklin. Arranged talks for radio. Very hectic. Took my speech to Brigade Commissar Gallo not in - went to blood institute. Called Mueller and picked him up in Radio hospital ate - picked up speech and slept.

§ § §

This diary page is intense in content and dense in hand. Bob Merriman had quite a lot to record for posterity. There are actually four diary pages devoted to these dates and he used pages from October and November to record them.

Merriman lets us know that the training period of the prior week has ended and he has orders to send the men into Albacete. This usually was a prelude to moving men to the front. Merriman hitches a ride into Albacete with a Russian, perhaps the same one who was involved in giving lessons to the troops. The "Liaison" expert is unnamed and would probably be a Comintern representative in Albacete. Important American Comrades have arrived and Merriman lands a car for them. On the 13th of April, Robert Minor¹⁷⁸ arrived in France and the timing would be right for this important party official to make it to Albacete. It is likely that he was one of the two Americans who was given the car by Jean Schalbroeck. Schalbroeck is variously spelled Schallrock and Schallroch by Merriman but we believe this is the Belgian officer. Schalbroeck was Vidal's Chief of Staff.



Robert Minor at Purburell Hill, Quinto, in October 1937. ALBA PHOTO 177-188058, Tamiment Library, NYU *Steve Nelson (left) and Doug Roach (right). ALBA PHOTO 177-179075, Tamiment Library, NYU*

The second name in this paragraph who will be discussed extensively over the next few months is Steve Nelson^s, a CP organizer from Pittsburgh. Nelson and Joe Dallet^t were detained in Perpignan, France, when they tried to get into Spain and were released after serving about three weeks time there.

^s Steve Nelson (Stevan Mesaros, aka Joseph Fleischinger), was born December 26, 1903, in Subocka, Croatia. He was a Party organizer, carpenter and auto worker who attended the Lenin Institute and undertook missions to China and India for the Comintern. Sailing March 10, 1937 aboard the *Queen Mary*, the Dallet group was arrested aboard a fishing trawler by French non-intervention forces and jailed. Released two weeks later, they arrived at Albacete in late March. Nelson served as Lincoln Battalion Commissar, Lincoln-Washington Commissar, and briefly commanded the battalion at Brunete after the death of Oliver Law. He became Brigade Commissar, served at Quinto, and was severely wounded by a sniper in Belchite. He returned to the US on November 9, 1937 aboard the *Aquitania*. Nelson was one of the Lincolns who was convicted under the Smith Act and served time in jail in the McCarthy period. He passed away in November 1993.

^t Joe Dallet was born on February 18, 1907, in Cleveland, Ohio. He graduated from Dartmouth in 1927, and became a Party Organizer, working in steel union activities. He became Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion Commissar and was killed in action October 13, 1937, Fuentes de Ebro.

Merriman says that they "discussed who was to go". This refers to who would go with the Merrimans to Madrid to deliver the radio address. While Marion finished typing his speech, it was decided that they would be accompanied by Bill Lawrence and Harry Haywood, first to Morata de Tajuña near Jarama and then on to the front lines. The "salvo conductos" were important enough that they were written in Merriman's diary on October pages.



Photograph of the XVth Brigade leadership at General Gal's headquarters at Morata de Tejuña (Villa Fuentes de la Venta), probably April 24, 1937. L-R Allan Johnson, Vladimir Copic, unknown soldier (perhaps the Cuban Jose Bridon who commanded the 24th Battalion), Harry Haywood, Marion Merriman, Col. Hans Klaus, Bob Merriman, and David Mates. ALBA PHOTO 177-196126, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman arrived late in the evening at the Estado Mayor in Morata and says he spoke with Al Tanz, Thomas Kelly^u, Patrick Long^v, George Wattis, Allan Johnston, Hans Klaus, Vladimir Copic,

^u Thomas Joseph Lawrence Kelly was 40 years old in Spain and had been a farm equipment worker and machinist. He arrived in Spain on February 7, 1937 and returned two years later to the US on February 4, 1939 aboard the President Harding.

^v Patrick Long was part of the first group of Americans and served in Jarama and Brunete. He died in 1939.

Stepanovich, and Phil Cooperman^w. Thomas Kelly was Section Leader of Company 1 of the Lincolns at Jarama. Merriman spells "Stefanovich" is believed to be Captain Vladomir Stepanovic, the Brigade chef du control des cadres.¹⁷⁹ Eby notes that Stefanovic was appointed the head of an ad-hoc committee to review George Wattis after the debacle of Jarama on the 27th of February and that Stefanovic was skilled in counter-espionage¹⁸¹.

Merriman did not take long to get embroiled in the politics of the Brigade. He again argued with Copic of the responsibility of the February 27 attack at Jarama. He would be asked by Vidal to write the May 5 memorandum ¹⁷⁰ given in the end notes. Merriman later admits in an additional note below, however, that some of the men did not like him. Allan Johnson, who did have considerable military experience, makes the comment that all the leaders are "amateurs", except for Hans Klaus. Klaus and Copic would go at each other hammer and tongs until summer when Klaus was removed. Copic is rumored to become the leader of the new "English Speaking Brigade". Merriman says that British Commander George Aitken¹⁸⁰ supports Copic to be leader. Aitken was generally a thoughtful leader. In May, a letter from Dr. Langer and Aitken makes a plea for funds to pay for the tombs of men killed at Jarama. This leadership in-fighting will bubble for two more months and, in June, the Lincolns will try to remove Copic as head of the XVth Brigade. Haywood, Mates, Johnson and Nelson would lead the effort to replace Copic and they would not be successful. Blaming the messenger who made the request to Copic to step down, Commissar Haywood would lose his job in Spain and make an enemy of Copic. Tellingly, Merriman would not be amongst those who called for Copic to go, although there was never a good relationship between the two leaders. We will return to this story in June.

The flavor of the jockeying for position in the command structure could not be more clearly stated than in Merriman's quote from

^w Philip Cooperman, 28, had 3 years prior military service and worked as a Bacteriologist. Part of the first group of Lincolns he served with the Lincoln Battalion as Staff Officer and battalion Secretary. He was killed in action date and place unknown.

April 24, "Political fencing of higher command sickening, much careerism".

It is interesting that Merriman says that Allan Johnson thanked him for what he did in Jarama. Johnson will later go on to write a series of five articles on military techniques for the Volunteer for Liberty newspaper that was distributed to the troops in late 1937 and 1938. Militarily, Johnson may have been the best trained of the Lincolns, being a veteran of World War I, a graduate of the US Military War College and previously having held the rank of Captain in the U.S. Army.¹⁸¹ Merriman and Johnson discussed the placement of the new comrades: David Mates^x, Nelson, Haywood and Lawrence.

April 23 was so busy that Merriman added a complete additional page on the November 21-22 unused pages of his diary:

§ § §

21 November

Presentación de N.º S.º

Note from 23rd of April

Met Zaret today. He is now Lieutenant and enjoying his work. He mentioned some interesting things including Gal idea about relief of Americans etc. As soon as new International brigade is ready. Frowns however on these clique moves made to force his hand. Hourihan and Political Commissars in Battalion not satisfying men & move for election started again. Slogan had been not one inch back and not a bullet wasted. Fine work until last ten days. Rumor about leaving lines etc.

^x David Mates (David Metropolitan) was born April 13, 1907 in Russia. He was from Staten Island, New York. He served as the first Commissar of the new Washington Battalion and fought at Brunete. The failure at Brunete led to Mates' fall from leadership and returned to the US on January 11, 1938 on the Aquitania. He died in San Francisco on March 16, 1977.

Zaret says General knows about school and Vidal says I need one more month to rest up. Seem to be in good favor. Zaret told about artillery work in wrecking ammunition factory in Toledo – laid it up for 4 weeks. Had a capacity of 1 million rounds a day. 6 guns put 500 shells onto it in 3 hours. Best work yet in this war with artillery.

22 Noviembre (24th April) [his edit]

It was strange to visit the Battalion again. I felt uncomfortable since they have been there for so long and see many of them are gone. There is no need to say that the best were wounded or killed - The present men are no indication of our original Battalion. Some glad to see me others not. Corona curried favor. 42 new men from Madrigueras came several days ago Engels and Kerr included.

Political fencing of higher command sickening, much careerism. Met Pike and Hourihan in Madrid looking fine. Hourihan little shaky – not visible, wears one broad stripe. In Madrid broadcast planned by many people and each tried to run it without doing the work. Greenspan & Lawrence & Haywood crossed horns some. Speeches written by Hemingway and Herbst. Dramatic for a soldier. Had to shorten my talk because of 6 people in ½ hour. {Ernst} Busch exiled German singers sang in the program.

§ § §

Lieutenant Zaret is Daniel Abraham Zaretsky^y, who was the Aide-de-Camp to General Gal. Zaret is described in Cecil Eby's *Comrades*

^y David A. Jarrett (David Abraham Zaret) was born April 11, 1891 in Simferopol, Crimea but lived in NYC. He served 15 months in WWI in the US Military. He was in the first group of Americans. Aide to three generals in Spain, he returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. He worked in an ammunition plant in Delaware in WWII and died Oct 13, 1984 in Vista, California.

and Commissars as being General Gal's translator so he must have spoken Russian. Zaret was a NY Court reporter. Merriman discusses with him an idea of Gallo's that the rotation of American troops out of the line could happen as soon as the new Washington Battalion in XVth Brigade can be formed. Zaret informs Merriman that Gal is aware of what Merriman is doing at the Pozo Rubio Officer Training School and that his work is well regarded. Merriman is obviously pushing to get back into action but is told that Vidal wants him to wait another month to heal from his wounding at Jarama. He and Merriman discuss a Republican attack on an ammunition factory of the Rebels in Toledo which was destroyed by an artillery assault.

Returning to the main diary above, April 24 begins with Merriman being awoken during the night by protests from the French comrades who were "in revolt" according to Copic. Merriman says he had his photo taken with General Gal and Copic. This specific picture with the three of them has not been found in the Tamiment collection. Other photos from Fuentes de la Venta are in the Tamiment Archive and one was included above.

Merriman says that he, along with Johnson, went to the trenches on the front lines of Jarama to meet with the men and bring them letters. He is disturbed by the number of good men who are now gone. The conditions at Jarama were improved somewhat since he was taken out wounded on the 27th of February. The sappers had moved the trenches forward about 200 yards and they had built a new road. This came at a cost, however. On April 5, the Garibaldi and Dombrowski battalions had driven forward to gain this 200 yards. Marty Hourihan ordered the Americans over the top to support the other battalions. The attack stalled when the Garibaldi's got tangled up in the Lincoln's barbed wire and had to pull back. 20 Americans were injured in the attack including Hourihan, Allan Johnson, and David Jones^z. Johnson and Jones

^z David Everett Jones, 39, was Lincoln Commissar at Jarama. He was forced to take command of the entire battalion after the attack on the 27th when Merriman was injured. He was wounded on 15 April 15 and Fred Lutz took over as battalion Commissar.

must have been lightly wounded since they was back at Jarama by the 16th of April and accompanied Merriman there on the 23rd.¹⁸¹

Bob Merriman's wife Marion Merriman Wachtel relates:

As we stepped from the car, we heard the solitary crack of rifle fire. We walked thorough the dugout trenches. I felt skittish, for the explosive bullets made a nasty crack as they sailed through the air and buried themselves with a thud in the earth. The men in the trenches gathered around Bob, and we all talked amid the zinging and cracking of the rifle fire. I was impressed by how deeply dug the trenches were, how clean and dry they were, and how high the sandbags were piled for safety. But I was jumpy. The bullets sang overhead. I followed orders about keeping my head down.

Bob moved easily among the men and you could see their respect for him. Inwardly, however, I knew he felt a little uncomfortable. He felt sorry for the men who had been at the front so long, almost seventy days by then. A sense of loneliness came over Bob when he realized how many of the men he had fought with were not there. Killed. Or wounded.

But Bob was cheered by the warmth shown him by American replacements, who had heard of his loyalty to his men at Jarama and knew of his own wounding on February 27.

In one place, the trench was within thirty-five meters of the enemy. The Americans looked tired. But I thought their morale was good. "Those bastards couldn't hit a barn with a cow", one said to Bob as the Fascist artillery rumbled to life and the shells went astray, crashing into the earth a good distance from where we huddled in the trench.¹⁸²



Merriman notes that a "Kaloski" had been demoted. This is probably Walter Kolowski, who had gone in with the first group in December 1936. Kolowski had been promoted to be head of the Machine Gun Company on the 16th of April¹⁸³ and this note says that he was demoted back by the 23th. Kolowski returned to the US from Spain in 1937 and he returned again in May 1938 along with a group of six other Americans who had been home for some time in 1938. Kolowski finally left Spain on the SS Ausonia in December 1938 with a large number of American repatriates.

Walter Kolowski upon his return to Spain in May 1938. ALBA PHOTO 11_0227, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman mentions meeting Fred Copeman, the Commissar in the British Battalion at Jarama. He also notes that Arturo Corona is now "currying favor" with Merriman, probably trying to get back to Pozo Rubio in a training position. Corona had made Lieutenant and was head of Company 3 (Spanish) of the British Battalion.¹⁸³ He comments (on the continuation page from the November 21 page of the diary) that 42 new Internationals have now arrived at Madrigueras. Included in that group were Dave "Mooch" Engels (who Merriman had met earlier in April in Albacete) and Canadian Bob Kerr. Bob Kerr would become the record keeper for all Canadians in Spain, make assignments of Canadian personnel to various units, and served in the Cadres service.¹⁸⁴

Later in the day, the Merrimans are off to Madrid to deliver their speech to the radio broadcast back to America. Merriman meets Dr. William Pike^{aa}, head of the Battalion Medical Services, and

^{aa} Dr. William Winston Pike was born April 17, 1904, in NYC. He came in the first American Medical Bureau (AMB) team. As a Captain in the Sanidad, he served at many front line hospitals including the mobile autochir. Pike stopped

Marty Hourihan in Madrid. Drafting the speech was done mostly at the last minute. Merriman was only one of six people speaking including segments of songs from Spain by a German exile named Ernst Busch. The songs of Ernst Busch are now available on CD from *Smithsonian Folkways*. George Marion ("Marion Greenspan") who was a newspaper writer, locked horns with Haywood and Lawrence on the text of the speech.

Merriman was in lofty company in preparing for his speech. He met cinematographer/radio announcer Herbert Kline¹⁸⁵, Matthew Josephson¹⁸⁶, Josephine Herbst¹⁸⁷, Ernest Hemingway¹⁸⁸, John Dos Passos¹⁸⁹, Frank Pitcairn¹⁹⁰ (Francis Claude Cockburn), Marion Greenspan and Sid Franklin ("the Brooklyn bullfighter" according to Hemingway)¹⁹¹. Sid Franklin "served as chaperone" to Martha Gellhorn, according to a recent book by Amanda Vaill¹⁹² on Hemingway and others noted in this diary. A film made about this time shows a fabulous line up of important names in the Spanish Civil War and Harry Randall apparently captured the group in a movie "With the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain" and a still is included below.

Merriman makes the following notation on the November 27 page of the diary:

On Monday's program 2am 25th was Kline - Sid Franklin bullfighter (helping Hemingway on NaNa) who was the announcer. I spoke first. Pike second. Speech by Dos Pasos {Passos} read third Josephine Herbst and Hourihan. Busch sang in general fine program. Pleased with Hemingway - disappointed in Dos Pasos.

Apparently none of them could stop Ernest Hemingway from modifying the text and making it more "dramatic" than Merriman was comfortable with.

the Lincoln convoy from the "Lost Trucks" mistake at Jarama saving many lives. He served in the WWII Armed forces and died April 26, 2000.



Photo taken of Hemingway's visit to the Brigade. Tentative identifications: (l-r) Egan Schmidt, unk, Radomir Smrcka, Malcolm Dunbar, unknown, Robert Merriman, unknown, Humberto Galliani, unknown, Ernest Hemingway, unknown, Major Crespo, Martha Gellhorn, Herbert Matthews. Harry Randall Photo Unit, ALBA Photo 11-1354, Tamiment Library, NYU

§ § §

April 25—26 Merrimans are in Madrid (Guernica)

25 Abril

S. Marcos, evangelista

Rose late after broadcast. Bathed – finished up work and saw Greenspan & Herbst. Ate lunch with Ted Allan who admitted he was plenty pleased not to be in trenches. Went to see Gallo -- 3d time not in. Left copy of speech. Went to Ministry of War to get gas. Got box but didn't wait for pass to University City. Instead drove into war zone ourselves. Walked around in area overlooking fascist lines and saw dozens of beautiful buildings wrecked by bombs. Barricades fine and several lines deep. Made of cement and cobbles from street. Made for M G & rifles. Tried to get to University City but couldn't find commandant. Returned - got gasoline and artillery started on the city. Hit bank and we drove around corner and stopped. Lit quite close and people kept handing us hot pieces of shrapnel. Marion frightened - while waiting for it to end we found ourselves near elements of fascist shells etc. Finally left Greenspan and drove out of town accompanied by deep sighs. Albacete late after running out of gas in La Roda.

26 Abril

S. Cleio

Arose late - went to see Vidal and found him out of town. Saw Doctor who told me to come back concerning arm. Talked with fellows about new men from school. Met men at Guard Nacional. And after waiting got lunch and rode out. No room for me and so slept in doctors room. Walked late into night with Bob - discussed politics.

§ § §

After the intense build up to the Radio broadcast to America on the very early morning of the 25th of April, the Merrimans slept in. They met with Marion Greenspan (George Marion) and

Josephine Herbst later in the morning. Marion Merriman quotes Josie Herbst for her reasons of why she went to Spain:

*"Because", she said simply. Then she posed her own questions. "Why do you write a book? Why do you fall in love? Because. It is the one concluding answer that comes from the bottom of the well. Later you may dress it up with reasons; some of them may very well apply. But because is the soundest answer you can give to an imperative. I didn't even want to go to Spain. I had to. Because."*¹⁹³

The Merrimans had lunch with Toronto reporter Ted Allan (real name Allan Herman). Allan was writing at the time for the Toronto Clarion. He wrote several books on the Spanish Civil War and his *The Scalpel, the Sword* is a definitive biography of Dr. Norman Bethune of Toronto, who helped found the mobile blood transfusion units that were to save countless lives in Spain and many, many more in China in 1939. Ted Allan would also later be known for being in the same car as Gerda Taro when she was killed at Brunete. Allan's experiences in Spain have been slightly fictionalized in his *This Time a Better Earth*.¹⁹⁴ The Merriman group would visit the Blood Transfusion Unit, probably guided by Allan.



Luigi Longo ("Gallo"), Photograph from RGASPI Archives, Moscow Fond 545 Op 6 Delo 129

The diary says that Merriman was trying to get to see "Gallo" (the nom de guerre for Luigi Longo). Not making contact the Merrimans and Greenspan head off into the suburbs of Madrid to try to see the lines at University City. The fighting in this district of Madrid had been at a standstill for six months with the Republicans unable to dislodge the fascists who had infiltrated buildings in the

new University of Madrid. Sniping between buildings continued.

Merriman's diary is nearly antiseptic in his analysis of what they saw. Marion Merriman Wachtel's memoir is more emotional from April 23rd before the radio broadcast:

"Even under bombardment, Madrid is marvelous!" I said to Bob. The wide tree-lined boulevards and modern buildings had an air of dignity that even blocks of bombed-out ruins could not dispel"

But the scene changed, quickly. As we walked down a broad boulevard, we heard the crack of rifle fire. Then the tempo picked up. "That's machine gun fire," Bob said. The machine guns rattled in the distance, perhaps a few blocks away, I couldn't be sure. Then we heard the boom of artillery and the reality of Madrid at war returned deeply to me. The artillery shell landed some distance away, collapsing part of a building, which fell into a rubble of dust. We dashed down the street, staying close to the buildings. The horror of war was driven home to me. I was terrified.¹⁹⁴

And from April 25, after the broadcast:

About four o'clock in the afternoon, we were pulling out of a gas station near the Post Office and we heard a dull, vibrating thud and saw a puff of smoke and dust go up from the bank down the street. People scattered like leaves in a storm, and our bewildered chauffeur stopped in the middle of the open square but not for long.

We raced up a side street and parked the car on the sheltered side of the narrow street. Fortunately, I thought, the shells from artillery can't come straight down between the buildings! Bob and others calmly joined a larger crowd out on the nearby boulevard, around the corner, to see what was happening. I decided to stay in the car. But, a moment later, the shelling began again. I was frightened into a cold sweat of terror.

At first there was a moment of what seemed like dead silence...Then the noise of the shelling exploded, the burst of

the artillery surrounding every part of me. My mind, my head, my eyes, my shoulders, my entire body immersed in the horrible sound.

I jumped from the car and ran down the street. My God! My God! This sucks up all the air into silence and then the explosion bursts and the air is gone and the silence is overwhelming again. My screams froze in my throat. I ran to Bob, who made me stand quietly against a wall until I got over my terror. I wasn't as much hysterical as I was angry. All I could think was, "the bastards, the bastards, the bastards". I couldn't say a thing.¹⁹⁴

A British Pathé newsreel of Madrid at this time is online.¹⁹⁵

On the 26th of April one of the great outrages of this war occurred. Guernica was bombed by the German Luftwaffen.¹⁹⁶ Guernica is no better remembered than in Picasso's famous mural from the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid (this image is Wikipedia Creative Commons licensed at this resolution):



Guernica by Pablo Picasso. Source: Wikipedia Commons.

In a fury of outrage, Picasso painted this large mural in one week in his Paris studio. Sadly, the West knew little about Guernica until much later in the war. The Fascist propaganda spread stories about the city being burned by Republican forces. A British volunteer for the Fascists, Peter Kemp, continued this lie even into the 1950's.¹⁹⁷ Like horrors that were to lie ahead in World War II, the larger the atrocity, the harder it is to believe.

April 27—28 ••• Merriman returns to Pozo Rubio

27 Abril

Ntra. Sra. de Montserrat

Men worked on maps - after talk in which I gave report. Isolated Begelman who had worn stripes. Confidence expressed. Talked about maps. After lunch talked with Robbins who says things are not well in school. Organized school into groups and sections. No room yet. Came in with Robbins in evening in truck. Rushed to hospital - doctor said not worth breaking again. Went to Club and to hotel. Rosenstein stayed all evening. Vidal in conference didn't see him.

28 Abril

S. Prudencio

Waited for truck at Intendencia - came 1 hr late. Truck not running well so we went to auto park. There I picked up another car after threatening to phone Vidal. Arrived late. Worked on {Etat} Major in the afternoon. Lectured on tactics of the section. In evening heard that it was necessary to come to Albacete again to stand guard. Tried to get room. While still in doctors room, Hagileou & Pete {Hampkins} helped to get other room ready. Finally moved in late. Drank bottle of champagne with Joe Stone and Bob Thompson. Forced German captain to move into another room.

§ § §

Merriman's short sojourn in Madrid ended and he returned to Pozo Rubio to resume his teaching at the Officer Training School. He found Elias Begelman had been wearing a stripe that he was not entitled to and he needed to reprimand him. The infringement was not serious enough and Merriman was able to say that he had confidence in Begelman who would move up to deserve those stripes by June 1937. Merriman finds from Al

Robbins that the school is still not running smoothly and that reorganization into sections was necessary.

About this time, the Pozo Rubio school was organizing curriculum for training and several courses had been developed by Merriman:

- School for machine gunners and rifle-machine gunners (7 days)
- School for Officers and NCO's (15 days for those with experience and 25 days for Spanish who had no prior military experience)
- Command school for Subalterns (15 days)
- Officer's School for Commanders and Heads of Battalions (15 days)¹⁹⁸

It is possible that leaders would then spend as much as two months at Pozorubio before going to the lines.

Merriman returns from Pozo Rubio to Albacete to see the doctor about his arm. He is informed that there is no point rebreaking the injured arm. That must have been comforting and discomfoting at the same time. In subsequent photos, however, Merriman is shown with his left arm in all kinds of positions so he must have regained full range of motion of his shoulder.

Merriman mentions that Rosenstein stayed all evening. He will often refer to Rosenstein as "Rosey". He confirms on this page that the Stone discussed previously is Joe Stone (Sheer Isaac Hershkowitz). Merriman shows that rank has privilege by throwing a German captain out of his room at Albacete and "organizing" it. Mess Sgt. John Hagileou and "Pete" (Hampkins) helped him get the room. Merriman celebrates his new digs with champagne with Stone and Bob Thompson in the evening.

Richard Baxell has noted that April 28, 1937, was an important day for the XVth International Brigade. On that date, they were replaced on the line by the XIVth Brigade (French) in Jarama and taken to Morata de Tajuña where they would rest. Baxell notes:

Before leaving, an 'impressive memorial service' for the members of the battalion killed at Jarama and a stone memorial, in the shape of a five-pointed star, was erected.¹⁹⁹

The British Battalion was pulled back further to Alcala de Heneres and subsequently would base their training in Mondejar, both east of Madrid and south of Guadalajara. The Brigade Estado Major would be based at Ambite, also a few kilometers away. General Gal would have a villa outside Ambite ("The Ambite Mill") where he would direct activities for much of the rest of the year. The Americans would later be based close by at Albares.

Baxell's book points out that the relief gave the Brigades time to deal with issues that arose in Jarama and one was the accusation that Bert Overton's actions included a "self-promotion" and a possible defection of his unit from a battle situation. The result of the investigation was the removal of Overton's stripes and a court-martial. He was sentenced to a labor battalion and then sent back to the front where he was 'killed by a shell while carrying munitions to a forward position.'²⁰⁰

Overton's removal will be discussed by Merriman in the diary in an entry in late May which may put the actual court-martial and removal at a somewhat later date.

§ § §

April 29—30 ••• Ludwig Renn Comes to Lecture

29 Abril

S. Hugo

In morning section went out on tactical problem. Point advance party, etc. E. Cecil-Smith and Garland leaders. Time short and didn't finish second problem with Hagileou in charge. Returned in time to take last notes on Ludwig Wren {sic, Ludwig Renn} talk on the great battle of Guadarrama. Interested in his cracks about failure of Lister to move up. Gave weaknesses of our army. Came to Albacete posted guard - Met Marion and later Sunny Kaminski. Talked with McDade and found him not much altho may have to take him. Ate late at Central Hotel & home in rain.

30 Abril

Sta. Catalina de Sena

In morning got German machine gun and new auto short rifle which shoots revolver bullets. In afternoon worked on Lewis gun. Met Rosey and Bob and we all ate and drank in small bar. Went to Etat Major where storm broke over question of shelling peas, etc. Finally quieted down. Bob ate here at hotel with Marion and me. Talked after - Had session during the day with Nelson Lawrence Haywood Bender.

§ § §

Training continues at Pozorubio's Officer Training School. Merriman notes that the training activities on the 29th of April were led by Walter Garland and Canadian Edward Cecil-Smith ("point advance problem"). The second problem which did not get completed was led by John Hagileou and this indicates that he is being moved up from his duties as Mess Sergeant at Albacete.

Ludwig Renn²⁰⁰, who was the commander of the Thälmann Battalion of the XIth International Brigade, came to Pozorubio to lecture on earlier battles and the state of the Brigades. Merriman

scrawls a word about a battle that could be the Battle of Guadarrama (and alternative topic is below). There are four battles that took place in the region of Guadarrama. The first was the first battle of the war in July and August of 1936²⁰¹. The second battle took place in December 1936 - January of 1937 in the Sierra Guadarrama which is northwest of Madrid. This battle is discussed by Antony Beevor.

While the whole republican sector looked as if it were about to collapse, Miaja²⁰² placed machine-guns at crossroads on the way to Madrid to stop desertion. He ordered in XII International and Lister's ²⁰³ Brigade. In addition, XIV International Brigade was brought all the way round from the Córdoba front. On January 7 Kléber²⁰⁴ ordered the Thaelmann Battalion to hold the enemy near Las Rozas, telling them 'not to retreat a single centimeter under any circumstances'. In a stand of sacrificial bravery they followed his order to the letter. Only 35 men survived.²⁰⁵

Having Renn discuss the heroic stand of the German Thälmann Battalion would have been designed to show the XVth Brigade that their losses at Jarama were not unusual for the Internationals. Interestingly, Merriman latched onto the failure of the Listers to move forward at Guadarrama, which is identical to the failure of the Spanish 24th Battalion to move forward at Jarama and where the Americans took such horrific losses on February 27.

There was reported to be a third battle of Guadarrama in March 31, 1937, but this reference is secondary and may be a mistake. The fourth battle of Guadarrama is also discussed by Beevor and took place in May and June of 1937.²⁰⁶ This battle decimated the French XIVth Battalion who passively absorbed a beating by aircraft and artillery. Renn would not have known about this last battle at the time of this lecture.

Another interpretation however is that Renn was relating the results of the recent victorious battle of Guadalajara. Starting in early February, Franco initiated his assault on Madrid designed to sweep around the southern end of the city and then up along the

east side to meet up with his troops that had already advanced across the north side of the Madrid region. Closing that trap would probably have ended the war with the taking of Madrid. Jarama was a significant impediment to his plans.

Franco's efforts to overthrow the government of Spain was underwritten by other Fascist powers in Europe: Portugal, Italy and Germany. German infantry troops were available to Franco but it was German air power and artillery that empowered the Rebels. Portugal contributed several divisions of infantry, but the most significant contribution of manpower came from Italy who could infiltrate boatload after boatload of troops into Spain now that the city of Malaga and the southern coast was clear for them. Thus, the Italian tanks, infantry and artillery would be involved in all major fighting against the International Brigades until the very end.

There was a superior attitude of the Germans and Italians against this unknown Spanish General Franco. When Jarama stalled, Mussolini was dismissive of Franco thinking that he was too careful and not daring enough in his offensive on Madrid. On March 8, the Italians led a massive onslaught on Madrid from the north and south which was intended to show Spain and Europe that Italians could do in Spain what they had done in Ethiopia, quickly conquer a weaker power. Landis⁴ analyzes this:

It would appear from the record that the ease of the almost all-Italian victory at Málaga had convinced the forces of the Italian CTV (Corpo Truppe Volontarie) that Madrid would fall in like manner. Franco historians maintain that because of this Italian thinking, previous grandiose plans for the shifting of the center of operations from the Madrid front to the area of the Levante had been hastily abandoned. Those plans, too, had called for the use of Italian divisions, using the fortress-city of Teruel as a base. An armored wave of Italian and Spanish troops were to breach the Republican lines below Teruel, fan out along the Zaragoza-Sagunto road, to be met finally by an additional number of Blackshirt {Italian} divisions to be landed at Sagunto above Valencia under the protection of the Italian

fleet. Republican Spain would thus have been effectively cut in half and its doom sealed.

The plan to take Madrid, however, was quicker and the Italians and Germans prevailed on Franco to make an assault of the city. This would become the Battle of Guadalajara. Landis outlines what international forces (remember that strict non-intervention was being non-applied, or at least, ignored, by the European Non-Intervention Committee):

The Italian general, Roatta Mancini, commanded the main forces, which consisted of four complete Italian divisions {approximately 40,000 men}. They were the Blackshirts of General Rossi, the Black Flames of General Coppi, the Black Arrows of General Novalari, and the Littorio Division under General Bergonzoli. This Italian corps alone had the armored support of 250 tanks and 180 varied piece of mobile artillery. There was also a chemical warfare company, a flame-thrower company, and an auto-pool with a disposition of seventy trucks per battalion. In addition, the Fifth Division (the Black and Blue Arrows) composed a mixed brigade of Italian-German infantry, a complete Brigade of German infantry, and four companies of motorized machine-gunners {the Italian Fiat Ansaldo L3 two-man tanks}, was placed at the disposal of General Mancini.⁴

The attack began on March 8 and surprised the Republican forces. General Rojo's forces were routed above Madrid with the fall of Almadrones, Alaminos, Brihuea and Trijueque. The Republican 11th (Lister's), 14th, 12th Divisions and the 72nd Brigade were involved in the fighting. On March 11, the International Brigades of France, German and Italy (the Commune de Paris, Thaelmann's, and Garabaldis) became firmly involved in the battle to hold that sector. By the 14th of March, when Spanish Rebel General Orgaz had attacked in Jarama, the overall assault was stalling against the Republican resistance and weather did not help the Fascist cause. Mixed cold rain, sleet and snow occurred through the period and made going more difficult. From March 15-17, a pause in the fighting occurred.

March 18, 1937, was a turning point in the Spanish Civil War. Up to that point, the Republic had been on its heels fighting one holding battle after another and losing several.

From Landis:

On March 18 the Republican forces under General José Miaja, the defender of Madrid, launched an attack along the entire front above Guadalajara. The tanks of Pavlov; Spanish troops of Lister, of El Campesino {Valentín González}; and of the Anarchist, Cipriano Mera, the Volunteers of the 11th and 12th International Brigades; and the Republican air force under Hidalgo de Cisneros, swung to the offensive. By the end of the day the entire Italian army was in wild retreat up the Aragon highway. Ernest Hemingway who was on the scene, spoke of "mountains" of ammunition, shells, grenades and provisions.⁴

Landis assesses the damage to the Fascists:

Franco apologists say that only three hundred prisoners were taken and that there were but two thousand dead and three thousand wounded. These figures appear in most of the pro-Franco dissertations on the Spanish War. But, since the statistics do not agree with even the captured data from German and Italian archives during World War II, we will rely on the more consistently valid reports from the men on the scene. It is quite indicative, for instance, that the Italian ambassador to Fascist Spain, Roberto Cantalupo, refers to the Italian dead in terms of "several thousands". A final consensus of the more conservative Republican figures lists the Italian losses as approximately 3,000 dead; 6,000 wounded, and upwards of 2,000 prisoners.⁴

While the Republic did not have the strength to continue this advance in March 1937, Guadalajara gave the Republic the time to bring in more materiel from abroad while Internationals continued to arrive at Albacete. It is said that the victory was short lived and the gains were minor. But two years in the future, those Italians who were captured at Guadalajara, and were kept alive in Republican prisons, were traded on a 1:1 basis for

International Brigade Prisoners. The value of this asset should not be forgotten for the hundreds of Brigadistas who were spared execution after capture in 1938 because Franco and Mussolini had decided that they needed living prisoners to get the Italians back to Italy. Some of those American prisoners have children alive today. They owe homage to the thousands who fought at Guadalajara for this victory.

After Renn's lecture, Merriman takes the OTS to Albacete to stand guard and uses the opportunity to see Marion and "Sunny Kaminski". The last man is not known at this point but could be Levie Kaminsky^{bb} who went by the nom de guerre Edward Baker.

Merriman meets with Alex McDade of Scotland and finds him "not much" but says he probably will have to take him to Pozorubio for OTS. McDade may have not appeared a great soldier but he became famous for penning the poem "Valley of Jarama" which has become a theme song for the Lincoln Brigade and is sung to the tune of "Red River Valley".²⁰⁶

Merriman finishes the month by discussing weaponry. He talks of a new German machine gun and a machine pistol, perhaps the Mauser 96²⁰⁷. In the afternoon, he worked on a Lewis Gun²⁰⁸.

Rosey is likely to be Joseph Rosenstein discussed earlier. The issue of "shelling peas" is cryptic. Perhaps it actually is about shelling peas (i.e. KP duty). There is a slang phrase "easy as shelling peas" meaning something is trivial. Perhaps Merriman used this phrase earlier and was reaping the backlash. Merriman may have given the men a day off and heard back about it. He will be reprimanded about the "shelling peas" incident.

Merriman finishes the day with a meeting with the leadership group of Steve Nelson, Bill Lawrence, Harry Haywood and Ed Bender. Bill Lawrence (a.k.a. William Lazar)^{cc} and Ed Bender^{dd}

^{bb} Edward Baker (Levie Kaminsky) was 26 and from Philadelphia, PA. He returned to the US on December 15, 1938 aboard the *Paris*. He served in WWII.

^{cc} Bill Lawrence was born as Lazar on July 7, 1903 in Kishinev, Russia (now Romania). Emigrating to the US in 1921 by 1931 he had attended the Lenin

arrived at Albacete in April and came to Europe together on the SS Vollendam on March 27. Lawrence, Haywood and Bender are seen together in a photo from this period in Albacete:



Bill Lawrence, Harry Haywood and Ed Bender, Albacete, 1937.²⁰⁹

§ § §

School in USSR. He was a US Communist Party functionary as were Bender and Haywood. He arrived in Spain on April 11, 1937 and became the Commissar of American Base, representing the American contingent at Albacete. He would return to the US in November 1937.

^{dd} Ed Bender was June 3, 1905 in Russia. He joined the Communist Party in June 1925. He was the HQ Chief of Cadres Service in Albacete. In WWII, he served in the US Army in France and Germany. Bender died April 1996, in Oakland, California.

MAY

1937

Salute Mariana - 5 fine years !!!

9 Mayo * S. Gregorio Nacianceno

~~went to camp late with documents~~
 spent morning in discussion with
 Marcovich and talked with him and
 Kelly about training of Battalion. After
 lunch went to view poor trenches
 of the 7th section used range powder
 and fired rockets. gave lecture on method
 of retreat and then retreated & talk
 with a crazy drive. Started E.M. in
 success and then to hospital where Monon
 met me. ate at Grand Hotel with Secundo
 and a chef de nome to a tired bed.

10 Mayo N. S. de los Desamparados

went to warehouse where men anti tank gun
 is located. many trucks unloading supplies
 for C.I. spent morning on gun. went to hotel
 with my horse with some provisions and
 Kelly. after went to E.M. what copies arranged
 for Platoon. made recommendations and
 returned to camp. Platoon advised that
 trouble was expected and more men
 should be here in alternate than to come.
 major visited camp for the first time
 called - they came out for meeting & dinner
 but all were gone and we had to
 return. went to Grand National and
 got money and arranged guard and
 quarters. This went to E.M. spoke to
 Platoon and from they met before
 once again and then to intendence
 to get a poor meal. Much equipment
 in alternate now and some broken
 for unloading. fishing. May 10
 Salazar Brown if all in pursuit
 Platoon makes them return - rather good

JUN JUL AGO SEP OCT NOV DIC

May 1—2 May Day: Socialists and Anarchists Visit

1 Mayo

S. Felipe

This morning had Lewis gun again after a long political talk to celebrate first of May. Then went to Etat Major talked with Vidal and Platone. Amlie arranged to get identity card. Ate lunch at Cadres and heard speaker & sang. Guard failed to come so I ate with Lamotte and set new guard. Went to see meeting of anarchists which did not materialize because of rain (?){Merriman's question mark} Got money for hotel meal. Set guard personally and talked with fellows. Burton says I am too easy. Vidal says maybe English speaking Brigade and I may go back up. Promises help.

2 Mayo

S. Antonino

Change of guard did not come so we decided to stay – changed guard late last night and met Sam Baron rep. of Socialist Party of U.S. in Spain. Didn't like him. Lamb coming into den. All while here studied Lewis, French and German guns. Mortar etc. Left after lunch. J. Harris and Rosie left for front. Harris goes to Polish Battalion as a private. Lamotte interesting fellow. Marion got cigarettes. Map table problem.

§ § §

May Day, 1937, in Albacete seemed pretty routine for Bob Merriman. No long marches down Fifth Avenue, just speeches in Albacete and a sing-along at the Cadres Office. But there are some underlying hints in these two diary pages. Merriman says that they were to meet with the Anarchists in Albacete, probably in a show of socialist solidarity, but they did not show up and Merriman presumes that was because it was raining. What Merriman did not know was that in Barcelona a storm was brewing. The Partit Obrer d'Unificació Marxista (POUM) and its

union, the Confederacion Nacional de Trabajo (CNT), were using May Day celebrations²¹⁰ to unify the far left parties in Barcelona against the Lluís Companys Government. This will result in fighting in Barcelona from 3-9 May (the “May Days” uprising), and it will not be mentioned for some time in Merriman's diary. On the 28th of April, George Orwell who was fighting for the POUM in the Aragon, was pulled back to Barcelona and saw the activities there first hand and described the POUM/Anarchist version of events in his memoir on Spain.²¹¹ A balanced view can be found in Richard Baxell's book.²¹² If you are very interested about the events in Barcelona, listen to Richard Baxell's Len Crome Memorial Lecture.²¹³



Colonel Stephen Fuqua (US Army Attaché at the US Embassy in Spain) and Hans Amlie, Quinto, October 1937 ALBA Photo 11-0817, Tamiment Library, NYU. Amlie had worked for Fuqua in the US Army in China in the 1920's.

Merriman mentions a man who has just come into Spain, Hansford (Hans) Amlie. Amlie went to Europe as part of a Socialist Party of America delegation. Peter Carroll gives us the backstory:

One American Communist later claimed that of the 25 {Eugene V.} Debs {column} volunteers in Spain, 18 were Communist sympathizers who had joined the Socialist ranks "for united front purposes"; 2 were Socialist party members; and 2 other "non-affiliated comrades state openly they are ashamed to have come with the so-called Debs Battalion" Most of the Socialists who reached Spain, like Durward Clark, simply entered the Communist-led ranks. Among them was Hans Amlie, the brother of the Wisconsin Progressive congressman Thomas Amlie. A mining engineer who had served as a sergeant in the U.S. Army during World War I, Amlie was so disgusted at the failure of the

Socialists to build a fighting force that he took the occasion of an official visit to Spain by the Socialist party's Sam Baron to quit that organization and become a Communist. Other Socialist volunteers, such as Hilliard Bernstein, leader of the Workers Alliance in Virginia, reaffirmed their commitment to a common cause, the Popular Front: "I, the Socialist", he asserted, "had come to Spain to fight for the democratically-elected government against fascism".²¹⁴

This story will be continued into the 3-4 May pages as Amlie's removal from the Socialists and the intrigue which accompanied Baron's visit will continue.

Merriman has meetings with Vidal and Felice Platone at the International Brigades Headquarters. He eats again with Pierre Lamotte at the Intendencia. His relief guard did not show so the Brigade Officer School candidates continue to stand guard in Albacete for another day. Since Marion is there, Merriman does not have his normal irritation when things do not happen as planned. He must have enjoyed the comfort of Albacete over "roughing it" at the camp at Pozorubio. Wallace Burton (one of the instructors at Pozorubio and who was having a fling with Mildred Bennett, later to become Amlie's wife) says that Merriman is not tough enough with the men. Merriman relates that Vidal is now talking seriously about an English Speaking Brigade and it appears that Merriman is looking for a promotion to lead that.

It was later on the second of May when the OTS candidates were relieved of guard duty and Sam Baron arrives. Merriman dislikes him immediately. Merriman says "Lamb coming into den". This can be interpreted that Sam Baron has no idea of what he is doing in Spain and how there is political intrigue going on all around him that he cannot see. We find out more on the next diary page.

As some background to the intrigue, on May 2, the POUM and anarchist militias, and their supporting union, the CNT, stormed the main telephone exchange in Barcelona and started the "May Days" rebellion against the Republican government. Merriman did not know much of what was happening at this point and certainly did not write it in his diary. This will be in the background for

several days.²¹⁵ The International Brigades who got a very brief respite from Jarama were sent back to the front and Spanish units there were retired back to Barcelona to put down the uprising. In Albacete, the whiff of rebellion is also in the air and the elements that are being repressed in Barcelona are free to react in Albacete.

After lunch on the 2nd, Merriman returns to Pozorubio. He notes that James Harris, who was his first commander prior to Jarama, has been reassigned to the Polish Dombrowski Battalion as a private. Harris will die in October 1937, at Fuentes del Ebro, for refusing to go forward with the XIIIth Battalion. Harris was executed for desertion in the face of the enemy. This will end a pathetic tale for a man who obviously had serious mental issues with war. Merriman notes Joe Rosenstein has been sent to the front.

Merriman continues his positive relationship with Pierre Lamotte who he describes as an interesting fellow. Perhaps it was the ability to get cigarettes. In a scrawl that takes a little hunting, the last sentence says "Map Table Problem". We will see that in the next week, Merriman will discuss a sand table which was used by the mappers as a type of blackboard. We don't know if he was setting a problem on the map table or if the sand was leaking out.

§ § §

May 3—4 ••• “Plot” Against Sam Baron Thickens

3 Mayo

S Alejandro

Rose at 7³⁰ planned tactical problems went out with men. Garland & Smith in command observation party. Returned - ate and attended lecture by Roblet on night attack - In midst came Donaldson, Platone, Bill Lawrence, Mates - Bromley CP London and we all went to Madrigueras. I was to get Amlie out of Madrigueras while Sam Baron was there. Plot (?) failed because Baron had already gotten there. Decided to bring Amlie anyway. Do him good. Met Marcovich and Clerc. Talked about exchange of men. Garland may go to U.S. & lecture. E. C. Smith to go as Company Commander to Madrigueras. Discussion in evening about tactical problem. Smith & Garland came in for late discussion.

4 Mayo

Sta Mónica

Machine gun lecture in morning Carlos came - political lecture finished up. Later finished lecture. Amlie came - lecture on artillery, grenade throwing - belt loaders etc. Amlie & I talked in evening and planned our talk on trenches. Amlie decided to join Party. Baron had no effect.

§ § §

In the May 1 and 2 pages, Merriman notes that Sam Baron comes to Albacete and on May 3 he goes to the training base at Madrigueras. Perhaps somewhat tongue-in-cheek Merriman mentions a "plot" to keep Baron from meeting up with Amlie in Madrigueras and to keep them apart, he brings Amlie to Pozorubio, the Officer's Training School. While they didn't stay separated, Amlie did meet with Baron but it had little effect not the outcome, since by the end of May 4 Amlie is in Pozorubio and has decided to join the Communist Party, clearly a coup for the CPUSA and Spanish Communists.

Who was Sam Baron that he had this effect on the Internationals? Baron was a member of the Socialist Party of the US, a reporter for the *New York Call* newspaper (to become the *Socialist Call*) and moreover was a right wing member of the SP.²¹⁶ In the early 20th Century, the Socialist Party had splits where left wing and right wing elements were both allowed to coexist within the party. The "right wing" had more anarchistic tendencies and were called "the Kangaroo faction".²¹⁷

Congressional testimony of Baron later in 1938²¹⁸ shows his anti-communist leanings and he accuses the Loyalist Government in Spain of having him locked up twice while he was there as a correspondent. Baron arrived in the middle of the "May Days" uprising in Barcelona and was treated as a hostile element by the Brigades. In the November 13, 1937, edition of the *Socialist Appeal* Baron says he was locked up in Barcelona by the "G.P.U."²¹⁹

Clearly, the intrigue about using Amlie as a wedge against the Socialists who failed to deliver the Eugene V. Debs column to Spain as part of the International Brigades was an important political effort on the part of the CP to assume sole leadership of the Internationals in Spain. The involvement of Ernest Bromley of the Communist Party of Great Britain points out the political involvement of the activities in Albacete. Alec Donaldson came in to meet with this important British delegate. The involvement of Platone and Lawrence indicates the high political stakes here.



Mirko Markovich, Vladimir Copic and David Mates, at Ambite Mill, June 25, 1937. ALBA Photo 177-177040, Tamiment Library, NYU

We find that David Mates has come to Albacete and a new name is introduced, Mirko Markovich^a (also written Marcovics, but we will use the Americanized spelling since Markovich signed memos that way). Markovich, a Yugoslavian, had been in Moscow before the war and was on a list of "Mexicans" who came to Spain.

Marion Merriman relates her impressions of Markovich:²²⁰

A Yugoslav-American officer, Mirko Markovicz, who had once made a play for me, only to be rebuffed, came to me one day. He told me he happened to notice on Bob's desk at headquarters a letter in Russian from a woman in Moscow. The woman's name was Klava {Klava had made advances to Bob Merriman in Moscow and Marion did not know what had really gone on between them}. I immediately felt weak and shaky, insecure, as though I were being told Bob had received a letter from a lover. I remembered Klava, the young blonde Russian who had tried so desperately to attract Bob in Moscow. I was perplexed. Markovicz knew it. He was cunning.

But I quickly realized what Markovicz was doing. He was attempting to separate Bob and me by making me suspicious of Bob. He --- it surely was thought --- would fill in the breach. Distrusting Bob, I would turn to him. Well, how

^a Mirko Markovich (aka José Porra Spolea, Markovicz; Markovics; note Markovich signed his name with a "vich") was born in 1907 in Stijene, Podgorica, Montenegro. He was a Serbian American with Doctorate in Economics from a KUNMZ Military Academy in the Soviet Union. He had been a commissar in the Red Army with the Rank of Lieutenant. He was a Party Functionary in the CP of Yugoslavia 1923. He went to the US in 1936 where he headed the CPUSA's Serbian Section and the Yugoslav Coordinating Bureau. He arrived in Spain on April 20, 1937 and was placed as Commander of the 2nd American Battalion, the Washington Battalion. For a short time, he became commander and captain of the combined Lincoln-Washington Battalion at Brunete until he was relieved for refusing to order his troops into what he considered an exposed position. He returned to the US and was held at Ellis Island, then deported to Cuba, later back in the US. Post WWII, he returned to Yugoslavia and taught Economics at the University of Belgrade. He was imprisoned in 1949 for supporting anti-Tito resolutions. He died in 1988 in Yugoslavia.

wrong he was! I remembered what I thought of Klava, how I felt sorry for her, how I realized she was reaching out to a strong man, a man she could not have, for love.

I told Bob that I was aware a letter had come from Klava. And I told him that Marcovicz, who was one of the more important American volunteer commanders, having taken over the George Washington Battalion {more later on this Battalion}, was attempting to cause a problem between us. Bob was outraged that Marcovicz would read his mail. Despite his fury, he told me he would keep it within himself. He would not trust Marcovicz ever again, but he would not allow Marcovicz's lack of scruples to affect the relationship of command needed in fighting the war.²¹⁹

Some new names are mentioned including a "Roblet", who is described in Vidal's memoir as having come from "Mission S".²²¹ Marcovich comes to the school with Commandant André Clerc. André Clerc was an instructor at the school but was killed in action in October 1937. Merriman reveals that Walter Garland may return to the US where he could be used for recruiting and fundraising purposes. Canadian Edward Cecil-Smith will go to Madrigueras as a company commander and will move up as the third North American English speaking brigade begins to form over the summer.

Training continued on May 4 with "Carlos" giving the lecture. Carlos was a nom-de-guerre for an Italian comrade. Carlos will lecture several times over the next month and in June, he will assume command in place of General Gal. He will be named in the May 7-8 diary page.

Vladimir Copic's diary says that on May 3, the XVth Brigade was ordered back into the trenches at Jarama through "high military orders". After 75 days at the front, the XVth got a grand total of four days rest.²²²

May 5—6 ••• “So Long Cast!”

5 Mayo

St Pío V. Papa

Amlie lectured on trenches after lunch - Dr. {JBS Haldane} & Olorenshaw on gas- - finished up on problem on map sand table. Sat with the fellows in the evening and talked a long time with Garland. Haldane had burnt cork face.

6 Mayo

S. Juan Ante Portam-Latinam

*** So Long Cast!**

Left camp to Albacete with Oppman and Roblet. Got new 45mm gun and took it to Chinchilla. Set it up and fired against hill. Cleaned lock, etc. Returned to Albacete went to Estado Major - out - met Marion returned to Vidal. Discussion on gun & camp. Went to meeting at Cerca Mercantile - after went to hospital - had cast removed. Royce - here and deserted from front. Came to me. Bob T. Royce & Marion attended cast removing ceremony cast signed went by EM and met Bob Minor and James Ford.

§ § §

Robert Merriman must have been in a hurry on the fifth of May because he did not write much and much was a real scrawl. He tells us that Hans Amlie is now an instructor at Pozorubio, the Officer's Training School, so his "promotion" to avoid Sam Baron at Madrigueras was effective to get him to move up rapidly in the training cadre. Cryptically, Merriman notes "Dr. and Olorenshaw" lectured on gas. The "Dr." is believed to be Prof. J. B. S. (John Burdon Sanderson) Haldane of England who travelled to Spain several times in 1937 to lecture on the use of poison gas in warfare. Haldane, a geneticist, was the son of John Scott Haldane²²³ who experimented on gas and invented the gas mask. Haldane wrote in 1925 that poison gas was no more immoral than other weapons of war.²²⁴ Olorenshaw's experience

in the trenches of WWI probably added to this lesson. It is fortunate that gas appears not to have been used by either side in the Spanish Civil War, except one episode of tear gas in Toledo. But having men trained on recovering the injured in a chlorine, mustard or tear gas attack was an important part of safety. There was a Lincoln gas unit that was trained in Aquaviva in late 1937.



Lincoln Antigas Section training in Aguaviva in December 1937. ALBA Photo 11-1088, Tamiment Library, NYU

After training ended on map lessons on the new "sand table", Merriman talked with Walter Garland, the new Tarazona camp instructor. He notes that Haldane had a "burnt cork face". Burnt cork is still used to darken a white complexion for camouflage. (As an example of how to not apply a burning cork, an online video is available²²⁵).



The sixth of May was a big day for Merriman as he got his cast removed and they had a cast signing ceremony with Bob Thompson, Andrew Royce and Marion Merriman. Bob Merriman notes that Andrew Royce had deserted from the front and normally would not have been received so well at Albacete,

Andrew Royce²

but Merriman must have been in a good mood.

Merriman confirms the names of the two important Americans who had arrived in Spain, Robert Minor and James Ford²²⁶. James Ford was the Communist Party Vice Presidential candidate for the US election in 1936. It is probably during this visit that James Ford visited the lines and a photo was taken with Jack Shirai.



Photograph believed to be from the Daily Worker, which shows James Ford and Japanese-American Brigadier Jack Shirai.

Merriman says that he left camp with "Oppman and Roblet". Oppman is Tedeusz Oppman, a Polish officer who will go on to command the 13th Brigade.²²⁷

Merriman had a cast signing ceremony and then finally got rid of it, nine weeks after being shot in the shoulder at Jarama. His "So Long Cast!" in bold in the diary emphasizes how happy he was to be free. Merriman was also very happy to get the new Russian 45mm Antitank gun and they took it southeast of Albacete to the town of Chinchilla to fire some shots into the side of a mountain.

May 7—8 The New Russian Antitank Gun is a Hit

7 Mayo

S. Estanislao

Car came late - and arrived home during political meeting about fighting night before. Guns loaded etc. They talked and I bawled them out as babies. Carlos came for political talk. Mike translated. I talked with Markovich after lunch discussed problem in the field & on sand table. Also range finder and new 45mm antitank gun. Came into Albacete in the evening – got massage {or message} - arm going fine. Moves well. Saw Lambert also looks bad. Met old friend in Intendencia. Ate together talked with Fein about lost trucks. Said goodbye to Milutchevitch who is leaving for front.

8 Mayo

Aparic. de S. Miguel Arcángel

From Albacete to Camp. Lecture by Roblet on scouting & fighting scouts details about Jarama front before we came. Markovich came from Madrigueras & arranged for Roblet to lecture to his officer staff on the tenth section to come to Albacete to see anti-tank gun fired & new type of combination Maxim & light machine gun Mexican. In aft Rochefort drilled them in manual of arms. Cleaver lectured on Colt. I came to Albacete went to control com. to see Fein about lost trucks. Not there. Met Paynter & Tapsell. Met Polish girl.

§ § §

Over the next month, the XVth Brigade will largely be in a training and resting mode. While the Brigade was ordered back onto the lines at Jarama, activity there was largely quiet and the main fighting in May was in Basque country and on the Segovia Front with the XIVth Brigade. On the 7th of May, fighting also ceased from the mini-civil war in Barcelona and the CNT declared a truce.

They ordered their members to tear down the barricades in the city. By this time, however, Thomas reports that 400 people had died in Barcelona and nearly 1000 were injured.²²⁸ The "May Days" still causes fighting amongst the Spanish left factions and is likely never to be resolved.

Merriman mentions the "fighting the night before" and this has nothing to do with Barcelona, but rather a rebellion in Albacete. Interestingly, Copic says in his diary "The notice to return to our old positions was greeted with tranquility in the Brigade, because the men did not have much enthusiasm for this period in Alcala {de Heneres}."²²⁹ One wonders how much Copic was really in touch with the men. Baxell relates how the British were in near revolt as their time on the line at Jarama dragged out.²³⁰ The British had been told that their tours would be as short as two months and many were sure that after six months they would be repatriated. When the Brigades could not allow men to leave, some of the British rebelled and even tried to desert through Barcelona. With the flux in leadership, this "proletarian army" was difficult to handle for the Commissars, who generally thought their job was to advocate for the men and get them the best food and supplies they could. In a hint of the coming month's struggles for command, Merriman says that he bawled out the men as "babies".



© Vittorio Vidali ("Carlos"), Nino Nanetti, and Soviet correspondent Mikhail Koltsov talk with Republican soldiers.

*Commandante "Carlos" (Vittorio Vidali) with Nino Nanetti and Mikhail Koltsov*²³¹

The men were given a lecture again by Carlos. We interpret this to be "Commandante Carlos" who was in actuality Vittorio Vidali²³², a Comintern representative who served in Spanish Military Intelligence (SIM). A photo of Carlos is shown in Radosh and when Merriman says "Mike translated", it adds some credence to this identification as Mikhail Koltsov²³³ was traveling with Carlos. Koltsov was believed to have a direct reporting line to the Kremlin and their involvement at Albacete and Pozorubio would show the growing influence of Russian advisors in the Brigade training.

Another bit of evidence is Robert Colodny's contribution to "The Good Fight":

A Comintern staff headed by Palmiro Togliatti (Ercoli) and André Marty reached the Spanish capital and began the work of shaping the polyglot collection of volunteers into an offensive shock unit. The former had been for years a high official serving on the executive committee of the Comintern: the latter, the leader of the mutiny of the Black Sea Fleet in 1919; was a Communist deputy from Marseilles. Marty, assisted by Luigi Longo {Gallo}, the inspector general of the International Brigades, and by {Giuseppi} di Vittorio {Mario Nicoletti}, the political commissar, took over the control of the units in Albacete. Hans Beimler, the one-time chief of the Communist delegation in the German Reichstag, Vittorio Vidali; "Carlos", the political commissar of the Fifth Regiment, and Ludwig Renn (Arnold Vieth von Golssenau), on of the Saxon Guards and lately and inmate of a German concentration camp, formed the general staff of the Albacete base.²³⁴

Merriman talked with Markovich about the new weapons that were pouring into Albacete. New Maxim machine guns, some with light machine guns attached, were reviewed. The most revolutionary weapon for the Brigade was the new Soviet manufactured 45mm anti-tank gun, which became the darling of the British Battalion. This weapon would fire a high explosive shell 3 km on a flat trajectory to take out a tank and could be used as artillery up to 16 km range. It was reported to be incredibly

accurate. Wally Tapsell and Will Paynter were clearly there to help start the new British anti-tank company. Bill Alexander and Malcolm Dunbar would become commanders of the company.



Moving the Anti-Tank gun into position, Ambite ALBA Photo 11-1233, Tamiment Library, NYU

It is not clear if Merriman got a message or a massage in Albacete, but his shoulder was healing from the wound gotten at Jarama. The next two words are also unintelligible and looks like "Saw Lambert", who would be American Sergeant John Lambert. His "old friend" in Intendencia is likely to be a Russian as Merriman refers to Russians as either "friends" or "Mexicans". This friend may be Captain Arnold Fein who is a 42 year old Yugoslavian "Mexican" who came to Spain in October 1936 and fought in Madrid. Fein was listed as a "Mexican" because he came to Spain from Russia. Fein was listed as a baker by trade. He is listed as working in the Estado Mayor in Albacete at this time²³⁵ and he is the Chief of the Cadres Control Commission Office. Marion Merriman would work for Arnold Fein.^b Fein would variously be listed in paylists as A. Fein or Arturo Fein. We believe this is the same man in all cases. Merriman bids goodbye

^b RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 47, p22: FEIN, Arnold: Captain, Yugoslavian, Born 1895. Baker. mbao. Came to Spain 29 September 1936. Was placed in the 5th Regiment at the Madrid Front, then to the Estremadura on 10-25 Oct 1936. Then was placed in the Estado Mayor of the Base at Albacete. Transferred to the 35th Division in December 1937. After 24 April 1938 into Headquarters in Barcelona.

to Milutchevitch, the man he put up on charges of insubordination and the book was thrown at him. Milutchevitch would be sent to a work battalion but luckily he will survive the war.

Back in Camp at Pozorubio, Merriman lists the lectures being given by Roblet, Rochefort, and Cleaver. René Rochefort was a Frenchman born in 1898. He is named in RGASPI as a lieutenant in the school in charge of training of the cadres. "Cleaver" is Lewis Cleaver of Liverpool who was at Pozo Rubio at this time. Cleaver will leave Spain incapacitated by sickness and a wound he received and return to England in a few more weeks.

§ § §

May 9—10 ••• **Salute Mariana - 5 fine years!!!**

9 Mayo *

S. Gregorio Nacianceno

Salute Mariana - 5 fine years!!!

went to camp late with Olorenshaw. Spent morning in discussion with Markovich and talked with him and Roblet about training of Battallion in Madrigueras. After lunch went to view poor trenches of the French section. Used range finder and fired revolver. Gave lecture on method of retreat and then retreated to Albacete with a crazy driver. Visited Estado Major. No success. And then to hospital where Marion met me. Ate at Grand Hotel with Secundy and a chaffeur. Home to a tired bed.

10 Mayo

N.S. de los Desamparados

went to warehouse where new anti-tank gun is located. Many trucks unloading ammo for B. I. Spent morning on gun. Went to Intendencia. Woke up Marion. We ate with Markovich and Roblet - after went to E. M. Met Copic and waited for Platone - made recommendations and returned to camp. Platone warned that trouble was expected and more men should be here in Albacete. Ours to come. Marion visited camp for the first time. Dallet - Steve came out for meeting & dinner but all men gone and so we had to return. Went to Guard National and got money and arranged guard and quarters. Then went to E. M. spoke to Platone and from there met Copic once again and then to Intendencia to eat a poor meal. Much equipment in Albacete now and some reason for uneasy feeling. May go to Valencia tomorrow if all is quiet. Platone thinks things are tense - extra guard

§ § §

Merriman lets us know that he and Marion Merriman have now been married five years. Happy Anniversary! Merriman returned to camp to lecture. As we noted on prior pages, many of the troops were disgruntled for lack of repatriation opportunity but also for just the lack of leave. Harry Pollitt, head of the Communist Party of Great Britain received a note from an anonymous volunteer (signed "Salud, S__"):

many volunteers 'feel downhearted at times' and that certain issues 'have caused hell among us'. Among these, it was being asked, 'Why do officers eat separate and sleep on beds while we sleep on the ground?' And rather more pointedly, 'Why do some guys go to Albacete all the time and we don't get leave?'²³⁶

One begins to understand this comment when we see how often Merriman, Marcovich, Thompson and other officers are back and forth to Albacete. Merriman was back in Albacete on May 10, had a session in firing the new anti-tank 45mm gun and then ate with Marion, Markovich and Roblet at the Intendencia. He met with Copic and Platone at the Garda Nationale and then returned back to Pozo Rubio, taking Marion with him this time. Her anniversary present was to go see where her husband worked. Since Pozo Rubio was "top secret", it must have been quite a treat.



(left) Joseph Dallet, Quinto, September 1937. ALBA Photo 11_0629, Tamiment Library, NYU. (right) Steve Nelson, with Lieutenant Colonel insignia, from fall 1937. Photo from Jo Yurek, with permission, source unknown.

Joe Dallet and Steve Nelson are now in Albacete and both will be involved in the setting up of the Second American Training Battalion, later to be called the Washington Battalion. The Nelson/Dallet group that came in from France were delayed by being jailed three weeks in France prior to being allowed to "leave France", which they did across the Pyrenees. Dallet reported the story in his memoir, *Letters from Spain*.²³⁷ The Lincoln and Washington Battalions would have separate identities until the middle of the summer.

Ripples of the fighting with the Anarchists and POUM in Barcelona are being felt at Albacete. Platone expected trouble in Albacete, especially since large amounts of equipment and munitions are now arriving. Merriman is told that they will have to increase the guard in Albacete. Merriman says "more men should be here in Albacete". There has been reaction against the Internationals. Arthur Timpson, who came into Spain during this week in 1937, relates:

About an hour later the truck stopped with a lot of voices about us. Then the back flap {of the truck} was pulled aside and someone with a very seamed face, topped by a leather cap, looked in, gave us a brief scrutiny, and closed the flap. I was sitting close to the rear and got a glimpse of a wall and a machine gun pointing carelessly in our general direction. Two more of the leather-capped men were with the gun. Our truck went ahead for another fifty yards. Then we got out. We were in an immense square with barrack-like buildings all around. There was the gate that we came through with two machine guns over the gate. A half dozen more of the leather caps were visible. None of them looked friendly. Someone, of the reception committee, I suppose, said "Anarchists. We are POWs."

*And so it was that on May 6, 1937, I became a prisoner in the fortress of Figueras....*²³⁸

The interception of Internationals and their being held as "Prisoners of War" by the Anarchists in Figueras would have been a significant wake up call for the Brigade Staff in Albacete. Having

their lifeline of new recruits cut off would have been most worrying. Timpson was held for a few days and released on to Albacete.

There appears to be some intelligence that trouble from the Anarchists may boil over to Albacete. Platone's warning to Merriman that more men should be in Albacete may be that they felt the headquarters was at some risk of retributory attacks from the Anarchists and POUM who were at this time being rounded up in Barcelona. Merriman hints us that he is going on leave on May 11 to Valencia.

§ § §

May 11—12 ••• Merrimans Go on A Road Trip

11 Mayo

S Francisco de Jerónimo

Went to hospital and then to Guard National arranged for half of men to go out until 3. Marched them out. Then went to Estado Major with Markovich who had been turned away once. Drank coffee with secretary of Candamar{?} YCL. Talked with Vidal & Platone - arranged for training and equipment - uniform & car for Bob T. Marion & me. Ate at Intendencia met with Marcovich and Roblet want to discuss training. Marion refused permission to go - argued & won. Got new pants and finally left for Valencia in Ford V8. Fine trip - Crazy driver - just arrived from Poland. In Valencia late - no rooms ate at Victoria - Marion slept with Milly. Bob, Chauffeur and I went to SRI slept on floor. Ate dinner met Griffin Barry (Reuters) Ed Kennedy (United Press), Jo Herbst, Kate & sister Millie & others. Millie & Herman had idea about each other but decided not to try it. Valencia the same as ever - crowded - pretty because it is spring.

12 Mayo

Sto. Domingo de la Calzada

At breakfast talked with Pinky Griffiths, Barry & Angel - also met English evacuation crew. 3000 taken from Madrid. Went shopping bought Marion a Spanish shawl - drove to hospital got Jan Kurske & then to beach. Met Marion & Kennedy who went by street car. Kennedy came back & we ate at {La} Marcellina. Fine food. Heard some of Jan's history. Car ran out of gas - Bob & I went in to get it. Got box from B I & then to Ministry of War. Went to censors & Propaganda Office met Constanca {de la Mora} and read some newspapers then spent long time putting chauffeur to bed. Ate with Berry, Bob Minor and James Ford. Later went out to visit joints - strip tease - etc. Returned and I slept with Kennedy & Bob with Feldman.

Met Stepanovich & a New Zealander - at SRI. Hunting for 15th Brigade members

§ § §

Merriman completes the discussion about potential sabotage in Albacete and places the guard until 3am. He went with Markovich to the Estado Major and got in, even though Markovich had been turned away previously. The importance of these visits on the 10th-11th of every month and at the end of the month was that payday was for days 1-10 of the month and 11-31 of the month. The two paydays were not large, generally being about 30 pesetas a pay period for a soldado (a private), which in current money is about \$5 US (1937 exchange rate). The officers would get about 425 pesetas for a commissar or lieutenant at this time (10 times that of the soldado). Commissars and officers, however, were to eat at the Officer's Mess and had to pay directly for their food. If they had a hotel room, they also had to pay their own billet costs. By September 1938, the commander of the Battalion made 900 pesetas a pay period and a soldado got 300 pesetas, a rate of 3 to one. This is remarkable for any organization when the person at the top made only a factor of 3 greater than the lowest paid person. One might expect that the urgency of getting into the Estado Major was to pick up the payroll for Pozo Rubio and Madrigueras, and as we will see Merriman will be leaving later in the day for Valencia, so having some spending money would be helpful.

Merriman meets with the head of a Young Communist League from what reads as "Candamar"... this location is unknown. Merriman arranges with Vidal and Platone to get permission for Bob Thompson, Marion Merriman and himself to go to Valencia and he arranges for a car and driver. The permission for Marion took a bit of arguing but they got permission and left late in the day with a "crazy" Polish chauffeur, who was only recently arrived in Spain. Accommodations in Valencia were limited so Marion stayed with their friend, the writer Milly Bennett, and Thompson, the driver and Merriman stayed at the Socorro Rojo Internacional (SRI), or Red Cross HQ.

Dinner was a reunion of old friends and some new reporter friends. They ate with Josephine Herbst, Griffin Barry of Reuters, and Ed Kennedy²³⁹ of the United Press. Griffin Barry's daughter wrote a book about him in 2003, entitled *A Man of Small Importance*. One interesting fact about Barry is that he fathered two children out of wedlock with Dora Russell²⁴⁰, Bertrand Russell's wife at the time. Bertrand Russell was having his own affair on the side so it appears that this was a very open marriage between them. Edward Kennedy's memoir²⁴¹ covered a bit of his time in Spain and describes interactions with these writers but does not discuss the meeting with the Merrimans. Kennedy became famous for flashing the surrender of the Germans in WW II (in 1945) back to the US and being fired by AP for jumping the embargo on the news prior to Eisenhower being able to make the announcement.

Merriman mentions, as well, Kate and sister Millie, which is clearly a reference to Milly Bennett. The "sister" reference was metaphorical since Bennett had no sister. "Kate" is Kate Mangan, a reporter in Spain at the time and Jan Kurske's wife. "Millie and Herman had idea about each other but decided not to try it". Herman was Allan Herman who went by the name Ted Allan as a reporter. Griffin Barry's biography by Harriet Ward²⁴² does describe meeting with Milly Bennett.

Waking on the 12th, Merriman says he has breakfast with Pinky Griffiths. Merriman met a "Griffiths, an AP Reporter" in the January 16 entry and this is probably the same Pinky Griffiths who is mentioned here. Eric "Pinky" Griffiths was a New Zealand pilot who was injured in Madrid during a dogfight. Griffiths is discussed in Chapter 5 of *Kiwi Companeros*.²⁴³ He mentions Angel but this person is unknown.

Merriman says that he met with "Constanta" at the Censors Office. This is Constanca de la Mora²⁴⁴, a Spanish aristocrat who supported the Republicans by directing the Foreign Press office in Valencia at this time. She was married to Ignacio Hildalgo de Cisneros y López-Montenegro²⁴⁵, who headed the Republican Air

Forces. Milly Bennett worked for Antonio del Vayo who was Connie de la Mora's supervisor in the Foreign Press office.

Merriman mentions that 3000 people had relocated from Madrid to Valencia by this time. He meets with a "Jan Kursky" who is Jan Kurske, a German in the XIth Battalion with the French, and was injured in Boadilla in February 1937. Kurske was hit by shrapnel and taken to Murcia where he was with Tom Wintringham and nurse Patience Darton. When Merriman was injured in February and was in hospital, Marion Merriman was a contact between Kurske and his wife, Kate Foster Kurske, who was working in the Press and Propaganda Office in Valencia at the time. Kurske's memoir is has a wealth of information on the people who the Merrimans meet in Valencia in May.²⁴⁶ Over lunch at La Marcelina²⁴⁷ (founded in 1888 and still there) near the harbor, they got Kurske's story. In the afternoon, the Merrimans go with Kennedy to the beach and do some shopping. At dinner, they meet with two important CPUSA leaders, Bob Minor and James Ford, along with Griffin Barry, who must have gotten great stories that night.

The boys did what boys do, going out for drinks at a strip joint, and Merriman slept in Kennedy's room while Bob Thompson slept with (probably) Sol Feldman, who had sailed for Spain on March 17. As part of their duties in Valencia, they were rounding up new US recruits who were recently arrived.



Merriman says that Stepanovitch was meeting with a New Zealander. There is not a large list of New Zealanders in Spain and Pinky Griffiths is the obvious candidate for this. We identified Stepanovitch as Vljako Begovics in the February 19 pages. Stepanovitch served as a photographer and many of the Comintern Folder 177 photos in the Tamiment Library were taken by him.

Vladimir Begovics, standing left, and others including Vladomir Copic, right. Yugoslavs in the Spanish Civil War, pg 94.²³

May 13—14 ••• The Road Trip Continues

13 Mayo

S Pedro Regalado

Rose late - ate and met Bartel {Barthel} - tried to find Stepanovich. Barthel wants ride to Albacete. Jan's going back to Albacete with us. Walked to car talked with kids from Madrid. Picked up Milly & we all drove to Segunto - 35 kilometers on the road to Barcelona. Beautiful country and fort built on hilltop 1 kilo long 1200 B.C. Got special permission from the Commandant in the Hotel Continental where we ate a marvelous lunch. Drove up steep steep road - all scared and visited at ruins where Cartagean - Greeks Phoenicians Romans and Moors all built on something more. Part of fort still used by armed forces & old Roman Theater beautiful ruins - village very picturesque - winding streets - tiled steps by doors. White houses & cobbled streets Returned - had coffee bought books in anti fascist book store - drank awful white drink - went with Milly to write story about Joe Streisand - news came in about H 35 English boat being hit by mines - great story - all excited. Returned - ate and went to news reel movie.

14 Mayo

St Bonafacio

Went to beach with Milly & ate at Marcellinas. Returned and saw Minor and Ford. Interviewed {Luis} Rubio Hidalgo about events in Barcelona. 900 killed 1200 wounded. Talked a little with Griffiths - got some magazines & cigarettes Milly wanted to send Herman wire to Berengeria. Shopped - drank at Wodka. Constanca {de la Mora} wants more information about B. I. Her husband is head of air forces - under Prieto talked with Milly on way to Prensa home to read & bed.

§ § §

While Merriman clearly was on a rest and relaxation trip, he continued to work over the next few days. He gained significant information for the Brigades in these discussions.



Hans Klaus (left), a Spanish Nationalist Prisoner (center) and Jean Barthel (right), ALBA PHOTO 177-189039, Tamiment Archive, NYU

Upon awakening Merriman meets Jean Barthel (not to be confused with Jan Kurske, also mentioned). "Bartel" who is Jean Chaintron²⁴⁸ (*nom de guerre* Jean Barthel²⁴⁹), Commissar of the XVth Brigade²⁵⁰. Barthel is later shown in a photo with Hans Klaus of the Brigade with a prisoner and his uniform would indicate he is in SIM (Servicio de Investigación Militar, also unfondly referred to as the '*checa*', which was modeled on the Soviet NKVD²⁴⁷). SIM was formed in early May 1937 to respond to the uprising in Barcelona. Merriman says that Jan Kurske also will go back to Albacete with them. Stepanovich, the Yugoslavian photographer

and head of the Secret Service, was also in Valencia and Merriman looked for him without success.

The R&R continued later in the morning as they grabbed the car and Milly Bennett and headed off to Sagunto where they saw the Roman ruins. Merriman confuses us with the Hotel Continental reference which is not in Sagunto but rather Valencia. It is not clear if the "commandant" of the hotel in Valencia just got them a permiso to eat at Sagunto or if Merriman is mashing up the times.



Castillo de Sagunto, Source: Wikipedia Commons

In the evening he says Milly Bennett wants to write a story about Joe Streisand. We discussed before the death of Robert Pick and Streisand at Jarama while they were sent to mark the position of the enemy by placing an aviation signal and clearly Merriman thinks this is a heroic tale worth telling to America.

While working on the story with Milly Bennett, the news came through of the explosion on the HMS Hunter (H35)²⁵¹ when it struck a mine while on "non-intervention" patrol. The excitement would have been due to the hope that British ships being attacked could get the British government to rethink its non-intervention policy. At the very least, Merriman would have thought the explosion to be some kind of ironic justice against British non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War.

On the last day of leave, Merriman again went to the beach with Milly Bennett (and presumably Marion). He says they ate at La

Marcelina. He says he saw Robert Minor and James Ford again, presumably at the restaurant not at the beach.

In the first reference in the diary to the "May Day" events in Barcelona, he meets with Luis Rubio Hidalgo, the head of the Spanish Foreign Ministry Press and Propaganda Department. Amanda Vaill gives a visual picture of Rubio when he met newspaperman Arturo Barea, who is one of the subjects of her book, *Hotel Florida*:

{Antonio} Mije²⁵² had a proposition for him. The inclusion of Communists in the government has given him some patronage power, and he might be able to suggest Barea for a post at the Foreign Ministry-- that is, if he had any fluency in English. Although Barea's other language was French, he read English well enough, and translate [sic] it; so within minutes he was being hustled off to the Foreign Ministry, where a harried young assistant ushered him into the crepuscular office of Luis Rubio Hidalgo, the newly appointed chief of the ministry's Press and Propaganda Department. Pale, bald as an egg, with a thin mustache on his upper lip and lash less eyes peering from behind round tinted lenses, Rubio sat impassively in the cone of light cast by his solitary desk lamp, his white hands folded in front of him, while Barea described his qualifications. Then he asked Barea if he would like to join the Propaganda Department as a nighttime censor for the foreign press - an important job, since most journalists wrote and wired their stories from Madrid at night in order to catch the morning editions of their newspapers in Europe and America.

The moment the words were out of Rubio's mouth, Barea knew they were what he was waiting to hear. Although he was personally repelled by his prospective chief, the work the man was describing was essential and interesting.²⁵³

Merriman learns from Rubio the number of dead and wounded in Barcelona from the fighting there, information that the leadership of the Brigades in Albacete would want to hear from an authoritative source. Merriman speaks again with Pinky Griffiths.

Milly Bennett wants to send a wire from Mr. "Herman" to the S. S. Berengaria that left Cherbourg on May 13, 1937, and is making a voyage to the US from France (the Berengaria would sail from New York back to Europe with another group of 28 Americans on the 20th of May). We believe that our mysterious "Mr. Herman" is actually Canadian Alan Herman²⁵⁴ who wrote under the name Ted Allan and would become close to Gerda Taro. Ted Allan is also discussed in detail in Hotel Florida:

Allan was twenty-one, a dark, curly-headed youth who had volunteered for the International Brigades but had been drafted away from combat to be the political commissar of the mobile blood transfusion unit whose work Geza Karpathi {n.b., later a highly recognizable character actor who went by the name Charles Korvin²⁵⁵} was filming. He was also a romantic and deeply impressionable young man, and his first site of the two photographers, their cameras around their necks, still dusty from their drive to Madrid, struck him forcibly. Capa, "black eyed, handsome," and "already famous", seemed impossibly glamorous to Allan, who was also an aspiring journalist, writing for Canadian leftist newspapers and broadcasting over the Madrid radio; but it was Gerda, with her short blond hair and bewitching smile, who took his breath away.

The young and handsome Ted Allan was the "Herman" who had thoughts about Milly Bennett a couple of days before. Marion Merriman likely was Milly's chaperone who kept them apart as they Milly and Marion were sharing a room in Valencia.

Amanda Vaill has explained that she believed that John Dos Passos was on the Berengaria on this sailing. An Ancestry.com search shows that John Dos Passos sailed to the US on May 19, 1937, from Le Havre and Southampton on the SS Paris. Perhaps Ted Allan and Milly Bennett thought that Dos Passos would make the Berengaria sailing and were looking to send him a story.

Merriman again talks to Constanca de la Mora and discusses her husband Ignacio Hildalgo de Cisneros, who is head of the Air Force

and importantly, reports directly to Indalecio Prieto²⁵⁶, who within the next week will move from Minister of Finance to Minister of Defense in the new Negrin government. He finishes the evening with another discussion with Milly Bennett, ending a very long two days of the diary.

§ § §

May 15—16 ••• The Americans Move to Tarazona

15 Mayo

S. Isidro Labrador

Rose late - got car - and Jan. Saw Milly & left for Albacete. Stopped to explore ruins and ate in Almansa - here I met artillery boys & had to give short talk to them about political situation - returned to Albacete got message - saw Vidal, Platone and Schalbroeck. Returned to talk to Steve {Nelson} & Bill {Lawrence} and Jock Cunningham got started. Statements rank & filism. Bates working in Madrid. Statement from Amlie & White.

16 Mayo

S. Pelegrín

Car came at 8 - picked up Harris, Thompson - went for Atal {see May 19 Dr. Atal} - not ready. Drove to Pozo Rubio - Doctor told me his long tale about demotion - drove car myself to Madrigueras. Trouble with gear. Talked with Amlie - Markovich, Mates, Walter Garland, Robbins and others. Ate there and later when order came to move to Tarazona for new American Battalion, I came in with Dallet & Markovich whom picked up in Pozo Rubio. Talked with Brodsky about supply officer job and ran out of gas. Decided to remain. Ate with Steve, Joe & Bill.

Caballero government fell and new one in process. Cleaver to trip to Valencia. Talked with Olorenshaw and went to show - "Ruggles of Red Gap". "Joaquin Murrieta."

§ § §



Map of route followed by the Merrimans from Valencia to Albacete through Almansa. Source: Google Maps



The Castillo Almansa. Source: Wikipedia Commons.

The Merrimans return to Albacete from Valencia with Jan Kurske. On the way back, they do a little sightseeing at Almansa. The map shows the relationship between Albacete, Almansa and Valencia. A current day photo of the Moorish Castle at Almansa is shown above.

Merriman reveals that the artillery training is in Almansa. The experiences of the Americans in the John Brown Battery and heavy artillery have been widely ignored in the literature of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion. This battery which was attached to the 129th Brigade later in the war would end up split off from the main English groups in the XVth Brigade and after the Retreats of 1938, they would fight in the “Levante” sector protecting Valencia and be cut off from the rest of the International Brigades.

Upon his return to Albacete, Merriman checks back in with Vidal, Platone, and Schalbroeck at Brigade HQ. The Belgian Jean Schalbroeck will move up in June to replace Platone in the Brigade Staff.

Merriman meets with Steve Nelson, Bill Lawrence and Jock Cunningham. Cunningham, who was the English speaking Regimental Commander at this point, "got started". Merriman uses coded words to remind himself that conversations were heated and Cunningham was not one to use Oxford language. He also says that Hans Amlie and, it is believed, Paul White also came and made "statements". Statements is also a code word for expressing their opinion that Cunningham probably did not agree with. "Statements rank & filism" is interesting because accusations were made about officers who took a proletarian posture and acted like a "shop steward" instead of a military leader. *Rank & filism* in Merriman's mind is a derogatory description of someone who is not tough enough on his men and doesn't believe in command structure, someone who takes the rank and file position on issues. About this time, debates were being held about saluting superiors. This debate continued into the fall of 1937 and as the Brigades moved more and more towards integration in the Spanish Army, the pressure to look more like a traditional military organization was felt. It is possible that the suppression of the anarchists and POUM in Barcelona was leading to pressure from the Soviets and Spanish commanders to bring the International Brigaders into a disciplined structure. One is left to wonder what form this "discussion" took, but Merriman will continue to push the leadership to a more traditional military command look.



Ralph Bates lecturing to the Regiment de Tren, probably August 21, 1937, prior to going to Quinto. ALBA Photo 177-178037, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman notes that Ralph Bates is in Madrid to speak. Bates lectured to the troops in Jarama on the events in Barcelona on May 14. Bates giving a lecture to the Regiment de Tren is shown above.

On the 16th, Merriman, James Harris and Bob Thompson went to pick up "Atal" who is Dr. Madan Mohan Lal Atal, the doctor in one of the training camps. Dr. Atal is Indian by nationality²⁵⁷, from Allahbad, and later will lead an Indian military mission in the Chinese War of Resistance. Merriman reported earlier that the Doctor in the Villaneuva de la Jara was incompetent and this is likely to be Atal. Atal told Merriman a long tale about his being demoted.

Merriman takes the car and drives over to Madrigueras, the British training base, where he meets with Amlie and Markovich, Dave Mates, Walter Garland and either Robbins or Roblet. Merriman is there because in the afternoon, the Americans are being pulled out to form another American Battalion in Tarazona de la Mancha. Tarazona will be the American base for the rest of the war and is about two miles west of Madrigueras. Apparently, they expected resistance from the men or officers about this reorganization, but it happened.

Marion Merriman Wachtel says that Merriman was the commander of the Washington Battalion until this new third

battalion was formed and that Merriman was in Tarazona in April.²⁵⁸ Eby states that the Washington Battalion was officially formed between April 1-6 and that its formation at Tarazona was at the insistence of Marcovich.²⁵⁹ On April 6, an inventory of the men in the First American training company at Madrigueras was made and it contained over 114 Americans under Hans Amlie.²⁶⁰ The most experienced men in the First Section of this company were sent, by April 17 according to the paylists, up to Jarama to join the Lincolns in Companies 1 and 4 (the latter if they were machine gunners). The remainder would either be the men remaining in Madrigueras under Markovich and Amlie or they would soon move to Tarazona for the third battalion under Merriman and Dallet. The Second American Battalion did not have a name until later when the men under Markovich suggested the Tom Mooney Battalion.²⁶¹ That suggestion would be overruled and the name "Washington Battalion" was suggested by Robert Minor and officially was approved by the Communist Party offices in the US by June.

The diary seems to indicate that the second battalion was actually formed in mid-May and the third battalion even later in May. In April alone, 515 Americans set sail for Spain and this does not count the Canadians who were also arriving. Clearly, there were enough English speaking North Americans in Spain for three battalions. Markovich would become the Commander and Dave Mates would become the Commissar of the Washington Battalion. Merriman's role as commander of the OTS and the NCO school is only briefly discussed in Wachtel and Lerude. Merriman would become the Commander of the third battalion (still called the Second Training Battalion) in June and Joe Dallet would become its Commissar.

Merriman looped back past Pozo Rubio to pick up Markovich and Joe Dallet and went on to Albacete to eat. He met again in the evening with Nelson, Dallet and Bill Lawrence. He ran the car out of gas in Albacete so he had to stay overnight. Merriman mentions that he spoke with George Brodsky about the job as head of the Intendencia as supply officer. This would have been a significant demotion for Brodsky but it was a way of offering Brodsky a job. Brodsky has dropped from Battalion Commissar to

a Battalion supply officer in a little over a month and this is consistent to reporting that Brodsky was not an effective commissar and the men resented him. Samuel Stember would also follow the same downward trajectory.

Merriman notes in the diary that the Largo Caballero government²⁶² has now fallen. The historical date that the government fell was May 17 and Juan Negrín²⁶³ took over as Prime Minister on the appointment of President Manuel Azaña. Negrín would be Prime Minister until the Republic fell in 1939. "May Days" is now over in Barcelona and the repercussions would be felt for another two months as the government will mop up opposition to the Negrin government.

Lewis Cleaver will be going to Valencia. Cleaver had been wounded, presumably at Jarama, and had been used for training at Pozo Rubio. Now, his weakened condition and illness make him useless and he will return home.

Merriman finishes the day by meeting with Arthur Olorenshaw and going to see two movies, *Ruggles of Red Gap* (a full length feature with Charles Laughton) and *Joaquin Murrieta* (an MGM short documentary on the Mexican revolutionary)

§ § §

May 17—18 ••• Pierre Lamotte Gets in Big Trouble

17 Mayo

S Pascual Bailón

Went to order uniform and introduced Brodsky to Intendencia – went to E. M. and ordered trucks to make change of guard. Men finally had to stay over for a funeral guard and left late in day. Ate with Marion and had meeting with Lawrence, Nelson & Kerr. Heard argument about auto park. Worked on report to be made to America-appeal. New government not yet formed. Caballero blames CP. Shake up due. Had massage and saw Jan who is soon to leave for Valencia - all OK. Pasurman{?} was here secretly.

18 Mayo

S. Venancio

Rose early - met men at Guard National - talked with Lamotte about posting of 50 men with machine guns in park at order of government and how American & English refused to move out and currency lost by Lamotte. Political commissar asked to have him removed. Not correct. Good soldier. Met Litwin – Saw Daduk & Flaherty who are going with Rochester to the U.S. for propaganda. Ate with Lamotte. Got truck and came to Pozo Rubio commission of Bill Lawrence. Joe Dallet, Pete Hampkins & I - three rejected Peters, McLaughlin, {Anthony} Theodoulou. Interesting to listen to answer of men. Send for more in Madrigueras from Markovich but was refused. In evening had talk with Olorenshaw, Carroll, Bob and Joe. Talked some time with Royce and decided to send him to transport. Joe fears trouble in Albacete. Meeting of political commissars.

§ § §

In a relatively quiet day, Merriman passes the day in Albacete and has the duty of making the introduction of George Brodsky to the

staff at the Intendencia (supply depot). Brodsky had been made a second Lieutenant in the Etat Major of the Battalion of Instruction at Tarazona de la Mancha on the 17th of May.²⁶⁴ After visiting the Headquarters (Estado Major), Merriman needs to muster up a guard for Albacete from his troops. An extra 50 men plus a machine gun are wanted for Albacete and on the 18th he relates that Joe Dallet expects trouble in Albacete. Clearly, intelligence has warned them of potential sabotage.

Merriman also mentions that the men are to form a funeral guard. In orders of the day from Albacete, Lucien Vidal informs us that Lieutenant René Rochefort who worked in Albacete died and was buried on the 19th of May and was buried on the 21st. Rochefort was said to have been unable to serve at the front because of his injuries that he got in WWI. He is said to have succumbed to hard work in his anti-fascist duties. Merriman may have misplaced the timing of his comment about the men having to accompany a military funeral on the 18th or else it was for another comrade.

Merriman's dining companions on the 17th are Marion Merriman, Steve Nelson, Bill Lawrence and Canadian Robert Kerr. Nelson and Lawrence seem joined at the hip at this juncture of the preparation of the battalion. Kerr, the Canadian political commissar, arrived on April 21 and at this point was charged with the formation of the Canadian Battalion. He and Lawrence would grab as many incoming Canadians as they could to direct to this new battalion.²⁶⁵ Ron Liversedge, who was seconded to the Canadian Cadres Service, remembers:

But there were almost as many Canadians in other Brigades and outfits outside the Fifteenth Brigade. ... A man would drop by, just in from Estramadura. He was in town for mail, for pay for his outfit, to enquire about medical supplies, etc. He was serving with a Balkan artillery battery. Yes, he was a Canadian; yes, there were five more Canadians with the Battery. We could get his particulars, ask him to try to get a list of the other Canadians to us as soon as possible, and help him complete his business in Albacete.... Thus it was that we gradually began to get a picture of who, and where, the

*Canadians were. The thousand Canadians had certainly spread themselves around Spain.*²⁶⁶

Merriman finishes the day writing a story for an appeal for resources to be sent to America. Jan Kurske returned to Valencia. He mentions a new name, possibly Pasurman, who was in Albacete secretly. Nothing has been found about this man.

Things begin to go badly for Pierre Lamotte. As head of the Intendencia, he was able to curry favor with Merriman who thought he was a "fine fellow". But at this point, Lamotte "lost currency". It was apparently a case of Lamotte going on a buying trip for the Intendencia and dropping hundred thousands (rumored between 200,000-600,000) of pesetas and not coming back with receipts to match. 600,000 pesetas was \$36,400 in 1937. Demands for Lamotte's removal are made by the IB leadership. A commission who investigated the "disinterest" in the leadership of the Intendencia concluded that three men, Favette, Lamotte and Francisco, should be removed.²⁶⁷ Lamotte is reported to have been charged with desertion and embezzlement and imprisoned in



*(left) Alfred Harvey (Abe) Litwin, RGASPI Fond 545 Opus 6 Delo 935.
(right) Two unknown soldiers and Sterling Rochester (seated), ALBA Photo 177-191070, Tamiment Library, NYU*

Valencia until he was released at the end of the war. He returned to the US on February 9, 1939. Having Brodsky available to take Lamotte's place was convenient.

Merriman mentions that he met with Abe Litwin^c, Steven Daduk, and (probably) Charles O'Flaherty^d. The latter two along with the Jarama-injured African-American Sterling Rochester^e are to be sent back to the US for fund raising and speaking tours.

Merriman returns to Pozo Rubio with Bill Lawrence, Joe Dallet, and Pete Hampkins as a "Commission". They were sent to investigate some issue. In the next sentence, Merriman lets us know that they rejected Raymond Lee Peters, Patrick McLaughlin, and Anthony Theodoulou (the first two came over on the Queen Mary on March 20). Rejected means that these men were flunked out of the OTS and returned to the ranks.

Merriman was interested (although he does not say he was pleased) with the response of the men to the naming of the Commissar. The Commissar in Merriman's battalion would be Joe Dallet.

^c Alfred Harvey (Abe) Litwin was born October 4, 1914, in NYC and was a graduate of the City College of New York. He arrived in Spain on May 11, 1937 after having been arrested in France. He served with the Lincoln-Washington Battalion at Fuentes del Ebro, Seguro de los Banos, Teruel, Aragon and Catalunya.

^d Charles O'Flaherty was one of three Boston O'Flaherty brothers who went to Spain. 34 years old, he sailed January 9, 1937 aboard the *Lafayette*. He was with the Lincoln Battalion at Jarama as a Company Commander. He became a Company Commissar in the officer's training school after he was wounded in action. He returned to the US on July 31, 1937 aboard the *President Roosevelt* and was involved in FALB fundraising. He served in the Merchant Marine in World War II.

^e Sterling Rochester was born October 15, 1901, in Barclay, Maryland. An African-American, he served in the US Navy 1924 on the Battleship *Utah* and the Destroyer *Dale*. He came to Spain from the Soviet Union where he was attending a Party school. He was wounded at Jarama and sent back to the US on propaganda tour arriving on June 27, 1937 aboard the *Lafayette*. Rochester died in 1978 in Norristown, Pennsylvania.

Merriman is still staffing up and sent word to Markovich at Madrigueras that he wanted more men but was rebuffed. He had a meeting that evening with Arthur Olorenshaw, Joe Dallet, Bob Thompson and William Reed Carroll^f, who had joined the OTS on May 14.²⁶⁸ Merriman meets again with Andrew Royce and orders him to Transports. Royce had deserted from Jarama but was identified as shell-shocked and useless at the front. Merriman clearly took responsibility for Royce and looked after him.

A single sentence at the end hides a remarkable meeting. On May 18 the Commissariat met and delivered three clarified instructions regarding the commissars.²⁶⁹ These were (paraphrased):

3^{eme}: All orders for materials (guns, ammunition, explosives, etc) must be signed by a military officer and the Commissar at his level.

4^{eme}: All orders given to superiors or inferiors must be co-signed by a Commissar at that level.

5^{eme}: Commissars must stop making demands for material above. These demands must be made by military line officers.

This would formalize the role of the Commissar in the decision-making command line.

However, the most important item of discussion was repatriation of the Internationals. In no uncertain terms, the third document said "The Government has decided that no repatriation of the Internationals will be authorized". Other problems including manning the brigades, artillery and pensions were unresolved. They were able to resolve, however, that meals at the Officer's mess were 3 pesetas a day.

^fWilliam Reed Carroll was born on January 15, 1907 in NYC. He had 13 years prior military service in the California National Guard. A mechanic, Carroll arrived in Spain on April 7, 1937, serving first in the Washington Battalion Armory and then continuing with the Lincoln-Washington Battalion. He returned to the US on December 15, 1938 aboard the *Paris*. He enlisted in December 1942, but was discharged January 1943 at the age of 36 as an old man. He died June 19, 1975 in San Diego, California.

May 19—20 ••• “Ammunition Depot Blown Up”

19 Mayo

S Pedro Celestino, papa

Parade at 8. Had general discussion concerning nature of the school and political work. Read new cabinet formed. Outlined course organized men into 2 sections - one under Thompson - other under Rawlings start good - election of political leader to be tonight. General atmosphere good. Roblet soon to leave so program made up for several remaining days. He has been to Valencia & new Minister of war making place for Soviet advisor. Roblet to be an advisor on preparation of officer Cadres. Expect provocation. UGT committees holding a special meeting - Carroll - lecturing on rifle - Spanish lesson to be after it now then close order drill. Doctor came to investigate former camp doctor. Spanish class held. Steve Nelson - Daduk - Flaherty arrived. After supper elected section political leaders - Prendergast & Joe held meeting. Daduk weak at speaking, Flaherty strong. Nelson discussed political events in Spain. Later held meeting of political bureau. Discussed guard - newspaper - cultural work etc. Later talked with Steve & Joe - statement for U.S. and problem of Dr. Atal.

20 Mayo

S. Bernardino de Sena

In morning translated for Roblet on scouting and combat scouting at lunch time went to Tarazona with Roblet. Met Markovich with some of the boys. Amlie also - Halliwell - talked about school with Garland & Smith. Returned to camp - new men to come tomorrow. From camp obtained ride to Albacete with small polish woman and then went to hotel - Cerca Mercantile and then to hospital. May be necessary to operate on elbow & remove bone secretion. Went to hotel and retired early. Ammunition warehouse blown up night before - careless about guard

not good although support for new cabinet seems strong enough now. Givney troubling again.

§ § §

Merriman's tone turns markedly serious and more detailed. Over the next two weeks, Merriman will assume a new role and he must have had an inkling of the changes to come. Merriman is still commanding the Officer's Training School (OTS) and overseeing the Non-commissioned Officer (NCO) schools in Pozo Rubio (which he calls "Camp"). While Marion Merriman has told us that Merriman was in Tarazona in April, it is clear that he is still based at "Camp", occasionally driving to Tarazona and frequently spending nights in Albacete if he can make up a good reason to do so. A soft bed with Marion must have been quite attractive compared to the rustic scout camp nature of the log houses at the secret base at Pozo Rubio. His job now, though, is to divert men from the Washington Group based in Madrigueras with Markovich towards the new training battalion in Tarazona and the OTS in Pozo Rubio. This will add to the already strained personal relationship between Markovich and Merriman over the unwanted advances of Markovich on Mrs. Merriman.

Merriman tells us that the new Negrín Government has been formed. This is the date recorded historically for the start of the Negrín government so his news pipeline to Valencia is good. He says that the Russian Roblet will be going to Valencia on a reassignment. He says that the new Minister of War Indalecio Prieto²⁷⁰ under the Negrin government has made a place for a Soviet advisor on his staff and we can speculate that Roblet will be this advisor. Roblet will become instructor for officers for the Negrín government. There were between 600 and 2200 Russian advisors who went to Spain and probably never more than 600-800 at any one time. 222 were in training.²⁷¹

Merriman forms two sections in the OTS, one to be led by Bob Thompson and the other by Rawlings. It is probable that this is Al Robbins, who was transferred to OTS on this date. Instruction by Roblet (largely on automatic weapons), Nelson, O'Flaherty, Carroll

and Daduk occurred on the 19th at Pozo Rubio. Nelson lectured on the political situation in order to train the commissar candidates on their role. Carroll gave Spanish language training. Daduk apparently is not as strong a speaker as were the others. Dallet met with James Prendergast, who was an Irish Communist Party organizer from Dublin. Prendergast²⁷² had been with the Connolly Column, injured at Jarama and was with Kit Conway when Conway was hit.²⁷³

Merriman makes a curious cryptic note "I expect provocation" and then says that a special meeting of the Unión Generale de Trabadores (UGT) committees was held. It is hard to determine if this is in response to the threat or the cause of the threat. The UGT supported the new Negrín government and was in conflict with the CNT (the anarchist/POUM union) after the May Days in Barcelona.



Only known photo of Dr. MML Atal.

Photo Source:

*<http://www.geni.com/people/Dr-Madan-Mohan-Lal-Atal/6000000001098580073>
(Accessed 20140517)*

The question of the competency of Dr. Atal, the training camp physician, is again mentioned and clearly required a decision of what to do with him. On the 15th of May, Dr. Atal was removed from the Health Service and assigned other duties. Dr. Madan Mohan Lal Atal led a medical mission to China in 1939, supported financially by Pandit Nehru. This photograph is the only one known of Dr. Atal and is taken from the website noted above. The problem with Dr. Atal will continue for a few days.

Merriman finishes the 19th with a meeting with Nelson and Dallet about formation of the new battalion and the statement that will be made to the US about the battalion. At that time, the Americans had hoped that the second battalion would be named the "Tom Paine" battalion or the "Tom Mooney" battalion but Robert Minor favored the "Washington" battalion. Later the Americans tried

again to name the third battalion the "Tom Paine Battalion" and the Canadians were insistent on recognition of their contribution and would prevail with it being called the "Mackenzie-Papineau" Battalion after two leaders of the 1847 revolt in Canada which ultimately led to independence from the British. This "statement for the US" is likely regarding the naming of the second Battalion. There is a blur of activity in the formation of these second and third battalions and with the heavy involvement of Canadians in the leadership, it is easy to confuse which battalion is being discussed in the diary. This is especially true since Merriman talks about this in the planning stage, which is nearly a month earlier than the formal naming of the third battalion. It is likely that the two battalions were partially being formed in parallel.

On the 20th, we see that Merriman and Roblet were sharing time between the training at Pozo Rubio and the new base at Tarazona. They meet with Markovich who is leading that base along with Hans Amlie. Merriman and Roblet are clearly recruiting from the ranks for new NCO's and Officers. Merriman spoke with Canadian Bill Halliwell about coming to the OTS, and got the opinions of Walter Garland and Canadian Edward Cecil-Smith, who were training the new Battalion as well at Tarazona. Halliwell²⁷⁴ was commander of the 2nd Company of the new Battalion. Alec Miller, a Canadian, became commander of the 3rd Company and Walter Garland would lead the 4th (Machine-Gun) Company. Cecil-Smith would later become the Commander of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in the fall of 1937. Merriman mentions that his new recruits to Pozo Rubio would come over on the 21st.

Merriman hitches a ride to Albacete with "the small Polish woman". Merriman sees the doctor in Albacete and is still having shoulder problems from his wound from Jarama. Seepage from the bone does not sound good.

Merriman reveals that the munitions warehouse in Albacete was blown up in a case of sabotage. Clearly, the suspicions and warnings of the past week were insufficient to protect everything in Albacete. The doubled guard of the prior days did not do the

job. Little has been written about this event and the state of mind of the leadership of the Brigade and their vigilance towards "fifth columnists" is understandable from this event. Merriman recognizes a failure in guarding the town here, but he then says "support for new cabinet is strong enough now". This indicates that Merriman does not suspect the fascists for this attack but rather those who did not make the new government.

Merriman finishes by saying "Givney giving trouble again". Clearly, he remains a thorn in Merriman's side. It appears that American John Givney deserted to Barcelona in May, 1937.

§ § §

May 21—22 ••• Merriman Leaves the OTS

21 Mayo

Sta Victoria

Markovich came to breakfast. We went to Estado Mayor and talked with Platone about Garland, Smith & Halliwell, rifles, money etc. Supplies for mapping went to Guard National & met Bill Lawrence and Lamotte. Returned to Hotel – met Marion and went to wait for Roblet he failed to come - ate with Marion in Intendencia. Met tall Spanish Officer who is in charge of teaching communications. Gold talked with us. Finally phoned Platone and he loaned me his car. Pozo Rubio at 2 o'clock and translated until 6 o'clock for Roblet on light machine guns and night attack. Later talked with 5 new men one (Knight) from front - others from Tarazona - where new Battalion is. After talk with {Patrick} McGuire decided to send him to front with English Battalion. New commandant of school should be appointed today.

22 Mayo

Sta. Rita de Casia

French comrade or Italian lieutenant in charge of camp. Good fellow. Wolffe and McGuire had been drunk the night before boys apologized and want to stay here in school. Spanish rifle lecture - close order and in range in afternoon - rifle firing auto rifle and assembly and sighting. Some of fellows took dip- fired late after others left. Flaherty & Steve fired - met new boys from Auto Park and talked long time with Flaherty and Steve about Battalion on some dope on some of the fellows. Talked late with Joe.

§ § §

Merriman spends another night at Albacete and in the morning he meets with Marcovich who has come from Madrigueras for breakfast in town. Together they go to the Estado Mayor to talk with Vidal and Platone on the decisions made on leadership in the

new Battalion. It appears here that Walter Garland, Edward Cecil-Smith and Bill Halliwell are being recommended for leadership. Halliwell and Garland will become Company Commanders. Smith will not be a company commander in the new Washington Battalion. Smith, Garland, Burton, Hampkins remained at Pozorubio at this point as trainers.

Mirko Markovich subsequently moves, with the Americans who are in Madrigueras, to the base at Tarazona. About 160 Americans will be called up from Madrigueras to go to Jarama to join the Lincoln Battalion, along with a few dozen British soldiers who were in Madrigueras training who will join the 57th British Battalion under Fred Copeman. At this point, the chief of operations of the XVth Brigade at Morata de Tejuña is Allan Johnson. The remainder of the Americans will form the new second Battalion, to become the Washington Battalion, but they are not quite ready to move up yet. Markovich will become their Commander. Merriman will become the commander of the 2nd Training Battalion which will form the basis of the third English speaking Battalion in July.

Merriman meets Bill Lawrence and Lamotte at the Guard. The meetings between Lawrence, the American responsible in Albacete, and Merriman and Lamotte deal with the unhappiness of Platone and Vidal over what is occurring in the Intendencia. This week in May was a very busy one for Vidal and one of great pressure on him. The Government in Madrid was in transition and the leadership of the military forces will turn over, partially to the new Prime Minister Negrin, who had been Minister of War. There are a number of high level memoranda describing this transition and there were meetings in Albacete to brief the command officers of the Brigades what these transitions meant for them. In a handwritten set of notes of one of those meetings²⁷⁵, an officer (believed to be either Johnson or Aitken) noted that the transition would be good for the Brigades but that the Spanish Army believed that the brigades were a mercenary army and could be treated as such. Vidal wrote a very long memorandum²⁷⁶ to the Command outlining the grievances of the IB's which led off with the fact that the English units were in the line at Jarama for 78 straight days with only a four day relief break for the Lincolns

which was almost immediately rescinded after four days of rest. The handwritten notes²⁷³ say that this was an anomaly and happened because of the events in Barcelona requiring other units to go to suppress the POUM/Anarchist rebellion. But the Spanish believed also that the IB's got better treatment than they did and certainly had more access to food than the people in general. This was outlined in a memo in French from Luigi Gallo to General Gall about the behavior of the Autopark Chofers and the irresponsibility of the artillery groups in Almansa (I translate):

Madrid, 22 May

*Comrade General Gall
Commander of the 15th Division {sic}
Dear Comrade,*

Comrade Vidal, commander of the Base at Albacete has told me he has received a report completely preoccupied with the state of the Transport Service Mobile Evacuation Service of our Health Service at Tarancón. After the messages we have received, Doctor Gorgan {sic, Gorian or Goryan} has fired all the international chauffeurs and has recruited new chauffeurs from the CNT {n.b. the Anarchist union rather than the UGT which was supportive of the Spanish Communist Party}, which has caused many great difficulties in the Service. On the other hand, there are many very serious irregularities in the responsible personnel.

He additionally warned me that the first battery of artillery (French and Belgian) attached to the 15th Division and actually commanded by Captain Clerc, was found in deplorable condition, caused by the conduct of that Captain, who stole nearly all of the reserve supplies of the battery and who sent a significant portion of those supplies of the battery to take to a house of prostitution in Madrid. We have written to ... Gé {name not spelled out}.

I would ask you to open an inquiry on these accusations and if it is the case, take necessary measures to eliminate all irregularities.

Anti-fascist greetings

*The Commissar delegate of War
Inspector of the International Brigades
{signed Luigi Gallo}²⁷⁷*

The RGASPI archives contain an answering memo from Dr. Goryan, who was in Morata, that complains about Vidal's removal of the ambulances. He also sends this letter to General Gal as commander of the XVth Brigade. Goryan denies that he wanted CNT drivers but instead, he asks that the 10 ambulances be returned with their auto park drivers or he cannot guarantee that the wounded can be evacuated to Tarancón.²⁷⁸ This curious episode points out some of the Brigade infighting for control on the vehicles. In the same week, Dr. Cachin had made a request for the Autochir (mobile hospital) to make a trip to France to drop off Dr. Catalette who demanded to go home. This highly irregular request to use a most needed vehicle to ferry home a disgruntled doctor prompted a thorough review of the Sanitary Service by Dr. Telge.

In Albacete, there was a fight between non-commissioned troops and some German Officers who were housed in the Garde Nationale and the Officers were turned out to "sleep on the ground" like the lower ranked soldiers have to. Tersely worded memos in German were written to Vidal accusing Lamotte of not managing the Garde Nationale barracks, which added to his subsequent demise. One called Lamotte a "gangster". We also found in the handwritten notes above the following snippet:

500 000 pesetas not true. but over 250-300,000 for bills.

Notes taken by IB Officer during a briefing on May 22

An accusation has been made that the XVth Brigade is 500,000 pesetas in arrears, but this note says that is not true. It does admit that the XVth Brigade owes 250-300,000 pesetas for its unpaid

bills. Since Lamotte would be responsible for paying the bills of the Intendencia, it is likely that this is the accusation of Lamotte embezzling 300,000 pesetas. One might also assume that Lamotte procured items for the Brigades and just did not pay for them. That would be viewed differently by the Brigade Command than the suppliers. In any case, Lamotte's leadership in the Intendencia is coming to an end during this week.

Merriman must have thought he was going to get a ride back to Pozo Rubio with Roblet, but he did not show so he stayed until lunchtime and had a meal with Marion Merriman in the Intendencia. He spoke with Gold (likely Irving Gold⁸). Frustrated by the crossed wires with Roblet, he arranges a car from Platone and is back to Pozo Rubio by 2 pm where he translates Roblet's Russian lectures into English.



On his last day at Pozo Rubio, Merriman gets his men from Tarazona de la Mancha who were pulled out of training and sent to (probably) the non-commissioned officer's school. Five arrive including a Knight who had been on the lines at Jarama (there is an Allan Knight in the list of Canadians)²⁷⁹. Patrick McGuire, an Irish-Canadian, who had been at the Officer Training School, is called out as a problem and Merriman sent him to join the British Battalion at Jarama.

Patrick McGuire, Irish/Canadian volunteer, RGASPI photo Fond 545/Opus 6/Delo 170, Moscow, Russia

McGuire must not have been happy about going to the front and he and "Wolf" (probably James Wolfe or Woulfe, also a Canadian at the OTS) decided to get drunk to celebrate the departure. Merriman keelhauls them, gets an apology and a plea

⁸ Irving Gold was born November 7, 1911 in Brooklyn, New York. Another of the City College of New York graduates, he arrived in Spain on March 10, 1937. He served with the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion as a Cabo. Gold served with the US Army Engineers as a Staff SGT. He died October 5, 1998 in Jupiter, FL.

to stay in school. Drunkenness was rampant in the Madrigueras base at the time and this was one reason that the Americans were pulled out and sent to Tarazona (to the relief of the villagers who appreciated that the Americans who drank less than the French). Richard Baxell relates a story from Peter Kemp who was in the opposing Nationalist Bandera at the time:

There was a grimmer side to the discipline, which reminded me how far I was from the O.T.C. The day after my arrival two troopers reported for duty incapably drunk; apparently they were old offenders. The following evening [their Catalan officer] Llancia formed the whole Squadron in a hollow square in the main barrack-room. Calling out the two defaulters in front of us, he shouted, 'There has been enough drunkenness in this Squadron. I will have no more of it, as you are going to see.' Thereupon he drove his fist into the face of one of them, knocking out most of his front teeth and sending him spinning across the room to crash through two ranks of men and collapse on the floor. Turning on the other he beat him across the face with a riding crop until the man dropped half senseless to the ground. He returned to his first victim, yanked him to his feet and laid open his face with the crop, disregarding his screams, until he fell inert beside his companion. Then he turned to us: 'You have seen, I will not tolerate a single drunkard in this Squadron.' The two culprits were hauled, sobbing, to their feet to have a half-pint of castor oil forced down their throats. They were on duty next day, but I never saw either of them drunk again.²⁸⁰

Drunkenness was no more tolerated in the American Battalion. Some Lincolns had files that reported that they had been sent to prison for one or two weeks because of being found drunk. And their documents on leaving Spain reflected these events. Each Brigadista had to report fully whether he had ever been disciplined or arrested. One child of a Brigadista was shown such a document from the Tamiment Archives and, while somewhat surprised, said "That does sound like him".

The new "French or Italian" commandant of the training school will be discussed on tomorrow's diary pages.

May 23—24 ••• The “X-rated” Edition

23 Mayo

Aparación de Santiago Apóstol

Left camp early and came to see anti tank gun - two guns - lecture and evaluation took all morning. Doctor Atal still seems bad to us. No discipline, etc. Men went to Guard Nacional and we ate at Intendencia. Later went to see doctor who examined Bob and me and then met Joe & Marion at Bull Ring. Chiseled in on box and had fine seats & much to eat - didn't enjoy the bullfighting so much and most Americans were disgusted. Went to Guard Nacional and met Lamotte who was very low and talked his head off about fight with Platone and Vidal and plan to get rid of American Artillery unit etc. Ate late and met husband of man arrived who runs Intendencia - shock. Boys stayed in hotel in Room 35. (Note at end of November)

24 Mayo

S. Robustiano

Rose early - went with Joe to Guard Nacional for 8 o'clock parade. Extra ammo building guard had been put on so that no one will fall in on parade. Returned to center and shaved while boys took bath. Went to see Minor, Haywood & {Bill} Lawrence but they were busy. Talked with Bill about trouble up in brigade and proposal of Vidal to Prieto & Negrin. Woke Marion and ate at Intendencia - then inspected guard at Estado Mayor. Tried to find out about uniform visited hospital. Got Xray and met Comm Marcy{?} and get communication flags in school. Met Bill Lawrence and talked with him some time - joined boys who are on the chase - and then to Auto Parc where Bob Minor spoke and entertainment followed. One of boys shot at - on road. Windshield broken. Inspected guard at ammo factory which was blown up (details now known) Our French guard seemed drunk. Hunted for officer of guard. Returned Bob T. had made grade with nurse and Joe had to wait. Boys stayed again in hotel with prize.

§ § §

Merriman has time on the 23rd and 24th to write plenty about the machinations of the Brigade. He even includes a page of notes from later in the diary.

The day starts routinely with Merriman going from Pozo Rubio ("Camp") to Albacete to view instruction on the two new anti-tank guns from Russia. He receives a lecture and evaluation that took all morning. Dr. Atal continues to be a concern to Merriman. Atal was not a member of the Communist Party (he was a member of Nehru's Congress Party in India later in life). It is quite possible that Atal has raised concern by his comments made in early May and he is now on Merriman's suspicion list. He did, however, apparently pass his examination by the Doctor brought to camp to check him out and it looks to be a political concern with Atal at this point. Merriman says Atal is being exposed to open political discussions and has "No discipline".

After he and Bob Thompson had a check up at the doctor's office, they ate and attended their first bullfight in the ring at Albacete. Marion Merriman relates:

In the afternoon, the two Bobs [Merriman and Thompson], Joe Dallet [the Ivy-League-educated commissar], and I went to our first bullfight. Through a friend we had seats in the circle of boxes high around the rim of the ring. The place was packed, at least the shady side for even at four o'clock in the afternoon the sun blazed. Music, a gay introduction to a dead romance. The bull racing bewilderingly into the arena. The cape holders (they do have a name for them but I can't think of it) waving their cerise and yellow cloaks. The bull rushing back and forth, not too excitedly and occasionally stopping to stare at the crowd. The bandilleros, riskier business than any, waiting for the proper moment to throw the brightly colored darts into the bull. The bull enraged trying to shake the darts out his back. Blood running in trickles down his sides. More play from the cape wavers. The fanfare. The torero with his crimson cloak and sword. Graceful taunting and tormenting of the bleeding bull. The quick thrust sword to the hilt draws

applause. The bull weaves, lunges in a last frenzy, sinks to the ground in a slather of fury and weakness. The man with the dagger at a safe moment plunging it into the bull's brain. The bull dragged ignominiously off on a chain by a team of horses. And the next bull is prodded and dodged through the same routine.²⁸¹

Merriman says he did not enjoy the bullfight and most Americans were disgusted.

More of Lamotte's battles with the Albacete leadership come out and Lamotte appears to be defending Americans being in the artillery unit at Almansa. Vidal's memo (see the previous page) also concerns the Artillery and there was discussion of taking all the artillery pieces away and giving them to the Spanish Army. Vidal had line authority over the Artillery units and would have been quite possessive. The dispute goes deeper apparently as we see on the 25th. In one of the more strange sentences in the diary, Merriman says that the "husband of the man" who ran the Intendencia arrived and there was "shock". We may never know this whole story but it does sound like an interesting one. At this point, Lamotte ran the Intendencia with two a French Officer named Fevrier and a Spaniard named Francisco so one might surmise that sexual orientation became an issue at this point. Lamotte is having a wide range of charges being stacked up against him. In one memo, Lamotte is accused of being abusive to the guard at the Garde Nationale barracks, taking his gun away from him and then the Americans who wrote the complaint felt that this was a way of setting the guard up for charges for not having his gun.

Merriman says that the guys he was with stayed in Room 35 at the hotel and we would need a hotel register to figure out who was staying in that room. We will find where they slept on the 24th to 25th. Merriman has enough to tell his diary that he used another notes page from the end of November:

§ § §

May 24, 1937

Talk with Bill Lawrence. Haywood here. Great trouble in Battalion. Aitken and Copic are still playing politics. Fellows resent Aitken and brigade staff. Gall both political commissar and General. Copic doesn't want relief until he is sure of being in charge. Doesn't want investigation of 27th and 23^d & 5th of April - Vidal mad at Copic who doesn't listen to him. No response etc. Johnson with Vidal against Copic. Both are collecting evidence against each other. Haywood pushing Aitken into rear. Johnson got sick and disgusted – left brigade staff and went to take charge of Battalion. Haywood made him go back although Copic liked it especially since order received to cut down brigade staff. Hourihan sick. Law in charge. Copic put Slav in charge of MG. Johnson resented it and words developed. When Ford and Minor came with Bill - They spent 4 hours in conference and forgot to invite Johnson – made him feel hurt. Ford taken in by Copic. He said he was a military man & didn't deal with politics. Ha ha. Spirit of men bad – many sick only about 80 in lines. Spanish want transfer since they got leave in other units.

Vidal and Gallo, Telge gone to Prieto ask to have representative of IB in war department. 4 units Slav German French English. Each Brigade 5 battalions - 3 in line one in reserve one at rest. Pension for families and right to repatriate certain ones.

Reorganization of B15 and make it English-speaking. Reorganization of political and military aspects – relief - Proposes not to send new Battalion in Tarazona until Brigade reorganized. Wants to reorganize Albacete – not safe – wants to have Prieto visit our Brigades here and in the lines. Interview was to have taken place on morning of the 24th. All language brigades proposed.



Bert Williams (left), George Aitken (center) and Marty Hourihan (right), ALBA Photo 177-196124, Tamiment Library, NYU

The intense rivalries in the leadership of the Brigades are revealed here in their depressing detail. Merriman says that George Aitken and Vladimir Copic made up a faction of the leadership who were opposed by Merriman/Haywood/Lawrence/Johnson (most of the Americans). Merriman makes the critical comment that General Gall {sic, General Gal, Janós Galicz} was acting as a political commissar and General. This is a conflict of interest since the "ombudsman" qualities of a commissar were designed to be a relief valve when conflicts with military line management developed. Clearly, the Brigade leadership did not have a Brigade Commissar to provide that adjudication of the infighting. The Brigade Commissar at this time was Jean Barthel.

The main issue appears to be the unwillingness of Copic to ask for relief troops to take the IB's off the line at Jarama until the Brigades were reorganized. The Americans appear to be resisting bringing up the new Battalion until these issues are resolved. Allan Johnson got in trouble for his actions on April 5 when he left the training base and went to lead at Jarama after a fascist attack on April 4. Harry Haywood sent Johnson back to Albacete since Johnson will have "deserted to the front" if Copic had not ordered him to the front. This event is not a major part of the story of Jarama but it was telling:

The loss of two hundred meters of trench on the 14th of March was rectified on April 5, when elements of the Dombrowski and Garibaldi battalions drove forward briefly on the Lincoln's left to recapture these positions. Captains Johnson and Hourihan directed the action, the Lincoln Battalion's job begin specifically to supply cover fire while the other battalions went over; then the Americans themselves left their entrenchments under British cover fire. When the attack was launched, there was some hope of pushing on beyond the first objective-- to straighten the line-- but again it was launched too late in the day, and some units failed to appear at all for their role in the operation. Captain Allan Johnson says that the Lincolns had not been slated to go over; that the plan had been for the 11th Thälmann Brigade to attack through the Lincoln line in conjunction with the assault of the Garibaldis and Dombrowskis. They were to have appeared on the scene at approximately 7:00 A.M. Since they did not arrive at that hour, and since four hours later the Rebels were thoroughly alert to the developing attack all along the line-- artillery and mortar shells were now ranging the Brigade parapets-- he ordered the Lincoln's First Company to go over, to threaten the enemy positions, and to prevent any possible counteraction prior to the arrival of the 11th.

Contrary to previous reports of this action, the Republican casualties were by no means light. The Garabaldis, especially were hit hard. Charles Nusser of the Lincolns states that some of the Garibaldis, either going over or returning to their lines,

found themselves in front of the Lincoln trenches, got caught up in the Lincoln barbed wire, and were badly shot up. Heavy fire met the assault of the Lincoln's First Company, but relatively few were killed. The entire Battalion actually sustained only twenty casualties for its part in the action of April 5. Amongst those wounded, however, were Captain Johnson, Captain Hourihan, David Jones, the Battalion Commissar and a number of the leading cadres.²⁸²

Knowing this counterattack was occurring on the 5th, Johnson left Albacete and took action. Aitken and Copic did not support Johnson in this action. Merriman states that as a result Copic jumped in and tried to reduce the Battalion staff by promoting Oliver Law up to Battalion Commander (in Marty Hourihan's absence as he was sick). Merriman's attribution of the changes may be clarified by Art Landis who says that it was Allan Johnson who made the promotions of Walter Kolowski to the MG Company, Paul Burns to command Company 1 and Edward Flaherty to the command of 2nd Company.²⁸⁰ Merriman, however, here says that a Slav was promoted Commander of the Machine Gun Company and Kolowski was demoted again by April 23. This is probably the event where Johnson must have had his moves overruled and resented it. "Words developed". If Johnson went at Copic, he clearly did not win the contest of wills.

The tempest developed into a political storm because when Robert Minor and James Ford visited lines at Jarama, Johnson was ignored and this aggravated the grievances. Copic apparently charmed Ford and this further irritated the Americans when the VP Candidate of the Communist Party of America took the side of a Yugoslav commander of the Brigades over the wishes of the American communist leaders of the Brigades. Continuing his list of grievances, Merriman pours out the fact that the Spanish are unhappy since they are also not getting the leave from the lines that they were accustomed to in the Spanish Army. Merriman says that the front line troops are demoralized and the "Lincoln Battalion" had only 80 men remain in the lines ... far fewer than the 600-800 that would be at strength.

As a side note here, Oliver Law would become a singular icon in the Lincoln Brigade as the first black officer in any war who rose to command a Battalion of mixed American soldiers. Law was both used as a heroic icon back in the US to hold up the Brigades as fully integrated as well as dashed after the war by a number of writers who sought to denigrate Law's competence. We will not delve into this controversy since it is peripheral to Merriman's diary and not discussed at all in Marion Merriman's memoir about Robert. It should be noted that these events on April 5 were central to Law's rise in the ranks.



Oliver Law, from Collum

Merriman describes the reorganization of the Brigade around language. He says that Vidal, Platone and Dr. Telge have gone to Valencia to plead their case with the new Minister of War, Indalecio Prieto. They wanted four "units" (for the lack of a better word in the transcription): one Slav, one German, one French and one English. Each Brigade would have five battalions making 20 overall battalions in the Brigades. The plan included three active Battalions at any one time with one in reserve and one completely at rest. The plan doesn't say how often the rotations would occur. The group asked for pensions to be paid to veterans after the war and discretion to remove some soldiers totally out of the Brigades and back to their home countries.

Merriman continues that this would mean a reorganization along language lines. The XVth Brigade would be entirely English speaking. Vidal continued his presentation that reorganization needed to include Albacete, the Base. It was said that Albacete was not safe (obviously so since saboteurs had destroyed the Brigade ammunition depot in recent days). In the interview, which was planned for the morning of the 24th of May, Vidal invited Prieto to visit the Brigade lines, a visit which apparently never occurred. In addition, a proposal was made to have "all language units", presumably mixing everybody up. This sounds like the "poison pill option" which you offer in a negotiation and one that you know will be rejected as unworkable.

Going back to the May 24 entry in the Diary, Merriman tells us he got up and took Joe Dallet with him for an 8 o'clock military parade at the Garde Nacional but that since the guard had been doubled on the ammunition dump, no one could fall in on parade. Merriman and Dallet returned to their quarters so they could do their ablutions, including taking a bath. He picked up Marion and they went for breakfast and then he was off to inspect the guard at the Garde Nacional. Clearly, the nerves were on edge about sabotage.

Merriman is still dealing with his broken wing and he gets another X-ray. We will hear the outcome on the 25th. Merriman says he joined "boys who are on the chase" which is clearly code for being out on the town to find women. He goes to the Auto Park and hears Bob Minor speaking and they have entertainment. In their travels, they get shot at and there were obviously fifth columnists (perhaps resentful anarchists or POUM, who would have been angry about the events in Barcelona earlier in the month) amongst the locals near Albacete. On the 21st of May, Hourihan's orders of the day state that Johnson was removed on orders of the Brigade.

Merriman gets to the Ammo factory that was blown up and finds it substantially gone. The French guard at the site had been drunk. Merriman has to hunt down his officer to complain.

Merriman reveals that Bob Thompson "got lucky" with one of the nurses and Thompson and Dallet spent the night with her.

§ § §

May 25—26 Washington Battalion Gets Its Name

25 Mayo

St Gregorio VII, papa

In morning, boys came down with gal who is trying to replace women battalion. Ate & joked etc. – Joe & I went to Room 22 and met Minor - Minor wanted to talk to me and it took a long time - he suggests milder name than Tom Mooney for Battalion, Washington or Jefferson. He & Bill Lawrence left with Haywood for Jarama. Steve Nelson on Cordoba. Had x-ray again & found elbow is broken when wounded with operation needed before able to open arm entirely - uniform to be ready in some days. Left Marion & went to Guard Nacional. Lamotte fighting again. Seems he must go. Too bad in a way. Trucks late - Stanley deserted & is in jail. Decision Madrigueras. Said our CP members could get any place here - Truck came finally & we went to put his ammo factory guard – bldg. well destroyed - left no guard on place returned home - men tired - Knight left in town - retired early because tired. Joe washed his third arm in room.

26 Mayo

S. Felipe Neri

Rearranged quarters according to groups - Spanish lesson until noon. Talked with Steve Daduk and O'Flarherty. During lunch hour general meeting of political & military leaders -- camp command. Weak - Oppman - lawyer by profession much needless talk- Otero, representative of Gallo, inspected camp. First flag raising exercise - upside down flag. Carlos came but late - Roblet lectured on m.g. Read change in Soviet military regulations – tank considerations - Atal still worries me since open talks are given here.

§ § §

Merriman is enough of a gentleman that he doesn't name names when it comes to his friends. From the post of the 24th, we know Bob Thompson and Joe Dallet picked up a nurse in Albacete and now we know they spent the night with her. We find that she is trying to "replace women {in} battalion".

We have some possible suspects for this. Mildred Rackley was in charge of the recruiting of nurses and was in Spain about this time. There was a sailing of a large number of nurses and doctors from the American Medical Bureau on the SS Normandie on May 19. All evidence about Rackley being in Albacete is speculative. Merriman (and presumably Marion as well since Bob stayed over with Marion) met the other three for breakfast and had a merry time.

Merriman goes to Room 22 in the hotel. Room 22 clearly is one of the bigger suites. Room 22 will be mentioned whenever Merriman goes to meet Party officials. The meeting took some time and Robert Minor insists on a "milder" name for the second battalion than the "Tom Mooney Battalion". Tom Mooney was in San Quentin prison at this time and clearly "Washington or Jefferson" had less political baggage. Minor wins out and the second Battalion becomes the "George Washington Battalion". Three out of the four Presidents on the monument being carved at this time on Mount Rushmore, in Keystone, South Dakota, were mentioned as names for Battalions.

After the meeting Minor and Harry Haywood depart for Jarama to visit the Lincoln Battalion on the lines. Merriman says that Steve Nelson departs for Cordoba, probably to meet with the 60 or so "lost Lincolns" who are in the 20th Brigade at that point on the Cordoba front. Those Lincolns will return to the XVth Brigade by July and clearly the intent is to put English speaking brigadistas in the XVth Brigade.

Merriman finds out the result of his X-ray of the 23rd and it is not good. In addition to bone seepage, he still has a broken elbow which will need an operation to fix. There is no evidence that Merriman actually had that operation and this note says that Merriman cannot straighten his arm. In the photographs of

Merriman for the next year, however, is shown with his arm straight in some photographs so either he overcame the injury by exercise or the diagnosis here is wrong. Knowing that Merriman has had a broken shoulder and a broken elbow may be of future use to forensic archeologists who may at some time come across Merriman's remains in digs near Gandesa and Corbera in Spain.

Merriman goes to the Garde Nacional and meets again with Pierre Lamotte, whose time in the Brigade obviously is shortening. He says Lamotte was again fighting with people in the Intendencia and Merriman recognizes that his friend will have to leave this job. Lamotte will shortly be arrested, charged with theft and imprisoned for the length of the war. He returned to the US in February 1939 under a questionable cloud. Merriman says that "Stanley deserted". There is an Al Stanley in the Lincolns at this time but he went by the name Al Handler in Spain. He was assigned to the Washington Battalion but there is nothing in his record on RGASPI that says he "deserted".

The next sentence does not seem to follow and the closest parsing reads "Decision Maddry", which could be Madrigueras. There was a decision needed on who would come from Madrigueras to Tarazona. In another frenzied memo, Vidal chastises the Autopark for not providing enough transport to move 125 men from Madrigueras to Tarazona. In any case, it is followed by some reference to party members being given jobs in "any place here".

Merriman goes to check out the Ammo storage building that was sabotaged and finds it leveled. His intent was to replace the guard on the building and realizes that there is nothing left to guard. He pulls the guard off the wrecked building. He returns to Pozo Rubio or Tarazona and says that he left the Canadian Allan Knight in Albacete.

In a moment of "too much information", Merriman must have been amused by Joe Dallet conducting his own "third arm inspection" ('third arm' or 'short arm' being military slang for an appendage which cannot be used to fire a gun) and washing his genitals in the room. At the time, Richard Baxell informs us of sanitary habits quoting from a letter from Australian Laurence Collier to Bill

Alexander that resides in the International Brigades Archives at the Marx Memorial Library:

At this period of my life, I was 23, I was not very good at either love or sex, or shall we say love and sex. There were a half a dozen young women I meant in the course of my service who attracted me, Angela H[aden] G[uest], Patience Darton, and a few Spanish 'nurses', etc. I never got as far as to make a romantic suggestion, they all seemed out of reach (I was immature, or something). When in Barcelona I visited a sort of red light district, and was rather appalled at a professional exhibiting herself outside a sort of booth which I suppose was a crude brothel.

I found a not unattractive 'sensible looking' woman of about 35 and suggested spending the night with her. She said she was otherwise engaged but took me to a room where we had what can only be described as 'surgical sex', after which in a very business-like way she completed the 'surgery' by washing my parts with a solution of permanganate of potash.²⁸³

The potassium permanganate or "Condy's Crystals" would have been a disinfectant. While some men in the Brigades actually caught venereal diseases, there was enough knowledge at the time to reduce the potential for catching VD.

On the 26th of May, Merriman holds meetings with Ed O'Flaherty who went by the name Flaherty in Spain and Steve Daduk. He meets with the camp commander and says he is "weak". This man is identified in the RGASPI Archives as a Lieutenant Mazzi. A few days previously, Merriman was taken with the man who we now know is Tadeusz Oppman, a Polish lawyer who was the head of the Dombroski Battalion in the fall of 1936. Merriman says that "Otero, a representative of Gallo" was inspecting the camp. There is a memorandum sending Comrade Otero to the Albacete in the orders of the Command.²⁸⁴

Merriman says that they had their first flag raising ceremony in camp with the Russians "Carlos" and "Roblet" there. The flag went up upside-down which must have been embarrassing. During

training Roblet read modifications to the Soviet military manual that had to do with tanks. We are only left to guess what change was included other than, sarcastically, British driving tanks should drive on the right side of the road and not run over donkey carts.

Finally, Merriman finishes the diary entry with another reference to Dr. Madan Mohan Lal Atal, saying that he is still suspicious of him. Atal must be in Pozo Rubio and since this camp was top secret with open discussion of most political issues, Merriman was suspicious of Atal's background. As we said in previous postings, it is unlikely that Dr. Atal was a Communist Party member at this time. We will hear no more of Dr. Atal in the diary.

§ § §

May 27—28 ••• Jockeying for Positions

27 Mayo

S. Juan I, papa

Rose early - attended flag exercises. In morning - went out on field manoeuver with Roblet. Emphasis on tank defensive position new Mexican rules - at noon ~~left for town.~~ After In afternoon had lecture by communications expert on flags, etc. Galli talked before - "arrest military leader"; "Political commissar is a civilian" etc. Went to town in evening in Roblet's car. Picked up Marion went to Auto Park where I gave a lecture on trucks & military rules etc. Good meeting - rode to hotel with Steve Nelson and he dropped in to talk. Cordoba front Mirandez - Traill - Chief of Staff - Gates Political Commissar Brigade on 11 kilometer front - fascists on high ground - gap front. Fein talked with me about Murcia.

28 Mayo

S. Agustín

Rose at nine - marched up to hospital - checked on uniform went to Fein and to Estado Mayor. Finally got Fein & discussed Overton and English girls who are inquisitive about arms and movements of troops. Marion may go there to see them soon. Ate with Brodsky "I shall put on the stripes crooked so it will look as if I didn't care about it". Steve - Bob - Carlos drove me out although Bob had to stay. Returned Carlos lectured - read and prepared lectures. Holiday to be on Sunday. Markovich came and talked about Battallion, 27th. Practiced stunt tomorrow night. Steve Nelson came along with Morrison. Horowitz. Bullied until late.

§ § §

Allan Johnson said in April that he felt that the Brigade leadership were largely "amateurs" and that only a couple had any real military leadership experience. The careerism within the General

Staff at Albacete is obvious in reading the diaries and a frustration from reading the diary is that one is left to ask "who is really in charge here?" We will see Merriman trying on the hat (literally) of a number of potential jobs and jockeying for position in the Brigade structure. Men are generally competitive, but this game of who is to be on top had a more political role. While military leadership experience would have been valuable, political stature within the Comintern or their national parties was also a major factor in deciding who would move into any job. On the diary of May 25-26, he says that a party man could have any job in the Brigades. And the intonation indicates that Johnson and Merriman feel that the appointees are not qualified to lead. Many of these men were looking for future roles within the structure of the Communist Party and the adjustments we see over the next week had that flavor.

Merriman spends the morning in camp on training and hears lectures from communications experts on how to send signals with flags, on how to operate under the new "Mexican" (i.e. Russian) rules (military manual), how to defend against tanks, etc. Before going out on this field maneuver, Merriman says "Galli" spoke. This was Honoré (Ernest) Galli of Nice, France, who was the Political Commissar at Pozo Rubio.²⁸⁵ The lecture was on the role of the commissar and we will hear twice in the next two days that the commissar is a "civilian" and he works for the Government of Spain. Emphasis is placed that the commissar is there to supervise the military leadership and watch them and that they can "arrest {the} military leader". This tips the command leadership on its head since military commanders usually don't have adjutants who can turn them in. It is a very Soviet structure of leadership, however.

In the evening, Merriman picks up Marion and they go out to the Auto Park so that Merriman can give a lecture. He meets with Steve Nelson who has returned from the Cordoba front and meeting with Americans there. He mentions Robert Traill, a British officer who is Chief of Staff, and John Gates who is the Commissar. Colonel Morandi (Merriman writes Mirandez) was the commander of the 86th Brigade. We discussed this front earlier.

On the 27th, Merriman meets with Fein and talks about Murcia. Arturo Fein, Marion's boss, was the "Chef du Service de Controle", effectively what would become the Servicio Intelligence Militar or SIM later.²⁸⁶ In reading this Delo in RGASPI, Murcia was in turmoil at this point. Several doctors, including Otto Telge (a Bulgarian who had replaced Dr. Neumann in April when Neumann was repatriated to Austria because of poor health), Blanck, Catalette, and Cazin have memoranda recorded where they accuse each other and the Brigades for the poor morale and impossible conditions in Murcia. We have seen that there was a fight between Dr. Goryan and Vidal over the ambulance service. This comes up in these memos, but the larger issue revolves around the competence of certain doctors such as Catalette, who had been in Murcia very early. Catalette was so irritated, he resigned his position and Cazin, in Paris, requested that an Autochir be freed up to drive him out of Spain. That would have been an extraordinary demand to make of the Murcia leadership. Accusations abound on the 5th Column in Murcia and drink is felt to be a tool by which the Fascist sympathizers sowed discontent amongst the Brigade. One should remember for this period that reorganizations were occurring everywhere with the new Government providing opportunity for those who wanted to move up. To do so, often accusations appear to be made which impugn the reliability or political strengths of some of the early volunteers.

This passage leads to a major event in the life of Marion Merriman. We see on the 28th that Fein meets with Merriman again and that there is a discussion about Bert Overton and two British women at Murcia who were asking questions about movements at the front. Suspicion arises that these women were sent in by MI-5 to spy on the Brigades and Marion Merriman will be tapped by Albacete to go check them out. Fein will choose Marion Merriman for this role. Mrs. Merriman relates:

Rumors reached Albacete that two Englishwomen were in Murcia creating trouble among the American volunteers. Bob was approached by brigade officials with word that the women were visiting the hospitals and encouraging the Americans to quit the Spanish Republican effort, telling them

*they were not getting a fair deal. Because the matter involved women, there was a feeling I should go to Murcia to learn what I could about them. So Bob assigned me, along with two officers, to the mission.*²⁸⁷

We learn more about this mission in upcoming days.

Briton Burt Overton has been in trouble since April and we mentioned these passages in that posting. Overton's trial will be over by May 30 and he will be spoken of twice here over a few days.

Merriman is back in Albacete on the morning of the 28th because he marches up to the hospital to check on his new uniform. "Clothes Make the Man" will be Merriman's watchwords this week and his diary reflects his obsession about looking like a Commander. George Brodsky is now in the Intendencia and very unhappy with the assignment. He makes a sarcastic comment that he is now wearing stripes (before he was a commissar and would



have had a single circled red star and two stripes on his cap as a Brigade Commissar). Now he will be a Lieutenant with a bars. Brodsky says he will put it on crooked so that people will think it doesn't matter to him.



Merriman rides out to camp Pozorubio with Steve Nelson, Bob Thompson and "Carlos". Merriman says "Holiday will be on Sunday". Sunday, May 30 was the traditional Memorial Day Holiday for Americans and they continued to observe it in Spain, possibly as reflection and honor for Americans who fought in the First World War. This remembrance of the fallen occurs in May for Americans (November 11 for the British and Canadians, while Americans celebrate their living veterans on November 11).

Merriman finishes the evening in meets with Mirko Markovich about the alignment of the Battalions and they will be competing

for positions over the next few days. Merriman drops the number "27th" into the text and that is a reference to February 27 where Merriman holds Copic responsible for the losses for the Lincolns at Jarama. He will never forget the order to go over the top even though the military position at the front was not what Copic described. And Merriman believes that Copic should not be trusted to lead. He probably was trying to align Markovich, an American Yugoslav, up with the American positions, hoping that it would not just be an American-European battle for the leadership. At this point, Merriman still holds out hope that Copic will be removed.

Merriman meets with Steve Nelson, Morrison and Horowitz (Sidney Horowitz^h who was nominated to reorganize the Intendencia along with Otto Vogel and a Spaniard in the wake of the removal of Lamotte). There were two Morrisons in the Lincolns: Joe Henry Morrison and Irving Morrison. Joe Morrison was an airplane mechanic and not in Pozo Rubio and Irving Morrison did not arrive until much later in 1937. This is believed to be the Briton William A. Morrison. The meeting is to practice their "stunt" which its likely to be a skit that the officers would give to entertain the troops at the holiday meal.

^h Sidney Horowitz was born September 21, 1909, in NYC. He sailed January 20, 1937 aboard the *Berengaria* and arrived in Spain on February 2, 1937. He was injured on Feb 27 at Jarama and in the hospital at Murcia. In March, he made a number of demands for pay, cigarettes, tea, books and mail for the Americans who were in hospital. He was in the Lincoln Machine Gun Company at Brunete and was in hospital, injured, at Castellejo in August, 1937. He was repatriated on September 24, 1937 aboard the *De Grasse*.

May 29—30 Marion Merriman Goes on a Mission

29 Mayo

S. Restituto

"Political commissars are civilians & not soldiers but representatives of {the} popular front government". Steve - Horowitz - Morrison stayed the night. Morrison to return to Albacete. Steve spoke about Cordoba front and cabinet moves. Afterward I lectured until 11³⁰ on difference between strategy & tactics and how to write orders. With Steve drove to Albacete - failed to find Marion but saw Overton who is in trouble - no record of his being an officer. Without stripes - and drinking much. Saw Patrick Long. Went to raise scandal to get uniform and finally got it a 6 sharp. Ate at Intendencia & appeared first time in new uniform - ate with Marty. Went to Guard Nacional - entertainment going on. Orchestra fine - some from French Legion. Talked with Lamotte about Overton because I wanted his hat. Order received to arrest him. Lamotte thought he was drunk and in jail. When he went to show me jail -- found hole in wall and most drunks escaped. Raised hell with guard. Marion and I went to show - *el 113* and *Mutiny on the Bounty*. Late when home. Marion informed by Fein she was to leave on special job in Murcia at 8 in morning. For this reason she missed celebration in camp. "Love in bloom". I wanted you so! Garland uniform. Marion to Murcia at 8 (British agents (women))

30 Mayo

S. Fernando rey

Rose at 6⁰⁰, went to B. I. club and came out to camp in Political Commissar car. Arrived in camp with new uniform and just in time to hear plans for the day. At 10 o'clock we had barrack inspection and 10³⁰ fell in for parade - fell in around flag pole & Vidal arrived and said holiday really farewell for Platone who is going tomorrow to the Garibaldi Brigade - with Vidal came Communist deputy

from France and all political Commissars from the base. In review our boys looked splendid - we were leading section and best on parade. After this barrack inspection by Winkler - Platone & Vidal etc. Dinner under trees at 12³⁰. Sat next to Platone & Carlos on the other side. Vidal said Brigade 15 to be reorganized - and I shall go after this session of the school with reorganization of brigade. All officers must be rechecked by war department. Got hat of Overton this morning, who was arrested last night. French deputy spoke & also Barthel "flags out when he left 15th Brigade". No translations for our boys. Entertainment in evening fine - cultural committee to make tour of hospitals - fronts - Greenspan, Garland and Steve Nelson came - spent session with Morry{?} over recent events in Spain. And split in anarchists & Socialist Party.

§ § §

Merriman's hand gets denser and denser. He has a lot to remember from these days. Merriman repeats the comment made at the meeting on 27 May "Political commissars are civilians and not soldiers and representatives of the popular front government". This message is being beaten into the heads of the Brigade staff and the commissars. Steve Nelson would become one of these commissars and that is not the message he heard:

The idea of political commissars has been around as far back as the Paris Commune, but when I was assigned to serve as one, I didn't have a good conception of what that meant. I asked around and got nebulous answers. I was told a commissar must be one who is trusted by his men, that he must be able to explain every situation, to see that military decisions and objectives are understood and that the mens' needs, physical and personal are taken care of. The fellow who had been the Lincoln's commissar at Jarama {George Brodsky} had been removed. He didn't do anything wrong -- he just didn't measure up to the situation. I asked if I could meet someone who had served as a commissar and was taken to a hospital to talk to a man who had been the commissar for

a French battalion until he was wounded at Jarama. His head was completely bandaged, leaving only slits for the eyes, mouth, and nostrils. Through my translator, he told me what the others had said: the commissar must be the most devoted and respected man in the unit. I had come to Spain with the recommendations of the American Party but I knew that I still had to prove myself to the men with whom I would serve.²⁸⁸

Many books on Spain leave the impression that the Commissars were completely political Communist party hacks. In fact, perhaps a quarter of the men who made Commissar in the Lincoln Brigade were not members of the Party and several were totally apolitical according to their exit papers. The statement made by Merriman reiterated that the Commissars worked for the Popular Front Government, not for the Army. This would have put many Commissars in a difficult conflict of interest.

Steve Nelson, Horowitz and William Morrison stayed the night at Pozo Rubio and Morrison would return to Albacete on the 29th. Lectures were given by Nelson and Merriman. Nelson's was political education from his commissar's role and Merriman's was on tactics versus strategy.



Robert Merriman's new hat (taken from Burt Overton). ALBA Photo 11 - 1278, Tamiment Library, NYU

After the training, Merriman returned to Albacete with Nelson and tried to locate Marion. Instead he had an interview with Bert Overton and detailed the charges against him. Overton apparently was never entitled to wear the stripes he wore at Jarama. Overton must have known he was in serious trouble and was drinking heavily at this point. Overton would be court martialled and convicted. This was convenient for Merriman since he needed to trick out his garb and now that he had his new uniform, he needed the hat. Merriman raised a ruckus (or in his terms, a "scandal") and got his uniform at 6 pm sharp. He will be talking about this uniform for days.

The order comes through to arrest Overton and Lamotte says he thinks Overton is in jail for drinking. Merriman and Lamotte go to the jail and do not find Overton. In fact, they find an empty jail with all the drunks broken out through a hole in the wall. Merriman raises hell with the guards. Likely they were drinking as well as Merriman has found French guards on duty drunk twice in the last few weeks.

Merriman says that he ate with Andre Marty. Merriman finds Marion and they go to the movies seeing "The Mutiny on the Bounty" (1935) and a Spanish film "El ciento trece". The 113 was made in 1935 and released in the US in 1938.

Marion gets news from Arturo Fein that she is to go to Murcia to check out the two British women who are asking questions and are under suspicion. Arturo Fine shows up in the records of Frederika Martin, a nurse there. This episode should be told but only in Marion's own words:

The other incident, which I did not share with Bob, nor with anyone else, was much worse. Bob stayed in town with me that night because I was to be off on the special business the next day. At eight o'clock in the morning on May 30, I left for Murcia with two pleasant Slav officers. As we drove through the barren lands, I caught up on my diary, writing entries as we motored along. We reached Murcia about noon, went on to Orihuela for lunch then went for a swim, my first in the

Mediterranean. Later I jotted in my diary: "A sandy beach, warm caressing water. Hold life, hold life so close".

We had dinner the two officers and I, on a terrace overlooking a sleepy village caught on the arm of a cove. We marveled at the rosy gray of the sea dotted with slow-moving fishing boats. And, during dinner, I noted that the atmosphere, the swim, the moonlight, the pure beauty of where we were, seemed to give one of my companions romantic ideas. In woman-less war, I'd seen the look before. I dismissed it.

That evening we checked into the hospital at Socorro Rojo. Weary from the long, if enjoyable, day. I fell quickly to sleep. But, suddenly and sharply, I was wide awake. The man whose "look" I'd noted at dinner was holding me down, one hand clamped over my mouth. I fought him, clawing, kicking. I couldn't scream. He raped me. I kicked him away. He fled the room.

I was stunned. I sobbed, terrified. I climbed from the bed, slowly, and pulled the blankets around me. I ran down the hall to the bathroom. There was no warm water. I filled the bathtub with icy water. I scrubbed and scrubbed, shivering from the cold and the fright. Crying, shivering, I scrubbed for hours. I couldn't cleanse myself, however hard I tried. I felt filthy, thoroughly filthy. I washed and washed, and I cried into the cold, early morning darkness.

The next morning I didn't know what to do. What could I do? Should I try to find a way back to Albacete? Should I somehow get hold of Bob? Should I try to reach Ed Bender? What should I do? I had to calm myself. This is war, I told myself. Men are dying and maimed. This is my burden. As horrible as the rape was, the worst that could happen would be a pregnancy. If that happened, I steeled myself, I would go to the hospital's doctors or to Paris and have an abortion.

But should I tell Bob? I asked myself, over and over. I searched and searched for the answer and finally concluded: I

must not hurt Bob with this. If I tell him, I reasoned, Bob might kill the man. Or one of the other Americans would, for sure. There would be great trouble. No this must be my secret burden. I cannot tell anyone --ever. What has been done cannot be undone.

I went down to the commissary where the two officers were eating breakfast. One was, as always, cheerful and friendly. He seemed confused when I didn't sit with them. The rapist was brazen, arrogant. We continued the mission. I ignored the rapist, but I could not get the rape off my mind. But I went on with my work. I interviewed the Englishwomen. I memorized impressions and wrote notes. When we returned to Albacete three days later, I reported to Bob about the Englishwomen's efforts to distract the Americans. I said nothing about the rape. The war filled Bob's mind. I could not trouble him further, and I did not.

Nor was I pregnant.²⁸⁹

The man's name has never been published.

Merriman wanted Marion at the celebration and says "Love in Bloom" How I wanted you so! "Love in Bloom" was a current song by Bing Crosby. One is left to imagine that this song might have been part of the "stunt" that the officers gave at the Celebration.

On the 30th, Merriman woke early and dressed for his "coming out" at Pozo Rubio and Tarazona in his new uniform and cap. He showed them off at the 10 o'clock barrack inspection and at 10:30 parade where the Brigade said goodbye to Platone as he would go off to lead the Garabaldi Battalion. It must have been an impressive send off since a Communist Deputy from France came and all the Albacete commissars were mustered up. Barthel, Winkler, Vidal and Carlos were there. Vidal informs Merriman that there will be a reorganization of the XVth Brigade and that he will be moving up. For now, he will stay with the school until the "end of term" and then move to a command position. Their entertainment must have gone well.

Merriman says that Steve Nelson, Walter Garland and Marion Greenspan (aka George Marion) came and in the session with "Marcy" or "Morry" they discussed the split between the PSOC and the Anarchists which occurred in the early part of May.

§ § §

May 31 ••• *The Ciudad de Barcelona is Sunk*

31 Mayo

Sta. Petronila

Put on old clothes again. Machine Guns in morning and finished it off with a lecture on infantry principles during lunch hour meeting of cultural committee to discuss work on wall newspaper. Murray Schneider hogged too much. {Hercules} Avgherinos told to become more active. Morrison, Steve Daduk & Flaherty left for Albacete and the trip home. During lunch hour General Gall came with Zaret. Gall wanted to talk with Hungarian section. Did so for several hours. I showed Gall mirror developed to allow shooting without getting behind gun directly. Heard about his fine shooting. Zaret told me of talks (7 hrs) between Gall, Haywood, Lawrence and Minor. Agreed to patch up the breach. Zaret expects more to come to Johnson since he is convinced he is a good man. Copic may go if he doesn't straighten up and be sent back to the Komintern or another brigade. Gall said I was to be adjutant for new Battallion in Tarazona. Said both Markovich and I {are} from Mexico {Russia} etc. Zaret said that it was agreed that either I go back to Lincoln Battallion or to the new one. Gal decided I was to go to Tarazona. Surprise to me but idea not bad one. Soon Markovich came on motorcycle and we talked - Mates seems to be getting weak and I approached Markovich that I might come to him as adjutant. He wanted to receive the order etc. Said no! Later he met Gal & asked about adjutant. "Sits on your left" I shall speak to a дедушка about weapons etc. Gal to visit them tomorrow after dinner. The news made Markovich & me decide to come to Vidal tomorrow morning. I decided to come tonight to talk with Bill who has just come from front. Minor left already. Arrived and talked. Bill gave report of talks with Gal and patching up of Johnson & low spirited Copic. Johnson may head brigade or be Chief of Staff. I found out today that Gal does not yet know what happened on the 27th. Bill said

Gal said I know how to work like a Bolshevik. Johnson not. Bill said once proposed that I be head of new Battallion & Markovich adjutant. But was no need for this. Line decided upon as follows - If Vidal wanted to send me to Lincoln must be done with consent of Haywood Johnson Hourihan. Opposed to both of us in one Battalion. But was question of 3rd Battallion and could bring Dart up from Cordoba as adjutant for Markovich! Went to Vidal - Gal was there & I had a few minutes with Vidal on the side. He decided I was to remain for this session of school & help Markovich and then take over the third Battallion in Tarazona. They had beat us to the solution. Talked about Copic & report etc. of 27th & he hinted change for Copic to new place etc. (Oct. 15)

§ § §

Robert Merriman has intense days in 1937 where he writes a lot and even (like today) needs a continuation page. This particular diary entry is illuminating for his frankness about the dynamic of the leadership of the XVth Brigade and the Vth Army Corps to which it belonged. We might pause to review this, this is the organization of the IB's^{290, 291} about May of 1937:

Vth Army Corps led by General Gall (Janos Galicz); Hans Klaus, Chief of Staff

- XI Brigade ("Ernst Thaelmann Brigade") led by General Kleber (11/36-11/36), Colonel Hans Kahle²⁸⁹ (11/36-3/37) and Maj Richard Staimer (4/37-12/37) with Ludwig Renn (Chief of Staff)
- XII Brigade ("Lukacs Brigade") led by General Pavol Lukacs (Mátá Zalka)
- XIII Brigade ("Dombrowski Brigade") led by General Gómez (Wilhelm Zaisser)²⁹¹

- XIV Brigade ("The Marseillaise Brigade") led by Colonel Putz²⁹¹ (who went to Bilbao in June) and General Walter Karol Swierczewski) after June 15 1937
- XV Brigade (XVth Brigada Mixta, "English Speaking Brigade") led by Vladimir Copic and formed on February 8:

First regiment (English Speaking) May/June 1937 led by George Nathan

- 16th (later 58th Battalion; "The British Battalion") led by Fred Copeman in spring-summer 1937
- 17th (later 58th Battalion; "The Lincoln Battalion") Led by Merriman then Marty Hourihan and then Oliver Law (4/37-7/37). Marty Hourihan was promoted to Regimental Staff.
- 20th ("The Washington Battalion", 22 May-14 July 1937) led by Mirko Markovich. In May the Washingtons were still in training and after the battle of Brunete, the Washington Battalion was combined with the Lincoln Battalion.
- The 60th Battalion - Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion - was not formed until after 29 June. This was "The Third Battalion" in Merriman's diary initially led by Robert Merriman, later by Robert Thompson and then Edward Cecil-Smith)

Second Regiment (non-English speaking)

- 14th Battalion - The Dimitrov Battalion (largely Slavic) led by Chapaiev who served as the Second Regiment's leader as well.
- 19th (later 14th Brigade; French Sixth of February battalion) led by Gabriel Fort

- 24th ("Voluntario 24", later absorbed into the 59th Spanish Battalion") - This battalion that contained many anarchist units was decimated over the summer of 1937.
- International Cavalry Squadron

With this review, we see that Merriman arose on the 31st for work and the new uniform goes into the closet and he switches to his work clothes. After some infantry and machine gun lectures, Merriman meets with the men and provides criticism. Merriman spells "Snyder" but this is Murray Schneiderⁱ. Schneider is dressed down for participating too much and Hercules Avgherinos for participating too little. This is not the Costas Avgherinos mentioned before since he was killed in action by this point. From Carmody:

Hercules later became a member of SIM, and was involved in tracking down Anarchists and others who were helping deserters from the IB's onto ships and out of Spain. He was later based in Barcelona and was part of the IB Delegation there. He was repatriated from Spain in October, 1938.²⁹²

William A. Morrison, Steve Daduk and Ed Flaherty are released to Albacete where they will be sent back to the US. Daduk will return on July 2 and the three Flaherty brothers, Ed, Frank and Charles on July 31 to the US. On June 1, Merriman will add Sterling Rochester in this group. Walter Kolowski also returned on the same ship as the Flaherty brothers.

General Gal (Janusz Galicz) arrives at lunchtime with David Zaret (real name Daniel Abraham Zaretsky aka David A. Jarrett) who was Gal's Chief of Staff. Gal's interest was meeting with his countrymen from Hungary but Merriman wanted to show off his

ⁱ Murray Schneider was born on September 14, 1905, in Pzemysal, Austria. A seaman by trade, Schneider arrived in Spain on April 2, 1937. He was in the OTS, served at Brunete, and then was sent to Tarazona placed in charge of canteen. There he was arrested for theft and speculation. He returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. Schneider died October 15, 1987.

new technology (a mirror to be used when firing a machine gun and keeping your head down). Gal took a turn at the gun.

Meanwhile Merriman got Zaret to reveal details of a high level party meeting between Gal and the leading American CP cadres Harry Haywood, Bill Lawrence and Bob Minor. This enclave which lasted most of a day clearly got into the details of who would go where in the new reorganized Brigade. Recall that Merriman blamed Copic for the disaster of the 27th of February and he expected Copic to be removed. Zaret lets Merriman know that Allan Johnson had been cleared of the accusation "desertion to the front" of April 5 and that more responsibility will be given to Johnson and Copic's removal is under consideration. Through the lens of time, Zaret must have been in a tough spot with loyalty to the Americans and working for Gal and Copic. Zaret reveals that Copic is only being warned to "shape up". Copic's political skills were extensive and his support within the Comintern was not negligible. Merriman's activism to have Copic removed will fail here and fail frequently over the next year.

Gal's thinking is revealed to Merriman and he will be adjutant for Markovich in Tarazona for the (still to be named) Washington Battalion. Given a choice between Markovich and Merriman, he is told they are both from "Mexico", i.e. the Soviet Union. This would indicate that Merriman is being given credit for his time in Russia, although according to Marion Merriman Wachtel, he was studying agricultural economics. Whether this indicates that he was studying more than agriculture or whether Merriman has claimed that his time in Russia gave him status with the CP is not clear. Zaret says that the conclusion was that Merriman would go back to a line position either as head of the Lincolns or as head of the new Battalion (the Washington). Since Oliver Law was in charge of the Lincoln and Markovich believed that the Washington was his, Merriman will have to bump one of them aside. He says Gal decides he is to go to Tarazona (stay with the training battalion until the current group moves up with Markovich).

Markovich must have had his informants out because he races over to Pozo Rubio on a motorcycle and found out what is going on. Dave Mates who was the Commissar for the new Washington

Battalion was viewed as "weak" so Merriman suggests to Markovich that he become Markovich adjutant in the Washington Battalion. Markovich is so thrilled with this idea that he asks to see the orders first. He told Merriman a flat "No!" Merriman must have been totally taken aback. They later go to see Gal to get the word directly and Gal tells Marcovich that as Adjutant, Merriman would "sit on your left". Whether this is to be taken literally or not, it does bring to mind Mark 10:37 where James and John asked Jesus:

"They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory."

If it was a biblical reference, Gal must have had quite the sense of humor.

In the next sentence, Merriman is encouraged to practice his Russian again and he says he will speak to "gegymka", written is longhand but in print in Russian дедушка pronounced "dedushka". A dedushka is Russian for "Grandfather". It sounds as if he will be going to a senior Russian advisor to speak about "weapons, etc." but given the prior discussion and train of thought, one must question whether Merriman is now playing power politics to get that Washington Battalion assignment and to get out of Pozo Rubio. He says Gal will visit "them" (presumably the Russians) after dinner on the 1st of June.

The shuffling by Gal encouraged Merriman and Markovich to go together to see Vidal about the new assignments. But as we see in the following paragraphs, Merriman did not waste time and went into Albacete on the ruse of intervening with Bill Lawrence who had come back from Jarama. Minor was already gone so Merriman would be trying to pull strings within the CPUSA and Lawrence. Lawrence confirms what Zaret had already told Merriman. Lawrence confirms that Johnson's actions of April 5 are repaired and that Johnson is off the hook. He may end up as Chief of Staff under Copic and that Copic is depressed by the reorganization talk. Merriman must have asked if Gal knew what happened on February 27th and finds out that Gal is blind about the controversy of February 27. Lawrence tells Merriman that he

has Gal's support and Gal thinks Merriman "knows how to work like a Bolshevik". He says "Johnson not". Whether this is a criticism of Johnson being soft, Johnson not being a Communist or just not following orders is not known. Recall that Johnson reorganized the Lincolns at Jarama without Copic's approval and some appointments were overturned.

Lawrence revealed that in the 7-hour discussion the possibility of Merriman leading the Washingtons and Markovich being *his* adjutant was tossed around. But the Americans decided on a position that is revealed here. Merriman can only go to the Lincolns with Haywood, Johnson and Hourihan's approval. This shows that if Oliver Law is to be removed those three American CP members would have to take the hit back home for how that would look. That could hardly happen easily. The Americans agreed that it would be bad to have Merriman and Markovich in the same battalion and the bad trust shown between the two men indicate that this is a wise position. In the formation of the 3rd Battalion, they could bring Rollin Dart back from Cordoba and make him Markovich adjutant and Merriman could take the 3rd Battalion (the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion).

Merriman goes to Albacete to argue for this line and has time with Vidal. He finds that this path has already been decided by the Brigade. Merriman will help Markovich train the Washingtons until they leave and then he will take over Marcovich' role with the third battalion. Merriman will not let the 27th drop and he discusses Copic again with Vidal, who throws Merriman a bone by saying Copic might be moved.

Merriman needed more room to finish his report and entered it on the October 15:

§ § §

15 Octubre**Sta. Teresa de Jesús**

(continued from May 31)

Returned and reported to Boys in 22. Everything seems ok. They are going tomorrow to Tarazona to see about Mates. Steve to go to front eventually as {Lincoln} Battalion Political Commissar. Soon. Boys from Cordoba coming to join other English-speaking comrades. Captain in charge of training at Figueras dropped in and complained of demoralized elements in Albacete and how to correct it. Met George Kaye who just came. He is to go to Tarazona. Joe and I left early and decided to retire early – Bullied for some time about Marion background – and Joe 1st & second wives. Joe typed. Vidal tells that ship hit by torpedo near Barcelona & some drowned others swam in. 200 on board ½ believed to be ours. Not known for sure. Gall has highest award of Spanish Government Medal – Order of the Republic. Only 4 men in Corps received it! Wintringham may take school. As soon as possible.

§ § §

Merriman returns to the hotel and meets with comrades in Room 22 (this would be Minor and Lawrence's room). He says that they will go to Tarazona and check on Dave Mates to see whether he is ok. Steve Nelson is tagged to be the Lincoln Commissar at this point and will go to Jarama soon.

Merriman reveals that the men who were assigned to the 86th Brigade (20th Battalion) at Cordoba will be coming back to join the XVth. This will bring about 100 or so more English speaking comrades into Tarazona, many of whom will be battle hardened and available for leadership. Gates and Dart are notable inclusions.

Merriman says that the Captain in charge of training at Figueras came to Albacete to report that some men in Albacete are "demoralized elements". It would be interesting to have

overheard that discussion. George Kaye ^j is now in Albacete. Merriman "bulled" with Joe Dallet in the evening and shared stories about Marion (little did he know the pain she was suffering in Murcia at the time, see the diary pages for May 29-30). Joe Dallet talked about his first (Barbara R. Eisenberg)²⁹³ and second (Kitty Puening²⁹⁴) wives.

Merriman gets news that the Ciudad de Barcelona has been torpedoed and that perhaps half of the men on board were Americans for the International Brigades. Sebastiaan Faber of ALBA wrote an article on the sinking of this ship for the 75th Anniversary in 2012²⁹⁵. There is a website²⁹⁶ dedicated to the memory of the sinking of the ship, and some letters and poems from veterans describing their experience are online at the University of Illinois.²⁹⁷

After acknowledging that General Gal won a medal from the Spanish Republic, Merriman finishes with the note that Tom Wintringham will soon come to lead the school and we can hear Merriman's urgency to get out of Pozo Rubio with "As soon as possible". Wintringham's tenancy of the position at the school will not be long lived and a place will be found for Allan Johnson as the schoolmaster.

^j George Kaye was born on November 26, 1915 in NYC. He had attended Los Angeles Junior College for 2 years and was in the ROTC there. Professionally a truck driver and clerk, he arrived on April 10, 1937. He would be put into the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion and transfer to the Lincoln-Washington Battalion's, Machine gun Company as a Cabo during the final Ebro Offensive. Kaye would return to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. He served in WWII. He died June 10, 1990 in Alameda, CA.

JUNE 1937

~~did - longer - figure and some more details.~~
 In morning Bill Lawrence left early and for a while
 I held check on secreted connection. Marching
 29 Junio Stos. PEDRO Y PABLO
~~arriving at the neighborhood - the mountains~~
 Co. looking clearly have figured and got along
 so general. Left his trench for altitude with
 major and his wife to Bill Lawrence who went
 with us to El Est. Major and had to leave
 for Andale front. Saw Pidal after lunch with
 Nathan (major) and Cunningham and writing
 to Nathan of the final draft. Went to Pidal and
 to the house - had long discussion - asked first by
 poor doubt and written question & number in that
 got order by name unless go to see but telephone and
 I wanted about it to discuss it in my report
 personally to Pidal. Didn't mention made out at
 get in the combination I in go man - my coat
 through you straight taken but he showed the report &
 go on you and pass me I in. at at intention
 and the show to Pidal to see money go from
 unpleasantly to see not - and I would return
 late - saw plane and range fence today
 went off. but back late and after a shower in the
 climbed in long day but got plane major
 tomorrow etc. but of morning but really relaxed on way
 home.
 30 Junio Sta. Lucina
 Battalion had until 8 o'clock cleaning
 some of urgent close and two international
 youth delegations at 8 quit and talked
 to Batt. awarded Batt banner to
 Com. Thompson first woman - talked about
 future of Batt and general outline of work
 discussion about food and Batt called to
 stop in 5 p. each each day day. Received
 out more work. Held several meetings
 had phone call from Tony when she
 came and soon after I asked for her
 documents, attitude not bad and he visited
 and talked with fellow. Both sounds
 work get show good interest in socialist
 etc. against other of many and Meace.
 after left sent battle, news of P. y. Robin
 W. H. H. came. Sentenced on 2. v. and
 H. C. immediately after had session with
 leading committee and worked the party
 and cleared up mail staff making good plan of studying
 me for front and organization of the
 American company. Dr. Davis here a party
 did from trouble.

JUL AGO SEP OCT NOV DIC

June 1 – 2 Merriman Listens to Men's Criticism

1 Junio

S. Segundo

In morning Markovich woke Joe Dallet and me. Told him results of discussion of night before and Vidal's decisions. He didn't like it naturally. Went to Room 22 and had general discussion. Steve Daduk, Flaherty and Rochester to leave today. General discussion. Met George Kaye, discussed political work of Mates in Tarazona and Brodsky. In general meeting of Steve Nelson, Bill Lawrence, Markovich, Kaye & I all talked Russian decided to send Kaye to work in as Supply officer & to talk with Mates about work. Markovich refused to herd Mates around himself. Tried to get ride home without success. Finally Roblet picked me up but left Joe Dallet. arrived home - Roblet lectured while I worked translation not good - settled in evening on names for machine gun parts which to be uniform. Had meeting of political commissars which lasted late - Anglo American relations discussed Also Spanish lessons, etc.

2 Junio

Sta Edelmira

First morning of bayonet drill. Mexican style-lecture on tactics & group functions Rodriguez (negro comrade) wanted to raise question about so-called comrade after said I was a better political man than military man and was not accepted on the front as a leader. Another thought I didn't know my stuff but mainly repeated Roblet on everything. Thing was to be introduced in ~~political~~ military lecture avoided this. Joe talked with Eladio Paula & Swinnerton who were supposed to have said this. Rodriguez got story twisted. Galli gave talk in evening discussed it in round table. Litwin returned from hospital & anxious to get back to Spanish. Steve Nelson came on way to Lincoln Battallion where he will be political

Commissar eventually. Learned Spanish commands for drill. Meeting about political work interesting. Paula bawled out Gonshak for asking such queer questions. Steve stayed night and gave us some news.

§ § §

The adjustments in leadership of late May continue and on the 1st of June, Merriman and Markovich have to learn to work together. Merriman tells Mirko Markovich that he will be helping him train the Washingtons until they leave and Marcovich is unhappy with the outcome. Together they go up to Room 22 in the hotel and meet with Bill Lawrence, Steve Nelson and George Kaye who has just arrived. Presumably, "Grandfather" (a Russian) is there since they speak Russian and it says Russian sends Kaye to work in the supply depot.

In a continuation of information given on May 31, what is clear is that Steve Daduk, Edward Flaherty and Sterling Rochester have left Albacete to return to the U.S. David Mates is still an issue in Tarazona and Markovich doesn't not want to "herd him". This would mean that Mates needs either training or monitoring and Marcovich doesn't want to be responsible for his Commissar. Merriman is nominated to speak to Mates about his work.

Merriman needed to get back to Pozo Rubio for training and Roblet came to give him a ride back but left Joe Dallet in Albacete. Machine gun training continues and Merriman has difficulty translating the parts names from Russian to English. It would be important to have uniformity in the naming of the gun parts since replacements would need to be ordered as weapons broke down. One never knew the nationality of the person who was working in the Armory and it would be like ordering parts for a Russian car using English words. The day finished with discussions on the relationships between the battalions, especially the English and Americans.



(left) Joe Sands , Julius Rodriguez, and Frank Chesler, ALBA Photo 11-0786, Tamiment Library, NYU. (right) Eladio Paula (in beret) and his brother Aurelio Paula. Aurelio would die in the Battle of the Ebro in August 1938. Eladio survived the war. Photo from the Paula family via Ancestry.com

On the second of June, a political meeting was held with the men and Julius Rodriguez^a tells Merriman to his face that there are men who don't trust his military ability and feel he is more of a political leader than a military one. The criticism comes from a "Paula" (believed to be Cuban American Eladio Paula) and a "Swinnerton". Eladio Paula^b was from Tampa, also Cuban, and would have known Rodriguez. Dennis Swinnerton was English and was injured at Jarama. He probably befriended Paula in hospital. Swinnerton will desert later in the summer of 1937. It must have been a frank discussion for Merriman to have with the men. Joe Dallet meets with Paula and Swinnerton and tells Merriman that Rodriguez has it wrong. Again Merriman says

^a Julius Rodriguez was July 4, 1908, Tampa, Florida, and listed as African-American. A driver by profession, he arrived in Spain on March 25, 1937. He attended the OTS then served with as an ambulance driver. He returned to the US on February 8, 1939 aboard the *Washington*. He was a Civilian Defense Worker in WWII in the Portland Shipyards.

^b Eladio (Yayo) Paula Bolanos was born December 14, 1916 in Tampa, Florida, and was Cuban American. He was by profession a printer and belonged to the Cuban Julio Mella Club. He arrived in Spain on January 14, 1937, and was with the Lincolns at Jarama, Brunete, and the Retreats. He returned to the US on December 31, 1938 aboard the *President Harding*. He was in the Merchant Marines in WWII. He died February 27, 2003, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. His brother, Aurelio, also served and died in Spain.

"Galli talked". Luigi Longo (Gallo) sent Honoré (Ernest) Galli to the Training Base at Albacete on May 5.²⁹⁸ Galli was sent to help develop a political course of training at the training base. The criticism of the men was discussed in a "round table" but Merriman does not let us know the conclusion.

Alfred Harvey Litwin is back from hospital and wants to get back to the "Spanish", and that could be to Spanish language training. Litwin came in on May 11 so it is not clear if he was injured or ill. Steve Nelson is preparing to go to Jarama to be Commissar for the Lincolns. He will stay over until at least the 3rd. In an evening meeting Eladio Paula "bawled out" Samuel Gonshak^c who was a Sergeant in the Autopark for the questions he asked.



Samuel Gonshak, Autopark, ALBA Photos 11_0026, Tamiment Library NYU

^c Samuel Gonshak (Gunshuk, Gunshick) was born September 22, 1911 in NYC. He arrived in Spain on March 15, 1937, and served with as Commissar in the AutoPark with a rank of Sargento. He returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. Gonshak died on May 9, 2000.

June 3—4 ••• Honoré Galli Can Play Volleyball

3 Junio

Sta Clotilde, reina

Bayonet drill in morning under leadership of Slavs. Spanish lesson held and then I gave lecture on activities of group. Leaders gave first drill this morning in Spanish. Not bad for first time. Machine gun parts definitely named and wrenches demonstrated by Levine. Told Steve & Joe history of Lincoln Battalion - gave Steve copies of all written material from school & he is to give it to Hourihan to help build him up when boys come out of line. Discussed political work and question of meetings after actions, etc. CNT has come out in favor of the government and hinting it might take part. Heard that German warship Deutschland bombed in order to allow two shiploads of ammo from old country to land safely. Steve left. Good luck. In evening played first game of volleyball. Kaminsky & Knight had never played. Galli starred. Tired after game & sleep a little - had discussion with Pete {Hampkins} & Bob {Thompson} and then retired early. Mullinger is heir to 2 million but may have lost rights to it by coming to Spain. Tellier yelled "Manana" at Roblet. Very poor!

4 Junio

Sta. Saturnina

Ran during early morning. Unable to get up for morning work. Bayonet drill then Spanish lesson and then comrade Olorenshaw gave them conventional signs. In afternoon Pete took men out to give Maxim and light machine gun lesson also. Pete too mechanical and carries out orders too strictly - many men turning against him. Must speak to him. Joe Dallet and Bob Thompson dropped in often and we held some interesting chats. Roblet came in during afternoon. Returned from Valencia when he arranged for appointment of 60 Mexican comrades who are dying to get to work. Roblet himself to aid in organizing and training several new Spanish Brigades. Men returned from range

late. Joe & I held commission on Bob Thompson about his health & asserting himself. Entertainment held and we officers unable to give our stunt because I am sick. Second time we missed. Vidal & Winkler came but I didn't see them.

§ § §

The jockeying for leadership of the previous week has settled down and Merriman describes a full two days of training in bayonet drill and machine gun skills. Merriman states that machine gun parts now have agreed upon names and instruction is being conducted in Spanish. Sidney Levine^d led machine gun instruction and Levine would lead machine gun companies until the Lincolns are pulled out of Spain in 1938. Levine would end up being shot in five separate places in at least four battles. Sid Levine and Jack Cooper (Isadore Levitt) would remain in Pozo Rubio for machine gun instruction throughout the fall of 1937, although Levine will see action in Brunete and Quinto and the Second Belchite in the spring of 1938.

Merriman gives private instruction to Steve Nelson and Joe Dallet who would be political commissars in the battalions. Merriman tells Nelson to pass some of the political information on to Marty Hourihan so he would be prepared for political instruction of the Lincolns as they are pulled out of the line. Nelson related how he would arrive at Jarama shortly before they were retired for the rest of the month of June to "Ibáñez"²⁹⁹. Ibáñez was actually Albares, 30 miles east of Madrid. Merriman relays the news about the bombing of the German Battleship *Deutschland* while it was in port in Mallorca. Merriman knows already that the attack was

^d Sidney Levine was born August 11, 1911 in Stanford, CN. He got an AA from De Anza Community College in History and then joined the Marines. Released due to being underage, he finally joined the US Army 106th Regiment as a corporal and machine gunner in 1934. He served with the Lincoln Battalion in Jarama, went to OTS and became Adjutant Commander of the Lincoln-Washington Battalion at Brunete. He was in the Special Brigade Machine Gun Company as a Lieutenant at Fuentes del Ebro, Teruel and Ebro Offensive. He returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. In WWII, as a corporal, he served as part of the US Army of Occupation in Japan. He died in July 1999 in California.

protective cover for a shipment of weapons from the "old country" (i.e. Russia). The Deutchland attack, while boosting the morale of the Brigades, provided an excuse for the Germans to bomb the port of Almería³⁰⁰ on May 31. Merriman wishes Nelson "Good Luck!" in his new assignment.



Merriman reveals that Honoré Galli, new instructor at the base, is a good volleyball player. Merriman says that Levie Kaminsky (Edward Baker) and the Canadian Allan Knight had never played volleyball. Merriman reveals that "Mullinger" who would become Chief of Scouts came from a very well off family. R. Charles Mullinger was really Cecil Merritt Cole^e and he would risk his inheritance. Mullinger was killed on the Ebro in July 1938.

Charles (Jack) Mullinger, Head of Scouts, ALBA Photo 11-0910, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman says he spent the evening reviewing Bob Thompson and Pete Hampkin's leadership styles and Bob Thompson's health. Merriman gives the name of Lucien Tellier³⁰¹ of Montreal, Canada, who shouted "Mañana" at Roblet in training. The Lincolns used Mañana as an epithet for the slow pace of activity in Spain.

On the 4th Arthur Olorenshaw is back in camp and leading the training again on signals. Pete Hampkins is said to be "too

^e Cecil Merritt Cole (Charles R. Mullinger) was born February 10, 1913 in Oakland, California as James Francis Armistead and adopted twice. He took the name Cole later. He was a graduate of the University of California and served 4 years in the US Navy. He served as Chief of Scouts for the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. "Jack" Mullinger (from Harold Hoff, private communication) was killed in action July 1938 at Gandesa, during the Ebro Offensive.

mechanical". Roblet returns from Valencia and announces that he has rounded up 60 "Mexicans" (i.e. volunteers who have come from Russia -- not necessarily Russian by nationality, but coming from the Soviet Union) to come and help in the training. It is likely that they came in on the Russian ship which ran the blockade at Mallorca avoiding the Deutschland battleship. Roblet again is noted as soon to leave to organize the Spanish brigades in Valencia.

Merriman is ill at the time he was writing on June 4 and the entertainment which was to be given by the Commanders (the "stunt") was cancelled again ... Merriman was also ill at the last fiesta for the entertainment. Merriman misses Vidal and Winkler who came to camp.

§ § §

June 5—6 The Washington Battalion Moves Up

5 Junio

S. Bonifacio

Sick but decided to get up and give a lecture. Got up finally & after Spanish lesson gave it on topography. Finished and got men ready to go to town. Bill Lawrence came on motorcycle - all muddy from fall. Battalion ready to leave for front and many men to be left in Tarazona (150). Bill Lawrence wanted Dallet and me to go there and take care of men or else French comrade will be put in charge. Finally got truck (camp's) and drove to Tarazona. Talked with Mates & Markovich who have selected best men and left the worst - Brodsky, Givney and 10 trouble-makers. Left for Albacete to talk to Vidal. Hank Fuller talked me to death - "if you multiply this by 100, etc." Vidal not in. Went to {Dr.} Telge and discussed Barsky, Mildred, Pitts and reorganization. Pitts to head one. Barsky another & to return to U.S. Inspected and necessary to talk it over more at night. Arranged for lectures on first aid & ambulance & doctor. Hyde came in. Wife left him & trouble in Murcia. Bill cut him short & told him he was to come to new Battalion. Hyde wanted to know in what capacity etc. As common soldier. Met Tommy who is to take his place. Bill - I tried once more to see Vidal & decided to go in morning. Barsky & Telge came in and started long discussion. Bob & I returned to hotel - discussed possibility of going to Tarazona. Went to station (1st. aid) to find Hyde - not there.

6 Junio

S. Norberto

Rose early because heard American singing. Went to Guard Nacional and met Cross & Corona who will be Chief of Staff of 1 Shock Brigade (may be bull). Abe Harris etc. Went to Etat Major & met Roblet who is to help form 16 Brigade & {illeg.} 1 old unit 2 new ones etc. Bill L. and I saw Schalbroeck who is to take Platone's place raised

question of new battalion. Commander. Canadian men from old school - Dart from Cordoba. Received car for the day to Tarazona -- permanent car later. Bill received permanent salvo conducto. Went to autopark met George Kaye. Picked up Bob Thompson. Lamotte had drink with us. Bill & Bender joined us. Drove to Tarazona. Met Markovich & talked with Dallet. Givney came up and met Mike Pappas - Burton. Met new Battalion and then talked with military leaders. After they left Galli came over to help - fine fellow. Returned to Albacete. On route decided on Dukes, Brodsky, Givney, Abe Harris quartermaster. Bob Thompson. Went to eat & then to Room 22 - chauffer of Dodge for political commissar went to inspect Etat Major guard and to get man to help Kaufman on his trip to Valencia. Met Royce drunk demoralized. Met night patrol and chose Schrenzel to go with Kaufman. Talked with Pete and came back to hotel and had talk with Kaufman. Bought lamb for fiesta. **(on side of page: Joe Dallet crossed with Bill L.) (Bob brought diary had been read!)**

§ § §

Four very hectic days begin for Robert Merriman as the Washington Battalion finishes its training and is to move up to the front at Jarama. In reality, the Washington Battalion did not go into the lines at Jarama as the Lincolns were relieved about this point and moved to Albares, east of Mondejar and north of Tarancón. The British Battalion would be withdrawn to Mondejar. The Washington Battalion would be held in reserve behind the lines.³⁰² But from the next four days of diary, we are informed that the Markovich-led battalion goes to Albacete and Merriman is ordered to Tarazona de la Mancha to start forming another battalion with men who did not go to Albacete. This will become the nascent Mackenzie-Papineau battalion and we can see a thread of Canadians being involved in these diary passages.

Merriman continues to be ill and he drags himself out of bed for a topography lesson. Bill Lawrence arrives from Albacete to Pozo Rubio and it must have been urgent as he took a motorcycle for the trip rather than being driven in a staff car. He took a fall on the way and showed up covered in mud. Lawrence informs Merriman that the Battalion is now moving out and that there will be about 150 men left behind in Tarazona. It is time to decide who will be the commander of that new forming battalion (recall that it takes about 600 men to have a full formed battalion). Lawrence tells Merriman and Dallet to get over to Tarazona to take charge or a French commander would be put in charge of the third battalion (one wonders if this might be a French Canadian considering the makeup of the new Battalion). This Frenchman is unnamed.

After "organizing" a truck to Albacete, Merriman and Dallet go over to Tarazona and meet with Markovich and Mates who are leading the Washington Battalion. They find out that George Brodsky, John Givney and "10 trouble makers" are being left behind by Markovich. Merriman will inherit these problems again. And he is not happy with that.

There is also a big shake up necessary in the Sanitary Brigade. Dr. Cachin has appealed to Albacete to get Dr. Catalette out of Tarancón and Vidal has had to get involved with the medical staff. At the same time, a third group of Americans has arrived in May from the American Medical Bureau and with that capacity, the temptation is to get the Americans in charge of the Medical Units. Merriman and Dallet drive back into Albacete to meet with Doctor Oscar Telge and Dr. Edward Barsky, clearly about issues of who will be leading the medical support for these battalions. Merriman and Vidal decide that the recently arrived Donald Pitts will lead one group in Villapaz and Castellejo, Mildred Rackley will go with him, and Doctor Barsky will head the hospital in the front at Cordoba (says Cordou in RGASPI) and that Dr. Ettelson will lead the "neurological group".³⁰³ It is also revealed that Barsky is scheduled to return to the US. Barsky presumably would be going to recruit more support for the American Medical Bureau. This would remove some of the uncertainty of whether the front line hospitals would be able to support the next actions.

Merriman introduces a new name, Tom Hyde, who is a problem for the Staff. Hyde arrived in Spain on March 20, 1937. Tom Hyde was a bookstore owner from New Jersey who had had some



(left) Dr. Oscar Telge (Tsvetan Kristanov) Source: Fredericka Martin Photo Archive ALBA 001: 1:1:31:1, Tamiment Library, NYU (right) Dr. Edward Barsky, RGASPI Archives Fond 545/Opus 6/Delo 861, Moscow



Tom Hyde, family photo used with permission

experience as a hospital administrator in the US. Hyde was probably attached to the AMB because of this latter experience. Hyde is working in Murcia as the administrator of the hospitals there. Hyde mentions that he has problems stateside and review of his file at the Tamiment Library shows that his bookstore was in financial difficulty with a partner in the bookstore pulling out and leaving Mrs. Hyde in serious difficulty in making ends meet. Some of the letters from Hyde reached André

Marty's desk as Hyde was seeking repatriation to the US to take care of his business. Here Bill Lawrence is unsympathetic and his

skills don't appear to be needed in the AMB so they tell him he will be going to the front with the new battalion "as a common soldier". There is a letter from Hyde to the Brigade file³⁰⁴ where Hyde explains that he was being usurped in his Political Commissar's role at Murcia by William Bradshaw and Sidney Stanley on accusation of theft and inefficiency. In his letters, to Alex Donaldson of the Cadre's Bureau, Hyde challenges the assertions and said he was vindicated by a tribunal held in Murcia. Hyde's disaffection will fester for months but he will be on the line in the attack on Belchite in September 1937 where he was injured in the foot by shrapnel. Hyde returned to the US in the fall of 1938, much too late to deal with his financial issues. He lost the bookstore (Richard Hyde, private communication).

Merriman says he met "Tommy" who was to take Hyde's place in the First Aid Service. This is Thomas Degan.³⁰⁵ Merriman finishes an active day with discussions again with Telge and Barsky about the medical service and he goes off to find Hyde at First Aid (presumably to give him a decision) and does not find him. Reducing friction in the Medical Service seems to have taken precedence over Hyde's feelings.

On the 6th, Merriman rises and goes to meet "Cross" and Arturo Corona who is to be Chief of Staff of a new shock battalion (shock battalions are the name of front line troops who are thrown into the most difficult assault situations). It was supposed to be an "honor" to be in a shock brigade although the service would be amongst the hardest faced in the war. Merriman doesn't believe this assignment of Corona, probably because of critical comments he made about him in February. Donald Ellis Cross was in Spain at this time, but unlikely to be put into a leadership role. Merriman does confirm that Abe Harris will be Quartermaster for the new brigade.

Merriman says he meets with Roblet and finds he will go off to the 16th Brigade (a Spanish Brigade in the Vth Army Corps that will have a role in the upcoming battle of Brunete) and he says it will include one old battalion and two new battalions. There is an unreadable word in the diary and it may be the name of the new Brigade, if it could be deciphered.

Merriman meets with the Belgian Captain Jean Schalbroeck who is replacing Platone as Vidal's deputy. Merriman wants to review with the Brigade leadership whether the previous plan was going to be carried out, i.e. Merriman would command the third Battalion or be Markovich adjutant in the Washingtons or whether Rollin Dart would be brought back from Cordoba to be Markovich' adjutant. No answer is found here, but Merriman does not leave Tarazona. The "en passant promotion" is indicated by the vehicles they drive, however, since Merriman and Lawrence get a permanent car, a permanent salvo conducto (to allow Lawrence to leave Tarazona and move around), and they go to the auto park to round up other transportation. We find that Lamotte is now in the auto park and out of Albacete. George Kaye, who is also in the Auto Park, Ed Bender, Bob Thompson, Lamotte and Merriman have a drink together.



(l-r) Unknown man, Mike Pappas, Ed Bender, ALBA Photo 11 - 1574, July 1938, Tamiment Library, NYU

After gaining a vehicle, Lawrence and Merriman go back to Tarazona to meet with Markovich and Dallet. Givney came and Merriman met Mike Pappas^f. Pappas will be a fixture in the Lincolns for much of 1937 and 1938. He was in the Machine gun company, in the cocina, and finally was killed on the Ebro in 1938. A highly recognizable vet because of his fine features and recognizable mustache, Pappas was spoken of often by later Lincoln leadership, such as Milt Wolff (Wolff would call him Nick Pappas or "Nick the Greek" on ALBA audiotapes made for Art Landis' book³⁰⁰). Galli is again mentioned and he came over from Pozo Rubio to Tarazona to help out in organizing the remaining men. Merriman clearly respected the experienced French soldier Honoré Galli.



Larry Dukes, ALBA Photo 11_0034, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman returned to Albacete at the end of the day and in the car ride, they decided to place Larry Dukes, John Givney, George Brodsky, Abe Harris and Bob Thompson in the new battalion. One is left to wonder, after all the grousing and trouble with Dukes, Givney and Brodsky, why these men were placed in positions of responsibility. Perhaps Merriman thought if they saw the command side of the Battalion, they would complain less about authority.

Returning up to Bill Lawrence's

^f Nick Pappas (ΝΙΚΟΣ ΠΑΠΠΑΣ; Mike; Michael Papadopullo) was born on June 8, 1913 in Boston (Watertown), Massachusetts. He had prior military service in the, MA National Guard, 26th Yankee Division. Pappas arrived in Spain on February 19, 1937, attended OTS then served with the Washington Battalion as a Section Leader in the MG Company. In the Lincoln-Washington Battalion MG Company in Quinto and Belchite, he moved to the Base as an instructor, returned to Lincoln-Washington during the Retreats. His last unit was the Plaza Mayor as a Teniente. He returned to the US on September 26, 1938 aboard the *Normandie*. He was in the US Army in WWII. Pappas died January 1997 in Los Angeles, California. He was brother of Phillip Pappas and cousin of John Hagileou.

room #22 in the hotel, they sent the chauffeur for the commissar (either named Dodge or driving a Dodge) to check on the guard at the Estado Mayor. We find out that "Kaufman" will be going to Valencia. This is likely Ruben "Ruby" Kaufman who will be in the Mac-Paps in 1937. Two other Kaufmans, Al and Leo are potential candidates for this name. Merriman again meets Andrew Royce who is again drunk. He and Pete Hampkins decide that Isidore Schrenzel[§] will go with Kaufman to Valencia. This could possibly be a payroll run as pay would have to be distributed on June 10.

Merriman explains that they will be having a fiesta for the departing comrades and he needs to buy a goat for the feed. Art Landis relates that this fiesta was held on June 14, 1937,³⁰⁰ but the Washington Battalion will move out before that date. Merriman's diary has two additional notations: "Joe Dallet crossed with Bill Lawrence" and "Bob brought diary which had been read". Merriman's diary was in Pozo Rubio and was brought into Albacete. It clearly worried him that someone had opened the diary and read it. His suspicion, not stated here, was that it was Marcovich going through his papers again. Marcovich had previously taken a letter out of Merriman's papers and given it to Marion in order to cause some friction between the two of them. Merriman had been quite frank in his discussion of the maneuvering around the new Battalion and Marcovich's role and it would have been disquieting to him to think that Marcovich had read his diary.

[§] Isadore Schrenzel was born December 25, 1909 in Newark, NJ. He attended the University of Missouri and arrived in Spain on April 2, 1937. He was Company Commander of the second company (Spanish) company of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. Schrenzel would be wounded in action at Fuentes del Ebro in October and die in hospital there.

June 7—8 ••• Merriman Shops for a New Car

7 Junio

S. Roberto

Schrenzel came in at 3 AM and slept with Kaufman and me until 6. They left to meet chauffeur for Dodge (Political Com.) Really to be used by Bob Minor. Truck turned over - Chauffeur says bolts on wheels loosened. Car to go to Valencia to be repaired. Came at 10 to see Bill {Lawrence}. Chauffeur had not yet shown up. He got himself held up by the Service Sanitar. Saw Schalbroeck - got 2 trucks and 1 car for myself. Finally Bill and I went to talk with Gunderlach who let Chauffeur go for one day. Saw Lamotte and spoke about new car. Finally left for Tarazona with Joe, Dukes and Carroll. Arrived in Tarazona met with boys and met men on afternoon parade. Spoke for a few minutes in mess hall. Put Dukes in charge of Co 2. Bob Thompson No. 1. Some tough customers. Spoke to older men and listened to complaints. Went to Hdqtrs to meet {French} comrade from bureau of cadres. Met some of them personally & listened to suggestions. Ate talked with more. Marion in pink walked in. Later left for Albacete with Marion arrived here at 9³⁰ washed & went to Cerca Mercantile and found Kerr but Bill was out. Personnel problem in Tarazona due to lack of political work and panic in preparations to leave for front.

8 Junio

S. Maximino

Car came late as usual. {Elliot} Loomis chauffeur - in School, Marion wandered around while I gave lecture on topography. Loomis wants to go to officer's school. Before coming we bought much fruit and after lecture we ate and then moved staff & people to river for picnic. Goat sold for 22 p. Because of tender hearts paid 35. "I got your goat by gun." Sent car for Markovich, Mates and Joe Dallet, Marion and I had delightful walk along river past hospital. Game in progress when we returned. Mates,

Kaye and Joe Dallet came. Commandant Umberto came & also Camp Doctor. Fine food and speech by Commandant and Mates. Knight hit of day. Sports - jumping etc. Volleyball on way back. Mates & Kaye entertained. Arrived in Tarazona - met Usera and had chat with Garland & Al Robbins. Markovich had his nose out of joint because I talked to his officers etc. Marion shown room, but on way home lost way. Waited with Dr. Strauss, Garland and Dallet in center of town. Finally Alfredo came and took us home. Tired and strange bed - didn't sleep well.

§ § §

Schrenzel and Kaufman were to leave for Valencia on the morning of the 7th and they shared Bob Merriman's quarters in Albacete. The Dodge vehicle (the Commissar's car) and the truck Merriman requisitioned on the 6th both had mechanical problems. Merriman obviously was being given hand-me-down vehicles by the Auto Park, especially since there was a mobilization going on for the Washingtons to leave for Jarama. Merriman has to come to Albacete to intervene with Bill Lawrence to get two trucks and a car, as the Dodge got "organized" by the Service Sanitar and did not come back. Merriman and Bill went to see "Gunderlach" in the Auto Park. Otto Gundelack³⁰⁶ was a Captain with the Service Sanitar in Murcia in October of 1937 and was responsible for the Intendencia in Murcia in the Spring of 1937. Merriman checks in with Pierre Lamotte about his car.

They leave for Albacete and it says "Joe Dukes and Carroll". This is believed to be Joe Dallet, Larry Dukes and William Carroll. Upon arrival in Tarazona, Merriman speaks with the new men and announces that Larry Dukes will lead Company 2 and Bob Thompson will lead Company 1. These companies were made up of people left behind by Markovich and were "tough customers". One of the men who would go into the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in Company 1 called it "The Bitcher's Company". Merriman heard them out. Marion Merriman is back at Tarazona and Merriman mentions her in passing. In Albacete,

Merriman meets with Canadian Commissar Bob Kerr who was organizing the Canadian comrades, who would be in the third battalion. Merriman blames the hurried nature of the departure of the Washingtons for the disorganization in Tarazona. He attributes that disorganization to a lack of political preparedness of these men.



On the 8th, Elliot Loomis^h is assigned to be a driver for Merriman. He takes Merriman out to Pozorubio and must have liked what he saw since he asked to be sent to Officer Training School. Loomis will be in Transmissions in 1938.

Marion and Robert did some shopping for fruit, presumably for the upcoming fiesta for the departing Washington Battalion. He marches the training battalion to the

Elliott Loomis in Transmissions in 1938. ALBA Photo 11-0876, Tamiment Library, NYU

river for a picnic. He pays 35 pesetas for a goat for the fiesta and makes a feeble joke that "I got your goat, by gun", probably referring to the farmer doing the supplying of the goat.

^h Elliot Burch Loomis was born January 13, 1901 in Albany, NY. He only had a high school education and had various jobs, as a driver, a physical instructor at a health club, and a construction worker. He arrived in Spain on June 4, 1937 and was assigned to the Albacete Auto Park, but he drove for Sanidad and for the British Battalion Estado Mayor. His photo says he was in Transmissions in 1938. He served at Fuentes de Ebro, Teruel, Seguro de los Banos, Retreats and the Ebro Offensive. Returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. He returned to Southern California and died in Adalanto, CA, on April 25, 1989.

Merriman sends his car back to Tarazona to pick up Markovich, Dallet, and Mates. They join with George Kaye and Commandante "Umberto". This refers to Commandant Humberto Galliani, who led the Garibaldi Brigade.

Merriman has time to take a stroll with Marion Merriman along the river and by the hospital. Recall that Marion just returned from her mission where she had a very difficult time. No indication is given that she let anything on to Merriman about her trip.

The diary sounds like the fiesta is being held on June 9 as there are sports and volleyball with entertainment from George Kaye and David Mates. Merriman meets Vincent Useraⁱ for the first time. Usera would leave under a cloud in 1938 and there were suspicions that he may have been planted in Spain. Usera was a US Marine in 1930³⁰⁷. José Alejandro Ortiz Carrión has written extensively on the Puerto Rican Vincent Usera in his book *Voluntarios de la Libertad*.³⁰⁸ Commandante Umberto and the Pozorubio Camp Doctor {probably Dr. Straus^j} gave speeches. Alan Knight was "a hit".

ⁱ Vincent Usera was born December 10, 1908 in Ponce, Puerto Rico. He has prior service as a Marine officer in Nicaragua. He arrived in Spain on May 30, 1937, and served with the Lincoln Battalion as an Adjutant to Oliver Law at Brunete. He was shortly relieved of line service and assigned to the Training Base as an instructor. He returned to the US on June 5, 1938 aboard the USS Blackhawk. He went back into the US Army as a Captain in July 1941 and by the end of the war, he was a Major and he was a Colonel when he retired Nov 1, 1965 with a Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster. He died January 21, 1982 in Washington, DC, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

^j Mark Straus was born May 1, 1909, Philadelphia, PA. He completed medical school at Faculté de Médecine de l'Université de Paris in 1936 and arrived in Spain on May 1, 1937, with the third group of the American Medical Bureau. As a captain, he served as Battalion Doctor in the Washington and Lincoln-Washington Battalions at Brunete, Quinto and Belchite. He returned to the US on July 12, 1938 aboard the *Aquitania*. Straus died in October 1993.



Dr. Mark Straus, ALBA Photo 11_0020, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman speaks with Walter Garland and Al Robbins who were in the Washingtons and this led Markovich to get upset since Merriman was speaking to his officers. There clearly was no love lost between Merriman and Markovich.

Marion was to meet Bob in Tarazona before they were to return to Albacete but Marion "lost her way". One can only imagine her state of mind during this week. Merriman, Dallet, Dr. Straus and Walter Garland waited for her in the center of town and once they found her, they returned to Albacete with a driver named "Alfredo". Merriman says he didn't sleep well because of a strange bed, but one might imagine that he picked up something going on with Marion and her "getting lost".

June 9—10 ••• School Days

9 Junio

Ste Vicente

Arose at sound of singing of "Franco's Ranks we shall demolish". Went to Battallion Hdqtrs and then onto into field where I spent morning correcting close order drill and helping Bob and Joe perfect themselves. Joe Dallet also along. Came in at 11 and talked personally with Markovich and then listened to tale of drunk & friend who cussed Bob for his arrest. One man missing also went with Corona Major & Chief of Staff. Talked with boys and left around 1 for Pozo Rubio with Murray Schneider. Sat in on examination of French Italian section. Oppman really a joke and gave leading questions like real lawyer. Finally left feeling Oppman and his section weak. Gave lecture on topography when Vidal dropped in with Gomez. Spoke some English. Vidal gave me permission to keep car several days. Same chauffeur Loomis. Met Hyde - ate in Intendencia. Met Bill and went to meet him in Room 21 (new). Azar left for home. Papa came for him with much paper. Long session with Bill over new Battalion, Markovich and reorganization of the base political work. Bill representative of Spanish government for outgoing troops of all Nations. Most important job of all. Marion became a party member after brusque invitation and all shook hands. Congratulations Party and also Marion. Hope you get along well. Try.

10 Junio

Sta Margarita, reina

Early in morning looked for Galli but failed to find him. Left for Pozo Rubio gave lecture to fellows. And heard of plans for examination commission. I am on for tactics. In afternoon left for Tarazona. Stopped for certificate for boys {?, INK BLOT ON PAPER} vaccinated and then held long discussion in Tarazona. Returned for night problem near River with Schrenzel & Levine. Problem a joke. Levine

and I went out as Scouts. Returned slept and finally attack planned and called off not enough information – drove back late and tried to get coffee.

§ § §

After the flurry of activity about the Washington Battalion mustering to Albacete for moving to the front, June 9 and 10 were training days for Merriman and the remaining IB's in Tarazona. Merriman was awakened by singing of "Franco's Ranks we shall demolish". Mike Wild (son of British Brigadier Sam Wild) has identified this song as White Army, Black Baron³⁰⁹, a Russian military folk song which has a chorus written by the British Battalion and sung by the American Battalion as:

*And we will Franco ...
his ranks demolish ...
the great Miaja leads us on ..
and on our rifles ...
depends our freedom ...
no pasaran, no pasaran!"³¹⁰*

In a word that is written over Junio in the diary, it appears that Merriman goes out to the north field to watch Bob Thompson and Joe leading close order drill and Merriman gives them criticism. Joe is probably Joe Dougher^k since Joe Dallet is mentioned separately in the next sentences. Joe Dallet and Merriman go to Albacete to meet with Marcovich and discuss a soldier who cussed out Bob Thompson. On June 11, Merriman will

^k Joseph Michael ("Jobey") Dougher was born March 23, 1897 in Archibald, Pennsylvania. With only a grammar school education, he was in the US Navy in WWI in the US Navy, followed by 4 years in the 2nd Infantry of the US Army. He arrived in Spain on April 2, 1937 and was placed in Company 2 of the Washington He graduated from the OTS on June 14, 1937. He became a trainer of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion at Tarazona and served with that Battalion in Fuentes de Ebro as a Teniente. He was wounded in action on October 14, 1937, and was in hospital until he was repatriated. He returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. He died April 28, 1978.

remove a soldier from duty and it may be this person who was drunk.

A soldier goes missing and Merriman believes that he was taken by Arturo Corona who was with a Major and his Chief of Staff. On June 6, Merriman noted a "Cross" who was with Corona. At this point, Corona was a Lieutenant in the 57th British Battalion as a Company Commander so this is likely Briton Christopher Cross.

Merriman catches a ride back to Pozo Rubio with Murray Schneider who was a driver. Merriman serves as a monitor on the examination of French and Italian comrades by Tadeusz Oppman. Oppman was a member of the French Communist party and had been trained as a lawyer in France. He will go on to be Chief of Staff of the Dombrowski Brigade. Here Merriman is not impressed with his training skills and says that Oppman is leading (like a lawyer) his men to answers to the examination they are being given.



Tadeusz Oppman

Lucien Vidal and "Gomez" also came to Pozo Rubio. General Gomez, who led the XIIIth Dombrowski Brigade, was Wilhelm Zaisser³¹¹ from Germany. He returns with a car loaned to him by Vidal with Elliot Loomis still as the driver. Merriman finds that Bill Lawrence has moved rooms and is now in Room 21. Merriman has told us that Bob Minor is coming to Albacete and will get the Dodge car so it is possible that Minor stayed in Room 22 and Bill

Lawrence moved. Joseph Azar¹ will leave for home and the orders³¹² say that he is "needed by his father". "Papa" arrives with papers for his departure. This is an intriguing mix of sentences. Mike Pappas was introduced during this week and that is a possible ID for Papa or that Azar will be going on orders from the American party and "Papa" is a senior communist official.

Merriman says that Bill Lawrence's new job is to represent the government with all the departing soldiers from all countries. This would be the job of the Brigade Commissar and Merriman says this is the most important job of all. Lawrence is indeed identified in late May in a list of Brigade Commissars in RGASPI.³¹³ In a surprise, Merriman relates that Marion Merriman has been "brusquely" asked to join the Party and she did. Marion Merriman Wachtel, in a taped interview with Sid Levine, says explicitly that she was never a member of the Party. Perhaps if she joined the Spanish Communist Party, it was an association of convenience since her job in Albacete was to keep the registry of names for the Cadres' Service. It is likely that Party affiliation was expected for someone in a position of sensitive access to Brigadistas' files.

On the 10th, Merriman's duties appear to be largely clerical. He set a night mission for the new Battalion and sent out Sid Levine Isadore Schrenzel to run the exercise. It was a failure for the Battalion and it is not known whether Merriman is referring to "calling off the attack" during the exercise because of lack of information or something elsewhere. There was to be an American attack at Jarama which did not occur.³¹⁴

¹ Joseph Harold Azar was born December 24, 1914 in NYC. He returned to the US on September 13, 1937 aboard the *Normandie*. Azar died April 19, 2001.

June 11—12 ••• Washington Battalion Moves Out

11 Junio

S. Bernabé

In morning came in late from night problem which flopped - took Pete back with me and forgot Carroll. Observed drill and talked about guard duties -- discussed problems with Harris - Pete came as Battalion Clerk. Left about noon for Pozo Rubio and gave lecture -- left in evening for Albacete. Went to Etat Major and met Schalbroeck who told me about leaving of Battallion for front. Saw Winkler make couple of changes in rolls etc. and returned to Schalbroeck - phoned Mates after much trouble and then left with official orders for departure. Translated orders and talked with Markovich hectic evening and barter for men vacant in his ranks. Got rid of one bad one. Tired and slept.

12 Junio

S. Juan de Sahagún

Slept awhile - got up at two o'clock and watched final preparations to leave - at 2:30 19 trucks came and boys loaded and said good luck to each truck & Markovich. Perry Pinson with trucks. Bender, Marion, Dallet and I farewell party at 3:08 pulled out and I phoned Etat Mayor of departure.

Rose and went to meeting of cooks and staff. Settled many problems and removed Steve {Daduk}. Drove to Pozo Rubio and observed problem being worked out. Returned and {ink blot} in afternoon. Sat in as member of examination commission for Slav section. Ruby arrived with car. Gave him 150 p. and Ford 4 1936 equipped. Drove to Tarazona to try it out. Works fine. In evening tried some tough cases -- attended a J. S. U. benefit show. Good but long and felt forced to stay since was special box for Staff of Battallion.

Merriman picks up the pieces from a failed night exercise at Tarazona with his new Battalion. He gets Pete Hampkins to come back to the town with him from Pozo Rubio and makes Hampkins the Clerk in the new Training Battalion. He left William Carroll in the field who would have had to walk back with the men. He discusses the drill and



placement of the guard with Abe Harris who is his Quartermaster in Tarazona. After looping through Pozo Rubio in the afternoon, he returns to Albacete and meets with

Joseph Dougher (Commissar of the Mac-Paps), Albert (Abe) Harris (Intendencia) and Wally Sabatini (Mac-Paps). Harris is shown here without mustache that he carries in other photos. ALBA Photo 11-0728, Tamiment Library, NYU

Schalbroeck who tells him about the imminent departure of the Washington Battalion for Jarama. Merriman uses the rest of the day to try to adjust who is in the Washington Battalion and who will stay behind for the third (to-be-named Mackenzie-Papineau) Battalion. He first negotiates with Brigade Personnel Officer Peter Winkler to adjust the rolls and then later meets with Marcovich to add people to Markovich' list where he had some remaining holes to fill. Recall that Markovich gave Merriman John Givney and about 10 other difficult soldiers and apparently Merriman is now trying to give some back. He gets rid of "one bad one" and since John Givney is wounded at Brunete in July (and the Mackenzie-Papineau battalion was still in training during the Battle of Brunete), it seems likely that the soldier returned to the Washingtons is Givney.

Merriman goes to bed early so he can rise and with Marion, Ed Bender and Joe Dallet, to toast the Washington Battalion as it moves out at exactly 3:08 AM. Merriman shakes the hands of the men in the Battalion and wishes Marcovich good luck. He phones the Brigade to let them know that the Battalion is on the move. Merriman mentions a Perry Pinson in regard to the trucks

and this soldier is not known at this point but would probably have been with Transportes. There was a Percy Hilton who was with the Mac-Paps and was a cook in Tarazona, but Hilton did not arrive from Canada until August 2. There is a Percy Hilton from Northampton mentioned in the ranks of the British Battalion in the RGASPI files, but no details of him are given other than he was a prisoner at the Base in September 1938. Leslie Perry^m was with the Regiment du Tren in June 1937 and boasted that he had formed the Transport Group.³¹⁵ Perry was later busted for attacking another soldier with a pistol butt. He was also attributed to be an intimate with Rose Abramson. If the reference is to Leslie Perry, we are still left with Pinson as the other name.

A Ford 1936 4-door sedan as described by Merriman. This would have been a fine staff car. Photo credit: Ottoswheels.com



The next day was fairly routine training, although he notes that Ruben "Ruby" Kaufman returned with a 1936 (nearly new) Ford V6 4 door sedan. Merriman wants this car.

Merriman says he sat in on an examination commission for the Slavs and they were trying cases. These mini-court martials could be for infractions like drinking or more serious cases, such as desertion.

Merriman finishes the evening with a celebration with was given by and for the Juventad Socialistas Unificados.³¹⁶ One of the youth leaders of the JSU was Santiago Carrillo³¹⁷. Merriman was not interested in being at the Fiesta but since they had a place of honor, he could not leave early.

^m Leslie Raymond Perry was a driver who served with the Regt. de Tren and Usine #1 (weapons factory). Perry was killed in action March 1938, in Caspe during the Retreats. He is believed to have been captured and executed.

June 13—14 Merriman Needs Reliable Transport

13 Junio

S. Antonio de Padua

Rose and had sessions with boys. Battalion voted to help popular front and went out into fields. Discussed work with Bob & Joe. Tried several comrades and talked with Hyde. Left after lunch for Pozo Rubio. Got to Tarazona and went for Schrenzel and Matilda invited us to stay and have wine and cakes. She had pictures of Overton & others. She is to be thrown out of house after 14 yrs. Wrote note for her. Left with seven in car for Pozo Rubio and planned problem for tomorrow. Played horse shoes. Someone has fooled with car from auto parc. 2 Russians and doctor. After meal drove down to river near Cueva de la Potita. Lane in court, etc. Levy

Boys in new Battallion are plenty tough cases and I see much hard work ahead. Seamen etc. Long session with problem of Hyde, Mullinger & Bradley visited last night & returned today. Doctor in camp broke lock on one car.

14 Junio

S Basili

Bill Wheeler led morning maneuver against Mutillya. Returned with all fellows riding in one car or tank. Fellows getting ready to apply for leaves etc. After lunch left for town with Martin(?). Talked short while with Schalbroeck. Met Abe Harris who was refused trip to Valencia. Unsigned note to auto park concerning car. Met Loomis and collected Stamm & Karl Thompsen and started for home with gasoline – and 14000 round ammo. Spring broke in Gineta ate 4 eggs - poor family paid 10 p. War is hunger. Talked with auto park on phone - Lou OK. Frenchman a bitch went in myself and fought for Car 149. Bureaucracy. Chauffeur became important and gave me permission. Returned to get men & Marion. Left men to guard ammo picked up two women on road afraid of

Fascists. Report by Joe - long one with Mates. To bed late. Joe poor officer of day with self-criticism.

§ § §

Merriman has his command, finally, of a Battalion, although he will be in training with them for nearly two more months. Merriman is dealing with largely organizational issues over these two days of the diary. His interests are staffing up, getting properly provisioned and finding the best junior officers that he can.

He mentions Tom Hyde twice on these two days and he continues to be dealing with the issues of where to place him. The fact that Hyde is mentioned in a sentence where Merriman says he "tried several comrades" seems to indicate that the issue has become a formal discipline case. Tom Hyde was vocal about having to be repatriated because his business was going under at home and his wife could not handle the issues. He was removed as Administrator of the Hospitals at Murcia and on the 15th of June he will be transferred to the training base at Tarazona, becoming Merriman's problem.

Merriman leaves Albacete for Pozo Rubio and then goes to Tarazona with Isadore Schrenzel. Merriman talks about a Matilda whose home apparently is being confiscated after she has been in it 14 years. Merriman promises to write a letter to intervene. Matilda had pictures of British Brigadista Bert Overton. Overton had been court-martialed by this point and was being assigned to a work battalion to carry ammunition to the front. He would be killed in action at Brunete.

He mentions Bob and Joe in the diary. This is certainly Bob Thompson who was promoted to Second Lieutenant on June 14 from a Base Order. In addition, two Joes, Dougher and Dallet, were also promoted, Dougher to Second Lieutenant at the training base in Tarazona and Dallet to the Commissar of the training base at Tarazona. Other promotions, one for Si Podolin as political commissar to the Artillery Group at Almansa, Thomas Degnan as political commissar at the hospital at Murcia (replacing Tom

Hyde), and Albert Harris was named "Sergent-Fourrier"³¹⁸, also came through on the 14th of June. The latter position translates as the sub-officer in charge of an Intendencia.

Merriman's car problems continue and he complains about the camp Doctor (probably Mark Straus) and two Russians who tampered with a car. The Doctor apparently broke the lock on the vehicle. Previously in June we have seen that Lucien Vidal had to intervene with the doctors at Tarancón hospital because Dr. Gorian or Goryan had terminated the American chofers of the ambulances there. Vidal felt that those ambulances belonged to the XVth Brigade but the hospital felt that the ambulances should be assigned as needed to get wounded for any Brigade. Vidal confiscated the ambulances and ordered them to the Brigade auto park along with the drivers. Much of Merriman's angst in these two days diaries had to do with those drivers and whether the vehicles would be available for his access. Since the Washington Battalion had shipped out to the front, Albacete base staff and the third battalion were short of transportation at this point. Merriman fights for Car 139 that is likely to be the Ford V6 that Ruby Kaufman drove out the day before.

Merriman says after the meal he drove down to the river (presumably Rio Júcar which was about five miles west of Tarazona de la Mancha). He mentions Cueva de la tía Potita, which is mental hospital in Albacete. Merriman says that someone is in court (perhaps the cases he tried in the morning) who looks like "Lane" and a "Levy" is mentioned. James L. Laine (Jack Lane) was in Spain at this time. Israel Levy was shell shocked at Jarama and sought repatriation. He would leave June 24, 1937 with a large group of International returns.³¹⁹

Merriman mentions here for the first time that "Seamen" were a problem. Over the next several months, a group of Brigaders who were recruited from the Seaman's Union would be outspoken and chafe against authority. The issue will rise to a near rebellion after Belchite in September and a few of the most outspoken Seamen are identified then. Merriman finishes the day revealing that Canadian Jack Mullinger and Carl Bradley were in camp.

On the 14th, Bill Wheeler was leading the training. Wheeler went into Spain in the first group in December 1936 and came out in late 1938 having been with the Lincoln Machine Gun Company at Corbera on the last day of fighting. Wheeler actually went home earlier in 1938 and returned shortly thereafter with a group of six men prior to the Ebro Offensive.

Merriman returns to Albacete with someone that looks like "Masten" or "Martin". This name is repeated on the next diary pages and he is an instructor in Pozo Rubio. On June 2, a Rafael Fernandez Martin who had been in charge of the "Companie de Renfort" (the reinforcement company) in Albacete was transferred to the training base at Madrigueras as an instructor and given the rank of Lieutenant.³²⁰ This could be the comrade discussed in this passage.

Merriman meets with Schalbroeck and Abe Harris who was denied leave, Elliot Loomis who was still driving cars, Morris Stamm and a "Karl Thompsen". There is a known photo of Stamm but Thompsen is a mystery. Merriman has the car break down in La Gineta, which is on the Albacete-Madrid road south of Tarazona de la Mancha. He eats with a poor Spanish peasant family, paying for his meal. Trying to replace the vehicle, he pulls rank and gets Car 149 and said that Lou Secundy was helpful but that a French Comrade was less so. This Frenchman was Lieutenant Tanguy and he will shortly be replaced by Secundy.³²¹

On returning to Albacete, he picks up two women who were afraid that there were Fascists around. He places a guard on the 14,000 rounds of ammo (this is about a Company's allotment during active actions). He speaks with Joe Dallet about his report on Dave Mates and says that Joe was a poor officer of the day with self-criticism. This gives some insight into how Merriman managed even his friends in Tarazona as Dallet was expected to be self-critical in a "bolshevik" method of instruction.

June 15—16 ••• “Something in Air”

15 Junio

S. Modesto

Drove to P.R. - morning maneuver under Masten legging in, etc. Too exposed. Talked about it at camp and then rushed to farewell party for Oppman who is leaving for 13th Brigade maybe as Chief of Staff although he claims he doesn't know enough. Dinner table set - champagne Roblet gave stirring talk "παρα κλον" - 20 hrs preparation to 1 hour attack. Cracked at Copic and idea "I am general. I know it all. I am no coward. Attack!" Left and drove to Tarazona – talked over work. Machine gun Co. – {Albert} Wallach a problem what to do! In evening Joe gave political lecture and questions were answered. Not bad. Couldn't locate machine gun comrades. Evans can't stand me & is now in armory. Marion doing good work. In camp rumored that Marseilles bombarded and war declared by France on Germany etc. Bought set of horseshoes.

16 Junio

S. Quirico

Slept in Tarazona. Went on parade and gave orders of the day and then drove to Pozo Rubio with Tellier. Tactical problem went off swell and final attack on left flank. Real surprise. Short talk on maneuver. Returned after eating and Edward Flaherty came along. Had session with anti-tank men & Katzin isolated himself shot off his mouth about being Battalion Commander, etc. Lectured to Company 2 on scouting -- too late for Co 1 After supper (fine one) left for Albacete. Met Lou Secundy - car not finished. Perry shooting off his mouth about 157 passing him up at Tarancón. Went to Estado Mayor and talked with Schalbroeck. Points settled. No antitank. Car arranged for Battalion et al. Returned to auto park – with Bender & Brodsky. Had session with Bender, Johnson phoned and something important. Called Bill Lawrence.

Something in air. Met Wintringham. Talked about school - "5 weeks with Kitty". Went to see Lamotte - guns. 7,000 civilian suits ordered and Vidal refused two tires for his car. Drove home - Discussion on self and movement.

§ § §

Merriman's diary gives us some important hints about the Brigade on the 15th and 16th. His day on the 15th begins with training at Tarazona under what looks like "Masten" or "Martin". This soldier's name is not confirmed at this point but we suggested Raphael Fernandez Martin in the previous diary entry. However, it would have been likely that Raphael would have gone by the matronymic Fernandez.

After criticizing the training session, Merriman hurries to Albacete for the departure of Tadeusz Oppman who will go to the 13th "Dombrosky" Brigade as Chief of Staff. Oppman admits uncertainty about his ability to do the job. Merriman had previously thought that Oppman was too much the lawyer (his occupation) and not a military leader. At lunch, where champagne was served, Roblet spoke about the need to do 20 hours of preparation for a single 1-hour attack. The Russian phrase *пара слов* ("para clov") is translated as "a few words..." The champagne must have been flowing as Roblet sends up Copic, sarcastically talking about the "General" who gave orders to attack. This would have resonated with Merriman who never forgave Copic for his orders on the 27th of February. More on this below.

Arriving back at Tarazona after lunch, Merriman looks for the machine gun company and doesn't find them. He says Wallach is a problem. This must be Albert Wallachⁿ. Harry Wallach^o was

ⁿ Albert M. Wallach (Aaron Wallach, Al Morris) was born in 1914. He had some college and was a US Army Reserve Officer. He arrived in Spain on May 30, 1937, surviving the sinking of the *City of Barcelona*. He went to OTS and later was in the Lincoln-Washington Battalion from which he deserted both at Brunete and Quinto. He was returned to the Lincoln-Washington Battalion after Teruel, he was sent to a labor battalion, deserted again sent to Castillo de Fels, in September 1937. He was believed to have been executed there early in 1938.

wounded at Jarama and would have been in hospital at this time. Albert Wallach was in the group of Jack Cooper's who came to Pozo Rubio.³²² Albert Wallach had a history of desertion throughout his time in Spain.

Joe Dallet gave a lecture which apparently met with Merriman's approval. Marion Merriman is also given a favorable report here. An "Evans" (probably Canadian Lloyd Evans) tangled with Merriman and was moved out to the Armory. Lloyd Evans would have an unfavorable biographical review that said that he was a "demoralized element" and had a "habit of taking sick every time there was active service". Evans would write a request for repatriation saying "I know that my staying here will not win the war. And sending me home will save a lot of trouble."³²³

Merriman repeats a rumor that the Germans bombed Marseilles and that France was now entering the war. This never happened, but hope reigns eternal. This would have opened the border for men and equipment to come through France.

On the 16th, Merriman stayed over in Tarazona and after inspection and giving orders for the day, he drove over to Pozo Rubio with Canadian Lucien Tellier, who was a driver in the Auto Park. The maneuvers of the morning went "swell" and Merriman was pleased in the attack pattern. He returned back to Tarazona with Ed Flaherty (who would soon return to the US with his brothers). Merriman meets with the Anti-tank company but crosses horns with Harry Katzin^o who was a new arrival in Spain and assigned to the anti-tanks on the 11th of June. Katzin must

^o Harry Wallach was a 23 year old Polish American baker and mechanic from Ormond, PA. He arrived in Spain on January 18, 1937, and served with Co. 1, Section 1 of the Lincolns. He was wounded in action at Jarama, picked up as dead after severe chest wound. He woke up in a morgue but two days later in the hospital his heart weakened and he was sent back to the morgue. He rallied and after nine months in the hospital returned to the United States arriving in December 1937. Harry died in 1999.

^p Harry ("Happy") Katzin was born April 6, 1899, Detroit, MI. He was automobile worker. He arrived in Spain on May 28, 1937, and he returned to the US on November 5, 1938 *President Roosevelt*.

have made a remark about being able to lead the Battalion which would not have set well with Merriman. He lectured for the rest of the afternoon and in the evening made contact with Lou Secundy at the Auto Park about getting a vehicle.

There is a cryptic sentence Lawrence Perry having 157 passing him up at Tarancón. 157 would have been an automobile and if it "passed him up at Tarancón" this could be information on a missing automobile. There was also concern about reckless driving at this time and perhaps he was reporting the driver of 157 passing him on narrow roads. Perry was in command of Usine #1 which repaired the rolling stock of the Brigade and he might have been concerned about getting another vehicle to have to repair.

Merriman goes to Albacete and meets with Schalbroeck. He gets settled that the Mac-Paps will not get the Anti-tank Company. The Anti-Tank Company goes to the British Battalion. In a confusing sentence he says that "car arranged for Bon et al." That could be an abbreviation for arranging for a car for the Battalion.

Bender and Brodsky go with him to the Autopark. Returning he has a meeting with Ed Bender. Allan Johnson phones and says something important. Merriman calls Bill Lawrence. He says "Something in Air". We know now that on the 16th of June, the American leadership presented a united front to Vladimir Copic telling him that he did not have the confidence of his soldiers. Copic was asked to consider resigning by Harry Haywood, who was a member of the Comintern, and probably with Lawrence were the highest ranking American communists in Albacete at the time. This mini-coup is talked about in the Spanish version of Copic's own diary.³²⁴ Copic relates in Spanish that he met with "H" who is believed to be Harry Haywood, who told Copic that he does not have the confidence of the men. Haywood says that whether the lack of confidence is warranted or not, the issue is that a Copic should self-critically examine whether he can continue to lead. Copic figures it out quickly and threatens Haywood with arrest if he continues to talk about it with the men. Copic will continue as Brigade Commander and the mini-revolt of the Americans is suppressed. In a telling statement of Copic's view of the Americans and English, he did not have this diary entry

translated from Spanish into English. In the English version it says "The XVth Brigade spends most of the month at rest". The passage translated above does appear in the German version of the diary in the Tamiment archive.

The revolt does not succeed and Copic stays on, holding very malicious feelings for Haywood and the British, who he suspected to be on the plot. The backlash would affect some of these comrades for months.

Returning to the remaining sentences of Merriman's diary, he meets with Tom Wintringham who just spent five weeks with Kitty Bowler. Wintringham has arrived to take over the training at Pozo Rubio. On the 15th Vidal will appoint Wintringham to Camp Pozo Rubio and assign Merriman the leadership of the third training battalion in Tarazona.

Merriman finishes the day meeting with Pierre Lamotte who now was serving as Armorer. He attempts to get 7000 civilian suits delivered. We don't know the reason that the men would need those quantity of suits, except to note that there were hundreds of repatriations happening in Albacete at this time. Merriman may have assumed that a routine replacement of personnel would start to occur.

Vidal was refused two tires for his vehicle and the replacement of Lieutenant Tanguy, Commissar at the autopark, might have had an additional trigger other than Merriman's displeasure with him. Tanguy may be Yves Tanguy because Georges Henry Tanguy was the Commissar of the XIVth Brigade and is not indicated as having been in charge of the Autopark. On the 13th of June, Tanguy is listed as having been moved out of the Auto Park to Usine #1 (factory for parts) and the notation "Americain" is made next to his name.³²⁵ He is not an American or Canadian so it may be that the transfer is at the request of the Americans. Later in the month, the reason is stated that he is to replace the sick commissar at the Usine.

June 17—18 ••• Merriman Goes Car Shopping

17 Junio

S Manuel

(No notations)

18 Junio

S. Marceliano

Lectured to Batt. -- drove to Pozo Rubio with Marion - discussed Markovich - Hans Klaus and things in general. Cleared up much hazy atmosphere. Lectured on entrenchment and general problems. Took out Section leaders to show position of problem -- defense & also night attack from same positions. Drove to Albacete met new men who just came in. Returned to Tarazona met Ruth {Davidow} -- Secundy and Lamotte. Cigarettes Luckies arrived stored with us. Marion favorite of local children. {Frank} Rogers arrived with Bender and Brodsky. {Joseph} Lash, A. S. U. president - Dave Doran & other staying here until Bill comes. Entertainment fair -- seemed like officers skit went off well. Hyde & Evans, Rushton starred. Show must be better next time not so much talking. Lamotte returned early & Ruth & Lou Secundy stayed over night Read, Bradley & Walker out of Battalion. Listened to Cross{?} in prison at Guard Nacional.

§ § §

Merriman makes no entry in his diary on June 17. On the 16th of June, Harry Haywood made a presentation to Vladimir Copic that Copic should resign. Haywood, the Battalion Commissar, acted as the representative of the Americans and took the brunt of Copic's reaction to the suggestion. The plotters must have been busy trying to gain political support for this. On the 18th, Merriman says he meets Marion and "clears up much hazy atmosphere". He reveals that Mirko Markovich and Hans Klaus were part of the discussion at Morata de Tejuña. Klaus was being proposed to replace Copic according to Lawrence. This would have put Klaus in Copic's bad book as well. The British were promoting Jock

Cunningham to take the leadership position. In the end, it is believed that both Klaus and Markovich provided support for Copic. Cecil Eby describes the event:

A mutiny did occur, but only within the officer caste, not the rank and file. With Harry Haywood as spearhead, the top-ranking American Communists demanded that Copic be relieved as commander of the XVth Brigade because he had lost his men's confidence. The mutineers, who included Nelson, Johnson, Hourihan and Mates, sought to form a new brigade led by Americans. Merriman, who suffered more than any other under Copic's tenure, refused to join them. The British had no affection for a martinet like Copic, but they interpreted this move as a signal that the Americans planned to take control of the brigade because of their numerical and financial superiority. Men who, like George Aitken, brigade commissar; Major George Nathan, chief of operations and Major "Jock" Cunningham, the commander of the British battalion, had distinguished themselves as outstanding leaders from the first hours of the Jarama fighting had no intention of yielding to Johnny-come-latelies. Markovicz refused to join the conspiracy, making it clear that he flew the flag of the Comintern not the CPUSA. On learning that his own commissar had joined the mutineers, he gave Mates a tongue-lashing and forced a retraction. Copic's headquarters became the setting for the final act of this palace coup when Haywood entered to deliver his ultimatum. {Eby repeats the diary segment presented on June 16 here}.³²⁶

Hans Klaus would have been in a difficult position since he was adjutant in the Brigade at the time of Jarama. The criticism of the Americans would have brought up whether it was Klaus or Copic who issued the demand that the Americans go over the top on the 27th of February.

Merriman says he took out the section leaders to review positions for the next few days training exercises. Merriman finishes the day's training and then goes into Albacete to meet Marion and a

"Ruth" believed to be Ruth Davidow⁹, a nurse who arrived on June 13, 1937. He also meets with Lou Secundy and Pierre Lamotte from the Auto Park.

The new men brought with them a treasure... a new shipment of Lucky Strike cigarettes from America. Along with soap and fresh shoes or boots, there was little that was more desired by the Americans in Spain than American cigarettes. Merriman takes the smokes with him to Tarazona, probably to put them under guard as he would for ammunition. There appeared to have been some scramble for this shipment as Vidal left an order in the files that when two private vehicles show up with personal packages, the Intendencia should still take responsibility to see that they get to the correct soldiers. Around the same time, General Gal wrote a memo to Vidal saying that 7000 packs of cigarettes are his.



(left) Frank Rogers, ALBA Photo 177-188048, Tamiment Library, NYU;
(right) David Doran, ALBA Photo 177-190027, Tamiment Library, NYU

Frank Rogers arrived with Ruth Davidow. While Rogers was on the May 29th sailing of the Britannic, he did not cross the border

⁹ Ruth Rebecca Davidow was born September 1, 1911 in NYC. A nurse in the American Medical Bureau, she arrived in Spain on June 13, 1937, and served at Pozoblanco on the Cordoba Front and during the Ebro Offensive with a Spanish Surgical Team. She passed away June 28, 1999, in San Francisco, California.

into Spain until June 13 via Massenet. He and Davidow must have been quickly brought from Figueras to Tarazona, perhaps in the two vehicles carrying the cigarettes and personal packages. It is likely that as a nurse, Davidow could have gotten the cigarettes through as "medical supplies". Rogers, from Regina, Saskatchewan, and a Communist Party member since 1927, would become the Commissar for the third battalion in the fall of 1937.

Rogers came to Albacete with Ed Bender and George Brodsky. Also arriving was Joseph Lash³²⁷ who was the President of the American Students Union and David Doran who was a leader in the Young Communist League. Doran would rise rapidly in the ranks and become XVth Brigade Commissar in 1938. In the afternoon or evening, a fiesta was held for the arriving personnel and Hyde, Evans and Rushton performed a skit. Harry Albert Rushton, from Toronto and Hamilton, Ontario, was 45 years old at this point and was a long time Communist Party member in Canada. He would go on to become a Commissar in the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. Rushton would later become a Mackenzie-Papineau historian after the war. Tom Hyde we have met on previous diary pages. Hyde did not depart with the Washington's medical group and is now in the third battalion. Evans is likely to be Lloyd Evans of Regina, Saskatchewan or Winnipeg, Manitoba.³²⁸

Merriman said that Read, Bradley and Walker were out of the Battalion. This could be William Bradley from Vancouver who was arrested in June 1937 and deserted in July 1937. He was arrested for drunkenness.³²³ Walker is probably Frederick Walker (a.k.a. Dan Wilson) who never deserted but Michael Petrou's notes say "No {did not desert}, but discipline problem, detained at the 'Maison de Prevention.' drunk"³²³. Wobbly Patrick Read was in the Lincoln Battalion and it seems likely this reference is to him. Read was transferred to the Intendencia about this time. In another disciplinary case, Merriman visits what looks like a "Cross" in the prison in Guarda Nacional. Cross doesn't show up as an American or Canadian brigadista. We leave the name questionable as the scrawl may be a completely different name but we suggested that the confluence of that name with Corona on a previous page suggests Briton Christopher Cross.

June 19—20 ••• Picnic, Politics and a “Bawl up”

19 Junio

St. Gervasio

Went to Albacete early - saw Schalbroeck got order for car -- discussed ammunition and new guns. 149 {a car #} went haywire while looking for Rogers' pants and 200 pesetas. Finally towed in. Bender left for Tarazona with Jock to get cigarettes up to boys. Spent all day trying to get car fixed or a new one. Finally get 5027 {another car} -- found spring cracked met Traill, Wintringham. Galli leaving. Carlos better. Met Lawrence & he told dope at 15th Brigade -- politics - secret meetings Klaus for Brig Com. - English want Jock Cunn{ingham}. Both promised to come out. Did so and sat ate into night in meeting decided sending of men to various units -- attitude on officers school, situation at front. Rudolph & Mildred{?} spies of fascists - scandal, etc. Decided Rogers to stay two weeks. Lash to stay unofficially & leave for July 14th World Youth Congress in Paris. Then to return. Doran to stay with us. Polit{ical} work. Israel - D{aily} W{orker} writer to be soldier with gun but no typewriter. Maybe Marion will work for Bill or Bender in Albacete after finishing here.

20 Junio

Sta Florentina

Slept late and rose just in time to meet Battalion in the center of town and march them out to the picnic. Horseshoe games and eats. Bob Thompson returned from Albacete and brought Milly. Good to see again. Had come with correspondents to hear Del Vayo in Albacete. Pleasant day -- Herman to return to S. U. Bob Jensen & Roffler{?} returning to U.S. Milly also. Listen Oak now open Trotskyist. Ropes, hikes and tug of war. Lucky Strikes for prizes. After picnic went down to river swimming Lou, Harris, Marion, Milly, Joe and I. Great fun hair washed. Returned at dark. Milly left. Joe-Bob-Pete & I had late session general problems -- talked over Pete attitude on school -

front - men Lash, etc. Leadership of m.g. company, etc. Hourihan to come. Speech to be discussed, etc. Joe bawled out Bob & Bob {bawled out} me & Joe. Bawl up - but great meeting much decided. Bender Jock set - bathed & went on.

§ § §

Merriman starts the day with logistical concerns on getting men and ammunition in Albacete for the new third battalion. While on a run to get some new trousers for Frank Rogers, who needs an officer's uniform, and locating some 200 pesetas, his vehicle (#149) conked out. He got another vehicle (#5027) and it wasn't much better since a spring was cracked on it. Ed Bender and Jock Cunningham headed out to Tarazona with the new shipment of Lucky Strike cigarettes that had arrived on the 18th. Merriman has meetings with Robert Traill who is back from the Cordoba front and Tom Wintringham, who now is taking over instruction at the Officer's Training School in Pozorubio. In a month, Robert Traill will be killed at Brunete.

Merriman says that Honoré Galli is leaving. It is possible that this may be the same comrade as Attilio Galli. Fraser Ottanelli (private communication) informs us that he was born on December 28, 1907. His parents Alfredo Galli and Angela Ferrari. It is known that he was born in Aubonne (France) but was originally from Roccastrada in the Province of Grosseto. He was a member of Garibaldi Brigade in 1938 and he fought on Ebro. Galli was sent to the Training Battalion at Tarazona by Vidal to help out in political instruction. Merriman also says "Carlos better" and this is unclear whether Carlos (Vittorio Vitali) is better than Galli or recovering from illness. We are leaning to the former interpretation that Carlos is a better instructor.

Following the story of the mutiny against Copic from the previous days diary pages, Merriman meets with Bill Lawrence and gets the "dope" on the results of the request for Copic to leave. He finds out that Hans Klaus has been chosen as Brigade Commissar but

that the British would have preferred Jock Cunningham in that role.

A sentence which is a bit of a scribble says that "Rudolph" and another soldier (unreadable name which looks like Mildred) have been accused of being Fascist spies. This may have to do with Marion's recent assignment to Murcia where two nurses were investigated for being too nose-y about where people were at the front. As Mildred Rackley was assigned to manage the American Medical Bureau, such questions could be logical in her position. Rudolph Franchini was an orthopedic surgeon in Murcia and this might be a reference to him.

Assignment of the new soldiers who have just arrived puts Frank Rogers with the third battalion for two weeks but he stays longer. Joe Lash of the American Student Union will go back to Paris for a Student World Youth Congress and Dave Doran, the young YCL'er, will stay to take on a political role. "Israel", who was a writer for the Daily Worker, will come to Spain as a soldier but not be given a typewriter. This is likely to be Israel Kwatt (George Watt)^r who started with the Mac-Paps and will rise through the ranks and become the last Lincoln Battalion Commissar by the end of the war. Merriman finishes the day by telling the diary that Marion may return to Albacete to work for Bill Lawrence or Ed Bender in the Cadres Office. During this time, Marion was working in Tarazona, described as a "mother hen" providing support for the incoming troops. Marion will ultimately end up in the publications office with Sandor Voros who was being

^r George Watt (Israel Kwatt) was born November 5, 1913, in NYC. He attended Brooklyn College in 1931 and Cooper Union Institute of Technology, Engineering from 1933-35. He will arrive in Spain on August 9, 1937 and served with the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion as Party Secretary and light machine gunner. Watt will be wounded in action October 13, 1937 at Fuentes de Ebro. He will go OTS and graduate in February 16, 1938. He arrived in the Lincoln-Washington Battalion Plaza Mayor during the retreats and will be promoted to Battalion Commissar on April 8, 1938, after Doran is killed in the retreats. After serving in the Ebro Offensive, he will return to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. In WWII, he was a Bomber Crewmember in the US Army Air Force, George Watt passed away July 1994 in Northport, Rhode Island.

transferred at about this time from the Artillery in Almansa to the Communications Office in Albacete.

On the 20th, the battalion held a picnic outside of town, near the river. There were several events celebrated on the 20th of June. In Albacete, Vidal gave up to one quarter of all battalions the day off to commemorate the foundation of a new Soldier's Home for Children. The Yugoslavs held a ceremony in Fortuna to commemorate a new stone memorial to Comrade Hurzig. It was important enough that Captain Gutensick of the Yugoslavs took Commandante Winkler and Captain Cazin of the hospital with him to the memorial.³²⁹

In Tarazona, games were played. Horseshoes were pitched. Food was had. Ropes were swung, they had hikes, and a tug-of-war. Merriman says the prizes for the winners of the games were the Lucky Strikes that had been brought out to Tarazona by Jock Cunningham and Ed Bender.



Largo Caballero and Julio Alvarez del Vayo, right. Source: Life Magazine, April 26, 1937. (Google Books)

Milly Bennett arrives with Bob Thompson from Albacete. We find out that a number of correspondents had been brought to Albacete with Julio Alvarez del Vayo. Milly would have been one of them. Del Vayo was the Republican Foreign Minister. This was one of the few cases where a major Republican Government official is seen in

Albacete. The woman on the very right of the photo above is not fully visible, however, Constanca de la Mora said in her memoir that she would accompany officials and correspondents on this type of visit and Connie was known for her hats. Connie de la Mora was placed in her position in the Foreign Press Office by del Vayo, himself.³³⁰ Milly Bennett worked for Constanca de la Mora.

A "Herman" was to return to the Soviet Union, and Bob Jensen and a "Roffler" were to return to the US. Alan Herman was Ted Allan, the Canadian reporter who was part of this group in Valencia. Whether Ted Allan went to Moscow or not is not known, but he would be in Spain at Brunete with Gerda Taro in July. Their story is thinly veiled in Ted Allan's novel "Mine Were of Troubles". Roffler is possibly the writer Ed Rolfe who will arrive in Spain on June 20 and stay throughout the war. Bob Jensen was a close friend of Milly Bennett and had also been a reporter for the Moscow Daily News.

Merriman says that Milly Bennett will return soon to the US. She relates that Liston Oak, who was a member of the Communist Party, is now suspected of being a "Trotskyist". Oak who was a friend of John Dos Passos was in Barcelona during the "May Days". He clearly lost his allegiance to communism and became a supporter of the POUM while there. He wrote an article "Behind the Barricades"³³¹. When his acquaintance and POUM Founder Andrés Nin was killed on June 20, 1937³³², Oak completed his metamorphosis to an anti-communist.

Zuehlke relates the end result of the May Days:

At 7:00 AM on June 16, 1937, William Krehm heard a fist hammering loudly on the door of the POUM house in Barcelona. When one of the other foreign POUM loyalists unlocked and opened the door, he was sent sprawling, and the foyer immediately filled with heavily built plainclothesmen. Half of these were obviously Russians from the dreaded NKVD secret police. The rest were Spanish. All of the men were yelling orders.

Krehm and the other POUMists were given no time to gather personal belongings. They were shoved out the door and into waiting trucks. Armed men stood guard next to the drop gate and threatened to shoot anyone who tried to escape.

Somebody asked why they were being arrested, "Spies, Trotskyists, shouted one of the guards, Where were they being taken? A brutal laugh was the only answer."³³³

In 2017, William Krehm is the last surviving Canadian who went to Spain. Krehm would remain in jail until October 1937 when he was sent out to France. A similar story befell Sam Baron who was also jailed. Andrés Nin suffered a more dire fate. George Orwell slipped the net and escaped to France.

On June 20, 1937, Bilbao fell to the fascists in the north ending the northern campaign and freeing up Franco's forces to move into the Aragon.³³⁴ Over the next week, the Lincolns would be pestered by leaflets from Fascists planes saying the war was over and they should surrender.

Unaware of what was happening in Barcelona and Bilbao, in the bucolic area around Tarazona in the evening, Marion, Milly, Abe Harris, Joe Dallet and Merriman went for a swim and had a chance to wash up. Marion Merriman Wachtel relates:

When I could break away from my duties, I went to Tarazona and stayed with him at Headquarters.

We swam in the Jucar River. Occasionally, Bob and I swam alone. Sometimes, a group gathered. If Milly were visiting, she and I swam in our underwear, upstream from where the fellows swam. In the evenings we gathered around and sang American songs. The fellows imitated instruments, pretending to be an orchestra. We laughed and sang and joked while there was yet still time.³³⁵

The picnic and swim must have been invigorating because Dallet, Thompson, Pete Hampkins and Merriman would have a bull session where they criticized each other. Merriman rates

Hampkins, Dallet bawls out Thompson, Thomson takes on Merriman and Dallet. Merriman called it a "Bawl up". But the session must have had some positive resolution. Merriman says that Bender and Jock Cunningham were "set" which indicates a decision was made on their roles in the Brigade.

June 21—22 New Battalion Commanders Decided

21 Junio

S. Luis Gonzaga

Lectured to Battalion on formation used in approach. After - held political meeting with Machine Gun Co. & settled many problems both military & political. {Niilo} Makela in as Co. commander - Coapman as section leader. Wallach to officer school in Pozo Rubio - Skinner (Canadian) as political leader for section - Bradley to be in as Company political leader. At 1 o'clock held meeting for mappers. Meet again on 25th. Lectured all afternoon to m.g. company - good listeners. Many problems settled. Made 4 week plan of Instruction for Etat Major. Drove to Pozo Rubio - Met Nathan & Wintringham. Mazzi spread on hill. Boys drank and it came out. Nathan wants Chief of Staff. Wintringham to help him - Johnson Chief Cunningham line officer & Aitken Polit. Commissar. Longest English officers here. Against Copic and even Klaus. Says Vidal said he would be in charge of 1/2 brigade (3 Batt). Copic he says is in and German{? Or Garabaldi?} Battalion split into two parts. Turned in late. Last time in old bed.

22 Junio

S Paulino

Day of examination started at 7. In general disappointed - didn't show up the way they should have. Some forgot entire sections of the course m.g. weakness very noticable. Late in day faster but slightly better. In evening had celebration and entertainment Lawrence, Johnson, Ryan, Nathan, Wintringham, Dallet & others present. Speeches - some inane. Officers finally gave our stunt it went over well. Knight a rage & Nathan bought drink. Returned to Tarazona with some of boys transferred and had late session here with Johnson about politics of brigade, etc. Little "Nap"

§ § §



Niilo Makela, as Commissar of the Mac-Paps, 1938. ALBA Photo 11-1281, Tamiment Library, NYU

The third English Speaking Battalion will come to be known as the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion although they won't be referred to as such for another week. At this point, formation of the first company is at hand, and Canadian Niilo Makela has been named as the commander of Company 1. "Coapman" is Arthur Henry Coapman^s. Coapman will go on to be a Mess Officer in the 2nd Training Battalion in Tarazona in August. Wallach is likely to be Canadian Jesse Wallach who is being sent to Officer's school. Canadian William Skinner will be the commissar in the section. We believe American Carl Bradley will become the Company political commissar. Since the Canadian William Bradley had already been a disciplinary problem, it is unlikely he would be

^s Arthur Henry Coapman was born May 5, 1918, in Detroit, MI. A construction worker and engineer, he was a member of the YCL and arrived in Spain on June 1, 1937. He will become mess officer in Tarazona in August and then serve with the 1st Regt. de Tren. H returned to the US on December 15, 1938 aboard the *Paris*. He died August 18, 1984 in Columbus, Ohio.

assigned this sensitive political posting. On June 18, 1937, William Bradley was arrested for refusing to go to the front with the Washington Battalion. Bradley was jailed for a month on June 19, 1937, and then expected back in Tarazona but he never showed up. He was believed to be in England after deserting.³³⁶

Merriman says that he filed a 4-week plan of instruction for the Battalion with the Brigade Etat Major in Albacete. This plan of instruction was:

Week 1: Rifle Instruction, Close Order Drill, Group Tactics, Signalling, Scouting

Week 2: Formations, light machine gun, rifle tests, aircraft protection, hygiene, anti-gas, remedial work

Week 3: Company practice, movements under fire, entrenchments, hand grenade training, bayonet training, digging machine gun emplacements

Week 4: Battalion movements, flank instructions, night attacks, street fighting, four-day battalion maneuver, ready to leave for front.³³⁷

Merriman is still interested in gaining information on the failed coup against Copic so he drives to Pozo Rubio where Englishmen George Nathan and Tom Wintringham are leading exercises with Italian Lieutenant Umberto Mazzi, who was an instructor in the 45th Division and had been made head of the OTS before being replaced by Wintringham.³³⁸ Apparently, they were loose lipped enough to let their feelings out on the realignment of the leadership. George Nathan wants to be Copic's Chief of Staff with Wintringham as his Adjutant. Since it is unlikely that there would be two Chiefs of Staff at the Brigade level, the next line "Johnson Chief" is confusing. The Brigade will divide into two regiments and Nathan will lead one while Miklos Szalway (Chapayev) will lead the other. Allan Johnson will remain in the school so it is possible that Merriman intended to say that Johnson would be Chief of Instruction. Jock Cunningham is being proposed for a line command and George Aitken as a political commissar in the

field. The British say that they are against Copic and Klaus but it is likely that this is what Merriman just wanted to hear. Cecil Eby's review of this event says the British aligned with Copic. Apparently Nathan tells Merriman that Vidal has told him that "Copic is in" and will be in charge of 1/2 the Brigade and that the "G" (which could be German Thälmann or more likely, Italian Garibaldi) battalion would be split. Merriman's diary should not be viewed as authoritative since this is not quite the lineup that occurs over the next two weeks in preparation for the Battle of Brunete. Merriman says that this is his last time in his old bed, so he will be moving from Pozo Rubio (or Albacete's hotel) to Tarazona permanently.

On the 22nd, the training was again followed up by a fiesta where the officers finally have had a chance to give their "stunt". Merriman says it goes over well enough but the Canadian Allan Knight was a "rage" and was awarded a prize. Many of the significant leadership of the Brigade were in Pozo Rubio for this celebration.

June 23—24 ••• Men Sense Gal Bawled Out Klaus

23 Junio

Sta. Agripina

Expected Hourihan in evening. During day gave lecture on infiltration and group movement, etc. {undecipherable word} formation of various units and checked on work. New men came, decided Moran to stay. Lunch - Rogers practices etc. In evening when Hourihan failed to show, I gave a lecture on the history of the Lincoln Battallion which fellows seemed to like. In general must finish at a later day. Socialist competition announced. Sent in Tom Brown - Negro comrade who refused to go front and now refuses to carry out orders, etc. Lamotte bluffed on question of m.g.

24 Junio

Natividad de S Juan Bta.

~~In morning~~ At night {arrow pointing to yesterday} had session with Johnson & Bill. They drove to town. He slept in our bed. Men at front sense Gal held meeting in which he bawled out Klaus, etc. Drove to Pozo Rubio. Talked with boys and since Wintringham was not there I returned soon. On way back met Bob Thompson and Mullinger planning maneuver next day. Later Mullinger played bridge with us and we won but he got hell later because of lack of preparation. Hyde has serious problems he wants to leave to front. "Can't work behind lines until I have been to the front."

§ § §

Merriman's diary is fairly skimpy for these two days. He gave a few lectures to the men during the day and decided on some personnel matters. Moran is Marsden Morant^t. Marsden Moran

^t Moran, Marsden was born March 22, 1914 in Detroit, MI. He arrived in Spain on February 17, 1937, and was assigned to Guerrilla work with the rank of Alferes (Sergeant-Major). He went to the Lincoln-Washington Battalion as a Sergeant. He was killed in action at Gandesa on April 1, 1938, during the

became the Alfarez (essentially a Sergeant-Major) in the 2nd Battalion of Instruction in Tarazona in August.³³⁹ Frank Rogers we saw previously is a new arrival and he will become a Commissar in the Mac-Paps.

Marty Hourihan was to have given a lecture in the evening but he did not appear so Merriman gave his "history of the Lincolns" lecture. Merriman announces an upcoming "Socialist competition". He also disciplines Tom Brown^u who is refusing to obey orders. Pierre Lamotte continues to struggle in finding a role in the Battalion. He clearly did not do well on his exam on the machine gun.

In the evening or overnight hours, Merriman had a discussion with Allan Johnson and Bill Lawrence. Likely that they were still debriefing about Harry Haywood's attempt to represent American discontent with Vladimir Copic. In an interesting revelation, Merriman says that the men sense that General Gal has bawled out Colonel Hans Klaus, who continues to fall in responsibility from the Brigade to the Battalion level. Merriman does not reveal what the issue is with Klaus but we know from Eby and others that General Gal will throw a party on the 25th at his Ambite Mill villa and Colonel Klaus was a no-show.

Merriman tries to connect with Tom Wintringham but doesn't so returns to Tarazona to play bridge in the evening with Bob Thompson and Jack Mullinger. Mullinger should have been preparing his lectures for the following day since he apparently got in trouble the next day. Tom Hyde continues to draw Merriman's attention. In this episode it appears that Hyde wishes to go to the front, since he apparently cannot work effectively in

Retreats. He was said to have come from a well-to-do family before the Depression.

^u Thomas Brown was February 5, 1910 in Wichita Falls, Texas. An African-American, Brown arrived in Spain on April 2, 1937. He was initially an instructor at the American Base Tarazona and later a driver. He was captured in 1938 and exchanged April 22, 1939, returning to the US on May 6, 1939 aboard the *President Harding*. In WWII, he served in the US Army. Brown died August 1983.

the rear without having the experience of having been in battle. This may be a recognition that you cannot just serve in the rear and maintain respect of the men.

June 25—26 Americans Return from Gal's Banquet

25 Junio

S. Guillermo

Went in the morning on a large problem with Co. 1 which turned off road and went to farmhouse - visited it and talked with Communist peasants who had been Socialists 16 years. Returned late & hungry - after lunch decided to talk with men from Co 1 about maneuver. Session with mappers first. In midst of talk in came Hourihan, Pike, Bender, Bill Lawrence. Finished then announced meeting for that night. Had session and Winkler & Chief of Staff of 13th Brigade visited {Sam} Baron and settled several problems. Continued meeting about new men who arrived about 5⁰⁰ - Robinson, Steve and other leading comrades decided to train them. Robinson to go to 2nd Battalion instead of Rogers who is not working out so well. After this had meeting - long - Hourihan spoke and created good impression. After it went to special party give by the m.g. co. Well done and entertainment was fine. -- lasted late & discussed & agreed upon men to go to Lincoln and also to Officers school. Canadians & others on list.

26 Junio

Sios. Juan y Pablo

In morning went out with m.g. co. and placed guns in defence of the village problem developing because of Kaufman and tendency to dominate things. Hourihan, Bender and Bill L. Received new car from Albacete - General wanted it and did use it some. Thing still needs repair. In afternoon gave lecture on anti-aircraft which lasted until late. Got long-delayed hair cut - Met [Ernest] Amatniek who just came in. Had long session - talked with N.C. [non-commissioned] officers on duties of group. Visited political elections (real politics) and best man lost. 1st Sec. Co 2. Rogers still showing up badly and later played bridge for a long tough session. Mullinger, Joe

Dallet & Marion & I. Tom Hyde obtained permission (talked to me today about officer's school)

§ § §

Between the time that Harry Haywood had his face to face meeting challenging Vladimir Copic to resign and the 25th, we know from Mirko Markovich's remembrances that General Gal threw a party at his Ambite villa. Eby relates the story:

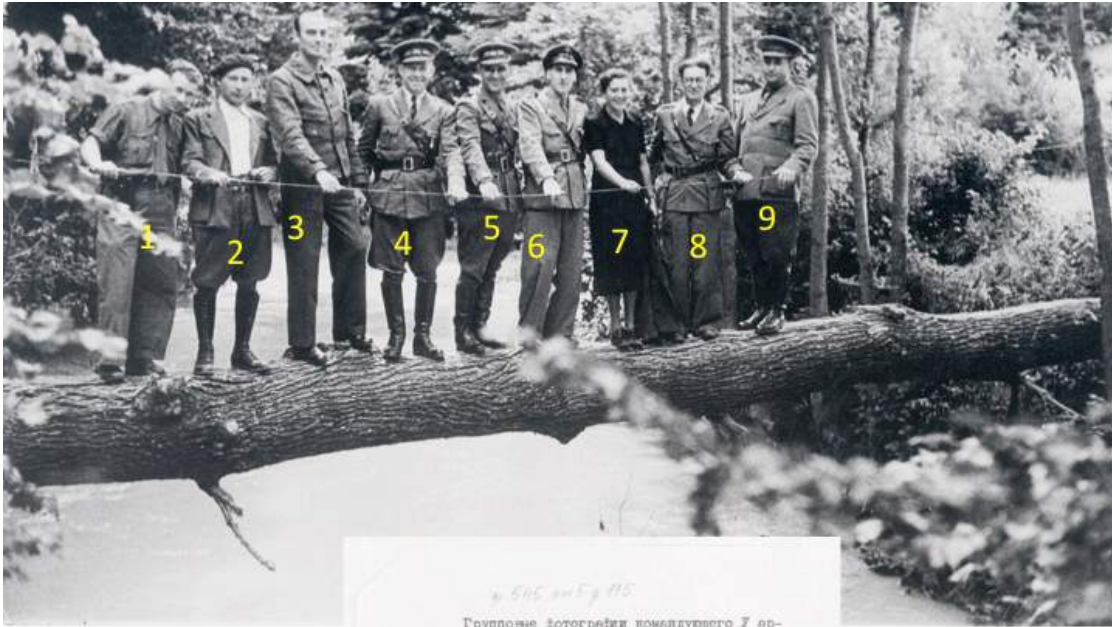
In an unusual obeisance to camaraderie among his inferiors, General Gal held a banquet for his staff and the six battalion commanders and commissars at his riverside dacha. Having been briefed on the aborted mutiny, he poured healing glasses of vodka on troubled waters, outlined his expectations for the coming offensive, and received from his retainers toasts to his health and continued success. He explained his 15th Division would also include the XIIIth Brigade, the Dombrowski, which was on the way from a hard campaign in the South. The camaraderie ended with an abrupt explosion of epithets in Russian and Hungarian. The general had just discovered that Lieutenant Colonel Hans Klaus, Copic's second in command, had -- for reasons never explained -- boycotted the banquet. Gal dispatched a messenger with an order for him to present himself at once. Marcovicz recorded the embarrassing finale: "Throughout the banquet Klaus was put on the spot, General Gal berating him both directly and indirectly".³⁴⁰

We know that Klaus sided with the British and Americans to have a different commander of the XVth Brigade than Copic. It is likely that Klaus had hoped that commander would be himself. This reference is probably more important in placing the Brigade commanders than the specific dust-up with Klaus. There are several very interesting photos in the Tamiment Library from photo opportunities at this dinner. The first which we dub "The Officer's Photo" is a who's-who of the leadership.



The Ambite Officers" photo (Numbered) - This is photo ALBA 177_175034, Tamiment Library, NYU -- Known faces: 2- Egan Schmidt, 5 Hans Klaus, 6 Harry Haywood, 7 Vladimir Copic, 8 David Zaret, 9 General Gal (Janucz Galicz), 10 George Aitken, 11 Adles Bebler, 14 Miklos Szalway ("Captain Chapayev"), 15 Gabriel Fort, 16 Tadeusz Oppman (tentative), 17 Max Milman, 18 Fred Copeman, 19 Bert Williams, 23 Steve Nelson, 24 Martin Hourihan, 25 Mirko Markovich, 26 David Mates.

Approximately a dozen important photos were taken at the event including Copic in a tete-a-tete with General Gal, the first photos of David Doran in Spain, and a very interesting photo of a number of the people on a log over the river:



Групповые фотографии командующего 5 армейским корпусом К. Модесто, генералов Галла, Ганса и Вальтера (К. Сверчевского), начальника Базы интербригад Визалля во время инспекции XV бригады.

Ноябрь 1937 г.

с/д

"The Log Photo" (numbered) This is ALBA Photo 177_175001. The caption has been translated to "Group photograph of the commander of the Vs (fifth) army corps H. Modesto, general Gall, Hans, and Walter (K. Sverchevskii), commander of the International Brigades' base Vidal during inspection of the XVth Brigade - November 1937" (translation courtesy A. Zaks). We believe, however, in the following IDs: 2: Peter Becker, 3: Hans Kahle, 4: David Zaret, 5: Vladimir Copic, 6: George Aitken, 7 - Suzanne Heck?, 8: Lucien Vidal, 9: General Gal. Others are not yet known. Generals Juan Modesto and Walter do not appear in this photograph.

This last photograph's caption is clearly problematic as Vidal and Gal were no longer with the Brigade in November 1937, the weather does not look like November, and the people are the same as in the "Officer's Photo". George Aitken who looks to be #6 in this photo was back in England in October 1937. He also could not have been there on that date. Untangling, these identifications in these two photos will help with some potential misidentifications in the Tamiment Archive. These two photos are still, after 77 years, a work in progress.

Merriman's diary is helpful with the dates of Gal's party. He says on the 25th, Marty Hourihan has returned to Tarazona and others in those photos have come back as well. Winkler and the Chief of

Staff of the 13th Brigade are among them. Merriman says on the 23rd that men at the front sense that Gal has bawled out Hans Klaus. This would tend to put this party on the 23rd or sooner. Since on the previous diary page that the "men sense Gal bawled out Klaus", it would indicate that the Ambite banquet was on the 23rd.

Merriman did not attend the party (nor did Dallet or Thompson or Allan Johnson). He has Company 1 of the third battalion out on maneuvers and they get lost by going to a house where Merriman picks them up. Meeting the residents, he finds a family who have been socialists for many years.

Back in Tarazona he meets with Winkler, the Chief of Staff of the 13th Dombrowski brigade and possibly with Sam Baron, who we last met in early May. The last name is tentative and could also be read as "Visited barracks". New men keep pouring in and Merriman mentions John Quigley Robinson and Steve Nelson who will train them. He notes that there was a swap of Robinson for Frank Rogers in the Washington Battalion.

In increasing the staffing at the front, some more Americans and Canadians will be moving to the front. There was a description of a "Canadian company" in the Washington Battalion during the upcoming battle of Brunete in July. Beeching says that this Canadian "section" was led first by Canadians Paddy O'Neill then by Tom Traynor then by Bill Brennan and later by Paddy O'Daire.³⁴¹ Bob Kerr, the Canadian in Albacete tasked with steering Canadians to Merriman's third battalion said that in one Lincoln Company over half of the soldiers were Canadian and 30 Canadians were in one Washington company prior to Brunete.³⁴² These partial companies caused a lot of confusion with historians who mixed them up with the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion that remained in Tarazona under Merriman for training. Some Canadians will go to the front and others to the Officers' School. RGASPI's archives help considerably in untangling this confusion. The "2nd Instruction Battalion in Tarazona" has detailed lists of the companies and sections. There is an American, a Canadian and a British company in Tarazona in July. Men were pulled out of Tarazona to restock the Lincolns in

late June and some of them were Canadians. The 3rd Battalion will not be fully formed and trained until August.

The next morning the exercise was to protect Tarazona. Ruby Kaufman is identified by Merriman as a problem because of a tendency to dominate the exercises. Ed Bender, Marty Hourihan and Bill Lawrence got themselves an automobile that has been under the use of General Gal. After a lecture and a haircut, Merriman met with Ernest Amatniek.^v Amatniek is likely sent back to Tarazona to train the Battalion in transmissions. He will serve with the Mac-Paps. After a grueling bridge game with Dallet and Mullinger against Marion and Bob Merriman, Merriman deals with Tom Hyde again who got a "permission" which allows him to stay with the Battalion and he requests to go to Officer Training School. Marion Merriman says in *American Commander in Spain* that they often played bridge and that Merriman could not concentrate because he had other more pressing things on his mind. That event could have been June 26.

Merriman says that there was an election in the camp and the best man did not win and he makes the notation (1st Co 2nd Section). The leader of Company 1 Section 2 in July will be William Neure.³⁴³ It does not mean, however, that this is the man being discussed since the Company and Section leadership were fluid and unlikely to be retained for a full month.

^v Ernest Amatniek was born December 5, 1914 in Talinn, Estonia. He arrived in the US in October 1929 and attended James Monroe High School in the Bronx and the City College of New York where he studied electrical engineering. He worked as a lithographer and Radio technician in New York. He served with the XV Brigade Transmissions. Amaniek returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. Amaniek died April 9, 2005, in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

June 27—28 “Frank Discussion Naming Battalion”

27 Junio

S. Zollo

Special meeting with mappers. Followed by general work in Headquarters and then called {Charles} Regan in and he signed a pledge for not drinking. Drove in ambulance to Madrigueras and ate at Matilda's and talked about Bloomfield and engagement to sister of Matilda. Went to talk with Clerc about loss of her place and he flatly said he did not interfere with local affairs. No satisfaction. Returned and left boys there. Had long session between section military & political leaders - Long session - Much talk not particularly good. Ate and sent out Battalion orders and arranged with Amatniek for communications work. Joe gave lecture on make up of I.B. and Loomis drove Joe Dougher to Madrigueras where he had a date. Went to local cafe and drank with Lash and others. Returned talked with Bob T. and then to bed.

28 Junio

S. León II, papa

In morning checked Company 2 problem on outskirts - general work - arranged for visit to town after lunch gave lecture on anti-aircraft work which lasted most of the afternoon. Then returned for discussion with NCOs and Wattis & Bill Lawrence came. Note passed in about Vidal wanting Wattis to be second in command here in Tarazona. He'll think about. First news about division of Brigade into two parts: 3 & 3 and one section under Cunningham, Nathan & 1 American. Eventually, a division into English speaking Brigade. Finally school Wattis & hold series of talks with leading comrades and Robinson. Sabatini and Robinson to stay with us in charge of m.g. section of Seaman. Carson to school Sabatini in his place. Rogers discussed and frank discussion on the naming of the Battalion Mackenzie-Papineau to help Canadians, etc. Ok'd by Vidal. I was first to suggest this to Kerr.

Cunningham matter aired. Wattis "what is best for the men". Two faced bastard - issue of 27th & our part in it.

§ § §

Merriman continues his supervision of the training of the third North American battalion in Tarazona de la Mancha (which confusingly is named the 2nd Training Battalion, the Washington Battalion being the first). He mentions Charles Regan who was reprimanded for drinking and took the "pledge". Merriman rode over to Madrigueras, the original British training base, and found that Matilda must have lost her home. Merriman appeals to Captain André Clerc, who was Commander at the Madrigueras Training base, to intercede on her behalf but does not have the pull to change the order. On the 26th of June, orders were being given to muster all the French in Madrigueras in preparation for a move to the Front. It is probably that Matilda's was requisitioned to billet these incoming Frenchmen. The French were moved out at 04:30 on the morning of the 27th to rejoin the XII Brigade³⁴⁴ and it is likely that this was the reason that Merriman went to Madrigueras to view their departure. On the 29th, another group of Dutch and Austrians left Madrigueras to join the XIth Brigade.

On the 19th of June, there was an accounting of the number of men in the IB's. At Albacete's Etat Major, there were two Chief Officers (Vidal and Schalbrock), 38 Officers, 6 NCO's, and 221 Soldiers.³⁴⁵ An additional 107 troops were in the Political Section, 654 in hospital, 171 in the "Reinforcement Company", 60 Engineers, 309 in the Autopark, with an additional 127 mechanics assigned to the auto park, 68 in the grenade factory, 372 in the Intendencia, and 27 in the Armory. For reference, there were 342 men in Pozo Rubio, 90 men in Mahora, 295 in Madrigueras, 224 under Merriman in Tarazona, 450 men in the artillery group in Almansa, and 36 in the antitank unit. Subordinate to Vidal and Albacete base, there were 41 in Denia/Benisa, 24 in Barcelona at the IB Headquarters there with André Marty at the head, 9 in Valencia, 4 in Alicante, and 108 men in Madrid, including the press office and men who worked on the Volunteer for Liberty

newspapers in all languages. With only a few battalions at the front, many, many Brigadistas spent their tours in the rear.

Merriman returns to Tarazona and met Ernest Amatniek about his assignment. Joseph Dougher (who graduated from the OTS on June 14) was given a ride by Elliot Loomis back to Madrigueras where he had a date. Merriman finished the evening drinking with Joe Lash and talking to Bob Thompson.

On the 28th, Merriman starts again with training, but meets later with George Wattis and Bill Lawrence and the members of the Non-Commissioned Officer's school. Wattis was likely an instructor there. Lucien Vidal at Albacete is recommending Wattis to become an adjutant to Merriman at Tarazona. Wattis is not sure. Below the discussion indicates that this would not be Merriman's preference, either.

There will be a realignment of the brigade into two regiments of three battalions each (Lincolns-Washingtons- British in one - Dimitrov, French Sixth of February, and the Spanish 24th Battalion in the other) and a third section (probably the International Cavalry Section). Jock Cunningham, George Nathan and "1 American" (presumably Marty Hourihan) to lead. There is a promise in the future that the Brigade would be split into an English-speaking only brigade.

In what looks like "Finally school Wattis", Merriman appears to instruct Wattis in his new duties. Merriman met with leading comrades and John Robinson. Amadeo (Wally) Sabatini is added to the Brigade to deal with the "Seaman's machine gun company". Jack Carson is to school Sabatini. This group was made up of relatively tough men and Robinson and Sabatini were charged with leading them. John Robinson had been a member of the Seafarer's International Union and thus had their respect.

We finally learn that a decision has been made to name the Third Battalion after William Lyon Mackenzie (note that the "K" is not capitalized and this is a frequent mistake on the Tamiment site) and Louis-Joseph Papineau. These Canadians were the Upper Canada (Ontario) and Quebec leaders of the 1837-38 rebellion

which ultimately led to independence for Canada. Merriman states that he was responsible for choosing the name and recommending it to Vidal and Bob Kerr in Albacete. Canadians remember it somewhat differently:



Ronald Liversedge, photo from his Book, © New Star Books, Toronto

All during June there had been many more Canadians arriving at the base, and about the time the Washington Battalion left to join the Brigade, a few of us decided on another visit to the base commander, to urge once more naming our battalion the Mackenzie-Papineau.

Bob Merriman said: "You guys are sure persistent. I can't make the decision myself, but here's what we'll do. I will grant you the right to form an all-Canadian company. You, Liversedge, will take the rank of Teniente (company commander), unconfirmed as yet, and you will pick your Alfarez (adjutant) and your sargentos, etc. When you have

formed your company, which will be Company Number one, you will supply me with the roster of your company. After that we will await developments. Can you do that comrade?"

I answered, "Yes, comrade Commandante, I have to do it". Merriman replied, also formally, "Bueno, comrade Teniente, and good luck".

We had made a break. The maple leaf forever. I got the Canadians together and made a short speech which the boys, being friends, took in good part. I asked for their help. This was a breakthrough; the first official recognition of Canada in Spain. We organized our company, and this was the beginning of the Mac-Paps. The company staff was Teniente Ron Liversedge, Alfarez Bill Skinner, Platoon Sergeants Bill Tough, Hugh McGregor, Pat O'Shea and Alex

*Melnychenko. Bob Kerr came out to the base and congratulated us.*³⁴⁶



Bill Skinner, February 1938 at Segura de los Baños, ALBA Photo 11-0675, Tamiment Library, NYU

An issue with Jock Cunningham was discussed and Wattis gave only the opinion that he had the men's interests at heart. This obviously set off Merriman who felt that Wattis and he were responsible for not standing up to the order of Copic and Klaus to go over on the 27th of February at Jarama. The countermanding of Merriman on that day grinds with him throughout his diary and he is looking for support for those who were there to confirm his view of the front on the 27th. Copic's view was that Merriman showed cowardice in not ordering the Americans forward until Wattis came up from the Estado Mayor and led the charge which resulted in many Americans being cut down from enfilading machine gun fire. The suggestion here that Wattis was to become Merriman's adjutant must have been insulting to Merriman and is likely retribution for the mini-revolt when Copic was suggested to be removed. Merriman does not hedge on his opinion of Wattis.

On the 28th of June 1937, the attack on Brunete began. This effort was designed to take pressure off the Asturian region and, if able to break the Nationalist supply lines to the outskirts of Madrid,

could be a turning point in the war. There will be a limited amount of discussion of Brunete and how it affected the XVth Brigade in Merriman's diary, but the reader is warned: Merriman did not go to Brunete and what he knew about the battle, he did not write in his diary.

June 29—30 ••• “Asked First Big Favor”

29 Junio

Stos. Pedro y Pablo

Called in Dougher & Rogers and gave them hell. In morning Bill Lawrence left early and Joe and I held check on socialist competition. Marching singing. Light Machine Gun signalling - one maneuver Co. 1 leading clearly. Fine spirit and good idea in general. Left in trucks for Albacete with Marion and Joe. Went to Bill Lawrence who went with us to Etat Major and had to leave for Cordoba front. Saw Vidal after lunch with Nathan (under Jock Cunningham) and Wattis & Hourihan getting final drunk. Went to Vidal and Schalbroeck - had long discussion - asked first big favor - don't send Wattis - question of numbers in Battalion got order for Ammo - rifles 10 Ross & tent telephone and 1 central. Secret note for Thibault and m.g. signed personally by Vidal. Dumb mistakes made and it let me see combination l.m.g. & maxims - air cooled Lamotte's gun almost taken but he phoned - We went to get one from Auto Park. No l.m.g. Ate at Intendencia and then drove to La Roda to see Marsly in Communications. Unfortunately he was not in and I must return later - saw periscopes and range finders today. Must get. Got back late and after a session or two climbed in. Tough day but got glasses, maps compasses etc. Lots of running but really relaxed on way home.

30 Junio

Sta. Lucina

Battalion had until 8 o'clock to clean up since I expect Clerc and two International youth delegations at 8. Met and talked to Battalion. Awarded Battalion banner to Co. 1 Com. Thompson first winner - talked about future of Battalion and general outline of work. Discussion about food and Battalion voted to chip in 5 pesetas each pay day. Raised one more cook. Held several meetings. Had phone call from Louis Fischer also came out soon after. I

asked for his documents, attitude not bad and he visited and talked with fellows. Hints inside work yet shows great interest in Socialists etc. Against idea of using word Mexico. After he left, sent batch of men to Pozo Rubio. Wintringham came. Lectured on maps and NCOs immediately after had session with m.g. leading comrades and bawled out Zaionz and cleared up much. Staff meeting good - plan of selecting men for front and organization of third Canadian company. Ivanov here & Zaionz told him troubles.

§ § §

Merriman's diary is particularly dense on these two days. He wakes to find that Dougher and Rogers probably are still not back from their "dates" at Madrigueras on the 28th. He chews them out. Bill Lawrence was in Tarazona to check to see if the Battalion was ready for the "Socialist Competition". Socialist Competition or Socialist Emulation³⁴⁷ was practiced in many collectives whereby workers would compete to meet the goals of production set for the society. Typically placed on important holidays, it had a flavor of a sporting competition with, typically, badges or flags of a political nature being awarded.

Merriman and Marion and Joe Dallet left for Albacete to meet with Bill Lawrence who was leaving for the Cordoba front. He meets with George Nathan who would be under Jock Cunningham and with Hourihan and Wattis. What looks like "final drunk" may be they finally got drunk. Merriman gets a side meeting with Vidal and Schalbroeck and asks his first big favor.... "Don't give me Wattis". Clearly, there was no love lost between these men.

Merriman rounds up ammo and weapons. He gains "tent telephones" and "1 central" (probably a switchboard with battery for the phones). He picks up maps, binoculars, Ross rifles. He gets a secret memo for a Thibault. Frenchman Raymond Thibault had been accused of desertion in May, 1937, and this may be the resolution of his case. Merriman may have made a mistake (or else someone else made a mistake) and showed him a new Light

and heavy machine gun combination. Merriman really wanted one of those. He gets a call from Pierre Lamotte who says he lost a weapon. Merriman goes out to the Auto Park and replaces it but is frustrated when he cannot get these new light machine guns.

Merriman drives out to La Roda, which is on the Albacete - Madrid highway to the southwest of Madrigueras. He looks for a "Marsly" or similar name who apparently is in communications. He sees new rangefinders and periscopes there and wants some of those as well. A long day in procuring supplies for the Battalion but he seems pleased with his bounty.

On the last day of June, Merriman got the Battalion gathered early for an inspection by Clerc of the Madrigueras camp and two youth delegations who were out to see the Socialist Competition. Company 1, with Bob Thompson as Commissar, stood out and won a new Battalion banner with the Mackenzie-Papineau name on it. Even during the games, Merriman is dealing with complaints and in order to improve the food, he asks the men to kick back five pesetas each payday so that he can get better food and he adds another cook.

Merriman says that Louis Fischer contacted him. Fischer was a writer for *The Nation* and apparently wished to join the brigades in some sort of position in the rear. Fischer, 41 in 1937, was in the Soviet Union in the 1930's and probably at the Lenin School.

Merriman is trading men with Pozo Rubio for them to attend the Officers and NCO schools. In this group from Tarazona, Jack Cooper, Saul Wellman, Otto Reeves, John Skifstrom, Burt Jackson, Ernie Kozlowski, John Macrel, Canadian Hugh McGregor, Canadian Bill Skinner, Albert Wallach and Frank Rogers will go to the school.³⁴⁸ Tom Wintringham came over from Pozo Rubio to lecture on maps. Merriman has some difficulty with William Zaionz. Merriman says that a Russian named "Ivanov" is in camp and Zaionz tells him his troubles. Zaionz will not survive the war.

JULY 1937

Left early for Albacete after calling
 Huddle by the Battalion. Orders on
 9 Julio present fellow against him suddenly and
 he had to stand there, and take it.
 S. Zepón
 I was not allowed to go to the front
 to see what was going on. He couple
 of days later that I was not afraid to
 go. He wanted to desert. Kept him to 30 days
 and he must go to front with us. Left for
 Madrid on 18 and went there in morning
 and healer all court. In Madrid
 in afternoon and met me in evening on 17 July
 18 July. He had been to Army + went to
 hospital in nearly hospital. Brought out
 Bill. met Garland, Le Smith, Frank, Hubler,
 Brown and Humber, wounded. Heard how killed
 and other. Learned much about movement.
 person movement and full of things, place
 and artillery in front. Lived in St. Peter
 at one time went and after office in Gray
 via met and other some old self with
 pretty girl and some inside in. met
 Garland also. Late July here some in line
 Ted about going a front and probably
 I now in to suppose under present
 condition. Went with me. Got out in
 late during night. St. Amalia
 In morning had some met Payne
 Orendigast. Don't know he did and some house
 the next day. He was Bill had ditched
 her. Laid out and moved mostly probably on front
 back etc. Bill suggested to go and it on
 shot and then the way. Taken on by
 idea at that time after 1 year of work
 on the idea. talked + he and it wanted
 me to ride to Albacete with her. Had talk
 with Sam and he took picture for people
 history. met Sam and got him near
 from front. unable to believe why I
 was in Madrid at that time so had
 I. Left soon as possible after eating at
 Alphonso and having recreation soda.
 Left in ambulance. One killed in front
 death and some dumb as hell. place + Payne
 and Orendigast Bill Bill and I. would
 pulled a bit downed with her and to
 Bill.

AGO SEP OCT NOV DIC

July 1--2 ••• “Dozens of Things Happened at Once”

1 Julio

Sta. Leonor

In morning went out to play horseshoes - spotted returned to find all quiet - and decided to take a swim where maneuver is to be. Fire revolver. Marion did well and did some fine swimming. Returned to find McLeod – Canadian Party - Chairman of Against War & Fascism. Talked about name Mackenzie-Papineau - stated our conditions rather emphatically - No breaking up military organization for political purposes. Anna Louise Strong here to stay couple of days. McLeod spoke in staff meeting and then walked up to speak at Mess Hall. Joe did a good job and name of Battalion accepted well. Anna Louise got room. One of those great movements - dozens of things happened at once. Report came of truck running off road at bridge. Man badly hurt in Center of town - Touring car overturned in ditch. Two trucks of cigarettes - radios – milk, soap, chocolate that came from America had to be unloaded at once. Marion Greenspan here and checking and rushing around. Word came for Amatniek to go to Albacete with push etc. Didn't get to go to meeting about name - injured man came in. Car stolen and sent guard & license plates removed. Damned fool. Howe & Dion got excited and I swore back at them. Threatened arrest. Apology soon followed. Robbie was looking for them - went later to Party of Co 1 for Joe Lash. Joe Lash ambushed. Much fun - informal very. Talks and one short one by Lash. Anna Louise, etc. Few words myself. To bed late after interesting hectic evening. Lawrence to come.

2 Julio

La Visitación de Ntra Sra.

Rose early - organized Canadian co. Liversedge in charge, Skinner second. Anna Louise came at 9³⁰ for an interview about Americans in Spain. Also mentioned 23rd

& 27th. Went out to see wrecked car. Snapped off two trees completely wrecked - damned fool driver. Guard there all night. Frenchy came out - Studebaker was to have been ours. All off now. Wanted our car. Lincoln Battalion & Washington went in lines. Hourihan ordered up. Called off guard. "Forget it". Frenchy reported wrecked car. NCO's at one - Kolowski came back - Anna Louise lectured in afternoon 6³⁰ staff meeting - tighten up. Liversedge wants to resign. Weissman being worked on. Clique in Co 2 broken completely. In evening Kolowsky lectured on practical trench work and 16 ft. sq. blockhouses. Gave orders at 10 to mobilize all men including ambulance - men gathered in short time at cook house. Then I announced we were all invited to the show: "Kronstadt" by air forces. Cheers - many went. Anna Louise sat in a box. Joe left early. Amatriek took Rosenthal & Grossner into Albacete - is going to get old equipment from Madrigueras. Howe was sick and how!

§ § §

In a very busy two days in the diary, Bob Merriman tells his diary much and holds back some things he must have known. On July 2, the Lincoln and Washington Battalions were ordered up to the lines for the "push", the Battle of Brunete. Probably for security reasons, Merriman doesn't write much about this in his diary. Instead he deals with visitors to Tarazona de la Mancha.

July 1 was "Dominion Day" in Canada, now known as "Canada Day", the Canadian national holiday. To recognize this, the head of the Canadian Communist Party, Albert Alexander MacLeod³⁴⁹, showed up in Tarazona to greet the men and lecture {Note that Victor Hoar makes a mistake and says that this was Allan Dowd, unless this is an alias}.³⁵⁰ They formally announce that the new Battalion will be called the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion (Merriman misspells Mackenzie). Merriman states that this is not a political unit but a military unit, probably to assuage the Americans who would be in the new Battalion. From the tone of the diary, it sounds like Joe Dallet, the Commissar, had to sell the idea of the name to the

Battalion. It is likely that the Canadians were excited about having recognition. Ron Liversedge recalls the visit:

We did have one visitor to the base who was welcome, especially to us Canadians, and that was our own A. A. MacLeod. MacLeod was sat that time the national secretary of the Canadian League Against War and Fascism, and was later to serve a couple of terms as a communist MPP in the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I cannot recall the date of MacLeod's visit, but I think it was early July, 1937. At any rate it was of great importance to us, as it was this visit that finally and officially established the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion of the Fifteenth International Brigade. MacLeod spoke to the massed personnel of the base for two hours. He gave a history of the founding of Canada, brought in the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the defeat by the embattled Canadians of the new American republic's attempted invasion of Canada, and finally the revolt of the early Canadians against the British Family Compact, led by Mackenzie and Papineau. There was a standing ovation for MacLeod; the Americans had never heard anything like it before. When MacLeod asked for an endorsement of a Mac-Pap Battalion, he got it one hundred per cent. The name was confirmed a few days later by the Brigades and the Spanish Government, and Canada was officially recognized in Spain as participating in the war. But not, of course, by the Canadian government.³⁵¹



Anna Louise Strong

Anna Louise Strong³⁵², showed up in Tarazona. Marion Merriman and Connie de la Mora both mention Anna Louise in their memoirs and she must have been a force of nature. Anna Louise would lecture several times over the next two days. Strong was with Milly Bennett in China in the 1920's and was editor at Moscow News in the 1930's when Bennett was there. Much of their shared experiences in China and Russia were covered in Strong's biography *I Change Worlds*. It was apparent that Marion

Merriman was acquainted with Anna Louise before Spain. Marion Merriman Wachtel and Warren Lerude tell the story of the visit:

Anna Louise Strong arrived from America, having returned home from Russia earlier. She planned to gather information for a book on the international volunteers. We found her a room in Tarazona and caught up briefly with the news of America. She was cheered about the program to aid the Spanish children, the most terrified victims of the war, and she wanted to talk to the American Volunteers.

Anna Louise wasn't as trying and exhausting as usual, perhaps because she herself was exhausted. She brought ten thousand dollars from an American philanthropist who wanted to buy boots for the Americans fighting in Spain. It was difficult to find boots large enough for most of the Americans. So Anna Louise set out to find a Spanish shoe manufacturer who would make the larger-sized boots the Americans required.

After a couple of days of rest, Anna Louise summoned me, and we made the rounds of the squads and barracks so she could seek out the stories of the volunteers. She was a good speaker with a strong voice, and she was forever talking as we moved about the men. She was built like a pyramid, tall and heavily widening as her figure went earthward. The men liked her because of her enthusiasm and the simplicity of her manner. The facility with which she could turn her charm on and off, almost like water from a tap, amazed me.³⁵³

Discipline still plagues Bob Merriman. Two men appear to have "organized" a Studebaker touring car, and in going AWOL and in the process of getting out of Tarazona, crashed it into a tree near the bridge in town. The car was totaled. Merriman seems to be as concerned about the loss of the car as he is disciplining the "damned fool" driver. "Frenchy" who is French Canadian Amédée Grenier³⁴² came out from the Auto Park to check out the vehicle. He reported the loss of the vehicle and this would be a scandal for the new battalion who expected to get this car. Merriman wanted this car. Apparently one of the men was injured in the crash and was brought in. No guard was left on the

car and so a guard would be placed on it for the next 24 hours (after removing the plates) and on July 2 Merriman removed the guard to say "forget it" since the car was a loss.

In this incident or a simultaneous one, Seaman William Edward Howe^a and Joseph Raymond Dion^b caused problems. After taking abuse from these men, Merriman demanded and got an apology (at the threat of arrest). Howe was noted for having wanted to leave the Battalion and the two incidents may be related. Merriman says "Robbie" was looking for them. Robbie is John Quigley Robinson who was brought in to manage the difficult, rough and tumble Seaman who arrived in June.

Joe Lash was in Tarazona and a Canada Day (at that time "Dominion Day") party was held on the evening of the 1st. Lash was "ambushed" and "much fun" was had. Anna Louise Strong also spoke to the troops in the evening with Lash and Merriman.

On the 2nd of July, Merriman formally organized the leadership of the Canadian "company". Lieutenant Ron Liversedge is put in charge with Bill Skinner as his Alfarez. By the end of the day, Liversedge has gone to Merriman to tell him that he is not the man for the job and he returns to the ranks. In Liversedge's memoir³⁴², he places this "stepping back" as much later in the summer, but clearly Merriman notes that it happened immediately. Bill Skinner is put in charge of the Canadians and Irving Weissman^c, who

^a William Edward Howe was born July 15, 1908. He lived in New York City but was a seaman, one of many who just arrived in Spain. He served with the Lincoln-Washington Battalion at Belchite. Disillusioned and wanting to return home, he later deserted. Howe was notable as one of the seamen with Bill Bailey when the Nazi flag was cut off the German ship Bremen in 1935 in NY Harbor. No return to the US can be found for Howe in Ancestry.com.

^b Joseph Aleodor Raymond Dion was December 7, 1908, Salem, MA to Canadian parents. He had 9 years prior military service with the US Navy and his profession was listed as seaman and "Bum". He arrived in Spain on June 6, 1937, and served with the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. He returned to the US on August 13, 1938 aboard the *President Roosevelt*.

^c Irving Weissman was born July 31, 1910 in NYC. Another City College of New York student, he also had been a WPA teacher. Leaving from Milwaukee (his parents' home) he arrived in Spain on June 4, 1937, and served with the XV BDE, Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion rising the rank of Sargento. He was on the line at

arrived in Spain in June, is being encouraged to step up into leadership. Hoar relates the story:

And what of Lt. Ronald Liversedge, the first officer of the original No. One Company? Within a few days after the creation of the Mac-Paps, Liversedge had resigned his commission and returned to the ranks because he refused to adhere to Merriman's admonition that all officers should eat in the officer's mess. Liversedge, said Merriman, was too democratic.³⁴¹

Merriman gets interviewed by Anna Louise Strong and focuses on the events of February 23 and 27. It would be very interesting to see her notes on this interview. Merriman continues to deal with the loss of the car. "All is off now". This must have been a great disappointment to Merriman who was very peripatetic. Walter Kolowsky has come back to Tarazona to be a trainer.

Merriman notes that the Lincoln Battalion and the Washington Battalion are moving out. In a small hint of humor, Merriman gathers the men, including the men in Sanidad, at 10 pm and tells them they are going to the "show". Recall that departures for the front typically happened in the middle of the night so the men may have inferred they, too, were going. When he lets them know it is the movie show, *We are from Kronstadt*, there is cheering. They at least would not be going to the front for now. Ernie Amatniek, however, has been ordered up and he takes Canadian Leon Rosenthal^d (whose residence was listed as San Francisco) and Samuel Grossner^e with him to Albacete.

Fuentes del Ebro and in Ebro Offensive. Weissman returned to the US December 15, 1938 aboard the *Paris*. In WWII, he served in the Anti-Aircraft group in North Africa, Italy-Salerno and Anzio, Northern Europe, and St. Tropez landings. He passed away December 20, 1998 in San Francisco, California.

^d Leon Rosenthal served with the Lincoln Battalion. Death certificate indicates killed end of February 1938 on Extremadura Front with the 45th Division.

^e Samuel Grossner was January 16, 1915. He was a radio technician and was initially assigned as well to the 45 Division on the Extremadura front in the Sanidad. He returned to Company 3 of the Lincoln-Washington Battalion. Grossner was captured and executed September 7, 1938, in the Sierra Caballs.

July 2—3 ••• The Mac-Pap Bugle is Silenced

3 Julio

S. Tritón

Bugle failed to blow - men late - Anna Louise & Joe Lash left on truck. Both promised to send materials. Went thru Pozo Rubio - went out on maneuvers - felt sick and improvement was slow. Ruby withdrew to leave then {left} holding {the} sack on wide flank Returned at noon. In afternoon - general work - and in evening Bill {Lawrence} & Bender came and held discussions. Boys again in line near Casa del Campo. In evening - new men came at 4 and it was necessary to speak to them. Fine bunch - started to unpack boxes - Great sport - flashlights - Soap - cream (dental and shaving) phonograph - Candy Cigarettes - etc. Went then to party of Co. 2 very fine - all decorated - good food and much fun. Izzie was good for Master of Ceremonies Speeches - popular front reps and Bill etc. Doctor {Colin} Bradsworth gave talk on 4th of July - Joe became drunk and a little hard to handle. Worked more on unpacking boxes and climbed in late. {Tom} Hyde & {William} Cantor having problems and together.

4 Julio

S. Laureano

Men allowed to rise late - at 8 o'clock Parade & Marching for banner held on drill field - after this men marched in review and then gathered in square and sang some songs. Dismissed. Sports field in afternoon. Bender & Brodsky stayed but Lawrence and Cooperman left early. After much trouble concerning telephone equip ate. Finally get away to Madrigueras and then went to swim near dam in river. Returned picked up Izzie and held staff meeting in evening. Ramón arrived with Roblet and in to stay a couple of days to help us. Roblet still planning training of reserves behind the lines. Transmission school for English speaking to be organized here Co 1 won in sports events -

Good to see Phil Cooperman who came because Canadians a problem!

§ § §

After the hectic beginning of the month, the next two days slowed down. On the 3rd of July, men slept in because the bugle did not blow. Michael Petrou relates the story:

The Mac-Pap tradition of beginning each day with an early morning bugle call was quickly ended when one of the soldiers in another battalion placed the offending instrument beneath the wheels of a truck, where it was soon run over and crushed - an incident which allowed everyone to sleep longer but also broke the ice between the Mac-Paps and the more experienced soldiers.³⁵⁴

Merriman saw off his visitors, Anna Louise Strong and Joe Lash, and continued evaluating maneuvers. Merriman notes that Ruby Kaufman's group left open a wide flank while retreating from the maneuver and he was left holding the sack, meaning that he was left in a bad position. Bill Lawrence and Ed Bender returned to Tarazona from Albacete and told Merriman that the men were in the lines in the Casa del Campo near Madrid. Actually the men were further northwest behind the lines at Valdemorillo, where in two days an offensive will be launched towards Brunete. The Lincolns and Washingtons would be held in reserve until the 7th of July and then put to a greater test than they had at Jarama.

In the afternoon, the men unpacked the new supplies that arrived with a batch of new men ("Fine bunch"). A mini-fiesta was held and "Izzie" was the master of ceremonies. This would be Israel Schrenzel who was the Assistant Company Leader in Company 2 in training. Izzie was joined in the festivities by Dr. Colin Bradworth, a British physician from Birmingham (and a member of the Birmingham Clarion Singers). A good time was had as Joe Dallet had too much to drink and got out of hand.



Dr. Colin Bradsworth (second right, standing) and the practicanes of the Mac-Pap Battalion, November 1937, ALBA Photo 11-0985, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman finishes the day with another note that Tom Hyde is still having problems and this time with Willam Cantor^f, a Seaman.

Everyone slept in on the 4th of July, American Independence Day, and the celebration featured competitive marching for the Brigade Banner. In the afternoon, sports were featured. Bill Lawrence, Ed Bender, George Brodsky, and Phil Cooperman all attended the festivities. Merriman appreciated Cooperman coming out since he was having difficulty managing the Canadians. With the squashed bugle and Ron Liversedge refusing to eat in the officer's mess, Merriman must have been trying to impose military discipline on men who had come from union and seaman's backgrounds and were having little of the regimentation.

^f William Harris Cantor was born July 5, 1916, in NYC. He attended college for 1 year and had prior military service in the USMC Reserve for a year and a half. A seaman who arrived in Spain on May 30, 1937 after surviving the sinking of the *City of Barcelona*. He served in the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion but appears to have been sent to the front as a replacement for Lincoln-Washington Battalion. He distinguished himself at Quinto. He deserted with a second volunteer and stowed away on a British ship.

Merriman mentions one more name -- Ramón, who has come with Roblet. Captain Ramón was a 41 year old Russian (Mexican).³⁵⁵ Captain Ramón will be with the 2nd Battalion of Instruction into the Autumn of 1937 and the personnel lists say that he only speaks Russian. There was a Russian pilot named Ivan Trofimovich Eremenko, who was a Major General in the Russian Air Force, who went by the alias Ramón and was in Spain at this time. It is possible that this is the same Ramón but it is not known if he wore Captain's stripes at the time of this writing.

July 5—6 ••• The Mac-Paps are on Maneuvers

5 Julio

S. Miguel de los Santos

Mullinger's section left at 6 and scouted road for first Battallion march. At nine, able to move out of town very slow and no movement possible. Signalling also not good. Moved out and ran over protector's unit and finally returned as companies. Not too successful. Discussion later and Mullinger was sick man. After lunch, lectured on morning's work and then talked about trench digging - and then they left to work in fields. Had long meeting with Canadians in the field and announced new Commander as Skinner. Liversedge refused to handle it. Lecture on discipline, etc. Role of political commissar, etc. Had staff meeting and at 9 o'clock had meeting with Ramón - on Red Army and new regulations, etc. Hard to translate him and talk could have been better & translated better. -- Didn't feel so hot and Bob & Joe tried to lay down the law. May go to Villanueva, Vidal phoned about 4 officers in wrecked car and Mexican instructor.

6 Julio

S. Isaías

After a thoroughly hectic morning we finally get off to Villanueva. Bob T., {Bill} Wheeler, Marion, Lou and I went. Through Iniesta and around about way. Arrived early and visited old convent. Many paintings destroyed and not as well kept as formerly - Disappointed town seems dead. Air forces using some buildings. Visited hospital which is a beauty and top floors done in brown green and blue. 200 beds and ready for the big offensive. Visited Fogarty and he invited us to sleep there. Ordered big meal - and invited the French and German nurse to come with us. Bob & Bill at work. Fine meal & met Mayor and visited church at dusk. Left them and spent time until 11:00 in local cafe - not a handsqueeze for the boys. Long talk

with Fogarty and then to bed. Fine hospital - well done in all ways (Bob returned)

§ § §

Merriman starts the day reviewing field maneuvers by the Mac-Paps. While Jack Mullinger's scouts were out at six a.m., the rest of the battalion was slow to move out and when they did, it sounded chaotic. The battalion overran what looks like a "protector unit" and had to be regrouped to return in Company formation. When debriefed, now it is Mullinger who was sick, making at least three of the officers down with illness.

Merriman went to meet with the Canadians in the Company to explain why Canadian Bill Skinner from Winnipeg would be the Mac-Pap Commander. Merriman says that Liversedge chose to give up command but it is clear that "rank and fileism", i.e. the unwillingness to be held above the men, was at the core of the problem. Joe Dallet also exhibited "rank and fileism" earlier, but Merriman worked on him to accept the status of rank. This tension between the troops and the officers would continue for more months, at least into October. Merriman again went over the roles of officers and commissars to the Canadians. The Mac-Paps would soon have American commanders until the fall when Edward Cecil-Smith would become their first Canadian commander.

Ramón lectured and Merriman had to translate for him. Ramón only spoke Russian according to the lists kept by Albacete, so Merriman was translating from the Russian to English. Merriman had difficulty understanding Ramón and felt that he did a poor job on the translation. Merriman attributed his problems to illness. Merriman says he discussed changes in the Red Army with Ramón. Merriman also says that Vidal is dealing with a car accident involving a "Mexican instructor" (i.e. someone who had come from the Soviet Union).

Bob Thompson and Joe Dallet continued with the disciplinary aspects of leading this new Battalion.



Tarazona to Villanueva through Iniesta (at the northeast corner). Source Google Maps.

On the sixth, Merriman goes to Villanueva de la Jara where they were based in March. He says that there had been an accident with four officers and a Russian injured. This may have been one reason for the visit to Villanueva, as they visited Canadian Eugene Fogarty in the hospital there. It looks like a sightseeing trip and Marion Merriman and Bob Thompson were joined by two members of the Auto Park, Bill Wheeler and Lou Secundy. The route they took was through the town of Iniesta and would have taken about twice as long as the more direct route through Quintanar. We get a reason for the diversion to Iniesta in the pages from July 7-8 and it is not a sightseeing trip.

Merriman notes that Villanueva de la Jara is worse for wear and the town seems deserted and the church has lost some of its artwork. On a good note, Fogarty shows them a 200 bed hospital in Villanueva which will be ready for the push at Brunete and will be in great need within the next few weeks.

Merriman is quite open in his diary about the rest & relaxation aspects of this trip. They are all offered rooms in Villanueva and Bob Thompson and Bill Wheeler "worked" two nurses from the Hospital. In a word that is hard to decipher, it appears that they did not get a "handsqueeze", which can be slang for sex.

July 7—8 ••• “Boys Deserted from the Lincolns”

7 Julio

S. Fermín

Slept until 11 and then ate many eggs etc. Mayor's cousin blind and deaf. Played mandolin. Suarez & Delgado fixed up two girls and now looked for Doctor to practice in Iniesta- documents etc. Now retired and private doctor. All local weapons picked up by Cuenca officials gave me shells - Wandered down one block and sat down in cafe - played dominos lazy afternoon - restful. Late in day drove thru Tarazona to Albacete - and met Bill {Lawrence} and Traill first had session with boys. Went later to Schalbroeck and talked over many things with him. Question about black car. Ammo etc. First news about great offensive and 50 brigades advance 11 or 12 kilometers. Great news - Vidal yelled and tried to throw out boys from Almansa. Bill peeved and to take matter up. Mix up with 2 Colonels left over and question of artillery pieces and being taken into Spanish Army. Late session with boys & Traill, Bender & Bill and to bed late. Missed Vidal - just as well get more grenades. Stayed in Hotel. Boys Bill {Wheeler} and Lou slept in haystack.

8 Julio

Sta Isabel, reina

In morning bought much stuff and got some telephone equipment Some boys deserted from Lincoln and brought news about Hourihan and wounded etc. Marion tried to get dress and I talked with Marsey {?} and get some regulations and borrowed heliograph and some wire. Told about maneuver from La Roda. Returned to Tarazona and spent afternoon in general work and staff meeting. In evening planned to leave next morning for Madrid and Bob left in charge while gone. Questions of buying shoes, etc. for boys. Ambulance already in Madrid with stuff for boys. In afternoon told boys about results of offensive and warned about slackers.

§ § §

Merriman's matter of fact tone throughout the diary rarely gives a view into his real feelings. The diary oscillates between news about the war and trivia about Marion buying a dress. Merriman must have still have been on R&R this morning in Villaneuva de la Jara because he woke late at 11 am. He met with the Mayor and his cousin who was blind and played the mandolin. Merriman gives a hint of why they made the loop through Iniesta on the prior days: Suarez and Delgado got two girls in trouble and he was looking for an accredited doctor who could end the pregnancy. In Catholic Spain this was no small matter. Delgado is believed to be Emilio Delgado Mariano. Suarez is believed to be Julius Ruiz Suarez or Luis Suarez Pineiro. Both are Cubans. It appears that they have found a retired doctor who could provide the abortion. It is interesting that Marion Merriman was along on this trip. Perhaps they needed a woman to broach the subject with the Doctor.

Merriman says that the officials in Cuenca turned over rifles to him and shells. Whether this was to reduce the possibility of fifth columnists getting weapons or just to provide more support to the internationals is not known. The town of Cuenca is some 90 km north of Villaneuva de la Jara.

Merriman says he has a lazy afternoon, playing dominoes.

Later on the 7th, Merriman returned to Albacete and met with Lawrence, Schalbroeck and Briton Robert Trill. Settling some questions and still fighting over getting a Staff car, which would be black not green, Merriman gets some news of the offensive that started the day before and says that 30 battalions (about 20000 - 30000 men) had advanced 11-12 miles. This is the Battle of Brunete that began the first week of July 1937. It is telling that Merriman knows little of the offensive (other than it will be a big "push") until he is told on July 7. The offensive was well concealed from anyone who might leak this information to the Fascists. The initial advance would take the Brigades from Valdemorillo to the vicinity of Villanueva de la Cañada where the offensive stalled for a day and the Lincoln and Washington Battalions were taken from

reserve and thrown into action to take the town. In bitter fighting, we find the next day that Marty Hourihan was wounded and is out of the line. This puts Oliver Law in charge of the Lincoln Battalion. This will be the first time an African-American will be in charge of a battalion-sized unit of Americans.

Merriman finds out that Vidal is on the warpath over some artillery pieces, which were taken off by the Spanish Battalions. Vidal threatens to pull the Americans out of Almansa where the artillery groups trained. The International Brigades never fielded a significant artillery unit although Canadians and Americans served in batteries such as the John Brown Battery and the 45th Brigade. Somehow two Colonels did not get absorbed into the new units and were left with the artillery. This would make Almansa quite top brass heavy. Bill Lawrence will have to take the issue up at Brigade Headquarters. Merriman meets with Bender, Lawrence, Thompson and Traill in the evening. Traill will be back at Brunete in a day and be killed in action. Merriman misses Vidal and hints that Vidal was trying to round up supplies for the front. Merriman would keep his grenades. One should recall that Vidal was directly responsible for the Artillery group in Almansa. His difficulties in maintaining control of this group must have been difficult, especially if they felt that they were wasting time without artillery to train on.

Merriman literally goes shopping for telephones and supplies. Marion looks for a dress. Merriman again talks with "Marsly" to get "regulations", which may mean regulation issue from the Intendencia. There is no Marsly in the British, Canadian, American or French ranks. There is a Paul Marsaillaz who was in the 50th Battalion of the 13th Brigade but the connection to him is unlikely and speculative. Merriman obtains a heliograph for communications and some wire to go with his telephones. The town of La Roda appears to be a headquarters for the Transmisiones unit.

Merriman lets us know that he will go to Madrid on the 9th of July to get shoes for the men. As mentioned on previous pages, Anna Louise Strong arrived with nearly \$10,000 in cash so that the Americans could be outfitted with real boots, instead of

Alparagatas (the rope soled sandals). This would be a shopping trip to get these supplies. Merriman says that there already is an ambulance in Madrid loaded with supplies. With the Battle of Brunete on at this point, a spare ambulance is a real luxury for the training battalions. Merriman relates to his diary that he will leave Bob Thompson in charge.

July 9—10 ••• Winkler: “Why are you in Madrid?”

9 Julio

S. Zenón

Left early for Albacete after calling Hyde before the Battalion. Bender was present. Fellows against his attitude and he had to stand there and take it. Superior attitude. "I'll not go to the front to get shot just to prove it to a couple of bureaucrats that I was not afraid to go!" Threatened to desert. Sentenced him to 30 days and he must go to front with us. Left for Madrid at 10 and went thru Morata and Perales. All quiet. In Madrid in afternoon and met Greenspan in 63 Velasquez IB hdqtrs. He had been too busy to visit 30 boys wounded in nearby hospital. Bawled out by Bill. Met Garland, E. C. Smith, Traill, Hochberg, Givney and Hourihan wounded! Heard Law killed and others. Learned much about movement. Piercing movement and fall of Quijorna. Planes and artillery in much evidence. Ate late at one story joint & and after coffee in Gran Via met Louis Fischer same old self- with pretty girl and same inside air. Met Garland also. Late Bob Kerr came in time. Talk about tough going on front and foolishness of moving up to sight see under present conditions. Slept with me - Control woke us late during night. Swinnerton lost memory?

10 Julio

Sta. Amalia

In morning had session - met Paynter, Prendergast, Donaldson, Dr. Adolph, and Anna Louise who went crazy because Bill had ditched her. Wanted to spend money foolishly on print books etc. Bill suggested to spend it on shoes and glasses for us. Taken in by idea at first but after 1 pair she cools on the idea, talked to her and she wanted me to ride Albacete with her. Had talk with Tisa and he took picture for brigade history. Met Fein and got hot news from front. Winkler wondered why I was in Madrid at that time so did I. Left soon as possible after eating at

Alphonso and having ice cream sodas. Left in ambulance. One hell of a ride. Dusty and Lerner dumb as hell. Ate at a fine place Paynter and Prendergast Bill Bob Kerr and I a wreck pulled in late discussed with Bob and to bed.

§ § §

In the midst of the Battle of Brunete, Merriman, Bill Lawrence and Anna Louise Strong take off for Madrid, ostensibly to buy supplies for the Battalion. One wonders if they just could not resist seeing what was happening. On July 9, Merriman's day starts with disciplining Tom Hyde in front of the Battalion. Hyde's comment was very fatalistic and Merriman apparently had had it. He sentenced Hyde to 30 days in the brig for "his superior attitude". He says Hyde threatened to desert. This may have been the best thing for Hyde who will become a good soldier at Belchite in September.

Merriman goes past Morata de Tejana and Perales to Madrid. The International Brigade Headquarters was 63 Calle de Velásquez. Marion Greenspan (George Marion) worked out of this office. But Greenspan was too busy to get out of the office and go to the hospital to visit the men from Brunete who had been injured on the first day of fighting: E. C. Smith, Robert Traill, Givney, Hochberg, and Hourihan. Bill Lawrence chews Marion Greenspan out about his priorities, saying he is too busy to visit the 100 injured men in hospital. Merriman finds out that Oliver Law, the Battalion Commander, was also killed. Brunete will decimate the Lincolns and Washington Battalions and within two weeks the ranks will be so small that they battalions must be combined into the Lincoln-Washington Battalion to have a fighting force. Others killed at Brunete were, for the British: George Nathan, Julian Bell³⁵⁶ (nephew of Virginia Woolf), John Alexander of the Anti-tank unit, Arthur Dunbar, Sam Masters, Alex McDade (who penned the Ballad of the Jarama Valley), Bert Overton (previously commander at Jarama), and amongst others. Notable Americans who were killed include the Battalion Cook Jack Shirai, Joe and Sam Stone (brothers), Bernard Entin, Ramón Steele, Jack Weinstein, amongst others.

Merriman gets some details of the battle including the capture of the town of Quijorna by Juan Modesto's Division. The fighting for Quijorna is shown in a Spanish TV Documentary.³⁵⁷

Within hours, Merriman was back on the street, shopping. Merriman meets the reporter Louis Fischer again who has a girl on his arm. He bumped into Walter Garland and the Canadian Commissar Bob Kerr. Kerr dissuades Merriman of the idea of going to the front for sightseeing since the going there is obviously tough. Even the Commander of the Brigade, Vladimir Copic, was injured by shrapnel.



Vladimir Copic, wounded, and lying on a cot. ALBA Photo 177-179003, Tamiment Archive, NYU

At the end of the 9th of July, Merriman puts a question "Swinnerton lost memory?" Dennis Swinnerton was from Islington, London. He arrived in Spain 27/1/37. (John Wainwright, personal communication). He was treated at Murcia but it is not known what his injury was. There will be more on him on the next diary page. Swinnerton was a possible deserter and left Spain on 25/2/38.

In the morning of the 10th, Merriman meets with Briton Will Paynter, James Prendergast, Dr. Adolph and Anna Louise Strong who lost her ride back to Albacete. Anna Louise had a disagreement on how to spend the money that was brought over from the States and starts to spend it on personal items, including



books. That was enough for Lawrence who thought they were buying boots and glasses. He left her in Madrid. Anna Louise attaches herself to Merriman trying to hitch a ride back with him. Merriman meets with John Tisa[§] who is writing the *Book of the XVth Brigade* and Tisa takes one of the famous photographs of Merriman for the book.

Back at the IB HQ, Merriman meets Arnold Fein, Chief of the Cadres Office in Albacete. In this position, Fein would have been Marion Merriman's boss when she worked there in May. Fein³⁵⁸ was a 41 year old Yugoslavian, whose trade was a baker. He also meets Peter Winkler who is the head of Personnel of

[§] John Tisa was born April 6, 1914, Philadelphia, PA. An Italian American of mixed Cuban and Italian descent, he attended Brockwood Labor College and worked as a writer. After arriving in Spain on January 13, 1937, he briefly served with the Lincoln BN, Co. 2. He moved to the IB Historical Commission and helped publish the *Book of the XVth Brigade*. He was later with Commissariat Service and Editor of *The Volunteer*. Tisa returned to the US on April 15, 1939 aboard the *George Washington*. He served in WWII and passed away December 12, 1991.

the Brigades. Both wonder what Merriman is doing in Madrid. They ask Merriman a very good question given the context of the battles. Merriman realizes that sightseeing in Madrid at this time gives a very bad perception and he works his way back to Albacete hitching a ride on an ambulance, driven by Murray Lerner. The riders in the Ambulance were Prendergast and Paynter, Bill Lawrence, Canadian Bob Kerr, and Merriman. They arrived back safely in Albacete, tired. If that vehicle had been hit by a bomb, there would have been a significant dent placed in the International Brigades.

July 11—12 ••• Trouble in Pozo Rubio

11 Julio

S. Abundio

At breakfast heard that Swinnerton. Brenner, Harbocian, Benson, Westfield had made up letter for Vidal about favoritism, etc in the school. Have idea about Wintringham in background. Stopped by Bill who said men need no defending. Wish I had words in letter for diary. Prendergast here on bribe of Luckies and chocolate etc. Went to parade and had meeting. Prendergast talked and I discussed the front - and movements. Then had practice falling in at loading stations. Had talk with Bob and Bill. Dentist came to spend two days - shower supposed to come. Comrade from States here to write history of I.B. American section. Had staff meeting at 1. Lasted 2 hours. At 4 had talk with signal groups and then until supper and after talked about history of Lincoln Battalion. Cultural Commission show arrived and went up late to pass out chocolate and cigarettes. Tomorrow day of specialists in many things. Show fine success and retired late. Dentist raised hell with guard for noise and was arrested before in Madrigueras

12 Julio

S. Juan Gualberto

Broke up into day of specialists - grenades rifles - light machine gun maps scouting signaling runners & observers - I took NCOs and spent a long day with them. After lunch had political meeting to point out relation of military group leaders to political leaders of section and lack of gr. pol. leaders. Not needed. Day in general o.k and much was accomplished.

§ § §



Photo of British Brigadistas from Manchester, UK.³⁵⁹ On the left with the pipe is George Westfield and next to him is William Benson. Others identified are Maurice Levine (centre) Eddie Swindells (first left kneeling) Jud Coleman and 'Tony' the Greek is Tony Theodopolis. Photo and Identifications from Kevin Buyers.

In a technical two days in camp, Merriman covers some issues of training and beefing. This page shows that even the most banal appearing entries can have an intriguing story. On the 11th, a delegation of Swinnerton, Harbocian, Benson and Westfield sent a letter to Vidal at Headquarters saying that there was favoritism in the Pozo Rubio training camp. Merriman suspects that Tom Wintringham, who was commanding the camp, was behind the letter. Bill Lawrence, the American Commissar, assures Merriman that the men (presumably the American instructors) don't need Merriman to intervene. Merriman doesn't record (or doesn't have) the offending letter. George Westfield was identified as a British brigadista in Martin Sugarman's manuscript.³⁶⁰ It appears that the Benson is William Benson of the British Battalion. Canadian Nicolas Harbocian was a Rumanian by origin and came to Spain from Windsor, Canada. Harbocian was a member of the Canadian Commonwealth Youth federation. Timing on this letter is tragic as Merriman speaks of it on July 11. On July 9th or 10th, Michael Petrou noted that Harbocian was killed in the Battle of Brunete fighting for the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

The RGASPI archives give more light into the problems at the school. In a four page unsigned memorandum³⁶¹ (which may have been written by Bill Lawrence or Merriman himself), the following observations were made about the school:

Conversations with Frank Rogers, the political commissar of the School, and Jack Karson {sic, Carson}, head of the Machine Gunners and others revealed the existence of considerable dissatisfaction with the amount and intensity of the training provided by the school.

There was general dissatisfaction due to the fact, that most of them entered school with the expectations of qualifying for leadership positions at the termination of school. Disappointed in the limitations of their training now they feel less confident in their fitness to assume command.

The main complaint is directed mostly against Captain W. T. Wintringham; former commander of the school; they blame him with incompetent organization of their training. They claim that Wintringham gave them long theoretical lectures on strategy and tactics but provided little practical experience and they claim that the high quality of the student body deserved a far better and more advanced grade of instruction than they actually received.

Merriman talks to Jim Prendergast who would have understood the concern in the camp. Merriman said they had to bribe him with cigarettes and chocolates to get him to come out to camp. Merriman says that there is a comrade from the US in camp to write a history of the Brigades. This probably was Sandor Voros or Edwin Rolfe who were working on the Book of the XVth Brigade.

On the evening of the 11th there was a show from the "Cultural



Commission" and it was apparently a hit. Merriman says that the dentist is in camp and a ruckus occurred overnight between the Dentist and the guards about noise. It is not clear if the dentist was previously arrested or the guard. At this time, one of the Dentists for the Lincoln Brigade was Arnold Donowa but it is uncertain if this was the doctor in camp.

No new names are mentioned on the 12th of July and it seems to have been an unremarkable day of training.

Dr. Arnold Donowa, Brigade Dentist, ALBA PHOTO 1:2:53:1, Tamiment Library, NYU

July 13—14 ••• “Cleaning us out of many things.”

13 Julio

S. Anacleto

Interesting Battalion maneuver - got up at 5 and selected spot - long ditch which served as trench. Men came up thru trench and trees and into position. Fire plans sent in and attack planned. Phones used for first time - attack bad because - Skinner Company got off on wrong foot - final assault late but in general maneuver was a good one - came in at 1:30 for lunch after lunch general discussion of work. Several prisoners - one sent to Albacete other kept here - Tough given another chance.

14 Julio

S. Buenaventura

Wanted to leave today on maneuver but couldn't do so because entertainment planned for tonight. Confusion concerning time of entertainment. Arranged for field kitchens etc. Entertainment I understand was only fair. Turned in because too tired. Sent supplies to front - cleaning us out of many things boys actually hungry, supplies difficult. Things slowed down on front except for aviation. Received new ambulance. IWU which is plenty swell. Special training for stretcher bearers.

§ § §

In another two days of training, we see another maneuver in Tarazona using available topography ... a ditch becomes a trench. Merriman notes that Company 1 under Bill Skinner generally does ok after a rough start and that they used their new telephones for the first time. We also see how Tarazona was used as a staging area for the front at Brunete. Men returned with prisoners who were screened and then sent on to Albacete. In return, Tarazona was a staging base for supplies and Merriman says that Tarazona was being cleaned out to keep the front

supplied. Even food was running short. A timeline³⁶² of the battle of Brunete shows that on the 14th the offensive would stall and some retreating from the front would occur. The diary pages here do not reflect at all the situation at the front.

On the 14th, maneuvers were cancelled because of confusion of entertainment for the troops. July 14 was Bastille Day in France and would be a probable cause for a celebration. Merriman is pleased with a new ambulance which has arrived and which was sponsored by the Independent Workers Union.

July 15—16 ••• Mac-Pap Training Intensifies

15 Julio

S. Enrique, emperador

During day made plans for movements. Had session with signalmen and set-up form of relay. In the day, talked with Co. 3 and Co. 2 on the fire plan and correct methods of infiltration. Session with Mullinger on details. Mullinger left at 2 and food taken out at 4:30. Main body Co 1 left at 5 and Battalion at 6:10. All went well until we ran into Co 1 and had to wait. Some misunderstanding as to scouting and use of protective unit. Had to stay night in field. Plan not bad. Hospital unit ok and trucks moved up front. Set battalion equipment far ahead. Two German observers along and in general things worked not too well. Cantor fell out and sent to kitchen. Confusion healthy and tomorrow will go better. Sorry not to reach river that night but couldn't be helped. Bob disagrees and is kind of sore about it all.

16 Julio

Ntra. Sra del Carmen

Spent night in field & went early in morning to inspect river. Found every one asleep. Listening post included. Things mixed up badly. Mullinger asleep. Ordered crossing of river before daylight. Scouts slept - main body crossed and took up position - after daylight main body crossed and set up phones immediately. Had staff meeting and planned movement on Battalion Front scale. Ruby Kaufman wounded in foot while cleaning gun. Rushed to hospital. At 12 moved forward - swung to left lost Co. 1 and flanked enemy and took up position on higher ground - olive vistas? in front. Set up hasty position - found? holes and then went to bridge and ate & swam. Sent down later and met Vidal who hunted us. He saw men and then asked for short formation on way back. Showed him and he left promising to return next day. Liversedge tapped by Amatniek. Bender came from Tarazona for me to come to

Albacete & see Vidal. Fein visited. Went to Albacete - all a mistake - had whiskey

§ § §

For nearly the complete next month, Merriman will be engrossed in the training in Tarazona of the Mac-Paps. Many of these diary entries are technical describing the maneuvers of the day and whether they are successful or not. The reader can follow this technical training and we will continue to focus on calling out the names of Brigadistas as they arise in the diary.

On the 15th of July, the exercise involved scouting and Jack Mullinger was the Mac-Pap chief of scouts. The maneuver was not particularly successful and Merriman says that William Harris Cantor fell out and was assigned to the kitchen, probably for KP duty. Merriman was non-plussed by the maneuvers but Bob Thompson was less forgiving. The story on 15-16 July was very similar to the story on the 5th of July.

Overnight, Merriman checked up on the troops and found no guards and Mullinger sleeping on the job. Merriman roused out the men and got them on the march before daybreak. More embarrassing was the injury of Rubin (Ruby) Kaufman who shot himself in the foot while cleaning his gun.

Merriman runs out of room on the page and starts abbreviating names. It is clear that Lucien Vidal came out from Albacete to review that battalion and had to hunt them down in the field. In a fold of the page in the diary, it appears that Ed Bender also came out from Headquarters. The loss of men at Brunete added urgency to the training at Tarazona. Ron Liversedge, who stepped back as commander of the Mac-Paps, apparently was selected by Ernie Amatniek and he moves from adjutant in Company 3 to Company 2.

Merriman again mentions Arnold Fein who is the head of the Cadres bureau in Albacete. Perhaps he represented Vidal who did not return to Tarazona. Merriman gets a mistaken message to go to Albacete to see Vidal but instead has a drink in town.

July 17—18 ••• Field Maneuvers Start to Gel

17 Julio

S. Alejo

Men dry in morning - hot staff meeting in which Harris had his pants taken down. Improvement noted immediately. Relations between Joe & Harris better. Inspected digging of trenches and let men go swimming in the afternoon. Fire plan and trench traces specialized on. Kitchen brought up to Camp. In evening planned a night attack. Company 2 to do the work with a patrol from {Companies} 1 & 3 to help on flanks. Later in evening, Bob, Joe, Bill Wheeler and I went over to patrol and encountered scouting parties and were challenged. Tried to capture prisoners. Chased by outposts. Whole operations carried thru well. Didn't know they had done it. Fooled us completely - nicely done and returned well Joe & Bill snored and scared away enemy. Daylight found all quiet. {Frederick} Cavanaugh went to kitchen along with Coapman. Racheff bawled out. Much trouble with talking of Ben Barsky - Carson on job to look things over & requested Carroll & Litwin.

18 Julio

Sta Marina

Men ordered to stay in trenches and to continue work. Had staff meeting to discuss plans for attack and success of attack the night before. Attack planned at 5 o'clock. All plans laid and checked. Just before 5 airplanes showed up and whistle given for planes - men made mistake in Company 3 and went over the top opened m.g. fire to help them and started attack early. Didn't go too well. Decided to withdraw men and try it again. Skinner had trouble with 3 men. Talked to, etc. Wallach on the ground at 8:45. Tried attack second time and it worked like charm. Machine gun fire good and movement well done. Phones taken out 37 min. After this held meeting in moonlight and sang and talked about July 18, 1937 - one

year after uprising. Password "This year is the last - for fascism", Marion doing well in field.

§ § §

The Mac-Paps spend two more days in the field on exercises. Things begin to go well and Merriman is very pleased that Company 2 went out on a night patrol and when challenged by a patrol of Bill Wheeler, the Mac-Pap operational commander at the time, and Merriman, they were challenged for passwords. Company 2 also apparently tried to take "prisoners" and one wonders if that was Merriman and Wheeler. In any case, the actions of the field group were professional and Merriman was happy. Except perhaps for sharing sleeping quarters with Joe Dallet and Bill Wheeler who "snored and scared off the enemy".



Benjamin Barsky, photographed in August 1938, just before he was killed in the Sierra Pandols, ALBA Photo 11-0237, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman continues to assign men who are not performing to kitchen patrol (KP) duty. Frederick Cavanaugh^h (who later became the Cook) and Arthur Coapman are two so assigned. Merriman had to reprimand the Bulgarian-American Gilesco Racheffⁱ and New Yorker Ben Barsky^j (who would go on to be a Commissar in the Mac-Paps). Carson who arrived in Spain on June 4 (his name is variously spelled Kerson or Karson). Carson requested William Carroll and Alfred Litwin to be assigned to the Officer's School at Pozo Rubio. Carson will go on to lead the John Brown Battery of the 11th Artillery so these men are being called out for artillery training.



The 18th of July maneuvers did not go as well, as the advance was prematurely started by a whistle used to warn of overflying aircraft, and the whistle was mistaken for the call to go over the top and start and attack. They tried to make the best of it, but they did not recover from the mistake and the attack was uncoordinated. Bill Skinner had problems with three soldiers who were unnamed. Jesse Wallach was in the field during these exercises. Jesse Wallach would become Battalion clerk.

Jesse Wallach of the Mac-Paps. Photo Credit: RGASPI Archives, Fond 545/Opus 6/Delo 1008, Moscow

^h Cavanaugh, Frederick Cavanaugh was born January 8, 1904 (or August 1, 1904) in Penarth, Wales. A naturalized American, he arrived in Spain on June 26, 1937 and served with the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in Co. 1 as a cook and Soldado. He returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. He died April 6, 1971, in Port Arthur, Texas.

ⁱ Gilesco Racheff was May 3, 1897, in Emen Bulgaria. A tailor who lived in Cleveland, he arrived in Spain on May 5, 1937 and served with the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. Racheff returned to the US on November 5, 1938 aboard the *President Roosevelt*.

^j -Benjamin Barsky was born May 5, 1914 in New York. A teacher, Barsky arrived in Spain on June 4, 1937. He served with the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, moving through the ranks of Cabo to acting Teniente. Barsky would be killed in action August 10, 1938 in the Sierra Pandols, Ebro Offensive.

July 19—20 “Much News from the Front”

19 Julio

S. Vicente de Paul

Rose at 5 and gave orders for Battalion to march to bridge where we ate. During breakfast had long session with Joe and Bob and many touchy points came up. Insinuations about not carrying out orders, etc. Personal angle as well. Marched back in 2:20 and men fairly tired but in good spirits. Checked on new men. Oliver elected in charge - bluffer - and men already complain. Carroll and Litwin sent to Pozo Rubio - Wallach bawled out for spreading rumors - denied. Drove to Albacete. Met Secundy & talked about Chesler. Much news from front. 2 Battalions united. Markovich in charge and Van den Berghe second. Steve Nelson & Jordan assisting. Usera failed. Mates out. Haywood cowardice & drunk. Johnson refused to help in pinch as Chief of Staff and is in Sweden with wife. Copic wounded. Policy of saving cadres CI made with Gallo. Wallach wants safe job. Dave Jones goes home. Brodsky comes to us. Parker to help Bender. Bender to help Bill and Marion to help Bender. 280 in line in combined Battalions - 120 wounded & 30 killed. Many fine ones. Traill died. Dart to Lincoln-Wash Battalion. Usera to come to us for training. Steve Nelson did great work. Too much leading men over Cunningham fine fellow but not military knowledge (cont. notes end of June). Snipers school started.

(continued from 19th of July)

NOTAS from June {out of sequence}

Visited Ruby who is in No. 1 SRI and hopes to be out soon. Talked with Hans who wants to go to line hospital and wants American doctor to take his place. Went to Service Sanitaire. Got glasses and promise of gas expert. Spoke for Hene. Went to Staff but couldn't see Vidal or Schalbroeck. At hospital Lou located two nurses who were hungry for that stuff. Lou took them for a ride & picked up

Usera who helped them out. Drove back and turned it late after session with Usera on policy and way in which he is to talk to men about front.

Boys in reserve at present and offensive has started by Spanish on Jarama. May be called in on end of the particular push.

20 Julio

S. Elías

Rose - talked with Harper - Rolfe and had session with Cantor who is off on wrong foot again. Went to mess hall and had long session on maneuver - food problem brought up - men decided to vote 5 pesetas for another 10 day period meeting ended late - in general good. Usera went to work with new men. Many complained about Seaman Oliver. Talked with Hooker and settled on line of work. After lunch talked with m.g. company and Ramón came in with snipers. Slept until staff officers meeting. Bob Thompson to be Chief of Staff - Wheeler Co 1, Neure assisting, Loomis liaison officer. Katine chauffeur. After supper had session with Ramón on scouting - not too good. Skinner objects. Piled in. Cantor ready to be good if I let him out. Saw Hyde yesterday and arrested ten drunks. Gave 3 men to Roblet for translators.

§ § §

Merriman's diary for July 19 was filled with news and he even needed to include another half page from the notes page at the end of June. Merriman relates that Joe Dallet and Bob Thompson had a difficult session on the morning of the 19th with considerable criticism including accusations that orders are not being followed. Returning in the afternoon, Merriman reveals that the men voted to have Seaman Louis Oliver become Commissar. Merriman thinks the men made a mistake and calls Oliver a "bluffer". On the 20th, Merriman repeats the claim that men are already complaining about Seaman Oliver. Oliver will

arise again in the diary in September as he again clashes with Merriman.

Merriman says that Bill Carroll and Alfred Litwin will be going to Pozo Rubio to go to Officer's Training School, as they were called out by Ernie Amatniek. In a



string of disciplinary notations, he says that Jesse Wallach had to be reprimanded for spreading rumors. There are two Wallachs at this point: Al who is in Pozo Rubio and Jesse who is in Tarazona with Merriman. In the Autopark, Lou Secundy was having problems with Frank Chesler. As an aside, the author actually learned to swim in Frank Chesler's pool in the 1950's. I thought he looked like Soupy Sales in the photo.

Hyman (Frank) Chesler, Autopark, ALBA Photo 11-0015, Tamiment Library, NYU

The results of the battles near Brunete are filtering back to Tarazona. Merriman notes that the Lincolns and Washington's were joined into the Lincoln-Washington Battalion. The number of effectives was down to 280 with 150 wounded and 30 dead. He notes that Mirko Markovich is in charge of the combined American Battalion with Van den Berghe second in command. Steve Nelson was the Battalion commissar and was noted to have done a fine job at Brunete. Dennis Jordan^k, the Machine Gun Company commissar was also noted to have helped. D. R. "Pat" Stephens mentions Jordan at Brunete:

^k Dennis David Jordan was a 33 year old artist who arrived in Spain on March 17, 1937. He served with Lincoln-Washington Battalion as Adjutant Commissar at Brunete. He would be repatriated late summer-early fall 1937.

The last of our troops crossed the river bed and the full retreat began. Our machine gun commissar, Denis Jordan, saw that one of our machine gun group was retreating without its gun. It was commanded by a Finn from Minnesota named Sunstrum¹. Jordan asked him where his machine gun was and he seemed aware for the first time that the machine gun was left behind. He and his group went back to the hill to retrieve it. We could not wait for them; we were in danger of being encircled. I asked Jordan if I could stay behind with my group to give support for Sunstrum and his men. Jordan said I could, but warned me to be careful. He said if Sunstrum and his men were not back soon I was to retreat and rejoin the battalion. I did not have to wait long. The men came back with the gun and we hurried back through the woods to rejoin the battalion. Jordan was worried, and had sent two patrols looking for us. One of the patrols was led by Mo Teitelbaum {Morris Granat} from Chicago. While looking for us, he had met an enemy patrol. An exchange of fire had taken place and Teitelbaum was wounded in the stomach.³⁶³

Others also did poorly. Vincent Usera was removed from the Lincoln-Washington Battalion and sent back to Tarazona to help out with training. Steve Nelson was critical of Usera and Milton Wolff told Cecil Eby that Usera said that he had been planted in the Lincolns as an agent of the US Government.³⁶⁴ Harry Haywood said that Usera had left his post without permission and was dismissed by the Battalion Staff.³⁶⁵ Art Landis relates the events of July 9, 1937, in the attempt to take Mosquito Ridge (a.k.a. Mosquito Crest):

The Lincolns moved into the captured Fascist positions on the line of the knoll. They established a makeshift headquarters in some trees immediately to the rear. At a hurried staff meeting held by Law, Nelson, {Paul} Burns and Usera, it was decided

¹ Johannes Valentine Sundstrom (Hannes Sundstrom), a Finnish American, had one year of prior military service. He arrived in Spain on February 11, 1937, and served with the MG Company as a corporal and gun section leader. He took over the Toivo Antikainen MG Section after Pakkala was wounded. He would return home after Brunete.

that the assault should continue; that they would attack immediately. Oliver Law, Burns and Usera were to take the men over. Nelson was to go only as far as the opposite ridge of the barranca and not attempt the slope until the forward movement had attained some degree of success.... The advance began again. Paul Burns took the No. 1 Company over; Oliver Law the Second.. {Landis then relates the death of Oliver Law at the head of his troops}....

The Lincoln dead numbered between fifteen and twenty, with another thirty to forty wounded, among them Paul Burns, the courageous No. 1 Company Commander. The Battalion pulled back from the slope to the knoll and set up positions there. Steve Nelson now assumed full command of the Battalion. The adjutant, Vincent Usera, had, for some unaccountable reason, failed to go over with the men. He went to Brigade Headquarters instead. Upon knowledge of this, he was summarily dismissed from the staff by Nelson, {Sid} Levine, and the remaining officers.³⁶⁶

Eby is more graphic with the story:

When telephone lines opened, Colonel {Hans} Klaus {who was in command because of Copic's injury by shrapnel} reported to Nelson that Vincent Usera was at brigade headquarters saying that the Lincolns had been smashed and asked for more reinforcements. "We're not in a safe position", Usera said. "No frontline position is safe!" Nelson bellowed. "You get the hell back here!" On his return, "cheery and crisp" Usera coolly said he was ready to command the Lincolns, but the men were not having it. "You'd be a helluva guy to give orders. We haven't seen you the whole fucking day!" exclaimed Carl Bradley of the staff. Usera drew himself up, "Am I not the adjutant of the battalion?" "No, you're not", broke in Nelson. "Report to Brigade. Leave your pistol here." After writing a note declaring he was at their disposal, Usera gave a smart parade-ground salute and faded away.³⁵⁴

This one episode is very indicative of the power and role of a Commissar in representing the interests of the men.

Merriman makes the accusation that Harry Haywood was a coward and drunk. Harry Haywood is an enigma. Haywood was in the Lenin School with Copic.³⁵⁵ His greatest flaws probably come from being the ranking Communist Party member in Spain and having insufficient military training to be effective in what he was asked to do. In his own autobiography, Haywood relates what he saw at Brunete:

We continued to march in the direction of Brunete to our new attack position, avoiding the road as much as possible. Hitler's and Mussolini's planes were already bombing the roads. Towards the evening we halted for the night. {Jock} Cunningham was called to brigade headquarters to get the plan of action for the next day. At the time I thought it was strange that I had not been called. Jock returned and unfolded a military map, asking me if I could read it. Having no experience in military map reading, I said no. He abruptly folded the map and marched off without saying another word, apparently having confirmed some derogatory judgement of me.

I mention this incident because from that time on, there seemed to be a definite cooling in our relationship. At the time, I wondered if there was any connection between this action and an incident with {George} Nathan earlier that morning. I had been standing roadside waiting for the Washington Battalion to pass so I could fall in with them. Nathan, the chief operations officer for the brigades, marched past. Out of the side of his mouth he snarled, "You'll get yours".

This came so suddenly and so threateningly, that I was taken aback. I yelled after him, "What did you say?" But he kept going without looking back. Now, putting these incidents together, I began for the first time to suspect that the hand of Col. Copic was at work, and that he had begun lining brigade staff up against me in order to even the score.³⁵⁵

Later, when after Haywood was confronted by Cunningham, Copic was reported to tell Haywood, "I told you these guys were no good,

but you sided with them against me", he beamed. "What are you going to do now?"³⁵⁵

It is disappointing to see the jockeying for position that occurred around Copic and how he played his officers off against each other. In conclusion, one cannot be sure that Merriman's statements about Haywood had any foundation and that they may have been part of a *deus ex machina* to get Haywood out. Haywood's downfall essentially started from the Americans' attempt and failure to have Vladimir Copic removed as Commander of the XVth Brigade, and Haywood's visible lead in that attempt. Haywood would say that he had to agree with the leading comrades that his position in the Brigades was untenable after Brunete and he agreed with Earl Browder about repatriation to the US.

Other black comrades had scandalous accusations made about them at Brunete as well. Walter Garland was accused by Cunningham of taking an ambulance to the rear and not returning. Garland argued that he was ordered to take men to the dressing station. Merriman did encounter Garland at the hospital in Madrid on July 9 and it doesn't say that Garland was injured in the diary. And the worst accusations came against Oliver Law himself with later stories invented about him being shot by his own men. Grover Furr has responded to these allegations in the ALBA Volunteer.³⁶⁷ Harry Hakam said that Oliver Law was shot trying to get Hakam back to safety after Hakam's four man squad had all been shot except Hakam. With Hakam hunkered down, Law, behind Hakam and behind a tree, stood up and yelled "Harry get out and get down off the ridge". Hakam said he saw Law shot by sniper fire and he felt that he owed Law his life.³⁶⁸

One must recall the times. No African-Americans had ever commanded white units in wartime and while African-Americans participated fully in World War I, they were led by generally wealthy white American National Guard commanders. Blacks returned from WWI to the US to face the same Jim Crow who was taunting them as they marched outside southern military bases in the US.³⁶⁹ While the generally positive attitude of the Lincolns towards integration of the Brigades was apparent, in a group of

1000 Americans, one could have expected hostility towards these black officers from some of the men, even if they were great military leaders.

Dave Mates was pulled out and sent back to the US. Merriman speaks about a new policy requested by the Communist International (CI or Comintern) to save cadres, i.e. not have all Communist Party men killed in action. In some moves, Jesse Wallach has requested a safe job. David Jones, who was injured at Jarama, will be repatriated. George Brodsky is to move to the Mac-Paps. DeWitt ("Eric") Parker will go to work with Ed Bender in Albacete. Bender will support the American responsible Bill Lawrence for the time being and Marion Merriman will work for Bender and not Arturo Fein. Jock Cunningham was a fine fellow but he is damned in the same sentence for not being a military man. Briton Robert Traill was killed at Brunete. As shown in a previous photo, Vladimir Copic was wounded by shrapnel. Rollin Dart will come to the Lincoln-Washington Battalion to fill in for the wounded and killed leadership. Usera's removal to Tarazona will help in training the Mac-Paps.



Dr. Julius Hene, May 1938. ALBA Photo 11-0215, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman had more to relate from July 19 and these notes contrast with the intense reorganization seen on the diary pages for that date. Merriman goes to the Secorro Rojo International (SRI) Number 1 hospital to meet with Rubin Kaufman, who shot himself in the foot in training. There he meets with a Dr. Hans who wants to go to the front and have an American replace him. Merriman puts in a word for Julius Hene who had been the doctor in Tarazona for the Mac-Paps. It seems he is suggesting a swap of positions here.

Merriman goes to see Lucien Vidal and Jean Schalbroeck^m. The Belgian Facebook group, Les Belges de la XIV Brigade Internationale, have provided a short biography.

^m Jean Schalbroeck

Né le 9 juin 1912 à Etterbeek (Bruxelles), mort à Mauthausen le 17 juillet 1942 ; militant de la Jeunesse communiste de Belgique, chargé de missions en Allemagne, capitaine à l'État Major des Brigades Internationales, résistant.

Jean Schalbroeck à Albacète

A Albacète, dans l'État Major d'André Marty

Jean Schalbroeck acheva ses études secondaires à l'Athénée d'Ixelles. Ses parents s'étant séparés, il quitta très tôt le domicile familial. Employé dans une firme industrielle allemande à Bruxelles, il était membre du syndicat des employés Membre des Jeunesses communistes depuis 1932 à Bruxelles, secrétaire de section, il entra au PC en 1934, mais demeura militer à la JC, puis aux JGSU, Il accomplit alors, vraisemblablement pour l'IC ou le KPD, des missions en Allemagne nazie.

Il s'engagea dans les Brigades Internationales en octobre 1936 et fut promu lieutenant en février 1937, capitaine en juillet 1937. Après avoir combattu dans la 35e Division, il fut ensuite affecté à la base d'Albacète en juillet 1937. Il parlait anglais, allemand, néerlandais, espagnol et français.

En octobre 1937, il devint chef d'État Major, secrétaire administratif de Marty, puis chef du service des investigations et de l'enregistrement des décédés au combat. Mal noté en septembre 1938, car « travaille mécaniquement sans aucune ligne politique et a commis dès lors de graves erreurs », il était en passe d'être déplacé. En revanche, Lise London qui le côtoya à Albacète, ne tarit pas d'éloges à son propos. Il quitta l'Espagne au début de 1939, demeura en France et ne revint en Belgique qu'au début de l'occupation. Il effectua des voyages en France occupée. Son activité est mal connue. Il travaillait dans une imprimerie et s'occupa de la propagande du PC dans le Brabant wallon. Il était cependant en liaison avec une petite équipe dirigée par un ancien officier des BI qui faisait du commerce au bénéfice du PC et qui touchait de près des membres de l'Orchestre Rouge. C'est à l'occasion d'un rendez vous avec eux qu'il fut arrêté le 29 avril 1942 à Bruxelles. Il vivait alors avec Ady Cortvrient, une militante du PCB.

Déporté à Mauthausen, il y succomba très rapidement.

SOURCES : RGASPI 495 193 416, Dossiers belges des BI ; Interviews Rachèle Gunzig et de Rose Lefevre-Genin ; Lettre d'Ady Cortvrient. — Lise London, Le printemps des camarades, Paris, 1998.

Merriman reveals that Lou Secundy and Vincent Usera were kind enough to help out a couple of nurses who were lonely. Given Usera's performance at Brunete, his inappropriate behavior here is particularly galling.

On the 20th, Merriman speaks with "Harper and Rolphe". This is possibly newspaperman Wiley Harper and most certainly the writer Edwin Rolfe, who was the Cultural Director for the Lincolns. Merriman again brings up Louis Cantor as a problem and he appears to be positive about Vincent Usera's contribution in training since Seaman Oliver is not working out.

Merriman says that he talked with Howard Hooker and found work for him. "Ramón" again came to camp for training, this time to work with a crew of snipers. Ramón was the weapons instructor at Pozo Rubio at this time. In the Staff meeting, more assignments were made with Bob Thompson becoming the Chief of Staff for the Battalion and William Neure as his assistant. Elliot Loomis will move up from being a driver to Liaison Officer. Benjamin Katine will take Loomis's place as a driver. RGASPI has a July 18 list of the Command of the Training Battalion³⁷⁰:

Company One

Commander	Robert Thompson
Adjutant	Lt. William Wheeler
Commissar	David Doran
Group 1 Ldr	Jack Mullinger
Section 2 Ldr	Bill Neure
Section 3 Ldr	Al Amery

Company Two

Commander	Lt. Isidore Schrenzel
Adjutant	Spanish (unknown)
Commissar	Spanish (unknown)

Company Three (in field)

Commander	Bill Wheeler
Adjutant	Ron Liversedge
Commissar	Albert Harry Rushton
Clerk	John Watson Croll

Catching up on those he sent to the brig, apparently Cantor has repented and wants to come back to the battalion. Tom Hyde still is in jail at this point but will be out shortly. Ten drunks were arrested and put into jail. We know from the RGASPI files that Vincent Sanchez arrested Wesley Mikalauskas and Francis Daly.³⁷¹

July 21—22 Ralph Bates Comes to Lecture

21 Julio

S. Daniel

Several days omitted day to day but shall summarize main events from 21 to 28 July inclusive. Bates came – lectured in fine manner - reviewed Battalion and then left to take up position as Assistant political commissar in Brigade before his world tour for Spain - gave talk on history of Spanish Army. Great agitator - tear in many eyes. Mates, Haywood, Rodriguez, Murray Schneider, Usera and others failed to work out on front. Usera sent to us to train new soldiers- may help out but he is upset because of his fight with Steve Nelson. "Your contribution to Spanish war." Feels badly. Went one day to

22 Julio

Sta Maria Magdalena

Pozo Rubio to attend party – arrived OK although late and had feed, gave talk and had entertainment. Later went back to hospital and met Russian from Albacete and drank a little with them - had to return early because Joe had meeting with Negro comrade. Spring broke and had to come home slowly so he missed meeting. Lou had nose out of joint and next day had Roblet and to Albacete. In late at night - got extra parts for machine guns. May get guns from Valencia.

§ § §

Merriman must have been busy with the deployment of the Mac-Paps because he did not keep up his diary for the week of July 21-28. He caught up at one go.

Ralph Bates came to lecture to the men and it was inspiring according to Merriman. Bates was acting as brigade commissar at the time and would soon go abroad to raise awareness and money for the Internationals. The photo of Bates lecturing is on Page 243.

Merriman gives a list of disappointments for the Lincolns. David Mates was the Commissar of the Washington Battalion. Harry Haywood's story was mentioned on earlier diary pages. Rodriguez could be one of a half-dozen men of that surname and if he was removed for cause, it has not been noted in the major texts on the Spanish Civil War. Murray Schneider was placed in detention for misappropriation of food. The story of Vincent Usera was given on the previous day. While Merriman notes that Usera's concern was with a fight with Steve Nelson, Nelson clearly was acting in his commissarial role in removing Usera from command. Interesting comment on Usera "Your contribution to the Spanish War". This sounds like Merriman bucking Usera up that he still would make a contribution in training new men. If Usera was really a plant from the US Army, Merriman had no inkling of that.

The rest of the diary posting dealt with issues of Lou Secundy being irritated by a problem with a vehicle and Joe Dallet missing an appointment because the spring broke in that vehicle. It seems Dallet must have given heck to Secundy on the status of the auto park vehicles.

The remainder of the diary entry are just notes on who visited and what Merriman obtained in the way of materiel.

July 23- 24 “After meeting, reported men drowned”

23 Julio

S. Liborio

day maneuver started and nothing was ready. Bob {Thompson} sick and since he is now second in command – no staff work was done. Collected staff on way. Bawled Lou {Secundy} out in field and he went to Albacete with Ben {Barsky} who had been refused test (rejected). They fixed it up in two day time and Ben passed by Perrey and car fixed in general. Advanced to river under cover on flanks and m.g. fire to front. Took up camp across river on {La} Gineta - Tarazona road. Had afternoon off for fine swimming. Signal work was lousy and Joe {Dallet} to spend some time with them. In meeting Joe jumped

24 Julio

Sta Cristina

on them - after meeting men reported drowned. Rushed to get truck or phone. All OK crawled along bottom. M.g. worked all afternoon getting targets set up for overhead fire and phones sent in reports of how firing went. Robbie got sick and was sent in in truck. Cook staff got good hand in meeting. Night maneuver and companies kept contact by dimmed lights - worked well

§ § §

Merriman continues to report the activities in training the Mac-Paps at Tarazona. He appears unaware of the desperate battle going on in Brunete or else he just felt it was not appropriate to record in his diary at this point. This is the second page of a catch up of activities that he recorded on July 28. This field maneuver was extensive and he may have left his diary in Tarazona de la Mancha rather than having in the field with him.

Bob Thompson takes ill and was in charge of the staff activities so the staff planning ceased. Merriman calls a staff meeting anyway

and reprimands Lou Secundy for not getting Ben Barsky through a test at Albacete. Merriman does not mention what the test is, although on the 26th Merriman makes appointments and Barsky becomes a commissar, presumably a company commissar. It is also possible that it is just a driving test, as Merriman conflates this story with the repair of their vehicle.

The field maneuver was near the bridge on the Tarazona to La Gineta Road over Rio Jucar. They camped on the far side. Here is a view today of those fields at the bridge:



Current Google Streetview image of the Tarazona - La Gineta Road bridge over Rio Jucar. Mac-Paps would have camped in that field.

The river looks quite passive in current day photos but Merriman is informed that men drowned swimming in the river and he rushes out to see what happened. He finds out that they did not drown but were able to crawl to shore by going across the river bottom. There is a reservoir on the Rio Jucar now and it is possible that the stream was really a river in 1937 before the reservoir was there.

Joe Dallet is mentioned as having to improve the performance of the signal crew. And in a word that is difficult to read, it appears that "Robbie" got sick and was sent into Tarazona to hospital in a truck. This would be John Quiqley Robinson if true. Robbie would become the Lincoln Brigade Commissar in about a month before the assault on Quinto.³⁷²

July 25—26 After disciplining men, Howe Deserts

25 Julio

Santiago el Mayor. Apóst.

Although some scouts lost, we lagged behind Battalion and almost lost contact. Good experience, returned late. Next day m.g. fired and we went on tough long problem to right of bridge. Company 3 had real work out in long wheel. Maneuver or gymnastics. Swam again and returned on march late that night after fine march. Some tired – machine gunners stayed out for further work on range set up ones on guard came out to join them. White showed up well. Stuff sent to front. Bradsworth called for new ambulance and got

26 Julio

Sta. Ana

us in dutch. Recommended men for appointments. Tried to get tires - failed. Chesler case in Auto Park still hanging fire. Howe from machine gunners broken along with Dion and Howe deserted. Have not caught up with him yet. Gave too much autonomy to Sailors section - never again. Robbie flies off handle once in a while concerning food. Barsky is now political commissar.

§ § §

The field maneuvers of the Mac-Paps on the Tarazona - La Gineta Road finish up on the 25th or 26th (remember Merriman was catching up his diary from the 28th and did not record dates accurately for this week). In a hard maneuver, Merriman lagged behind the battalion and lost some scouts and nearly lost contact with the full battalion. In the field to the right of the Tarazona-La Gineta road bridge, Company 3 was put through a "wheel maneuver" where one end of the line stays pinned and the rest of the company rotates around to gain fire in another direction (presumably 90° to the original lines). It was a tough workout and Merriman called it "gymnastics".



Paul White in the Lincoln-Washington Battalion in February 1938. ALBA Photo 11-1028, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman praises "White" and this is most likely to be Paul White who served with the Mac-Paps at this time. White had a very exemplary record in 1937 and once disillusioned in 1938, had a sad fall from grace.³⁷³ Dr. Colin Bradsworth was the doctor with the training battalion at the time and his rustling up of an ambulance would be a serious mistake, especially since Brunete was underway and all ambulances were needed at the front.

Merriman says the "Chesler case is hanging fire". The details of why Frank Chesler got in trouble in the Autopark are not known. This story does not show up in Chesler's personal file, nor does he discuss it in his video history.³⁷⁴

Merriman says that "Howe" was broken along with Dion. William Edward Howe, one of the Seamen in the Seamen's Machine Gun Company. Dion was a discipline case previously and is Joseph Raymond Dion. Howe has deserted and is being looked for. Merriman chides himself for letting the Seaman's company have too much autonomy. "Robbie" Robinson was also a Seaman and was presumably brought in to keep this unit under control. Robbie was in hospital early in the maneuver and without being watched, Howe took off. Merriman says that Robbie complains too much about the food. But Robbie was just in hospital and probably had a legitimate complaint. On the 23-24 July diary pages, Merriman said the men applauded the cooks so perhaps that is what he wanted to hear, while some of the men complained about the food. Supplies for the Mac-Paps were low at this point with almost all available stores having been taken to the front at Brunete. Nearly all of the veterans spent time in hospital over dysentery or some other food contamination based illness.

July 27—28 “Finally had to break Seaman Oliver”

27 Julio

S. Pantaleón

{continued sentence from previous page}

at the auto park. Doran talked to about subjective attitude. Bill {Wheeler} thinks Joe Dallet also shows some of the same. Frank Rogers working out better in school. Some bombs dropped near there. Scary situation. Sent more men to the school. Now 35 from here. Neure in charge of Co. 1 Necessary to talk to Mullinger who does not work as well as necessary. Several night problems Company against Company. Worked out not too badly. One called off because of trouble in Company 3 after {Bob} Kerr visit here. Long session criticism and Whitfield held to bad attitude. All three Rushton, Liversedge & Skinner

28 Julio

S. Celso

bawled out. Meetings held and tension relieved. Talk with {Bob} Kerr later with Bill {Wheeler} on this question. Hope it lasts now. Usera doesn't pretend to be a brave man. Oliver and Hooker fight a pain in the neck. Oliver an ass. Had to finally break him and in a tough manner. Now he wants to go to front in labor battalion. Tells Joe off - says he is most hated man in I. B. Scandal and he must go.

§ § §

The sentence fragment "at the auto park" was a run over from the 25-26th July diary pages. It should read "{Ben} Barsky now Commissar at the auto park". This ties in a bit better with Merriman's relief on getting settled on a vehicle once Barsky passed his test in Albacete.

Joe Dallet and Dave Doran were both spoken to by Merriman because they had a "subjective attitude". A subjective attitude

would be one where the moods or opinions of Dallet and Doran were more important than objective reality. Dallet and Doran were both strong personalities. The seriousness of the criticism is revealed in the repeated interventions of the political responsible, Bob Kerr. Merriman says that Frank Rogers is working out better in the school.

Merriman reveals that Lt. William Neure was in charge of Company 1 of the Mac-Paps in the maneuvers. Neure would be William Wheeler's adjutant in Company 1 in the fall and would be killed at Fuentes del Ebro in October leading a charge of the Mac-Paps. Jack Mullinger is still receiving criticism for not working hard enough in leading the scouts. The scouts got lost in an exercise on the Tarazona - LaGineta road in a previous diary page.

Merriman had to cancel one exercise because Canadian Commissar Bob Kerr was in Tarazona for discussions. Merriman calls out Canadian Fred Whitfield for a bad attitude. Whitfield, while Canadian and from Vancouver, spent a lot of time in the US and reportedly spent 3 years in Alcatraz.³⁷⁵ Whitfield (42 years of age) was jailed for insubordination and it could be for this event. He would be killed on the 17th of March 1938, probably at Caspe, during the Retreats from Belchite to the Ebro. It is possible that the attitude of the Canadians was why Kerr was called in and Harry Rushton (46 years of age and the Commissar), Ron Liversedge (the company adjutant to Thompson) and Bill Skinner (the company commander) were reprimanded. Rushton, Kerr and Liversedge were well respected in Spain. Merriman hopes that the discussions will settle the issues in camp. The scent of Canadian rebellion against their American commander and commissars is in the air.

Merriman again mentions Vincent Usera, who had a run in with Nelson at Brunete, doesn't pretend to be brave. Merriman again calls out Seaman Oliver and Howard Hooker who had a fight. Merriman thinks Oliver is at fault. Oliver says that Dallet is the "most hated man in the Brigade". This comment has been picked up in several texts on the International Brigades and considering the source, one wonders if Dallet's unpopularity was all that real. It will come up again in October.

July 29—30 “Tough Luck, George”

29 Julio

Sta Maria

Went into town early in day for a few hours. Last day of Vidal. Met John Miller - great surprise. Bender had nerves from front. Nathan killed 17 kilo behind lines. Tough luck George. John wanted shower - had mass one. Late session about new policy of I.B. and John summarized some problems. Went to Base and got some equipment new typewriter - (fight). Radio - ammo, field glasses and, in general, a good day. Decided to stay for new Commandant of Base Bielov and Frame, Doran behind the scenes. Meeting packed in Ecole Normale. Vidal summarized his term and tended to justify himself. Frame said Guard Nacional might be best in Spain. Slip at claim of Vidal for good work. Vidal bitter and showed it. Received present, shook hands later and said I would see Vidal in Paris. He said, "I hope that I shall return to Spain." Naturally upset at removal. Frame seems very smooth. Winkler left. Schalbroeck to stay until new man hikes in. Frame & new political commissar for base came next day. Needed an introduction. 8 deserters from Madrigueras. Guard Nacional cleaned out 4³⁰ A.M. Emergency medical commission.

30 Julio

Stos Abdón y Senén

Battalion maneuver which worked well. Mobile signals good. Later in day John Miller, Bender, Haywood, Lawrence, Jack Reid came had long discussion and then gave summary of new policy of I.B. Saving cadres, C I decisions, removal etc. Long session but finally interrupted by moving out on night maneuver Co 2 against Co 3 Great boasts by Skinner, Bill {Wheeler} & Makela with me and John, Dallet, with Co. 2. Never touched. Few prisoners caught but in general a failure. Question of ordering equipment from America and repatriation, pensions etc.

Marcovich removed from Battallion for not carrying out orders of Klaus.

§ § §



William Frame, Brigade Intendant, December 1937 ALBA Photo 11-0638 Tamiment Library, NYU.

In a very busy two days in the diary, Merriman lets us know that Lucien Vidal (Vital Gayman) who has been leading the Albacete base since December 1936 has been removed. Clear from the diary is that the removal was not welcome and that Vidal held hard feelings. His comment when Merriman said he would see him in Paris, "I hope I shall return to Spain". The party for Vidal gave him short approbation and shorter applause. Vidal would be replaced by Comrade Bielov, a Russian who would lead the base into 1938. William Frame and Dave Doran were working behind the scenes in this turn-over. Frame was the head of the Intendencia at this point and gave a talk about how the Guard Nacional (the Intendencia) was the best in Spain at this point. Frame apparently stepped in it by giving a compliment to Vidal. While Vidal's memoir does not discuss his removal (except in a very academic debrief of his experience in Spain at the end of the memoir) it apparently had to do with mismanagement of funds

and the Intendencia itself so there is a subtext running through Merriman's notations here. Merriman's friend Pierre Lamotte had been removed from the Intendencia in Albacete because he came up several hundred thousand pesetas short in a purchase made in May.

Merriman says that Ed Bender had a case of nerves when he returned from the front at Brunete. On the 29th, things were not going well for the Lincolns and as they retreated, some men were killed. George Nathan, the Regimental Commander of the Brigades was killed 17 kilometers behind the lines from a bomb fragment. Steve Nelson recalled it:

Ahead, under the trees, we saw smoke rising from the camouflaged kitchen, saw the crews of the anti-aircraft guns moving about. The lovely smell of burro stew floated through the still air. Major Nathan, in charge of the withdrawal, strolled across the field. "Steve, old chap! Welcome home. Come along, you old Yank, have a bit of a snifter. I've been saving this for you. An Englishman's drink.

He raise a tin cup solemnly, cocked an eyebrow at me, "To our new Brigade Commissar. Mud in your eye, sir!"

You mean -- me?"

Certainly. You will have official notice shortly, but I assure you -- I say!"

The drone of motors. We craned our necks, peering at the sky. "There they are -- coming over the mountains. Oh, the bloody -- Best hit for cover, eh? Over that wall -- a ditch"

We ran like deer. The anti-aircraft let loose, all five guns at once, but the planes were flying very low. The thud of bombs came from beyond the grove, and instantly the planes were overhead. Nathan yelled, "Drop!" and I burrowed into the dirt. My holster was under me. If I could get the holster out, my behind would come down a few miles. I tugged at the holster, and an enormous crash deafened and blinded me. The

bomb had burst right beside me seemingly. But I was all in one piece.

Nathan was calling "I'm hit Steve!" I ran to Nathan ripped open his shirt. There was a three inch gash in his breast, with only a speck of blood oozing out; I thought at first it was just a scratch, but Nathan's face twisted with pain. It must be bad. I yelled frantically for first aid, and a couple of men came running. Nathan couldn't speak. He was clawing at his Sam Browne belt; he dragged it off, and handed it to me, and his gesture said "Take it -- I'm through".³⁷⁶

Although Walter Garland would commandeer an ambulance to rush Nathan to the hospital, he died that evening. Garland would be reprimanded for stealing the ambulance. Nelson felt that he had ironed out the theft of the ambulance, but from Merriman's diary we see that this counted against Garland. Both Garland and Haywood would face accusations for leaving the front, when both of them were on duties that were appropriate for their jobs.

Merriman's comment: "Tough luck, Geo."

Merriman met John Miller in Albacete. Miller is likely John Miller of Windsor, Canada, who was a Communist organizer since 1933.³⁷⁷ Merriman also says that Winkler will leave as will Schalbroeck. This is quite a turnover at Albacete since Winkler was the personnel officer of the International Brigades. Merriman says that there will be a new political commissar at the Base as soon as he hikes in from France.



Arnold Reid, RGASPI Photo Fond 545/Opus 6/Delo 970

On the 30th, the political leaders of the American brigades, John Miller, Ed Bender, Harry Haywood, Bill Lawrence, and Jack Reid arrived to discuss a new International Brigade policy on repatriation. Jack Reid was Arnold Reid (a.k.a. Arnold Reisky), an

American who worked in the Paris Office of the brigades and helped channel Americans to Spain.³⁶⁴ The Comintern (CI) worried that leading communist cadres were being killed in increasing numbers and they were reserving the right for themselves to identify Brigadistas for repatriation to their countries. This will be noted through the diary as "saving cadres".

In the midst of the discussion, a maneuver between Companies 2 and 3 of the Mac-Paps took place at night. This competition involved Bill Skinner, Bill Wheeler, and Niilo Makela of Canada, against Merriman, Joe Dallet, and John Miller. Merriman says euphemistically "they never laid a hand on me" (while the objective was to take prisoners).

At the end of the diary pages, Merriman notes that Mirko Markovich was removed from command of the Washington Battalion for not following orders. At this point in the battle of Brunete, the Lincolns and Washingtons were so decimated that there really only was one Battalion left and probably only the need for one Commander. Peter Carroll tells the story:

At one point, the new officers of the Lincoln-Washington battalion -- Markovicz, Nelson and Garland (before he was wounded) -- were ordered to a meeting with brigade Colonel Klaus, a Prussian officer who had replaced the wounded Copic. Bringing out a contour map, he directed the Americans to move their men to an exposed position in order to protect a company of Spanish marines. "A deep silence fell on the group as the Colonels' words were translated", remembered Nelson; 'we all seemed to get the gist of the urgency of his words before they were translated.'" Markovicz, speaking to Nelson in their native Serbo-Croatian, said "This can't be done. I am against it." Klaus, sensing the response, eyed Marcovicz and responded, "That's an order".

Still speaking in their own language, Nelson asked Marcovicz how they could disobey the colonel. "If you accept this order," said the experienced Markovicz, "I will hold you responsible before the Americans back home for whatever happens." Unable to understand this conversation, Klaus

demanded that they speak in English, with which his translator was familiar. "We have no time to waste," he said, demanding that Marcovicz gave him a clear answer.

Commander Klaus," the Yugoslav replied, "this is a disastrous order. I will not order the American battalion to carry out this order because it will result in a disaster, like the one at Jarama". As he spoke, Marcovicz kept his eye on Nelson, looking for support. "He should have known," the commissar {Nelson} later reported, "that I had no choice ... we could not disobey an order".

Marcovicz, I gave you an order which I received from division," Klaus declared. "You and I are under military orders. This is not a debating discussion here. We must act, especially since we are International Brigades, whose role is to develop discipline".

"Then," Nelson reported, "Klaus stood up and with unmistakable military bearing said "I order you to carry out the order". Markovicz also stood up and said "Colonel Klaus, I cannot carry out this order. Then Klaus stepped closer to Markovicz and extended his hand and said, 'Marcovicz, I order you to surrender your weapon'"

Marcovicz reached for his pistol and with an expression of obedience and surrender he handed the gun to Klaus." Taking the pistol, the Colonel turned and passed it to Nelson, along with the responsibility for carrying out the order.³⁷⁸

Nelson returned to the men and told them they had to go back into the fire. The men could not believe that they would be sent back to certain death. Nelson told them that they had to do it or they would be fighting the fascists where they were on the next day. The Americans mustered to march, but did not have to have to take the lines as other Spanish reinforcements were brought up and the Americans were allowed to retire from the Battle of Brunete. In this exchange, Nelson's standing rose dramatically and Marcovich's fell.

July 31 Merriman is Grading, A List to Avoid

31 Julio

S. Ignacio de Loyola

In morning - after failure of night maneuver - bet. Co 2 and Co 3 gathered comrades into church to hear John Miller - party speech pure and simple. Joe mentioned it later. Mess fund discussed later. Lash introduced and received well Bill {Lawrence} and I talked about Joe and party attitude of question of saving cadres. Question raised in meeting of leading comrades, about Thompson - Question of 25% ratio of American to Spanish discussed - we held for 280 men as it now stands. Question of Joe's attitude on comrades who are weak. Joe resented it because Harry Haywood was in the room. Later we decided he didn't open up enough. I chickened on Bob Thompson to remain. Mention about me but dropped. Harry Haywood's face serious downcast. Markovich came and returned late at night. Told about poor work of Cunningham. Laughs, etc. Missed direction several kilos. Story about Ruby and house which couldn't be found. Late poker session while entertainment went on in Church. Winner won ball game from Co. 3.

NOTAS

Brodsky wants to go home even if it means party expulsion. No. 1. Bad man Brodsky. No. 2 Haywood. No. 3. Dave Mates - shame - disgrace. Policy. After 6 months, men have perspective of going home may apply or stay - replacements and leading comrades to go home. Garland went slightly stale and goes home. Should not have deserted back to the front. Bill, Marion, Bender left for Villa Paz and Phil Bard came soon after in gray car for Bill. Committee (delegation) also came. Want Lamotte to come here. Robbie and Seaman's machine gun co. may go to Lincoln. Robbie as political commissar.

§ § §

Back from the Mac-Pap night training, Merriman has time to deal with political issues in the Brigade. The Mac-Paps assemble in the church for speeches by John Miller, of the CPUSA, and Joe Lash, of the American Students Union. Joe Dallet was not impressed with the speech. In a session of criticism and explaining party policy, Joe Dallet is discussed in the sense of repatriation of CP Party Cadres who should be saved. In the party meeting, Bob Thompson is discussed in this regard as is Haywood and Merriman. Joe Dallet must have had the strongest opinions on sending back the weakest comrades. Merriman hoped that Dallet would point the finger at Harry Haywood but Haywood was in the room and Dallet did not speak up. Merriman himself was going to suggest Bob Thompson to be sent home, but he chickened out. This clearing the decks must have been an important opportunity to have the leadership of the brigade allow weak military leaders to be sent home without losing face (i.e. saving the best cadres). In any case, Haywood must have known that he was on the chopping block as he himself said in his memoir and while returning home would have been desirable from a self-preservation point of view, it would also be considered a disgrace back in the US.

The meeting also gives mention about Prieto's desire that all units have at least 25% Spanish troops in them. The Americans balk at this since they fought hard to get an English only speaking brigade. But after this point, the Brigade would have one Spanish Battalion to balance the demographics.

Mirko Markovich is back from Brunete after having stood up to Hans Klaus and having been removed from command. Marcovich indicts Cunningham for "poor work". Several of the Americans, including Haywood and Garland, had run ins with Jock Cunningham. Markovich laughs about missing direction by several kilometers at the front. Nelson also spoke about trying to supply Americans on the front by two burros and getting misdirected so that they walked right into fascist lines. He has to shoot the burro to keep it from defecting to the Fascist troops. The burro was carrying ammunition and a bag of shoes for the Americans.³⁷⁹

After some laughs and story telling, Merriman and the staff had a late night poker session. Merriman mentions "Ruby" in this section and Steve Nelson mentioned another name in his memoir, "The Volunteers"³⁶⁶, Ruby Ryantⁿ who was the head of the Machine Gun Company. It is quite possible that the "Ruby" who was previously identified in the diary could have been Rubin Ryant. Ryant was on the machine guns at Brunete and then became Adjutant to Sid Levine about this time. By Quinto, in a month's time, Ryant would be commissar in the Machine Gun Company with Manny Lanser^o as the Company Commander. About this time as well, a young recruit named Milt Wolff moved up from being an ammunition carrier to being section leader in Lanser's Machine Gun Company.³⁸⁰ Milt Wolff recollected this reassignment poorly in the tapes made for Landis' book.³⁸¹ Wolff would end the war as Commander of the Lincoln Battalion.

In the notes at the end of the month, Merriman writes down his top 3 on the "Hall of Shame". Number 1 is George Brodsky who Merriman calls a "bad man". Number 2 is Harry Haywood for weakness in leadership as discussed earlier in the diary. Number three is Dave Mates who is a real disappointment to Merriman. Why he is going home "shamed - disgraced" is never discussed. Mates has been sent back to Albacete very early in the Brunete Offensive. Merriman also mentions that Walter Garland would be going back home. Garland "deserted to the front" rather

ⁿ Rubin Ryant was born July 30, 1914, in Montreal, Canada. A printer by trade, Ryant arrived in Spain on February 11, 1937, and served with the Lincoln Battalion MG Co. at Jarama and Brunete. He became Company Commissar in the Aragon offensive. He went to OTS and graduated January 1938. He joined the Lincoln-Washington Battalion but was killed in action March 10, 1938, in Belchite, at the start of the Retreats.

^o Morris (Manny) Lanser was born August 12, 1912, in NYC. Lanser had worked in the theater and as a pleater in the garment industry. He arrived in Spain on March 7, 1937. He served with the Washington Battalion MG Co. in Brunete. He became MG Company Commander in the Lincoln-Washington Battalion at Quinto and Belchite. His last unit was the Lincoln-Washington Battalion as a Teniente in the Plana Mayor during the Ebro Offensive. He returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. He was in the armed forces in WWII and he passed away December 24, 1999, in New York City.

than staying in training at Pozo Rubio where he was in June. One could be charged for premature heroism, it appears.

We have not heard much of Marion Merriman in recent pages, since she is working with Bill Lawrence and Ed Bender at the American Cadres Service in Albacete. Merriman notes that they will go to the American Hospital at Villa Paz that by this time must have been overflowing with injured and dying from the Battle of Brunete. Phil Bard picked them up. Bard was the American Base Commissar at Albacete and had returned home to the US in March 1937 because of severe asthma. This makes it apparent that Bard was back in Spain in July 1937. Bard will return to the US again on August 20, 1937.

Finally, in some reassignments, Merriman requested Pierre Lamotte to come to Tarazona. Merriman really liked Lamotte and found him a "fine fellow" since late January. Lamotte continually bounced around the rear until he was arrested and accused of stealing. It is likely here that Merriman is trying to provide some cover for Lamotte while the decks are being cleared in Albacete over mismanagement of the Base and the Base's Intendencia. Lamotte would return to the US in 1938.

AUGUST 1937

Remained in conference meeting concerning plan
 in which most pleased with attack found tonight
 done **25 Agosto** in San Felipe Benicio
~~Chapel as a general trouble with trees~~
 and have lost (1000) small loss in an awful
 fire. Logos said to return here. Some leaves and
 some no. meeting in which with some people
 and finally a hard battle coming out all
 again on the spot with nothing of the white
 and a several portion once again. coming
 out again on this year in life and interest
 to attend cemetery - but it is in a corner
 of the 2 or 3 to travel on highway. Much
 performed out of the order to replace and
 the 10.000. impossible. Much never again
 I see yesterday tried to know trees for 11
 months. Just right you have finally made a
 great impression. Back to more. Much
 has made much impression etc. started to try
 followed some American - then decided to
 get out of the way just to attend. No trees
 shown at the last minute. Copy printed
 20. A man however might have some good
 trees to be made. No trees indeed. Today
 negotiations all that came along made those
 without people and instead of what they +
 2 road - everything left - but just find in
24 Agosto S. Barfolome. apóstol
~~old location~~ small dirt road I find
 on our first plane lower one. the first
 arrived finally and reported to staff - had believed
 and things at attack with names just no. white
 some much. heavy bombing material and much
 and finally the advantage of having. Real
 home on orders. into tank from the bottom
 front full on as well as on the 11. position
 worked well. small mounted rest to correct
 and help changes. small holes in no. anyone
 help with center of training. I went to take the
 in. back time finding here island road. must
 no. road. nothing - heading question about
 position. also to leave in position in front and
 other to go. left flash. into as a left hand
 Kachon had. at a road way started. Gasco
 followed and on boys with tank. toward the
 heights - a man perfect movement. see and to see
 single protection. things led out - would be right out
 but. rather or otherwise see type out into another. light
 to show way for night. some what into forward corner
 for ambulance back to go. found just into night
 presents for nation. found it had a lot. little in way

August 1—2 Visitors Keep Coming to Tarazona

1 Agosto

S. Pedro Advinoula

Sports day. Slept late after breakfast had prisoners. Sentenced Deluca. Martineau reprimanded. Decided on release of Hyde – object not to break men. In semi-final in ball game defeated by Co 1 – 10 - 8. Question if spirit is sagging. Lost at Horseshoes by Co 1. Comrades came from Pozo Rubio noses out of joint because no official celebration or welcome. One hell of a note. Co 1. lost soccer to Co 3 – 1 - 0 Marion returned from Villa Paz - Al Rothman{?} Hourihan, Raven (blind) there. Romer wife. Discussion about movement at front. Fight in mess hall day before. Long session with cooks and many sharp word. Robbie spoke. Coapman in place of Racheff. General out. Cavanaugh in. Deluca's out. New rule. Cavanaugh had fine attitude. Markovich came and stayed over night. Staff meeting lasted very late with many things discussed and brought up to date.

2 Agosto

Ntra. Sra. de los Angeles

Went on Batt maneuver in the morning started poorly but finished up well Semyonovitch {Stepanovitch?} went with us & made him run plenty. Killed all Company commanders and third in command had to take over. Retreat practiced. Sent B. Wheeler, Makela – Barsky with Ben to Valencia to see what happened to trucks which were supposed to go for 32 tons of stuff from America. After lunch Markovich spoke to Political Commissar and then to Batt. Made fine talk but showed our weakness. Complained why he was removed and said Klaus was weak and apologized and whole talk of justification of his position. Rejichek {Rezac?} and Lepo dropped in. Checked on Oliver. Lepo in charge of m.g. Co. Lincoln then wounded. Hyde released wants to go to front immediately, get it over with and go home.

§ § §



Sam DeLuca, RGASPI Photo, Fond 545/Opus 6/ Delo 879, Moscow

With Brunete wrapping up and the Americans being pulled back into reserve positions, people return to Tarazona and drop in on the Mac-Paps. Merriman is busy with disciplinary actions. He has removed a DeLuca who is probably Samuel DeLuca^a, an Italian American in the Mac-Paps. Robert Martineau was a French Canadian from Montreal. Michael Petrou's notes³⁷³ show that Martineau was arrested for 8 days and it is probably this incident. Merriman decides to release Tom Hyde from prison and says that the goal is not to totally break the men who are

^a Samuel DiLuca (DeLuca) was born on April 5, 1892 in Oratino, Italy. He immigrated to the US in 1914 and, in 1917, he was back in France fighting for the 47th Regiment of the US Army in WWI. He lived in Milwaukee, WI and arrived in Spain on June 22, 1937. DeLuca was a Cook with the Lincoln Washington Battalion at Brunete, Fuentes de Ebro, Teruel, the Retreats and the Ebro Offensive. After leaving Spain he was held in a French concentration camp. He returned to the US in February 1939 aboard the *President Roosevelt*. DeLuca passed away January 8, 1976 in Milwaukee, WI.

difficult. On the August 2 page of the diary though, Merriman says that Hyde is requesting to go to the front "to get it over with" and go home.

In Tarazona, August 1 is spent on sports with a baseball game, a soccer game and horseshoe match. It appears that Merriman did not do well in any of them. Merriman notes that the spirits of the men is sagging and it is very likely that word of the rebuff at Brunete and the loss of so many men has gotten back to Tarazona. Merriman says that men came over from the Officers Training School to Tarazona and they were irritated because there was nothing special set up for their visit.

Marion Merriman returns from the hospital in Villa Paz and she visited Marty Hourihan, the American Commander in Brunete, and Robert Raven who was blinded at Jarama. She also met with Al Robbins (Merriman writes "Rothman") but Albert Robbins was wounded at Brunete. He makes a cryptic comment "Romen wife" and there is no context for this. It is likely that he meant to write Romer for Samuel Romer^b whose wife was Edna Drabkin Romer^c, a nurse at Villa Paz. They were one of the few couples who served together in Spain.

^b Samuel Romer was born September 21, 1912, Detroit, MI. He graduated from the University of Michigan with a BA in Journalism. He was married to Edna Drabkin Romer, Journalist, and a nurse at Villa Paz. Romer arrived in Spain on May 30, 1937 after surviving the sinking of the *City of Barcelona*, and planned to join the Debs Column, which never materialized. He was with the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in training, but joined the Brigade Staff as Paymaster. In Teruel he was with the 24th Battalion and would be captured March 12, 1938, in Hajar during the retreats. He would be in the group exchanged October 8, 1938, and return to the US on October 18, 1938 aboard the *Queen Mary*. He served as Meteorologist with the US Army, and be a civilian consultant to MacArthur in Japan. Sam Romer died in April 1965 in New York City.

^c Edna Drabkin Romer was born February 10, 1913, in Brooklyn. She trained at the Metropolitan Hospital of New York as a nurse and was married to Samuel Romer. She arrived in Spain on July 18, 1937, and served with the Medical Services at Villa Paz and later with the Auto-chir on the Aragon Front. She returned to the US on September 26, 1938 aboard the *Normandie*. She passed away in January 1983 in Holly Hill, Florida.

There was a meeting with the cooks and John Quigley "Robbie" Robinson spoke. In reference to some names from an earlier page, Arthur Coapman has been put into some position that had previously held by Gilbert Racheff. This seems to concern staffing in the kitchen as Frederick Cavanaugh is in and will become the Cook for the Mac-Paps. He probably is replacing DeLuca. Merriman says "Gen. out" and that is likely to be a reference to the removal of General Gal from the Vth Army Corps. Markovich is still in Tarazona and he stayed over.



(left) Samuel Romer, Teruel, 1938, ALBA Photo 11-0946, Tamiment Library, NYU (right) Edna Romer, ALBA Photo 1:1:22:1, Frederika Martin Collection, Tamiment Library NYU

On the 2nd, the Mac-Paps go out on maneuver again and it goes better this time. Merriman mentions "Semyonovitch". It is probable that Merriman meant Stepanovich who was the photographer who followed the Brigade around. The list of "Mexicans" lists a Petar Zjubimovich, a Yugoslavian, who was an instructor in the Brigade at Pozo Rubio.³⁷⁴ But this notation is about the Mac-Paps in Tarazona. There was a Walter Seminoff, a Canadian from Toronto who was in Tarazona about this time. In any case, Merriman ran him ragged. In a cruel prediction of future battles, Merriman called all leaders of the Brigade "dead" and put

the number three in the companies in charge, generally a corporal or "cabo".

Merriman expected a convoy of trucks with 32 tons of supplies from the US that were at Valencia and they did not show up so he sent Ben Barsky, Bill Wheeler and Niilo Makela to Valencia to check out what happened.

In the afternoon of the 2nd, Mirko Markovich spoke on his adventures in Brunete and his removal by Colonel Klaus. Merriman says that Markovich revealed "our weakness", which may be that the senior Brigade staff was willing to expend the Internationals to the last man. Markovich did apologize to the men but he still justified his position. Clearly, he could not give the order to send the men back into battle after three weeks of hard fighting.

Merriman says "Rejichek and Leppo" dropped in. His reference to the latter man leading the Machine Gun Company at Brunete draws us to identify him as Daniel Lepo^d. The first man is likely to be Albert Rezac.^e Merriman is still worried about Seaman Oliver. Lepo would be responsible for him if the Seaman's Machine Gun Company went over to the Lincolns. Lepo was injured at Brunete.

^d Daniel Lepo (also Leno or Danil Lipo; Stefan Prohorov, Stefan; Daniel Lepo), was a Croatian-American born in 1910, in Josipdal, Croatia. He immigrated to the US in 1914 and then left for Leninsk, USSR in 1931 to study at the KUNMZ. Lepo was one of the "Mexicans" who arrived in Spain from Russia in February 1937. He attended OTS then went to Lincoln-Washington Battalion as a Lieutenant and Company Commander of the MG Co. in Brunete. He also served in the Servicio Inteligencia Militar (SIM) and the Albacete Auto Park. He was wounded in action and his fate uncertain.

^eAlbert Rezac was born April 20, 1893, in Brezova Hora, Czechoslovakia. He became a naturalized US citizen in July 1928 and lived in Chicago, IL. A baker by trade, Rezac arrived in Spain on June 6, 1937, and served with the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in training. He was drafted to the front from August 12, 1937-January 24, 1938. He served at Quinto, Belchite, Fuentes del Ebro, and Teruel. Rezac returned to the US on September 24, 1938 aboard the *President Harding*.

August 3—4 Mac-Paps Get their Banner

3 Agosto

Inv. de S. Esteban

[top says General Notes of this Period on Sept 21]

night maneuver final contest of Co. 2 & 3. A tie since neither one won out. Grabbed Skinner scout by the leg. He ran.

4 Agosto

Sto. Domingo de Guzmán

In the morning went into long trench and then over the top. Co. 3 not so good, others very fine. Good planning on infiltration etc. After lunch North American committee came and meeting held for after lunch. In course of meeting Max Bedacht, Bard spoke. Max sore because IWO overshadowed by Bard's talk. Meeting in general dry in middle, Roblet came in and talked about weapons, etc. and then called up Bielov. Canadian Co. given the banner and cheers. After meeting had talk with John & Bill who agreed to have us come to Albacete the next day to discover general plan and to get opinion of John etc. Question of % Spanish etc.

§ § §

As the pace of training accelerated, Merriman missed a few days in his diary. On August 3, he just tells an anecdote about maneuvers when he "pulled the leg" of one of Bill Skinner's scouts. Merriman is obviously in the field with the men and spends time overnight in a trench.

On August 4, Max Bedacht³⁷⁵ and Phil Bard arrive to lecture the men, a lecture which Merriman says is dry. Bedacht reportedly testified to Congress that he was part of a group of 8 who went to Spain to visit the Brigades. Bedacht is reputed to have recruited American reporter Whitaker Chambers to the Communist

Party.³⁷⁶ However, as in all things Chambers, one must view the stories with a critical eye. Bedacht material is available in the Tamiment Library.

Art Landis captures the event:

The early days of August, 1937, saw Volunteers from both the United States and Canada welcoming a delegation front the United States which had brought over thirty-two tons of soap, cigarettes, chewing gum, and other needed items. This was the first of a steady flow of supplies to be distributed under the dispensation granted by Secretary of State Cordell Hull on June 6, 1937. The visiting group was headed by Phil Bard (Lincoln Veteran), now acting secretary of the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. It included Frank Mertens, of the National Maritime Union; John P. Hautala, of the Finnish Workers Federation; and Max Bedacht, national secretary of the International Workers Order.³⁷⁷



Max Bedacht



The Mac-Paps in December 1937 with their flag. Believed to have been in Mas de las Matas, Spain. ALBA Photo, 11-1327. Tamiment Library, NYU

John Miller and Bill Lawrence are in Tarazona de la Mancha to see the naming ceremony for the Mac-Paps. The Mac-Paps are awarded their Battalion flag. John Miller and Bill Lawrence invite Merriman back to Albacete to get the scoop on upcoming plans of action. In the next three months, the Lincolns, Washingtons, and Mac-Paps will be in almost continuous action. Roblet introduces the new Albacete base Commander Comrade Bielov to the Mac-Paps and he lectures. Bielov was also called "Popov" according to Hugh Thomas.³⁷⁸ However, the list of Mexicans in RGASPI also lists a "Popov" as the nom de guerre of Dimitri August Ustinov, a Bulgarian.³⁷⁹ Thomas alludes to Bielov being responsible for the fortifications at Belchite which were overrun in Spring 1938. Others have mentioned that there were no fortifications at Belchite in the Spring of 1938 and this is why the town was overrun so easily.³⁸⁰ Bielov would remain commander at Albacete Base until December 1, 1937, when he would be replaced by General Gomez.

The last line "Question of % of Spanish" hides a multitude of issues facing the International Brigades. In June, the Spanish Ministry of War issued new orders claiming that all Internationals were subject to the command of the Spanish Army. The Internationals command viewed this as a threat to dissolve the International Brigades and place them in Spanish units. Vital Gayman ("Vidal") wrote a long series of memoranda outlining the Internationals' position about this integration and subsequently earned his own dismissal by General Miaja. In one memorandum Vidal says (translated from the French):

For the XVth Brigade, how can one imagine that the officers could ignore the threat made against General Gall after the taking of Villanueva de la Canada and the crossing of the Guadarrama, for the sole fault of not having managed to succeed, with the weakened effectives, after the failure of the Spanish Brigade that marched ahead of them, to ultimately take the two positions of Romanillos and Mosquito {Ridge}.³⁸¹

Vidal goes on to assess Brunete and the difficulties that the Brigades were facing:

Subject to huge losses, four of its battalions have been combined into two and two cannot be formed into two battalions. The English battalion has attained a vague collection of desertions that have started to win over some of the American Battalions. The Officers are not excluded from this process of demoralization.

Demoralization of the least patient of the men of the Instruction Battalions and their command (the American battalion of instruction is about 500 men) can foresee no date where they will depart, as a new unit, to reinforce the old American Battalions: first – there are no arms available to the Base of the B.I. within the Brigades themselves (the second American battalion sent to the XVth on June 10, 1937, was armed with the artillery, engineers, etc. and the last reserves of the Armory of the Brigade). Second, because there is no measure one can take to add the Spanish effectives to this battalion and that, in accord with the decisions taken, the Etat Major of the Base refuses to form battalions that are made up of 100% international effectives.

Vidal explains his removal and gives direction to his successors:

This is why, now where I must leave the command of the International Base, I must convince those who will occupy the functions and the charges that I have overseen for the last 10 months, exactly at the height of these circumstances, that it is not my leaving which will provoke this or that reaction of his {General Miaja} over the International Brigades. I consider that is my telling of the truth of the situation of the International Brigades that is responsible for the measures that at this time evoked these regrettable and sad events.

Vidal goes on to suggest that the Internationals must be kept together as a group and not treated as a “Foreign Legion”. It is necessary that their constitution should remain as it is. It is necessary that their rights are officially recognized.

As a result, on 11 August, Vidal followed with a memorandum³⁸² detailing the problems and asking that 3000 Spaniards be

assigned to Albacete to begin training at the schools. He suggests reorganization of the Brigade into the XI, XII, XIV, XV and 150th Brigades. He proposes that the 150th be renamed the XIIIth and that the XIth and XVth be internationals. He proposes sending the Franco-Belge battalion (XIVth) to the 150th (the new XIIIth). The Dimitrovs will be sent to the new XIIIth battalion and the XVth staffed with another battalion of North Americans. This suggestion is ultimately put in place by Bielow but General Gal and Vidal were gone from the International Brigades, when this happened in September.

Vidal concluded his memoir with a frank assessment of the leadership of the Brigades:

"Gall was only a junior officer with the military knowledge of a junior officer before 1914 The military knowledge of Copic was more than a summary. Only Hans (Klaus) was an officer in the German Army with the intelligence and military experience, before forming the Brigades, that let him assume command later of the large units without showing himself to be inferior to his task."³⁸³

August 5—6 Half of 2nd Training Battalion Moves

5 Agosto

Ntra Sra de las Nieves

According to agreement went to Albacete early in the morning. Bob took Battalion on maneuver and pictures taken by Phil Bard. Leading Comrades met in our room. Bill, Bender, Jock, John, Markovich, Marion, Mates and I & Kerr. Question of number of men in Battalion Spanish etc. Transferring men from the lines. Exchange. Markovich and speech in Tarazona - claimed later people got mad. Subjective and still clings to ideas. John laid down law and he agreed to make a new statement before Battalion. Kerr to get recognition. Mates blew off against Bill and rumors (source Doran) and raised hell. John quieted them down. Question of leadership of L. W. Batt. on problem of going to see Bielov- Harry Haywood sore because he was left off. Meeting at six – long then halving our Battalion. Canadians to English -some to Dimitrov Battalion etc. After hard fight agreed to send up 200 men - My Battalion to stay. I requested to take them up. Agreed. Statute of I. B. being prepared. Official recognition of government. Guns and 50% Spanish as policy. Returned home and called Company Commander who got lists ready. Worked until late at night - much typing etc. Talked with Dave Doran - personal way of working etc.

6 Agosto

Stos Justo y Pastor

The first thing in the morning I read off the list of those to move up. Great cheering during day some changes made. Supplies issued and some firing in the afternoon. In evening special meal – with John, Bill - Parker – Mates, etc., attending. Idea spread that only worst men going to front. Meeting in the evening when farewell given for men. Speeches by John, Robbie. Markovich admitting that he made a mistake although did it just like and kind of mistake not clear. Marriage of Minnie our dog and

Fishman (sore). Bourne and company commanders spoke. Singing and Albacete band came. I gave last speech - what is bravery and save your officers. Hip, Hip.

After this a long last meeting with John. Mates (?{his question mark}) Policy of deserters. - broadcast use of extra men going up etc. Markovich general dissatisfaction because of hand received by Usera. Report to Political Bureau sent for Lawrence collective leadership. Written slips for departure and Lou Secundy in charge of convoy. Last handshakes of John fine.

§ § §

Merriman has to make hard decisions over the next few days. With the decimation of the Lincoln and Washington Battalions at Brunete, men are needed to fill out the ranks of even a combined Lincoln-Washington Battalion. Merriman fights to keep the men he has, but the need is great at the front and nearly 200 men will move up into other battalions. In his visit to Albacete, Merriman meets with leading comrades who are there: Bill Lawrence, Ed Bender, Jock Cunningham, John Miller, Mirko Marcovich, George Marion, Dave Mates, and Bob Kerr (of the Canadians). A decision has to be made as to the number of Spanish in each battalion. Two weeks prior, the Americans fought against even 25% of the brigade being Spanish and now the policy is 50%. Mirko Markovich spoke about his role and his apology for not leading at the front, but Merriman is not having any of it (see additional material below). David Mates is defending his position and uses statements made by Dave Doran for support but Merriman calls it "rumors".

In the flurry of activity about the adjustment in leadership, the question of visiting Comrade Bielov (who is leading the Albacete base) is raised. Harry Haywood is still fighting to save his position, although previously it was decided he would return to the US. Haywood would rightly be peeved if he wasn't involved in the meeting and Cunningham and Kerr were. The Battalion in Albacete was going to be halved. Merriman argued and partially won the argument that his Battalion should stay together and that

he would take them forward to the front. Merriman would lead the group of 200 and leave the Mac-Paps behind in Tarazona. Once the meeting ended, orders were written, lists of who would move were prepared, and "much typing was done". Merriman spoke with Dave Doran about his method of managing troops.

On the 6th, the decisions were revealed to the troops and the fact that they were going forward was received well. When the decision that the Battalion was being split was discussed, however, the men thought that only the malcontents and weaker elements were being sent to the front. In an evening meeting, this was dealt with and John Miller and Robbie Robinson spoke to the troops. The Seaman's Machine Gun company was probably viewed as being amongst the "malcontents".

An evening meal and party featured "Minnie our dog" being "married" to Fishman. While probably humorous for some, it wasn't to Morris Fishman. This is clearly not Moe Fishman who was wounded at Brunete and was in hospital at this point.

At the evening meeting, there was some discussion on the policy of deserters and Jim Bourne spoke to the troops. Mirko Marcovich continues to be marginalized and he is irritated that Vincent Usera (who also showed weakness at Brunete) was given a hand by the troops. At the end of the evening, Lou Secundy of AutoPark made up the transit Salvo Conductos for those going forward.

Merriman made a note in the diary that he added additional notes on the September 21 page. This is actually pretty telling for Merriman that he would place his additional comments at such a date. His diary would run until December 31 but he had made the decision at this point that he would probably not need diary pages after September 21. One can only imagine the fatalistic images that were going through Merriman's mind if he picked that date as far enough in the future for him not to worry about needing diary pages at that point. Pages for September 21-24 were used to wrap up his thoughts for August 3-8.

§ § §

21 Septiembre**S. Mateo , apóstol****{from here on Merriman uses as notebook }**

General Notes of 3-8 of August:

"If Markovich had to lead offensive, it would not have taken place"

McGuire - Gonshak - Burton - Krangel and others either cracked deserted or went on leave without permission. Van den Berghe to go to Brigade - Dart in as Commander. Kosonatechev didn't do so well - to come out with 35 being replaced. Walter Garland didn't want to go. Gonshak argues about his case twice f---- off. Aitken wants Wintringham to come help Jock Cunningham.

Frank Ryan said he heard that an American was going to be put on the Brigade Staff - next year" Just a rumor!

{flows over 22 Septiembre**S. Mauricio}**

Brigade Headquarters in marvelous mansion - garden swimming hole near - tile etc. Wiley criticized work of Joe {Dallet} on basis of case of Weissman and Hyde. Said I must check it all myself. Claimed Joe got me into trouble. Oliver bulled while half drunk. Howe called in and bawled out. Let off square deal.

Lamb and Estevez doing good work.

{flows over 23 Septiembre**Sta. Tecla}**

Must send periscope.

Marion must go to work in Cadres English & Americans and must not go to front with us or try to visit too often because of her position in Cadres. New boss quiet and in general a puzzle.

Owen Smith in charge of Company and doing well. Also Miller was fine.

Robbie chosen to go and asst to Steve and later in his place proposition put to him on the stage during farewell meeting.

§ § §



Patrick McGuire of the Canadian contingent in Brunete. RGASPI Fond 545/Opus 6/Delo 170. Moscow.

In these additional notes, Merriman makes the statement that if Markovich had continued to lead the Battalion the attack on Brunete would never have been made. Clearly, this quote is hyperbole, but Merriman and Markovich were antagonistic throughout the spring of 1937. He lists comrades who had either deserted or not performed at Brunete. McGuire is likely to be Canadian Patrick McGuire. Gonshak is Sergeant Samuel Gonshak of the Auto Park. Burton is Wallace Burton who was a trainer at

Pozo Rubio. Krangel is a new name and is Morris Krangel^f who will be killed in action at Fuentes del Ebro in October, 1937.



Samuel Gonshak, RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 900

Merriman names Van den Berghe as moving up to the Estado Mayor of the Brigade. Amandus Van den Berghe was the second in command for the Brigade at this point. Merriman notes that Rollin Dart is in as Commander of the Lincolns. A Russian named Kosonatchev (name uncertain) did not do well at the front. Thirty-five leaders are being replaced at the front. Walter Garland did not want to leave but clearly was being removed and sent home. Samuel Gonshak defended himself and Merriman is very explicit about what he thought of the excuse.

In the British ranks, George Aitken is advocating for Jock Cunningham. He wants Tom Wintringham to move up from Pozo Rubio to help Cunningham in a command role but Cunningham, Aitken, Copeman will soon be called back to England for meeting with Harry Pollitt of the British Communist Party. Cunningham will not return to Spain. In a rumor, Merriman hears from Frank Ryan that an American (presumably Merriman) will be promoted to Brigade Staff.

Merriman visited the Brigade headquarters at Ambite Mill and is in awe of the facilities. He says that Wiley (presumably Samuel David Wiley) criticized Joe Dallet's handling of the disciplinary cases of Irving Weissman and Tom Hyde. Merriman says that Wiley warned him to check out the cases himself. We don't know

^f Morris (Murray) Krangel was born May 21, 1910. He arrived in Spain on February 21, 1937 and will be killed in action October 13, 1937 at Fuentes de Ebro.

the result of that investigation. We do know that Merriman had released Tom Hyde from detention. Wiley warned Merriman that Dallet created problems for Merriman. Seaman Oliver continues to spread rumors and accusations, and in this case was drunk when doing so. William Edward Howe⁸ called in and was bawled out. Merriman thinks he has Howe straightened out, however, he will get in bigger trouble after moving to the front in September.

Merriman makes an additional comment in the material brought forward from the September pages. He has been advised by Marion Merriman's new boss (the head of the Cadres service) that she cannot accompany Merriman to the front. She will have to stay behind in Albacete in the Cadres' office. Merriman says that her new boss is a bit of a puzzle to figure out. This will make their parting on the 9th of August more poignant. Marion will, however, be able to get to visit Merriman several times in the Fall, hitching rides with other comrades and in September, she will be brought to the XVth Brigade in order to help straighten out paylists and personnel rosters when Merriman gets behind in his paperwork.

⁸ William Edward Howe was born July 15, 1908. He arrived in Spain on June 6, 1937 and trained with the 2nd Training Battalion but moved up with group of 200 to the Lincoln-Washington Battalion during Brunete. Howe would go into the line and served at Belchite. Disillusioned wanted to return home and when this was not approved, he deserted. He was caught and incarcerated in Barcelona but led a riot at the jail. He slammed one jailer's hand in a cell door and broke the finger of another guard. He was taken by DeMaio and sent to a Spanish Prison. After 77 days there, he was apparently cured and was sent to the front on January 27, 1938 at Teruel. He is assumed to have died in Spain as he has no return record from US Immigration. Howe was one of the seamen with Bill Bailey when he pulled the flag off the German ship, Bremen in 1935.

August 7—8 ••• 200 Americans Move Up

7 Agosto

S. Cayetano

Finished meeting in small hours last part mixture of talk and orders for departure at 3³⁰ after flat tire and lost time we pulled out toward La Roda without destination other than direction of Madrid. Gassed up at Quintanar where first section of convoy lost ahead. Drove, caught up and went to Tarancón and then to Albares - to Brigade Headquarters. Meeting being held and elementary things discussed. Sleepy after driving. Arrival of Americans caused some excitement - no Spanish given. After a good meal (Cunningham conceited - Chief of Staff under Klaus also to be under Copic when he returns). Means now different then concerning Markovich. Control man talking to Klaus about Markovich's tale of events on front. Left the American Battalion up the valley and met some of the fellows and slept until supper when convoy came in. Ate and afterward had a meeting among Cooperman, Jordan, Bates, Bender, Joe, Steve and I. Discussed HQ problem mentioned at the base. Steve says leadership for 3 battalions is now impossible. Robbie acted badly concerning the appointment. Walked out. Reconsideration? "Coop" wants to go home. Steve goes to Brigade. Jordan, Walter Garland out. Policy on deserters outlined. Secundy did good work.

8 Agosto

S. Ciriaco

Had morning meeting in Battalion. Official visit of Klaus, Aitken, and Bates. Steve praised. I spoke few words. Some men leaving on basis of new policy. Small rebellion in KP. Burton, Gonshak, McGuire & others buggered off and were removed from positions & 10 days KP under guard. Then drove to Brigade and finally on to Madrid after session with Stepanovitch who wants Bender - Coop to go. In Madrid found Greenspan and Rolfe. Found Lash

and hotel room and then visited Greenspan and bawled him out on lack of policy concerning men, Amlie etc. Dart & Walter later from Madrid. Spanish etc. Van den Berghe has wife visiting him. 12 men given citations. Cunningham in and out. Never admitted mistakes. Klaus agreed to talk if we came back. Awaited Gallo but he never came. Swim in pool. Ryan said next year an American staff officer rumored. He goes to Madrid.

§ § §

Robert Merriman leaves Tarazona de la Mancha on August 7, 1937, and he will not return to training. He asked for, and received permission, to take half of the 2nd Training Battalion (200 men) to the front as a unit. He took a majority of Americans to reinforce the Lincoln-Washington Battalion that was now resting in Albares. Replacing Merriman would be Allan Johnson as training battalion commander. Merriman was clearly record keeping in prior pages of his diary and he knew that he would soon be in combat. His use of pages from September on as notes pages gives a hint to the fatalism he felt as he may not have expected to need those dates later.

Marion Merriman Wachtel and Warren Lerude fill in the details from these days:³⁸⁴

All through that day, after the rally at the church, Bob was with different groups of the Command. I tried to stop time but the hours rushed by. I wanted Bob to myself. I didn't want to yield him once again to the war, as I had done when he left Moscow.

Then, at five o'clock, the battalion formed in parade.

"So long, fellows," Bob said. He gave no long speech. He had wanted to take the battalion personally into the next battle and felt bad about leaving it. The men stood in review and looked at him. He looked back, with respect. There was a strange silence, the silence of goodbye.

Afterward, a few of us gathered for a light supper. Someone broke out a bottle of champagne. We toasted the battle and the victory and the safety of our soldiers. And we toasted freedom. Steve, I'll never forget, was like a surprised and angelic boy, too excited to show much anxiety.

Then, at last in our room, Bob and I said our goodbye, once again. When he was gone, I sat alone for a while. Late in the evening, just before going to sleep, I wrote in my diary: "Final farewells and my darling is off. May he come back as safely this time".

But sleep would not come. I lay in the dark, knowing Bob was in a truck heading north, first to Ambite to pull the Americans together, then to a Spanish village called Quinto..."

Marion may have mixed up this departure a bit with Merriman's next advancement to the Brigade level where he would become Chief of Staff. Here Merriman himself says that he is leading the Americans from the 2nd Training Battalion, which pulled out at 3:30 AM for La Roda to turn up the Valencia-Madrid road. Many of the Mac-Pap battalion would stay in Tarazona until just before Quinto later in the month. After passing Tarancón, the men joined the resting Lincolns and Washingtons in Albares. Merriman has a chance to discuss the Brigade politics with Jock Cunningham (whom he finds conceited) and with Colonel Hans Klaus who removed Mirko Markovich. Merriman reveals that a "control man", probably from the Army Corps level, was talking to Klaus about the Markovich removal and Markovich side of the story was discussed. On the next page, Merriman says that Stepanovitch was asking for the removal of Phil Cooperman and Ed Bender and one wonders if he is the "control man". There also is a photo of Comrade "Max" or Maximov who was at Ambite Mill in June for General Gal's gala prior to Brunete.

In the evening of the 7th a meeting was held amongst the American leaders, Phil Cooperman, Dennis Jordan, Ed Bender, Joe Dallet, Steve Nelson and Merriman. Briton Ralph Bates was also there. The Headquarters problem at the Base refers to the swapping out of General Gal and Vidal discussed on August

3. Nelson says that they have too few officers to lead three full battalions. Evidently, John Quigley "Robbie" Robinson chafed at his assignment to be the Commissar of the Lincolns. He supposedly "walked out" on the appointment. Phil Cooperman seeks repatriation and other cadres are being sent home, including Walter Garland and Dennis David Jordan. Cooperman does not make it and was killed in Spain.

On the 8th, Colonel Klaus, George Aitken and Bates, arrive from headquarters. Merriman repeats the comments made on the September 21 notes page that Sam Gonshak, Wallace Burton and Patrick McGuire were reprimanded for going AWOL and sent for 10 days of KP (Kitchen Patrol).

Merriman heads off for Madrid to meet with Marion Greenspan (George Marion) and Ed Rolfe. Merriman lectures Greenspan on the policy concerning desertion and repatriation. He mentions Joe Lash and Hans Amlie as part of this discussion. Merriman appears to have a lot on his chest that he wants to get rid of. He later sees Rollin Dart who is his equal in leading the Lincolns and General Walter who will command the Army Corps that the Internationals are in. Shortly, Hans Amlie will advance to be the Commander of the Lincolns and Merriman may not have been happy with that choice.

Merriman notes that the Belgian Van den Berghe is on leave and his wife is in Madrid. Amandus (Armand) Van den Berghe progressed from a soldado at Jarama to a Major by the time he left Spain in 1939. In the battle of Jarama, leadership quickly devolved to Van den Berghe who stepped in the leadership of the 58th Battalion (Americans) after Merriman was wounded. It is quite likely that he was greatly involved in training Marty Hourihan in leadership skills. Van den Berghe had been a sergeant in the Belgian army in 1914. His questionnaire³⁸⁵ said that he was a teacher at the School of Engineering in the School of Mines. He claimed to have experience in leading over 3000 men in WWI. Van den Berghe would survive the war and would be involved in every major battle of the XVth Brigade. Van den Berghe's wife, Margarite, recruited Amandus into the Communist Party and was working in Spain during the war. At the end, the

two of them would be arrested and imprisoned by French authorities after they crossed the border. His file has a pathetic letter from Van den Berghe to General Walter dated 20 June 1939, where Amandus writes his old commander for financial aid as he and his wife are in dire straits in Geneva, Switzerland, without work and Amandus is now 39. Walter writes on the bottom of the letter, "J'ai fait repondre negativement" (I responded negatively).

Merriman may have spoken with Jock Cunningham since he says that Cunningham will not admit he was mistaken in his actions at Brunete. Cunningham clearly identified Americans, including Garland and perhaps Markovich, as ones who had to go. Merriman tries to see Colonel Hans Klaus but doesn't meet with him. Instead he sees Frank Ryan who again is quoted as saying that an "unnamed" American will be coming to the Staff by next year. Merriman must assume that is him. Ryan would shortly be going to Madrid.

Landis says:

Leave was granted. There was no more of the nonsense of General Gal. The Americans were free to go to Madrid, to Albacete, and to Alcala de Heneres close to the nearby rest camps. They arrived in Madrid by the truckloads, and the capital took them to its heart. Their stalwart, colorful figures in I.B. ski-pants, boots and berets, were seen everywhere..... Americans were everywhere, they went to the movies, saw James Cagney take over Chicago with "pineapples" and submachine guns. At the Capital Cinema, opposite the Hotel Florida, the Marx Brothers held forth in A Night at the Opera.³⁸⁶

August 9—10 ••• Merriman Moves Up Further

9 Agosto

S. Romàn

Slept late - shopped awhile and then saw Rolfe and heard trouble in 5th Tren Regimental Political Leader promised men trip home etc. Gallo left for Brigade. Galli helped us eat. Later after losing much time we left for Brigade with Greenspan. Arrived there late and just missed Gallo - Franz. Klaus gave advice on last action and then told story of Markovich and threatened demotion & trial if he's told. Left for Albacete. Stopped in Tarancón - Rose - & Al Stone - Gal from S. F. with greetings from Abbie, Fay etc. Left and drove Joe & I fast to Tarazona. Late meeting and discussion.

10 Agosto

S. Lorenzo

Early in morning to Albacete. Met Steve, Rolfe, Copic here - Gallo etc. Went to discuss policy and decided on reorganization of Brigade. Fight on policy - French accusations of Americanism. Gave in. American in each Battalion base in Tarazona. I am to go to Brigade staff as Chief. Some job I must work hard. Too bad not some other American comrade to take it. Talked with Copic later about special recommendations. Markovich included. Given permission to clean Albacete. Fernando{?} session & put thru Secundy in transport, etc. Then left to Pozo Rubio - Steve spoke. Wintringham weak. School slow - Seegar{?} agrees to go in Madrigueras with the men. Some men from Officers school. Eat late and session with leading comrade. Usera, Markovich explained etc. Good meeting new policies.

§ § §

Robert Merriman assumed that when he went to the "front" that he would be with the Americans. His involvement with the

Lincolns will be short lived. As the Americans are in Albares on rest, many of the men are in Madrid on R&R. Merriman also is in Madrid and talks to Ed Rolfe about trouble in the 5th Regiment du Tren, when the repatriation policy is overstated to them. The rumors about repatriation will echo through the ranks of all the International Brigades and rumors of policy changes on the length of service were rife over the summer of 1937.

Luigi Gallo was not available at the time and Merriman says Ernest Galli helped them find food. Galli had been moved from Pozo Rubio where he had been a trainer. Marion Greenspan and Merriman leave for Ambite where the Brigade is based and they still missed Gallo who was moving fast. He was with a Brigadista named "Franz". Franz is probably Franz Dahlem who headed the International Brigades political Commission and would have Gallo's boss. Dahlem was a member of another Communist International.³⁸⁷ Gallo was in Madrid, Albacete and later Valencia during this week so he was really on the move.

Merriman says that Klaus explained his actions against Markovich and threatened anyone who told Markovich what he said with court martial. This must have been a very awkward position for Merriman to be in, knowing that Markovich and he were not close, but that Nelson and other Americans must have told him Markovich's side of the story. Markovich's error was to stand up to Colonel Klaus and refuse to send the Americans back into battle in late July at Brunete when the Americans had been decimated. Jock Cunningham and Aitken had flatly refused to send the British back in and Aitken told Markovich and Nelson that they were crazy to accept the order since the men would not follow them. Nelson did mobilize the Americans to go back but they were reprieved from a likely demise by the Spanish who plugged the lines on the 24th of July and rescued the Thaelmanns who had been surrounded. The resistance of Markovich, Aitken and Cunningham to Klaus' orders will shortly work against them.

In a rush to get back to Albacete with Joe Dallet, Merriman stops in Tarancón and meets with Al Stone (Albert Gottlieb) and "Rose" (probably Solomon Rose, who would have been in hospital from injuries at Brunete). Apparently there was a woman from San

Francisco who knew Merriman's family as he says that he has a message from Abbie and Fay. Fay is Faye Cook Merriman, his mother, and Abbie is Abbie Cook, Fay's mother and Merriman's grandmother. One letter from Merriman's mother and father was included in the latter pages of Merriman's diary as a transcription:

§ § §

(First letter from Mother and addressed to Marion Merriman at the American Embassy, Spain, Valencia).

Mojave, March 17 1937.

3 Noviembre

S. Armengol

Dearest Marion,

I do not suppose this letter will ever reach you. But Doris wrote that perhaps you could be contacted through the American Consul at Valencia and had so written, airmail and so I will try also. We have been expecting to hear from you momentarily, but I suppose that you do not realise that the news of Robert's injuries has

4 Noviembre

S. Carlos Borromeo

been flashed all over the U.S. We saw but one account and that was in our LA paper last Friday, that we did not see all until Saturday. We immediately tried to get in touch with Emma and Jennema but could not do so, so Dad telephoned to Dora who had also read the account in the paper and had gone over immediately to see the Consul and Alma and Barbara and done everything

5 Noviembre

S. Zacarias

she could, even to appealing to the Red Cross.

We knew it would do no good to cable to Moscow as we knew you would not be there, but were going to cable the Consul there if he did not have news of some kind Monday, but letters came from some of the folks saying that they had read other reports and that the first were much exaggerated. They saw somewhere

6 Noviembre

S. Leonardo

that you were to your Robert wherever he is. Jean Young first brought the news to Emma. There was much talk

about it in the Santa Cruz paper and Jan and the folks went to the News office and heard the dispatches as they came in.

We are heartbroken about it. We cannot understand why Robert should go there as he has done. But I am sure that he feels that he is doing right- that is only one

7 Noviembre

S. Ernesto

and only consolation. There seems to be nothing ahead of us now but endless days and nights of horror and anxiety, but I suppose if that is the will of whatever gods there be it had to happen. Let me know if there is anything we can do. We have little money but will do what we can.

My brother Robert died Tuesday of last week in Sausalito where Ruth and Evelyn were taking

8 Noviembre

S. Coronado

care of him. We could not go to the funeral as I was unable to travel at the time and I have heard nothing from them since. For months I have been waiting for word of his death daily. Then two days after the funeral, I stumbled, all unprepared, over the dreadful news in the paper.

Doris has been a tower of activity and strength and has wanted to come down to be with us, but we now

9 Noviembre

S. Ursino

have no place where she could sleep. And she is doing much there.

I cannot write anymore. With all our love and a sadness that I pray you will never know. Tell Robert that we are hoping for the best; it is all we can do.

Mother & Dad.

We received the beautiful picture yesterday, but we have had to put them away as we cannot look at them again.... yet

10 Noviembre

S. Andres Avelino

Thank you for sending them. Robert looks much older but very handsome and the one of you was lovely.

Mother

§ § §

As with other Americans, even Merriman could get his mail months late.

Merriman races back to Tarazona for a meeting and the next day reveals the reason. Robert Merriman's diary is unique in unraveling the machinations of the leadership adjustments in August 1937. While Merriman was talking about an American going to the Staff level of the Brigade in his August 7-8 diary pages, that adjustment took exactly two days. In a flurry of activity that involved the rotation out of a number of British and Americans who had been in Spain from the beginning, Luigi Gallo, Ralph Bates and Vladimir Copic returned to the Brigade and shook things up. On the 10th of August, Merriman is told he is to be the Chief of Staff to Copic. The French were not pleased with the Americanization of the Brigades and one recalls that French Officer Lucien Vidal was recently removed from Albacete base command. Vidal would say in the concluding page of his memoir³⁸⁸ that he found that the infighting between the French and Germans was bad but that the inability of the British and Americans to accept French (or international) leadership over their battalions was a major cause of the failing of the Brigades. He particularly called out the Americans and British as a problem in having a truly international collaboration in the Base of the Brigades.

Merriman speaks with Copic about recommendations for comrades who fought in Brunete. He includes Markovich in that list. Merriman has clearly sided with the American view that Colonel Klaus was unreasonable in his orders and that Markovich was correct in resisting them. Merriman says that he has permission to "clean Albacete". The feeling at this point was that Albacete had become a dumping ground for "inaptes", men who were useless at the front because of inability, injury, incapacity or just being shell-shocked. One can imagine Merriman viewing these men as consuming food and supplies, goods

that should have gone to men at the front. The drain on supplies could be staunched if they repatriated these non-combatants home. He also probably suspected a surfeit of able, but well connected, comrades who found work in Albacete instead of at the front.

In another unreadable word, he has a session with a comrade who looks like "Fernando". Spanish nicknames were often taken for Russian advisors. Merriman solidifies Lou Secundy's placement in Transports. Secundy did a good job in getting the Battalion to Albares on previous days.

Nelson spoke at Pozo Rubio and Tom Wintringham was viewed as weak. The training at the school is noted as "slow". One American in the Manny Harriman Oral Histories would say that the early training under Merriman was very good but that the training under Wintringham was terrible as it involved only theoretical lectures with no time in the field for practical experience in what they were being shown.

Another new name "Seegar" appears and he will go to Madrigueras from Pozo Rubio. Unfortunately, the name list for Pozo Rubio does not reveal this name in August. We have found that George Fletcher, a Briton, was sent from Madrigueras to Tarazona on August 13 so it is possible that "Seegar" was a Briton being sent to Madrigueras in exchange. Merriman speaks with the men at Pozo Rubio and explains what happened with Vincent Usera and Mirko Markovich at the front. Merriman's sympathy for their actions is apparent and quite nonjudgmental.

August 11—12 ••• “Hello, XVth Brigade”

11 Agosto

Sta. Filomena

Early in morning at 7 held Batt meeting - Ralph Bates - Steve N. Spoke counteracted things Markovich said after this. Ralph announced that I was to go to Brigade - Dart to come here I then spoke and then Joe spoke in general. At 10:30 meeting of group section leaders discussed lessons of the front. Question of changing political work. At 1 o'clock had a meeting with political leaders on the same subject. Talked with Skinner - to go with me - also Sidney at 5 meeting of officers champagne - Toasts & talks galore. Marion spoke at 6 o'clock at last parade - Ford showed up. Delivery body - sang (weak) and said "So long". Owen wanted history said something hid. Steve & Ralph arrived Wheel lost - ready to go. So long one swell battalion.

12 Agosto

Sta. Clara

Hello! 15th Brigade Slept on grain sacks for three hours. Had coffee - Steve said English sore because not in on discussion in Albacete. Soon held meet with Paynter, Rowe, Aitken, Cunningham on suggestions. Meanwhile Copic went to Gall for decision. All English united on Cunningham for Brigade Commander. First time for Aitken. Idea of combination of Jock & me. Jock thinks he is plenty good. Fight between Markovich and Cunningham each defending his mistakes. Stalemate on question - English had session while we met with Robinson, Dart and Kaye. Ralph must leave before next offensive. "Cunningham more of a loss than Copic". Swam and while doing so Copic returned. Aitken, Cunningham to go. I shall be Chief of Staff. Official orders will come soon. Markovich will be information officer. Matter settled. English out. Feel sorry for them. Had long talk with Copic & Steve about

attitude in Brigade. Talk with Markovich – Warning about Nelson and hope to do better work or move. Long talk with Coop about old days and some men. Car not yet returned - Begelman talked & talked.

§ § §

At Pozo Rubio in the morning, Merriman continues to document the shake up of the 15th Brigade and records that Ralph Bates and Steve Nelson came to the Battalion to tell the men that Merriman will be moving up to the Brigade level as Chief of Staff. Rollin Dart would move back to Pozo Rubio to head the training battalion as Allan Johnson was apparently out of Spain visiting his wife in Sweden. Merriman will take Canadian Bill Skinner and Sidney Shostek^h with him to Brigade as his aides.

In the farewell, Marion Merriman spoke. The August 9-10 posting has Marion's description of the event and it seems that she mixed up Merriman's accompanying the 150 Americans and Canadians reinforcing the Lincoln-Washington Battalion at Albares and then his return to Pozo Rubio to announce his movement up to the Brigade level. But she missed by only one or two days in these events. Merriman says "ford" arrived and this could be James Ford, a CP official from the US but it more likely to be a vehicle for him in his new position. The next line says "delivery body" which sounds like it is vehicle related. Merriman was sure that he would get the trappings of office when he got a promotion. Merriman also spoke briefly and there were songs. Merriman says Owen Smithⁱ wanted

^h Sidney Shostek, 25, was a Teamster and Functionary who had been in the YCL. He arrived in May 1937 and served in the Estado Mayor, as aide to Major Robert Merriman. Sid Shostek would be killed by a sniper on September 6, 1937, in Belchite.

ⁱ Owen Jefferson Smith was born August 18, 1909, in Moore, MT. Smith spent 5 yrs. at the University of Iowa and completed graduate work at the University of New Hampshire with an MS degree as Entomologist. He arrived in Spain on February 14, 1937, and served with the Company 2 of the Washington Battalion at Brunete and became commander of Company 3 of the Lincoln-Washington Battalion, where he was wounded in action at Belchite. He was an officer in the Brigade Special Machine Gun Company, and then went to the Estado Mayor of the 35th Division. Captain Smith served at Jarama, Brunete, Belchite and the

more on the reorganization and said that the leaders were hiding something. Smith obviously was aware of the trouble that Markovich was in from Brunete and the Americans were watching his treatment closely. When Steve Nelson and Ralph Bates arrived, Merriman accompanied them to Albacete.



*Captain Owen Smith,
Operations, Tamiment
Photo 177_188024,
Tamiment Library, NYU*



William Rowe

The next morning (after having the perks of command allowing him to sleep on grain sacks), Steve Nelson starts to reveal to Merriman how upset the British are about these adjustments. Merriman met with Britons Will Paynter, William Rowe, George Aitken and Jock Cunningham. Thanks to Kevin Buyers, doing photo research on the Brigades, for the identification of William Rowe (1905-1948). Rowe arrived in Spain in April of 1937 would be invalided home for tuberculosis, returning 19 September 1937.³⁸⁹ The British suggested that if Cunningham was not going to be Brigade Commander, perhaps Cunningham and Merriman could share the role. This is a very strange suggestion and one that was being preempted by Vladimir Copic's trip to see General Gal (Janos Galicz). General Gal was known to be moving on as Merriman said "General out" on an earlier page, but on this day he was still in command of the Internationals. Copic was getting

Ebro Offensive. He returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. Smith saw service in WWII and died March 5, 1994.

orders ready for the reassignments and Copic would lead the Brigade and Merriman would be his Chief of Staff. Since Gal and Copic were colleagues, Copic wanted his preferences acted on before he had to deal with General Walter.

Mirko Markovich continued the battle with Cunningham that started with the commands given at Brunete. Recall that Markovich laughed at having been sent into battle several kilometers off target. The British and Americans were at loggerheads over the leadership question and Merriman met with Robbie Robinson, Rollin Dart and Conrad Kaye to develop an American position. Ralph Bates would be leaving before the upcoming offensive (Quinto) but he must have given Merriman the quote that "Cunningham leaving would be more of a loss than Copic". Copic, however, maneuvered his way to the leadership and arrived back at Albacete with Gal's orders that Merriman would be Chief and Aitken and Cunningham were to go. Merriman says "English out. Feel sorry for them." Merriman's notes leave us to conclude that the exclusion of the English, Scots and Irish was Copic's doing. (One might reread Copic's comments to Haywood about the British in the July 19-20 entry here). Mirko Markovich (another Slav, although American) survived the housecleaning and will become information officer. Aitken, Cunningham and Markovich all crossed Colonel Hans Klaus at Brunete and the piper must be paid.

Merriman talked with Markovich and a warning was received that Steve Nelson was not going to be his ally and that Merriman needed to do better work or move on. Recall that at Brunete, Nelson was put in the position of having to take over from Markovich because the latter refused to follow a difficult order to send the Americans back into battle. Nelson accomplished what Markovich could not, but only through his motivational abilities. Markovich may have been telling Merriman that Nelson was responsible for his downfall. At the evening meeting, Elias Begelman was also in the discussion and apparently was too garrulous for Merriman. Merriman finished the day reminiscing with Phil Cooperman.

August 13—14 General Gal Calls Bates “A Fascist”

13 Agosto

S. Hipólito

Today a hectic day - Sidney started to work in office. Translator missing and we had many orders of the day. Men sent to Division for school of Radio & Enlace. Wording of order of Gal concerning release insulted Jock & Aitken their names not mentioned. Found Tapsell incommunicado. 4 political orders in Aitken's room. Gave order for him to walk in garden. Wattis helped. Discussion of increasing rank of Wattis but Klaus told him it was decided. Gal came and then was followed by a nasty scene in courtyard with many people there. Jock said in Madrid - he & Aitken were getting fucked out. Ralph Bates told Aitken who repeated. Gal who doesn't like Bates, called him a fascist and disrupter, etc. Gal claimed Bates had told Valencia he was a fool & no Bolshevik. Brought in training given by Stalin. Praised Aitken and Cunningham to make them feel better etc. Changes made in staff. Wattis to be coordination officer. Van den Berghe spent day saying goodbye to wife. Lou going to work. Sid & Coop audited books of treasurer. Question of more Spanish officers in Brigade Staff. Bates to leave since he can't go with us to the front because of his tour and foolish risk of cadres. Tapsell affair a real mess. I think all are off the line.

14 Agosto

S. Eusebio

Today talked with Markovich about patrulla and left to meet Dimitroff at 10 and 24th Batt at 11. Speeches along the way. The closer we got to the English Battalion, the more Aitken and Cunningham thought it best for the newcomers to speak instead of old. When reached English Battalion sight was pitiful - unprepared - no interpreter- Earlier Aitken booed. {side note: Amlie came back} They announced they would come back, which

they did after meeting with Americans. Queer talk of Jock's about cursing mistakes - running to front and then wanting to get back etc. Leo Gallagher there. Last meeting with antitank and engineers. Met two reporters said nothing much. Rushed to dinner at Division for Costelli 71 yr old major -who at dinner broke into a speech against worthless people in rear guard - stripes, etc. Russian advisor to Army Corps there. Met big Jim Ruskin. Many speeches and presents of Gal trying to cover up mistakes yesterday. Tone good & complimentary. Political Commissar of Division young, knows Spanish. Band from 17 Brigade played in all its glory and it was swell - crowds around the dinner table set under the trees. Gal wants Zaret to become a Mexican citizen. Strange. "He has become a Bolshevik." - Gal. Skinner came. {"Tapsell Talked" written on side}.

§ § §

Merriman is now fully ensconced in Brigade politics and he has a lot to tell his diary. Merriman is believed to be at the Brigade Estado Mayor in Ambite Mill at this point. Merriman notes that Sidney Shostek is now in Ambite with the Brigade staff. He says that he sent men to two schools, "Radio and Enlace". Enlace is coordination (this is the school for the Brigade Runners who must give oral orders from Command to front line troops and vice-versa). That would definitely require schooling. Radio would be the transmissions school.

Merriman is left to pick up the pieces of the crushing of the British leadership Aitken and Cunningham were dismayed that their names were not mentioned at all in General Gal's order brought back to Brigade by Copic. Wally Tapsell would not speak to Merriman. On searching Aitken's room, four political orders (probably ignored or not acted on) were found. Aitken was ordered to go take a walk in order to cool down.



Peter Winkler, Hans Klaus and George Aitken in the garden in Ambite Mill, probably June 23, 1937, ALBA Photos 177_175005, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman was highly suspicious of George Wattis but uses him in this difficult situation to go talk to Aitken to settle things down. Later Merriman tries to get Wattis promoted to Captain. Aitken wrote memoranda at this point trying to get many of the British repatriated and it may be that this was seen as misleading the men into believing that they would or could go home. The Spanish Army policy was that no one was to be released if they could fight.

The situation deteriorates with some significant accusations: Gal calling Ralph Bates a fascist and Bates calling General Gal a fool and not really a Bolshevik. Gal counters that he was trained by Stalin himself. This probably indicates that Gal attended the Lenin School in Moscow where Stalin was indeed an instructor of sorts, giving lectures at the Lenin School to many including Copic,

giving lectures at the Lenin School to many including Copic, Haywood and Steve Nelson. But this "I am a better Communist than you are" argument is leading nowhere. Merriman mentions that Gal holds council in the garden at Ambite and Tapsell has been sent there to cool off.

Merriman seems to stay above the fray and makes Wattis "Coordination Officer" (see Enlace above). Van den Berghe's wife (Margarite) is leaving and he is seeing her off. Lou Secundy starts work on the Brigade Staff, and Sidney Shostek and Phil Cooperman conduct an audit of the Brigade's books. When Merriman says he wants to clean up Albacete, he apparently means it. The loss of hundreds of thousands of pesetas was a scandal that needed finding the culprits.

Merriman again says Ralph Bates will leave because important cadres of the Communist Party are not to be sent to the front. He says the "Tapsell affair is a real mess". Richard Baxell spends considerable time discussing the Tapsell affair in his book *Unlikely Warriors*.³⁹⁰ A very brief synopsis of the issue was that both Fred Copeman and Wally Tapsell had suffered nervous breakdowns during the recent battle of Brunete. Tapsell, like Markovich, told Colonel Klaus that the British were in no shape to return to the Battle of Brunete on July 28. Aitken said that this was a "bloody terrible" decision and Tapsell went further and accused General Gal of gross incompetence.

Tapsell caused considerable political controversy when he criticised General Janos Galicz, the commander of 15th Brigade. He reported that "only stupidity or a deliberate disregard for life would keep men in such an exposed position (on Mosquito Ridge). Galicz isn't fit to command a troop of Brownies, let alone a People's Army." Galicz responded by demanding that Tapsell be shot for insubordination. However, Tapsell was protected by Fred Copeman, the commander of the battalion.

Tapsell also accused Cunningham of "being out of his depth as regimental commander". Bert Williams related that Tapsell's conduct was abnormal and on August 9, 1937, Tapsell sent a letter to the British Communist Party Secretariat stating:

In plain fact, and it is hard to state this, on every occasion we were with Spanish troops in this engagement they let us down. Their behaviour on every occasion either resulted in serious casualties, or the immediate loss of positions won by us at heavy cost. This is a fact.

In view of the disintegration of the leadership of the Scots, Irish and English and the "circular firing squad" set up by them, it is no wonder that Copic was able to use Brunete as an excuse to mobilize Gal and Klaus to get them all out. The skill at which Copic could incite self-destruction amongst his subordinates was truly uncanny. Cunningham, Bert Williams, George Aitken, Wally Tapsell, and Fred Copeman would be ordered back to the British Isles before the end of August and Harry Pollitt, leader of the Communist Party in England, would enforce the decision to keep some of them there. Only Tapsell and Copeman would return to Spain in November, further rousing the anger of Aitken and Cunningham who thought that this was a terrible decision. In any case, Merriman reveals that "all are off the line".

Things quieted a bit on 14 August, and Merriman assigns Mirko Markovich to check on the patrols (i.e. the brigade military police) and he goes off to visit the Spanish 24th battalion and the Eastern European Dimitrov Battalion. He visits the British battalion (based in Mondejar) and finds them in disarray, with no welcome and no translators for the Spanish from Brigade. Aitken and Cunningham suggest that the new Brigade leadership should speak instead of them and after Aitken was booed, it is apparent why. Merriman and the staff leave to visit the Americans and to give the British time to get themselves corrected in camp.

Merriman makes a side note that Hans Amlie has come back. Amlie was a Captain with the Americans at Brunete, was wounded and had to be dragged from the field of battle. Merriman continues to criticize Jock Cunningham who attacked those who ran to the front and then sought to get out. Perhaps Cunningham was referring to Walter Garland or Harry Haywood who he had criticized for just this. Merriman says he met up with Leo Gallagher, a Canadian from Toronto who

would have been in training with the Mac-Paps. He also meets again with the British anti-tank company.

Merriman speaks with two reporters and then rushed back for a dinner at the Division level honoring a Major Costelli who was 71 years old. Costelli is not found in the Italian lists in RGASPI and so the name may be misspelled by Merriman. Costelli made a curious speech about worthless people seeking stripes ... likely to arouse Merriman's suspicion since he just added a stripe of his own by becoming Chief of Staff. He meets "big Jim Ruskin", a Briton who was a Captain in Transmissions. Ruskin was born Dovmont Sergeevich Zubchaninov³⁹¹.

Merriman says that General Gal feebly tried to recover from the mistakes he made with the orders given to Copic. He wants David Abraham Zaret to become a "Mexican" citizen, i.e. a Russian citizen, because he has become a good Bolshevik. Zaret (a.k.a Jarrett) was an aide to Gal and thus probably was being looked after by his boss. Zaret will return to the US with the American contingent in December 1938. Merriman notes that Bill Skinner has returned from the Mac-Paps in training and will be on his staff. He says in a side note ("Tapsel {sic} talked"), which probably refers back to the discussion above.

August 15—16 ••• The Americans Get Separated

15 Agosto

La Asuncion de N.S.

At 10 o'clock had meeting with Intendencia. Kaye stood out as usual. Outgoing one seemed not so hot. Wattis & Skinner checked over the inventory on hand. Rice stands out. Sidney and Goodman checked on the books. Things purchased personally. Cameras, etc. Van den Berghe started on his work. Intendencia starting OK. Hinks & Coyle came to protest about Tapsell. I still think Aitken & Cunningham have put their feet into it. Hinks & Coyle promised trip home and now it is refused. They think it is to keep them from telling all. Jock said all settled in English Battalion but opposite seems to be case. Petition etc. Matter settled during lunch. Aitken rode hard rough shod. Wattis raised question of promotion to Captain. Senior Lieutenant, bravery etc. Correct. Tapsell whisked off today - they finally got 3 cars after all. Sent today to auto park. Long session. Gas, cars, disaffectionations. Chauvinism etc. Kaminsky wanted to listen but couldn't. Lutz has returned to help in propaganda. Fine fellow. Question of Martinez leaving discussed. Gonshak spoke about Joe Dallet and accusations of being yellow. Impressions created quickly. Horner and Paynter came thru today. Report on check of Intendencia. Late order came about 24th Battalion, must go to Morata at once. Question of nearness to front and sending of Americans to 24th & vice versa. Problems of Americans going to English and need for good political outlook, etc.

16 Agosto

S. Joaquín

Change takes place today - Americans 60 to Spanish 24th. 70 to English Battalion. Crespo - Skinner went to Morata to pick out place for new quarters. I went to American Battalion to see about selection. Jim Bourne to go to English. Amlie, Lamb, Ruby seem to work OK.

Hagileou giving trouble again. Pappas wants to go home etc. Met Olorenshaw with the English and he came back with me. Frank Ryan had returned and ready to work with English. Late in day drove to Armory and found 3 Colts 1 Lewis and a nasty position. No work - dead end. Rinaldo OK but no organizer Garcia buggered off at front and on leave now. Spanish went to Americans. 60 Americans to Morata. After supper drove to English Battalion with Steve & Wattis. Met Ryan, Avgherinos, Morrison etc. Had good talk met first load of Americans with Bourne in low spirits bucked him up. Sing song under way. We'll be OK. Returned and heard that Popovich will come et al. Heard about wrecked truck near Carabaña – send 3 trucks of convoy to get 24th Batt.

§ § §

In a very dense hand and in a very newsy mood, Merriman starts the 15th of August by checking on the Intendencia or Brigade Stores. Conrad Kaye is apparently doing a good job in the Intendencia and Van der Berghe will be going to the Intendencia to help out. Continuing his audit of the Brigade, he has George Wattis and Bill Skinner, two experienced commanders, taking inventory of the stores and he has his new aide Sidney Shostek and a Goodman looking over the books. The only American named Goodman in Spain at the time was Carroll (Kibby) Goodman¹ but he was listed as working in the Regiment de Tren. It is possible that he is in Albacete as the Americans would utilize the trains significantly over the next few days. Shostek and Goodman find that people were purchasing items for themselves from the Intendencia. Otherwise, Merriman is happy with the progress of the stores. There is a lot of rice, though.

¹ Carroll (Kibby) Goodman was born October 19, 1911, in Boston, MA. A shoe worker, he arrived in Spain on March 7, 1937. He served with the Regiment de Tren. Goodman would return to the US on October 9, 1938 aboard the *President Roosevelt*. He served in the Armed Forces in WWII. He passed away March 1979.

Joe Hinks and George Coyle visit Merriman and complain about the actions of Wally Tapsell. Joe Hinks would return to England to write a memoir about the early days in Spain. George Coyle was, according to Richard Baxell, "another Lenin School alumnus who had been in Spain for six months, [but] should not go back into the line" and he as a "disappointment in Spain when he deserted from the front at Jarama and took a few days leave in Madrid without permission for which he was placed in a labour battalion."³⁹² The repatriation of Tapsell and not Hinks and Coyle irritated them, who felt they were being punished because they might send the stories of the British Battalion disarray back to England.

Merriman says he settled the issues over lunch. While Cunningham felt that the British issues were already addressed, apparently a petition had reached the command level. Wally Tapsell was removed from the line and in trade Merriman got three new cars at the Autopark. George Wattis pushed for his promotion from Senior Lieutenant to Captain and Merriman agreed.

The Autopark, too, was in disarray with complaints. Fred Lutz joined to help with propaganda. A "Martinez" was leaving and this soldier does not appear to be an American. A suggestion to who Martinez is will be found in the discussion of the August 18th entry. Samuel Gonshak continues to be a problem and is now accusing Joe Dallet of cowardice. "Horner" could be Arthur Horner, who had been President of the South Wales Miners Federation³⁹³. Will Paynter³⁹⁴ also was a Welsh miner.

Much of the rest of the two day diary entries involves adjustment in the balance of the Brigade. Major Luis Crespo went with Bill Skinner to reorganize positions in Morata de Tajuna. Crespo will be a feature in the diary for the next three months as Crespo will move up to become co-chief of staff with Merriman in the XVth Brigade. Recall that Spanish were being placed in positions of leadership in the International Brigades and Crespo would become the XVth Brigade's "Spaniard". Crespo will start with the 24th Spanish Battalion but keep moving up. Crespo was a good politician and had support at the Army Corps level.



Major Crespo of the Brigade Staff in November 1937, ALBA Photo 11-0651, Tamiment Library, NYU

Americans were added at almost Company strength to the British Battalion and the Spanish 24th Battalion. Merriman notes that



Leonard Lamb, ALBA Photo 11-1306, Tamiment Library, NYU

Americans going to the British would have to have a proper political outlook as the British were very jaded at this point. Jim Bourne was added to the British and was downcast by the assignment. The Americans added Hans Amlie as their commander with Leonard Lamb and Ruby Ryant along. They seem to work well together. John Hagiliou is again causing problems, probably involving his criticisms of the Communist party. Mike Pappas keeps pushing for repatriation. He will never get his wish and will be killed in action in August 1938.

Arthur Olorenshaw and Frank Ryan are mustered to work with the English in an attempt to restore order and morale. In his round robin checking on Headquarter's units, Merriman visits the Armoury and finds it wanting. Only three Colt machine guns and one Lewis Machine gun were in the Armoury and the location of

the Armoury was "nasty". The Armoury was led by Robert Rinaldo and he had few organizational skills. Rinaldo was named as Robert Scholl in a document on the "Mexicans".³⁹⁵ He came to Spain on March 17, 1937, from Russia but he was a Yugoslavian by nationality. Initially in the Dimitrov Battalion, he would move through the Armoury and end up with the Mac-Paps and 24th Battalion in the Spring of 1938 during the Retreats.

At the front at Morata, Garcia buggered off. There were two Garcia's in the 24th Battalion and it is not known which one this is. The Americans inherited 60 Spanish soldiers in the effort to balance the Battalions. Merriman makes a visit to the British with Steve Nelson and George Wattis. They meet with Frank Ryan, Hercules Avgerhinos, and William Alexander Morrison. In an attempt to improve morale, they have a sing along.

Finally, Merriman says that "Popovich" will soon be coming to the Brigade. This could be Kosha Popovics³⁹⁶, a Yugoslavian Communist brigadista, or Vladomir Popovics³⁹⁷, a Captain in Spain and a friend of Marshall Tito (Josef Broz).

Merriman finishes reporting on a car accident near Carabaña, northwest of Perales. Car accidents irritated Merriman since he had so much trouble landing enough transportation. In the next few days, everyone will be on the move and every vehicle will be needed.

August 17—18 ••• Leaving Albares for the Front

17 Agosto

S. Liberato

Marceau here this morning to discuss his plan. Bill left for Morata Intendencia auto park and Division Band to play in Morata. Gal came - stated he is being forced to send out Dimitrov by Min. of War order. Brigade will be 3000, means new Spanish. Further, all new guns if old ones turned in. Ten trucks - activities on Teruel - loss - evacuation. Discussion of last action - cooperation bet. units. etc. Comrade here checking on anti tank guns. After lunch went to Lincoln and had discussion concerning quality of men and Carl Bradley. Chesler returned from AWOL. Gonshak wants to return. Carl came and went to English Battalion. Talked with some of fellows. MacDougal ate and visited boys. Late had meeting with military and political heads and decided certain things. Wattis came & Frank Ryan. Had a long talk about Daly and O'Daire. Leaves etc. After this had long talk with Bourne on attitude in Albares and reaction of men from Tarazona to Joe D. and training. Let down, etc. Returned at 10 with Capt. Wattis. Olorenshaw missed boys and returned. Steve came in and reported success in Morata with Americans in 24th Batt. Late chat.

18 Agosto

Sta. Elena

At 3 am received order (telegram) to prepare to move at 9 o'clock am. Jim {Ruskin} brought order. Sent out prepare orders to all outfits and started to pack stuff. Martinez "healthed" out us. Convoy in 3 parts - Perales, Ambite, Mondejar Van Den Berghe - Markovich - Wattis in charge. Question in Dept. of Intendencia - our boys in charge. Copic did not come back - Gal came - said "Teruel" - we leave him behind new anti-tank battery - 120 trucks came 250 men in leave Madrid - Bill & Bender Joe D.

came. Hot news from CI - Cabellero & Anarchists - uprising planned. Imperialist division - hold front while troops in rear solve problem. Anarchist campaigns against 3 invaders. Bill displeased at some actions Steve and I had to make. Joe raked over a little. Against Dart - possibility that Wintringham is not OK. Removed from School - Wheeler in to end. Bill went to Gal to say Dimitrov to go or you. "My beloved Battalion". Gal takes orders only from Minister of War. Ammo late, left late in day. Copic returned - ate in Tarancón with the Rose of Tarancón. Steve ate also. Had a hectic confused time - no one responsible from Carabineros. Ran myself to death - Steve & I had only one car. Long hard night & a couple of wrecks and a few breakdowns. Received note from Marion and sent one. Goodbye another time dear girl - I wanted to see you so much.

§ § §

The pace will pick up rapidly over the next month as the XVth Brigade now goes into frequent action. Merriman says that "Marceau" arrives to discuss his plan for the upcoming offensive. This may be Captain Jan Marcev (aka Nikola Ginkov), a Bulgarian "Mexican" who was in the Estado Mayor of the XIIth Brigade.³⁹⁸ While the target is not stated, we know now that it was the village of Quinto on the Saragossa road. The ultimate target of the Aragon offensive is Saragossa and the Republicans will get within two kilometers of the city but not take it.

Bill Lawrence is off to Morata to check on the Intendencia and auto park there. Morata was the staging area for Jarama and men will begin to move away from that front towards the Aragon. General Gal comes to tell Merriman that he will lose the Dimitrov Battalion and they will not go with the International Brigades on the offensive. Since the Brigade should be 3000 men (5 battalions in strength), this means Spanish troops have to be added to the XVth Brigade. This corresponds to Vital Gayman's (Vidal) departing memo where he recommends 3000 men for the XVth Brigade. Gal further tells Merriman he will get 10 new trucks and new guns if

he turns in the old ones. Merriman discusses the last action (Brunete) with Gal and the cooperation (or lack of it) between units.

Merriman says that a "Comrade" is here to check on the Russian anti-tank guns. One can imagine that this is a Russian technical expert. Merriman leaves after lunch and goes to Albares to discuss the preparedness of the Lincoln Battalion and Carl Bradley. The diary reads "Hesler" returns from AWOL and we interpret this as Frank Chesler who was in trouble previously in the auto park. Merriman also says that Samuel Gonshak wants to come back which indicates that he was under discipline for some time.

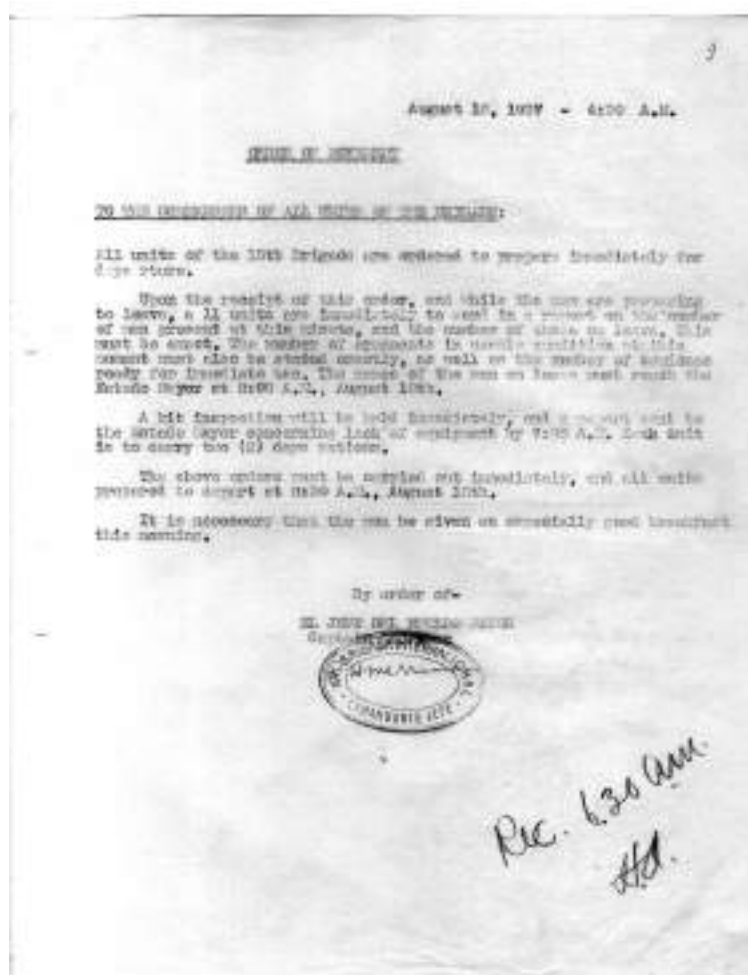


Paddy O'Daire, Mac-Pap commander August 1937 and British Battalion, November 1937. ALBA Photo 11-1277, Tamiment Library, NYU

Carl Bradley goes to the British Battalion. "MacDougal" visited the British troops and Frank Ryan and George Wattis meet with them to discuss Paddy O'Daire and Peter Daly.³⁹⁹ The issue of leave is still being discussed on the eve of shipping out for the front. It is apparent that Merriman is sounding out morale and who will be

ready to fight in a few days. Merriman talks with Jim Bourne to get feedback on Joe Dallet and whether the attitude in Albares (where the Americans were based) towards Dallet would be a problem. "Let down, etc." may indicate morale problems in the school after the lack of complete success at Brunete.

Merriman returns at 10 pm with Captain (note the emphasis) Wattis. He was able to get a promotion through Copic. Arthur Olorenshaw must have had to turn around and go back after missing his ride. Steve Nelson returned from Morata and says that the Americans sent to the 24th Battalion (Spanish) were integrating well. We will find that one of them will be Hans Amlie who leads the American Second Company of the 24th Battalion into the next two battles.



August 18, 1937 orders of the day. RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 3/Delo 427, page 9. RGASPI Archives, Moscow. Note that this was received by Hans Amlie at 6:30 AM.

At 3 AM on the 18th, Merriman gets the orders to move and he sends them on to the units. He prepared orders for all companies and starts to pack up for the Front. The units are checked ("healthed out") by Ernesto Martinez of the Intendencia.

The Brigade would go first to Valencia on the 18th and then take a train towards the train station in Hajar. The convoy from the 18th would bring troops from Perales led by Van den Berghe, Ambite/Albares led by Markovich, and from Mondejar led by George Wattis. Copic did not come back for the move (he would run on ahead to scout positions for the battalions), but General Gal came to see the Brigade off. He tells Merriman that their target is Teruel. Teruel fell to the Fascists in 1937 and that would be a target of attack later in 1937, but the direction was a deception, probably to divert the Fascists if the soldiers leaked where they were going. The actual target would be Quinto. General Gal would not be going with the XVth Brigade and his command over this group of internationals ended on the 18th.

The muster must have been impressive with 120 trucks involved and they also had to retrieve 250 men who were on leave in Madrid. At 30 men to a truck, the whole Brigade would move on the 18th. Bill Lawrence, Ed Bender and Joe Dallet arrive from Albacete to help with the move. Merriman has to send men to Madrid to roust up the nearly 200 men who were on leave. This story again appears in the August 19-20 diary discussion. All but five men on leave were found and brought back in time to move.

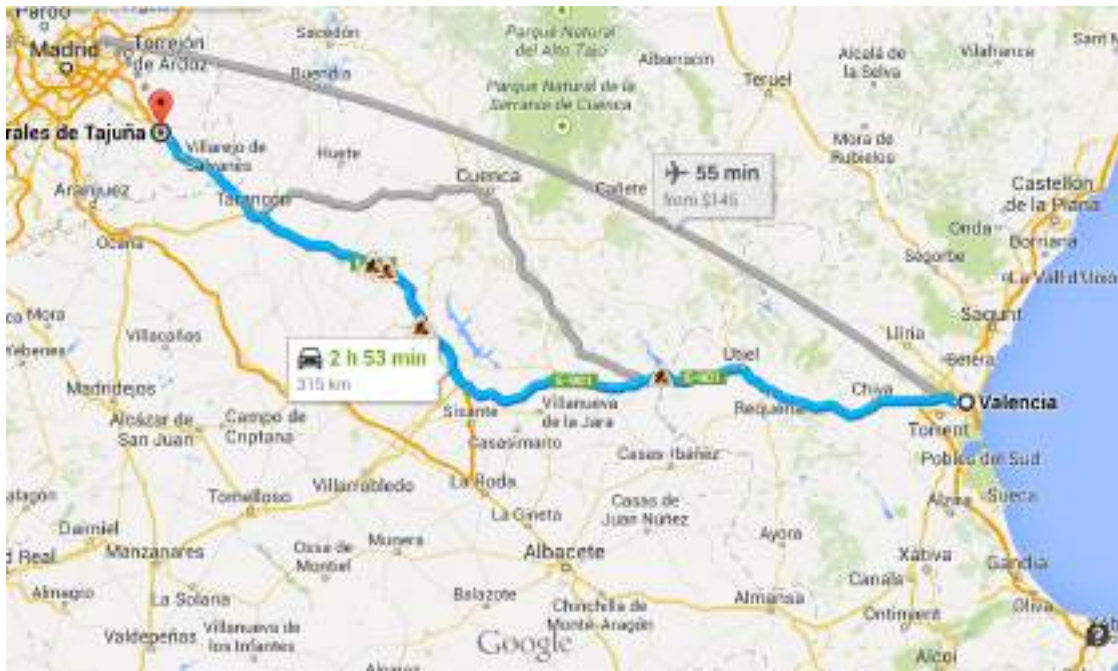
Lawrence and Bender brought news that Largo Caballero, who was removed during May Days, was reported to be working with the Anarchists to overthrow the Government. The Communist International line was that the Brigade would go to the front to hold off the Fascists while other troops would clean up the Anarchists in the rear. There is mention of an "Imperialist Division", but that is not clear.

Bill Lawrence was not happy with some personnel decisions made by Steve Nelson and Merriman. Joe Dallet must have gotten disciplined about the lack of support of the troops. Dallet was accused of being "the most hated man in the brigade" by Seaman

Oliver. Joe Dallet, however, is known to have been liked by both Nelson and Merriman, so this may have been in the nature of an "attitude adjustment" that Dallet needed to make. Dallet struggled with his "rank and file" attitude and yet he was in a leadership position. It appears that Dallet or Merriman made comments against Rollin Dart. Merriman is leaving but worries that Tom Wintringham was not going to be able to effectively lead the school. He says for second time that "Wintringham is not right" and Wintringham is removed from the Officer's Training School. Recall that Copic has purged most of the British Officers over the previous few weeks and this continues his purge of the British. Canadian Bill Wheeler will go into the school at this point. Wheeler will be back on the front lines in October so this leadership position in the school is short-lived. Allan Johnson who will ultimately lead the school may still have been out of the country on leave to visit his wife.

General Gal's battle with Ralph Bates did not end when Bates left Spain. Now Bill Lawrence goes to Gal and tells him to fight the order that the Dimitrov Battalion will not go with the Brigade. The Dimitrovs were slated by the Ministry of War to move to the 150th Brigade and reform the XIIIth Brigade. Gal says that he only takes orders from the Ministry of War. Ignoring the senior political commissar in the American Battalion forces the issue to the top. Lawrence says that the Dimitrovs either go with the Brigade to Quinto or Gal will go. In the end, Gal will be gone, and the Dimitrovs will move up with the XVth Brigade. Gal severely underestimated the power of the political cadres in Albacete and Madrid. Gal had few backers after the failures of Brunete and even Vidal said in his memoir that Gal did not have the military experience to lead men at the Battalion or Brigade level, let alone lead a Division.

Merriman eats in Tarançon with "the Rose of Tarancón". We had previously interpreted this as Sol Rose. Merriman sends Marion a note that he is disappointed not to be able to get to see her in Albacete and says "next time".



Today's route from Perales to Valencia (315 km). Flying in 55 minutes was not available to the International Brigades.

The map above gives a scale of the move on the 18th of August. Tarancón is a crossroads for two routes to Valencia. Perales is near Morata de Tajuna where the Jarama Battles were staged. The rest positions of Ambite, Albares and Mondejar are northwest of Tarancón.

August 19—20 Trains Leave for Híjar and Caspe

19 Agosto

S. Mariano

Arrived early in the morning in Valencia. Men tired and hungry. Copic had found no one. We waited. Copic returned and all ordered to Bull Ring. They refused to let us in went again to Ministry and Intendencia order and again refused. Last time told to crash it in one hour. Chased for equipment - reports -guard on door. Ammo and general good work of Wattis. Finally obtained ammo but no supplies. Intendencia got rations. Men had one hot meal. Copic spoke with Senzentel {Schrenzel} - Saw General Rojo. Late in day saw Aitken & Cunningham who borrowed 200 but promised to visit Brigade & didn't return either car. Damned dirty trick if you ask me. Late in day started loading onto train. Truck drivers demanded right for relief and held our heavy equipment. 48 LMG 22 heavy. 400 rifles. Gun trains - Steve in charge of first. Markovich in charge of second. Aguila failed to show up and upset all plans immensely. Received order to move to Caspe. Just before second train came. The men (100) from Madrid arrived and ate and added to total numbers. No guns blankets etc. Paul White did good job. First train left - prepared for second all night long. It left late in morning. We then also pulled out leaving complicated instructions on rest of supplies - men etc. sealed orders. Night hectic one slept in snatches. Crowd cheered then our boys moved out. Left many rifles etc. Gathered up and ready to load on trucks. Markovich sore because no definite order or responsibility. Real confusion in the bull ring.

20 Agosto

S. Bernardo

Left with Copic, Hans, Ivanov for the north. Stopped at Benicassim (my first visit) and had breakfast. One fine place a series of villas, etc. Copic at home. Met

Neumann and the German comrade who was translator at the Bureau of Cadres when I came. Turned off the Barcelona road into the hills and found road far from good. Ebro beautiful and dams & hills fine. Many pictures taken. Copic correctly mad when he found I had not taken the cars away from Aitken & Cunningham. Ate in Gandesa – a fine meal quiet – spirits restored drove on {to} Caspe - found Albaniz Estado Mayor place for our Division 35 - Walter was looking for Headquarters when I met him. Showed us our sector and we planned positions and returned to Caspe to wait for train. Ate at Oriental Hotel and took turns waiting for train to come in. Finally came at three in the morning - got them started and then left for Albaniz. Slept in field. Ivanov went together. Steve said some lost along the way. Albaniz - high city - castle - cathedral green beautiful valley. Visit it again sure.

§ § §



The Plaza del Toros, Valencia, image from GoogleStreetView

Overnight on the 18th to 19th, the XVth Brigade moved en masse to Valencia in preparation of meeting trains to go north. Vladimir Copic went ahead of the Brigade and was to have found a place for

the Brigade to bivouac and failed. When the Brigade shows up in the middle of the night, they are denied access to the Bullring in Valencia. After two tries, they are told to "crash it in one hour" which makes it look like the Brigade, even with an order, was refused entry to the bullring, probably because they did not have the password for the guards. Merriman and Wattis work hard to get the Intendencia to provide food and they needed to gather ammunition for their weapons. Early in the morning a meal was rustled up for the men.

Copic saw a person whose name looks like "Senzentel" or "Gengentel", probably American Izzie Schrenzel who went ahead. Copic and Merriman saw General Rojo. In the midst of organizing for the front, George Aitken and Jock Cunningham borrowed Car # 200. Aitken and Cunningham would take these cars as far as the French border and it would be some time before they got them back. Copic was furious that Merriman did not get the cars returned and Merriman had to agree with Copic. He called it a "damned dirty trick" but when you are mustering for front line action, taking vehicles was a very serious transgression. Even getting their equipment off the trucks and onto the trains was an issue as the truck drivers wanted time off after the drive from Perales, Ambite and Mondejar.



(left) Anti-aircraft gunners on the roof of a train. ALBA Photo 11_1360, Tamiment Library, NYU; (right) An armored train in Quinto (Fall, 1937). ALBA Photo 11-0851, Tamiment Library, NYU

By late in the day, machine guns and rifles had been gathered for the first train of two to start heading out. Steve Nelson was in charge of the trains. The second train appears to be held up because the 24th Battalion under Major Aguila failed to show at departure time. Mirko Markovich would be in charge of this second train and it will become a major issue for Merriman. Nearly 200 Spaniards did not make it with their weapons from Valencia to Caspe/Híjar. The missing troops were a scandal for the XVth and having nearly two companies of armed Spaniards roaming around would scare Merriman. Remember that there was a discussion of Largo Caballero leading another internal revolt in the rear in August 1937. This rumor never seems to have panned out to be true.

Paul White retrieved 100 men from Madrid who were on leave and they bolstered the numbers. Milly Bennett told a story of Wallace Burton and Eddie Fliegel being in Madrid and roused out of bed in the middle of the night to make the train from Madrid. In a letter from Burton to Bennett that she got on August 28, forwarded from Paris, Burton mentioned making a run for the train but going back to the hotel because he forgot his coñac. He subsequently missed the train and this would lead to him getting busted in rank. Milly Bennett tells the tale (note that Milly did not waste time with the shift key):

remember Jen, how you knew from his letter, you sensed with that instinct you have for really, good people, that he is fine. his orderly was with him, a handsome, trim Jew named fliegel^k, that is fliegel, the orderly, was orderly to burton, the private. wallace had been "broken" -- disciplined from commander back to private because after brunette, the men were given three days in madrid for boozing and whoring --- and then called in to a rest camp. the rest camp was boring,

^k Edward (Eddie) James Fliegle was born in July 29, 1905 in Two Rivers, WI. He left from Los Angeles, CA to Spain in July 1937. He served in the Plaza Mayor of Lincoln-Washington Battalion through the Ebro Offensive. He returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonía*. Fliegle had bit parts in movies in 1939-1940 and in WWII was a merchant seaman. Fliegle died March 14, 1978 in Orange, California.

both to men and officers. wallace, longing for the bright lights of madrid, (he fought 22 days at brunette and went from section leader to company commander) --- decided to go back to madrid, orders or no orders; and being himself, didn't go alone. he took his whole company with him. the company was scolded; wallace was broken back to the ranks; and when i saw him, he was a private, but his orderly refusing to leave him. i had thought he might come through Valencia; so there was a bottle of bacardi rum and one sherry in my closet -- and a carton of cigarets that i'd been having an eye on in a certain newspaperman's bag under my writing table

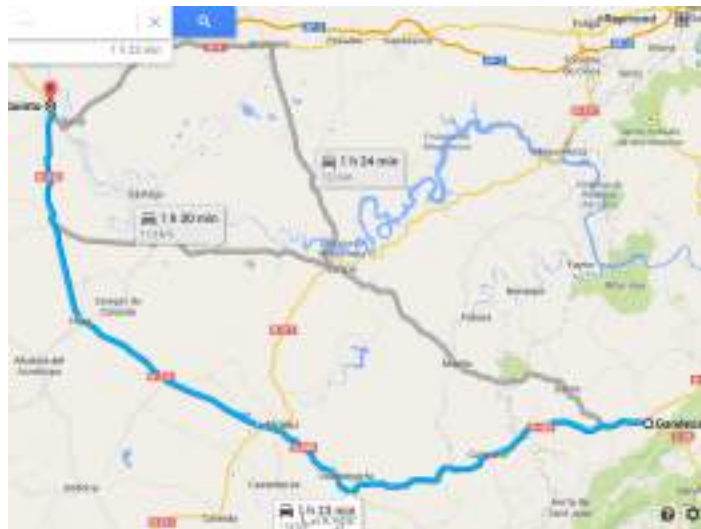
fliegel, obviously worshipped wallace, the latter being able to get him into more mischief in ten minutes than he could think up in a lifetime finally had to be sent back to the troop train loaded with sherry, chocolate and cigarets ----⁴⁰⁰

However, the men from Madrid had neither guns nor blankets. It took until late on the night of the 19th before the second train could pull out. Markovich was probably expecting to be put back in a command position, but wasn't. Nor was he told details of the upcoming action and he felt excluded. Frankly, it is not clear from this that Merriman himself was included in the details of the offensive at this point.

On the 20th morning, Copic, Colonel Hans, Comrade Ivanov and Merriman set off together for the Aragon. They ate at Benicassim on the coast where Copic had a villa and where Copic's wife stayed. Merriman says that Copic was at home there. From Benicassim they turned up into the interior and probably followed the route on the right through Benefallet and over the mountains into Gandesa. This is ironic since in a year hence, in 1938, one of the major battles for the International Brigades would take place on Hill 666 in this pass, while the Internationals were trying to recover Gandesa. On this trip, however, Copic and Merriman had supper in Gandesa. From there, they drove on to Caspe. Quinto is about 100 km from Gandesa and the Brigade would be in action in this Aragon region for the rest of the year. The second map shows routes to Quinto which go through Caspe but also via Alcañiz and Híjar.



The routes from Benicàssim to Gandesa. Copic and Merriman would cross country that would be very familiar in 1938.



The routes from Gandesa to Quinto go through Caspé and Alcañiz/Hijar



Alcañiz Castle (today, author's photo)



View from Alcañiz towards the south (author's photo)

General Walter, the head of the 35th Division, had set up his headquarters in Alcañiz (Merriman says Albaniz) and Merriman and Copic met with him to find their orders and maps of the sectors they would be responsible for. They returned to Caspe to wait for the trains to arrive and they stayed over at the Oriental Hotel. The trains arrived overnight on the 20-21st and the Brigade bivouacked outside Caspe. Merriman headed back to Alcañiz but slept in the field that night.



Taken from Cemetery Hill in Caspe. This would be the command post for the Americans in March 1938 when Caspe was attacked from the west and north.

August 21—22 ••• The Objective is Zaragoza

21 Agosto

Sta. Juana Fremiit

Early in the morning saw train coming in and waked all and went. Boys unloaded gathered ½ of 1st Train left in Hajar. Marched 24th and English Battalion to positions – no food. But washed and bathed - parties went out for food and stuff. Steve tried to get food, found out we were put into wrong place and must change during the night. Food finally came and also rain. Copic left for new camp. Sidney {Shostek} came back as guide Steve and I gathered up men who left in station with our food. Monarchists fighting fascists in Zaragosa. Time ripe - they have captured some arms etc. Wintringham put out since he has no special work. Trucks expected but never arrived. In evening went to new position. Much work to do - men came in. I went to Hajar to find place for supplies etc. Kamy - Rinaldo - poor fellow . Went to place Battalion 24 & English since no one else to do it. Chapayev refused to point out place and became real snappy - perhaps I woke him too rudely out of his sleep but I was damned tired and he wanted to fight. Order, etc. Retired late - with Rosie. Arranged coffee for next morning.

22 Agosto

S. Sinfiorano

Early in morning coffee - reports galore – Spanish company lost 200 men en route - 1 scandal - 1 m.g. left there in Valencia - Copic found place around Quinto – not known what we shall do exactly. Worked hard on supplies - Wattis worked hard and puts himself on the spot but carries on. Many sessions - trouble with Dimitrov and finally insulting letters and Chapayev still stubborn after talking to by Copic. 8 trucks finally come in and much to be done. Kitchen set up in Hajar. Talk with Walter - hospital service - artillery 30 pieces - don't mention drive on Zaragosa. Only to help Basque Country. In trucks to Zaragosa - Lister on

left. Maybe we go after trenches. Question of base. Nearer. Brought mules. Meeting of politicians and turned into military meeting by Copic. Today guns lost. Men gone, etc. Really discouraging - felt low at time - so did Copic but he acted fine in the face of all of it. Session late with Van den Berghe, Georgeovitch goes to Valencia for guns - cars etc. Rinaldo bawled out by Copic - Wattis vindicated. Dimitroff wants own kitchen. Truck sent for broken trucks.

§ § §



The train station at Híjar now (author's photo)

The XVth Brigades move from Perales/Ambite/Albares/Mondejar to the area around Híjar is completed overnight on the 21st of August. Prior to this on the 16th of August, the XIth Brigade (the Thälmann Brigade) had left its positions northwest of Madrid to also move through Colmanar to get on a train for Híjar. Merriman starts to reveal in his diary what the strategy is for this push. Overnight on the 21st the first train from Valencia has arrived and the British Battalion and the 24th Spanish Battalion are marched into positions in Híjar, some 40 km west of Caspe. Híjar is on the rail line so transport by train to a point near their staging positions was needed. The XVth Brigade did not take the intended positions and would move again overnight on the 21st.

Copic went forward to locate positions for the offensive that was coming. Quinto is about 100 kilometers north-northwest of

Híjar. Sidney Shostek (Merriman's aide) went with Copic to the new camp and returned to guide the Brigade to their next post which would be south of Quinto.

Merriman reveals that an uprising has started in Zaragoza and the offensive is to put pressure on that major crossroads city and to support the Monarchists who have risen up against the Fascists. If Zaragoza were to be recovered by the Republic, all pressure would come off Madrid and significant pressure would have been placed on the Fascists to defend their capital, Burgos. This could have turned the war at this point. Hugh Thomas draws a map of the offensive which shows a wide line of attack from Teruel on a south-north line through Belchite, Zaragoza, Huesca and all the way to the French border.⁴⁰¹ To get to Zaragoza, the Brigades would have to go through the towns of Quinto and Fuentes de Ebro from the south. General Kleber's forces would attack Zaragoza from the northeast and southeast across the Ebro River. For the English speaking XVth Brigade and the German 11th Brigade, Quinto was the first objective. Thomas, however, is quite unreliable on his time line and blurs activities from Quinto to Fuentes de Ebro, battles which were spaced almost two months apart. Merriman appears to have gone to the new position near a hill overlooking Quinto and then returned to Híjar to organize the Intendencia where the supplies would come in.

Merriman criticizes David Kamy of the British Battalion and Robert Rinaldo of the 24th Battalion who had been charged with setting up the support services, such as the kitchens and Intendencia. Merriman personally organized the camps for these two Battalions. While Wintringham is looking for work, Merriman seems to push him aside and does the work himself. Perhaps it is a matter of not trusting the Englishman Wintringham's loyalties at this point. Cunningham and Aitken had just taken Merriman's car. Merriman tries to wake up Chapayev who is leading the second of the two regiments that includes the Dimitrovs and the 24th. Chapayev (Hungarian Major Miklos Szalway) doesn't like being woken up but Merriman doesn't care. Merriman gets to sleep late on the 21st and sleeps with "Rosie", who cannot be Solomon Rose who was in hospital until October. This is likely to

be Joseph Rosenstein who was in the Brigade Commissariat at the time.

When Merriman wakes up on August 22 he gets many reports. Merriman confirms the report that 200 Spaniards have gone missing en route from Valencia and that one machine gun is missing, left in Valencia. The last thing Merriman would want is a fifth-column attack by over a company size group with a machine gun in the rear. That would certainly have ended his career if not his life.

Merriman reveals that Copic has found their staging location south of Quinto but that Merriman doesn't have the plan of attack for Quinto at this point. Merriman and Wattis are working logistics and Merriman is very impressed with Wattis now. Recall that at Jarama, Merriman blamed Wattis for forcing the order to attack, which he had argued against. Merriman has clearly forgiven Wattis for this.

He continues to battle Chapayev who has written letters complaining and continues to complain even though Copic has spoken to him directly. Recall that Vidal and General Gal have both challenged the Ministry of War decision which has dissolved the XIIIth Brigade on August 4th. Chapayev's troops are being fought over by two divisions and he has been forced to accompany the XVth Brigade while the Ministry of War wanted them to join the 150th Brigade that would become the XIIIth International Mixed Brigade. At this point, the Dimitrovs wanted out of the XVth Brigade and hoped to be under General Kleber. Even General Rojo had told Copic that he was not getting the Dimitrov Battalion but clearly they are at Híjar and will be going to Quinto. Involved in the fight were eight trucks that the Brigades received that afternoon. With them, Merriman sets up a kitchen, a field hospital, and gets 30 pieces of artillery moved up. The Dimitrovs want their own kitchen.

Merriman meets with General Walter who warns Merriman to tell the men nothing about Zaragoza but rather this effort is to take the pressure off the attacks on the Euskadi (Basque territory). Merriman finds out that Enrique Lister and the 11th

Division will be on the left of Walter's 35th Division containing the XVth Brigade during the offensive and that the hope is to reach the trenches outside Zaragoza. While the overall plan was to sweep around these towns and advance on Zaragoza, Zaragoza is still a long way off, in reality. Merriman says that the base needs to be brought nearer to the front. He rounds up mules, but loses guns and men. The stress appears to be getting to Merriman and Copic as both of them are discouraged that the logistics of getting into place for this attack did not go more smoothly.



(left) General Walter examines a rifle during inspection (December 1937). ALBA Photo 11-0855, Tamiment Library, NYU; (right) Enrique Lister (Creative Commons photo)

Merriman sends Van den Berghe and Georgeovitch back to Valencia to get the guns that were left behind. Dimitrie (Selka) Georgeovitch was a Yugoslav who was born in 1884, he would be 53 years old in Spain. Another “Mexican” who came from Russia on March 17, 1937, he was in the Intendencia of the XVth Brigade as second in charge. Later he would be assigned to the Artillery as a Commissar. He served in Jarama, Brunete, in the current Aragon campaign and finally ends up fighting in the south.⁴⁰²

Copic bawled out Rinaldo over his poor work at the front with the 24th. Of all the units in the Brigades, the Intendencia will always be under criticism for being too slow with the supplies, primarily food.

August 23—24 ••• “Quinto is Ours Almost!”

23 Agosto

S. Felipe Benicio

Tremendous confusion. Meetings concerning plans for attack. First planned us to attack fascist height where we have trenches. Changed so we encircle. Trouble with trucks. Find arms lost (10 m.g.) Rinaldo doing an awful job. Copic said to remove him. Guns cleaned and passed out. Meeting in which Walter spoke openly and frankly - a hard battle coming. Put all officers on the spot - worth nothing if no food etc. Went to observer position once again. Americans & English into reserve in olive grove on left and Dimitrov to attack cemetery - 24th 1 Company here in Division Hdqts, 2 Company to trenches on heights. Trucks promised and 24th ordered to replace anarchists at 10 o'clock impossible. Trucks never came. I rode motorcycle, tried to borrow trucks from 11th Brigade. Great traffic jam - lines of artillery - tanks etc. Great confusion. Rush to move up trucks. No trucks, used ambulances etc. Started 40 English followed some Americans - then decided to get Dimitrov because first to attack. No trucks came altho at last minute Copic promised 20. A more discouraging night I have never spent. Troops to be moved & no trucks - ended by taking some, requisitioned all that came along. Made them Markovich's people & material and sent them to the front - Everything late & daylight found us in

{flows over 24 Agosto

St. Bartolomé, apóstol

old location. Finally drove up at 8 just as our first planes came over. Tire flat. Arrived finally and reported to staff - tired - viewed 2nd attempt at attack altho missed first one. Artillery done nicely. Barrage. Dimitrov scattered and moved slowly failed to take advantage of barrage. Block house very evident. Anti tank gun which I almost forgot finally came. All sent to Dimitrov. Aviation worked well. Finally Markovich sent to correct and help Chapayev.

Finally decided to move Americans to help with center of Dimitrov. I went to take them in. Hard time finding olive orchard road. Moved out toward Dimitrov - sent up question about position - Told to leave Co. 2 as reserve as planned and others to go to left flank. Ended up on left flank of Thälmann Battalion. At 6 o'clock barrage started. Tanks followed and our boys with tank stormed the heights - a more perfect movement I never want to see. Smoke - protection - {Manuel} Estevez led out - wounded. Tom Hyde not so bad. Robbie ok. Returned met Copic went into cemetery & helped to place men for night. Some went into town and wounded. Food & ambulance hard to get up. Found food & ate royally - presents for Marion. Bummed ride back and slept. Quinto is ours almost.

§ § §

On the early morning of the 23rd of August, Merriman learns what the objective is and within hours they are supposed to be in motion. "Tremendous confusion" says Merriman. A World War II phrase would be SNAFU, "situation normal all fouled up". Merriman is told that they would attack the hill overlooking the town of Quinto, Purburell Hill, where supposedly the Republicans had trenches. Although the Brigades did not know it at the time, Purburell Hill was held by a nearly 800 well fortified Fascist troops and there were a series of significant block houses on the hill from which machine gun fire could sweep up any attackers. Vladimir Copic told the troops, "There are only thirteen men on that hill. Go ahead and take it".⁴⁰³ One Lincoln said that you could roll a grenade down that hill to attack any troops coming up and the grenade would roll forever.

There is an excellent overview video of the Battle of Quinto with images using the Tamiment Archive photos and video.⁴⁰⁴ It might be easier to understand Merriman's discussion if the reader has a visual image of what these locations look like. The steepness of Purburell Hill would be an unimaginable obstacle to attack and Copic was wrong, dead wrong, on how many men were there.

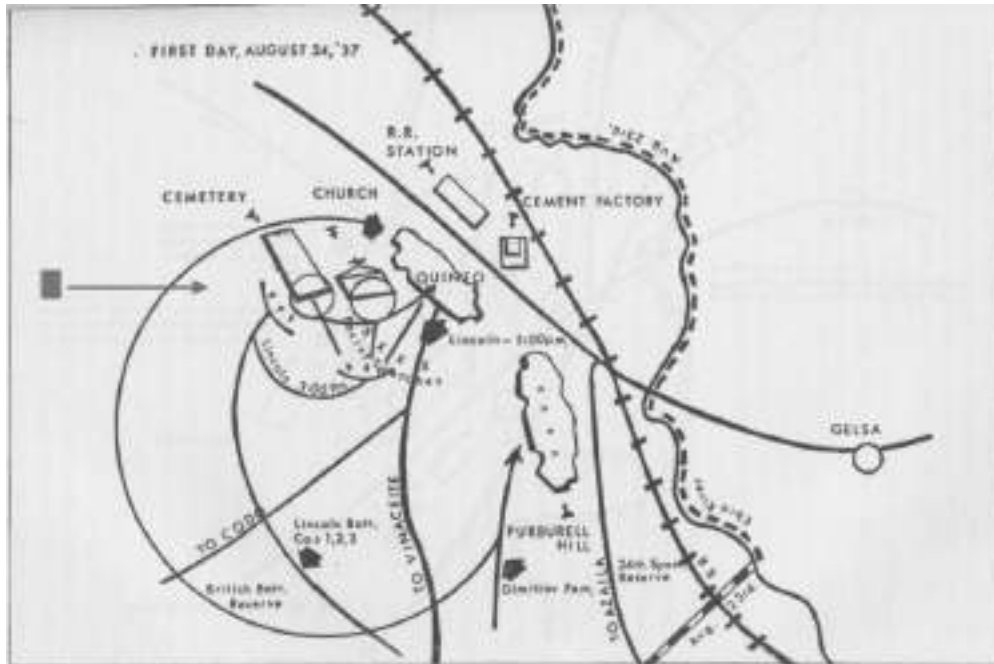
The plan changed rapidly with the plan to encircle the town and take the cemetery that was on the far side of Quinto. As the attack is being organized, Merriman finds that ten machine guns are missing. Robert Rinaldo appears to be the person who was to provide arms and he is doing a poor job so Copic wants him removed.



Robert Merriman (left) at the observation post above Quinto on the morning of the 24th. ⁴⁰⁵

As sunlight approached on the 24th of August, General Walter briefed the troops and said that this would be a hard fight. Merriman leaves to go up on a hill which becomes the observer post for the attack on Quinto (photo above). Merriman sends up 40 of the British Battalion but realizes that he needs to first get the Dimitrov Battalion forward as they were to lead off the attack at 7 AM. The 24th Spanish battalion was split up to cover the Division staff and the second company to start the attack on Purburell with the British. This second company was led by Hans Amlie and consisted mostly of Americans. The maps in Art Landis' book *"The Abraham Lincoln Brigade"* are very helpful in understanding the events of the next three days.

The 24th Battalion was to be in place by 10 AM but no trucks showed up to transport them to the front. Merriman takes off on a motorcycle to ask the 11th Brigade for trucks and has no luck. Copic promises him 20 trucks would come but they don't. The road to Quinto became a parking lot, blocking transportation and even the Artillery which was to soften up Quinto and the heights.



The situation at Quinto on August 24. The photograph at the end of today's diary entry was taken from the road running from the Cemetery to the Church.

Merriman says he spent the most discouraging night of his life. He admits that he and Copic were both demoralized by how badly the plans were failing. Copic, however, would never show his feelings to the men and kept up his bravado. Finally, Merriman requisitioned every truck that made it through the traffic jam. He sent the trucks and materiel to Markovich and moved them to the front. By daybreak on the 24th, the XVth Brigade was still in its reserve positions outside of Quinto. Merriman arrives several hours later at 8 AM after a flat tire and missing the first assault of the Dimitrovs. The Artillery barrage appears to go off as planned but the Dimitrovs were not in position to take advantage of the rolling barrage. The Dimitrovs, with Chapayev at their head, changed the plan to attack Quinto from the north and cut off any lines of retreat of the troops in the town. Chapayev's experience was in guerrilla fighting and the fluidity of his commands appear to have confused the Americans. Merriman says he decides to reinforce the Dimitrovs. Hans Amlie, the commander of Company 2 of the 24th Battalion at this point, has a different story in his unpublished notebooks from Spain⁴⁰⁶ (the choppiness of the text is verbatim):

Com of company 2 - an American co. in the 24th Battalion - the only American co. - 63 Americans - the whole thing experiment - formerly Spanish co in American battalion - this was the reverse. Gave us some Spanish but sent whole bunch of officers - so let them run the show.

At Quinto 24th took French posit{ions} on the Quinto side of the Ebro.

Morning of the 24th given job with - coming around on road most miraculous thing happened in Spain -- ran smack into food wagon - hot coffee - chocolate - bread - marmalade (no jelly real jelly) - this incident probably stands out in the minds of people beyond graves -- empty containers, wind our way with full bellies -- I was still co. commander of a good situation -- given taking reserve French position, not in rear but in far distance. Comrades, we have no right to eat supper while our comrades are out there fighting. Comrade, one of the greatest into war to have reserves & they also have to eat.

Many of our new men new. Good that they were able to sit and watch. I didn't have any go thru. 1st skeptical about sticking heads out -- then they climbed up on parapets -- began registered shots -- towards night, felt cool -- Now had more than theoretical knowledge - more honed feeling about going into fight.

Landis's map gives a slightly different picture, but the concept is the same. The Dimitrovs swung around the town to attack from the North, the Americans fell in behind them to cover the hole left by the Dimitrovs overrunning the western flank and the Spanish 24th, while in reserve, firing into town from the southern side of Quinto.

The Church at Quinto causes problems until Merriman remembers he has the precision antitank guns and sends them to the Dimitrovs to help out. This will put the British anti-tank unit into furious action on the 25th.



Fascist Blockhouse on Purberell Hill, ALBA PHOTO 11-1121, Tamiment Library, NYU

For one time in Spain, the Republicans have air superiority and support that puts the Fascists at a disadvantage. Merriman sends Markovich to the Dimitrovs to help Chapayev on his command. It may have been that Merriman figured Markovich could speak Serbian to Chapayev and get him back on the original plan. As the day unfolds, Merriman decides to split the Americans and send half to the left flank, sweeping around both Quinto and the church and cemetery and half to shore up the middle of the line where the Dimitrovs were to attack. Merriman decides to take these latter men in himself. He gets a bit lost working his way through the olive groves. Canadian Maurice Constant was on the Brigade Staff and recalled:

... in the fighting at Quinto ... we had to cross an open space and get down in the ditch, run across the road, get back into the ditch, crawl along it and run across the road again before we got behind the Fabrica {the Cement Plant}.

There were three of us. There was Merriman, some other fellow I can't remember, and me. Now, the fellow who was first was the lucky one because the sniper in the tower would have his first clue that people were coming.

Merriman made a dash across the road, got into the ditch, and that was fine. Then the next guy. By this time the sniper was

waiting for him. He shot and missed. The guy got into the ditch, crawled along it an, although the sniper was waiting for him to emerge, he got out behind the Fabrica before the sniper could get him.

Then it was my turn. I knew the sniper was waiting for me. I dashed across the road and got into the ditch. I heard the snap of the bullet. ...I thought, "Thank God! He didn't get me." It was only after I got out on the road and in the Fabrica that someone said "You know, Constant, you're bleeding. He got you." I asked him where and he said "He got you in the head" because my face was covered in blood.

It turned out he got me through the lobe of the ear. ⁴⁰⁷



Fascist Machine Gun emplacement on the road to Quinto. The Cement Plant is shown in the rear. ALBA Photo 11_1214, Tamiment Library, NYU.

Merriman says that at 6 o'clock the artillery took up a barrage on Purburell and tanks were sent in (Victor Howard⁴⁰⁰, Richard Baxell⁴⁰⁸, Book of the Brigade⁴⁰⁹, and Landis⁴¹⁰ place this barrage as the morning of the 26th). Merriman's diary is not

authoritative here since he flowed the whole battle over four days in the diary. Merriman himself waded into the action throwing grenades and nitroglycerin bombs.

Merriman says "Quinto is ours Almost!". If he wrote this on the 24th, he was overenthusiastic. On the afternoon of the 24th at 3:00pm the Americans turned, and with artillery and tank support rolling over the barbed wire that ringed the town, the Americans had taken the cemetery and surrounded the church. There were Americans and Canadians on three sides of the town and the Dimitrovs were coming into the town from the north.

In fact, there are many stories of the taking of Quinto and door to door fighting to clean out snipers took several days. The Church at Quinto was particularly troubling as snipers held up within and holding hostages stopped a direct assault. More on this on August 25.



The restored Church at Quinto. The cemetery is behind the position from where the photograph was taken. (Author's photo)

Merriman says that Copic was able to secure the cemetery and placed the battalion within and under the cover of its walls.

August 25—26 “Need to Clean Up City. Not so Easy”

25 Agosto

S. Luis, rey

Need to clean up city - not so easy. Certain parts of town filled with fascists - church snipers caused us plenty of trouble - {Milo} Domjonovic killed, Gibson wounded - Estevez out day before in knee. More killed in trying street fighting. Tried to burn church - three grenades liquid fire light guns & finally heavy artillery. Men wounded in clearing houses because of underground passages etc. Much equipment found. Artillery pieces with breech locks missing - shells, etc. Early in day one heavy bombing in the city to our left. Crashed thru. Sniping from church continued. Anti tank worked on the heights. Still holding out in church and village. English sent to attack strong position on mountain heights. Worse than it looked. M.g. fire cover. Guerin{sic} next to me hit in head. English & American advanced before notice - trenches then filled by few men. One mortar. Returned to point out artillery piece to Slater. English unable to advance and left there in darkness. Sent word to keep them from sniping and posted complicated guard. Moved to right during night--24 Battalion and English to move at daylight. Tank barrage & artillery preparation. During night 23 men, 1 sergeant, reported to our lines told about volunteering for water raiding party. Good little fellow - slept by fits during the night - calling on phone - and long questioning of prisoners etc. Early in morning tanks started to fire. Soon followed by artillery - finally

{flows through 26 Agosto

S. Ceferino}

turned out English could not move - field raked with fire. Americans sent up to help on right flank. All positions were difficult barbed wire. After second attempt - with real heavy artillery fire, they surrendered. Started to come out but our fire started again because someone who fired on

Van den Berghe. Came out in mass - more men than we had - at least 500 and a position strong enough to hold for years. No intendencia - although plenty of ammo and equipment. Fortified heights. Prisoners came in in droves wanting water, etc. Haggard, bad looking lot. Selected officers questioned them and finally shot them. Other shooting bad because one German comrade unnecessarily taunted a brave young officer. Held him to last, etc. Greenspan came and our men started to loot the town - bad but a fact. Collected guns - Modesto came etc. Great feeling men told they could rest but finally had to gather in one end of town to pull out. Some filled up road, etc. Bradley to stay - moved out of town during night and had jump up Headquarters near mill. Dimitrov set out protection. 102 Brig said to be retreating.

§ § §

Merriman's diary for these days has to be read in tandem with the August 23-24 pages. Remember that this is Merriman's first action since his few days on the line in Jarama and his excitement and enthusiasm of the 24th has clouded the time line for us today. On these two pages, he straightens the sequence of events out a bit but still jumps ahead in time.

On the 25th, it was clear that while Quinto was in the hands of the International Brigades, they held many trapped Fascists troops in the town, in the church, and on the heights of Purburell. Merriman went into town with a group of troops and Maurice Constant's memory of the event was given in yesterday's diary pages. In the fighting to take the church, Milo Domjonovic¹

¹ Milo Domjonovic (aka Domjnovie; Domjomovie, Domjonovich; Danyanovich; Damjanovic) was born in 1897 in Stosici, Bar, Montenegro. A Serbian-American, he had prior military service in WWI in the Serbian or Montenegrin Army and was captured and became an Austro-Hungarian POW. In the US he worked in Cleveland OH as an auto worker and arrived in Spain in March 1937. At Quinto, he was in the Lincoln-Washington Battalion when he was killed in action on August 25, 1937.

was killed and "Gibson" was wounded. This is likely Canadian Patrick Gibson since there is no Gibson in the Lincoln Brigade. "Estevez" is likely to be Manuel Estevez^m from California.



The Church at Quinto after the battle. ALBA Photo 11-1218, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman reports briefly on the street-to-street fighting. Many IB were killed going from house to house as the basements had been linked in town and when a house was attacked, the defenders would move to another. The Fascists would also use this urban defense strategy in Belchite in September. The church was a particular problem since it held the high ground above the town and from the steeple one had a field of fire on the cemetery and town. The photo above shows the church after the IB's finished with it and took their prisoners. Yesterday's pages show it as it stands today.

Merriman says "Guerin next to me hit in the head". From Maurice Constant's story given yesterday makes us wonder if Merriman got

^m Manuel Estevez Barrena was born October 15, 1918, Plymouth, CA. He was a student in Spain when the war broke out. He served with the Column Rosal of the 60th Brigade until November 21, 1937. He transferred to the XVth Brigade Headquarters as Sargento and was promoted to Teniente in September 1938. He returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. He was in the Armed forces in WWII. Estevez died April 21, 1991.

the name wrong and confused his Canadians. Constant was the one who was shot in the head. Another Staff member, "Gede"⁴⁰⁴, according to Landis, was reported killed. This name, too, is incorrect and it is sad that, even in death, this brigadista's name has not been recorded correctly. In trying to take the church, Tom Wintringham is also shot and this wound will finally send him back to England.

Merriman went to the cemetery after noon and ordered the British who were in reserve to take Purburell Hill. He admits to his diary that it was worse than it looked. No covering artillery or tank fire was available since it was expected that the hill was only lightly defended⁴¹¹.

Peter Daly, the British Commander, led the charge and was shot almost immediately in the stomach by a machine gun. He would die on September 5, 1937, in Benicassim Hospital. The Canadian section leader, Tommy Lyons, was wounded in the head.⁴¹² The Irishman Paddy O'Daire took over command. The Book of the XVth Brigade⁴¹³ relates the story that the Fascist aviation actually bombed their own troops on Purburell Hill. The British go up on the 25th and get pinned down in trenches as the sun is going down. The British make the trenches on the hill but light runs out and they have to stay the night in the trenches. Merriman sets out a complicated sentry scheme to keep the Fascists on the hill and tells the British not to snipe at them (which would give their positions away).

Merriman says that a number of men made a sortie to raid water and that the Sergeant in charge of the maneuver was a "Good little fellow". Landis attributes this to Larry O'Tooleⁿ and Melvin Anderson^o of the Americans who cut the pipeline feeding the

ⁿ Lawrence John O'Toole, was a 23 year old seaman in 1937. He arrived in Spain on April 29 and served with the Washington at Brunete and later the Lincoln-Washington Battalion in Quinto, Belchite, and Fuentes de Ebro. He would be wounded in action.

^o Melvin (Sigward/Siguard) Anderson was born. February 10, 1910, in Escanaba, MI. Anderson had been in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and worked as a laborer and steel worker. He entered the IB on February 11, 1937, and served with the Lincoln Battalion Machine Gun Co. at Jarama; Quinto,

water supplies to Purburell Hill. In 24 hours, the Fascists on Purburell Hill were dying of thirst and this could be the most significant attack of the entire battle. In the attempt to get water overnight on the 25th and 26th, about a dozen fascists were captured who were also out trying to obtain water. These are the men that Merriman spent the night of the 25th interrogating. At this time, the Brigade knew that a large number of men were on the hill, but that they were in a desperate state because of the lack of water.

Steve Nelson tells the story:⁴⁰⁶

That same evening, the guards brought in a little Fascist sergeant, who was grinning and happy to be a prisoner. He stood before Bob Merriman. "Him and twenty-nine others", said the guard. "They come in with their hands up just now".

"They sent us for water, to the river", the sergeant offered. "I was leader. So I led them here".

What were you doing with the fascists?"

"I was an observer and mapper"

"How did it happen that they sent you for water?"

"I volunteered. I figured this was my chance to get away".

"Why were you with the fascists?"

"Conscripted. What would you? It was enlist or be shot."

"I see ... How many men on the hill?"

"About a thousand. Two hundred are wounded, forty-five dead. The airplanes yesterday killed all the artillery crew, and

Belchite and Ebro Offensive. He returned to the US on December 31, 1938 aboard the *President Harding*. Anderson was in the US Army and Merchant Marines in WWII. He died June 8, 1993, in Santa Clara, CA.

put the guns out of commission... Tell me, were they your planes?"

No. They bombed you because they thought we had already taken the hill. Look, we'll ask the questions. How's the morale?"

"The officers shot six men yesterday. Does that tell you?... Today we heard many broadcasts that a relief column was approaching, to hold out all all costs. But there is no water. That's the main trouble--no water."

"Is that the chief worry of the officers?"

"Yes. That, and your tanks and planes; they have no anti-tank or anti-aircraft left."

"You say you're a mapper. Draw a sketch of the whole position on the hill. Mark in the ammunition dump, radio post, command, machine gun nests, everything."

When the map was finished, he sent the sergeant out, and had another prisoner brought in. With him, he checked the information supplied by the sergeant. Everything jibed. Merriman phoned the tank and artillery commands and other units, giving the men orders."

From Merriman's diary, it appears that the tank, antitank, and artillery barrage on the hill started on the 26th of August. This softening up was followed by an assault that did not succeed. Merriman brought the Americans up on another flank of the hill to assist in the assault. This group was led by Charlie Nusser, #1 Company commander, Sam Gonshak, his adjutant, and David "Mooch" Engels, the commissar. The battle for Purburell Hill lasted about five hours and was not without drama. At one point, Italian Caproni aircraft flew over and bombed their own lines on the hill. Thinking that this was Republican aircraft, white flags went up and the Brigades advanced thinking they had taken the hill. When the Fascists realized that these were their aircraft and that they were returning for other strafing runs, they hauled

down the flags and began firing again. In the meantime, however, the Brigades significantly advanced up the hill without fire.

After a late afternoon precision artillery and anti-tank barrage led by Hugh Slater's Britons, again white flags went up. As Merriman relates in the diary, however, some fascists fired on Van den Berghe and the white flags again came down and shooting commenced again. Paddy O'Daire's British battalion had reached the Fascist trenches by that point and yelling "Charge the trench", the Brigadistas saw hands go up and the Fascists yelled "Agua. Agua". Clearly without water in the August sun, they were dying of thirst.



John Weldon (left) and Felix Kusman of the Lincoln-Battalion in Spring of 1938. ALBA PHOTO 11-0352, Tamiment Library, NYU

The Fascist troops surrendered. One German and one White Russian killed themselves. Felix Kusman related to Art Landis in his taped interview 30 years later:

The sun is going down. The first couple of positions we occupy with no opposition--lots of wounded -- lots of dead -- lots of prisoners. We ordered the prisoners to put their arms down and to take the wounded to the center of the hill. And, at the center we find a command post for the officers and Falangists. There had been women there too, officers' wives and others. The place was surrounded by machine-gun nests, but they are empty now, as is the command bunker itself. The

officers have retreated to the northeast section of the hill and are putting up a last resistance against the Spaniards of the 24th Battalion. They are wiped out. We continue. At one point we see a White Russian officer. Larry O'Toole and I approach him. He is screaming in Russian: "Red Pigs! Red Pigs!" Then in Spanish: "If you come any closer I'll shoot!". O'Toole yells back: "Go ahead and shoot, you bastard. If you don't, I will!" He has his gun in his hand and he blows his brains out, I take his gun and a sword and a Russian Bible from his body".⁴⁰⁴



Print of Fascist officers from a negative captured during the attack on Purburell Hill. ALBA PHOTO 11-1196, Tamiment Library, NYU



The photo above is of the Fascist officers in the bunkers planning the defense. Most were killed and many of those who were captured were executed. Merriman says in excess of 500 prisoners were taken. Merriman says the number of prisoners exceeded the number of International Brigades attackers.

*Juan Modesto, Ambite,
ALBA Photo 11_1080,
Tamiment Library, NYU*

Merriman relates the dirtier side of war in this passage. Prisoners *were* shot. A German Brigadier taunted a Spanish officer and then shot him. Harry Hakam would later relate

that this was the only case where the Lincolns were involved in the shooting of prisoners.

The Brigade looted the town. Marion Greenspan came up to Quinto and after that the men had their weapons taken from them, perhaps to cut down on retribution or attacks on civilians. Juan Modesto, head of the Division, comes to Quinto to observe the victory and everyone is justifiably proud of their accomplishments. While they were given a hint that they could rest for a while, the need to get quickly to Zaragoza means that the victory celebration would be short lived. The element of surprise is now gone and the Fascists will be countering the assault so the XVth Brigade needs to keep moving northward. They gather on the edge of town and are told they need to move up. The Dimitrovs will lead the protection units on the move and Merriman is told that the 102nd Brigade is retreating. The 102nd Brigada Mixta crossed the Ebro at Pina del Ebro (between Quinto and Fuentes de Ebro) and took the town. If they were retreating south towards Quinto this would slow the advance towards Zaragoza.

August 27—28 ••• XVth Brigade Moves West

27 Agosto

S. José de Calasanz

Before daylight fear of planes caused some action decided to stretch out trucks since couldn't find woods. Great confusion as usual and I left to change guard in town. Wailing refugees, etc. Drove to new position - scattered out trucks - Headquarters under small bridge under road. Went up to locate Dimitrov Battallion and got caught with Skinner, Sid & Morry in heavy fire, both artillery & machine gun. Skinner didn't return until much later - crawled. Headquarters found on the right. Returned - village bombed by Capronis - new and shining. Remaining rest of day in this position - much trouble with food & moving up the Intendencia etc. Organization in Brigade is still weak and unsatisfactory. Hospital train came up to where we are located. Many planes in air but seems to be no dog fights. Bathed in the ditch - very fine water. 102 Brigade is inexperienced. "Much food & fear" Spoon by Greenspan hit and bent. Almost lost car by artillery of fascists. Trouble with keeping people from Brigade Headquarters which is under a road bridge draining ditch. Discussions about advisability of sending men against high position in Quinto. Looting to be punishment by shooting if necessary. 11th Brigade experienced and showed us how to organize things.

28 Agosto

St Agustín

Spent entire day in same position. News not {good} in regards to food. Melons thrown. Talk of sabotage and shooting of someone working behind lines. Had long talk with Greenspan about last action. We received orders that Lister is to take Fuentes de Ebro and then we are to move on quickly in 2 sections. 1 with armored cars. Dimitrov - tanks artillery guns & then rest of the Brigade to follow. Secundy moved up here. Promised 30 trucks for

rest of Brigade since we only have about 20 now. Held superiority in the air all day long - since concentration here to attack (several) by Lister makes it necessary to protect us well. Raised hell in the kitchen - much bad work - hard to blame any one person. Correction must be made or a riot will follow. Rest without food. Nominations again raised. Copic decided on policy group leaders - cabo or sergeant - section leaders teniente or sergeant. Company Commanders Captain or Teniente. Battalion Commander Major or Captain. Swam late at night after driving up to see flanks which caused so much excitement.

§ § §



Panorama of Codo. ALBA PHOTO 11-1266, Tamiment Library, NYU

With Quinto behind the Brigade, there is a short breather to try to explain the overall ambitious plan for the Aragon offensive. Attacks took place from the Republican army on the Fascists all the way from the Basque region to Teruel. The XVth Brigade was about in the midpoint of the attacks. Kleber's army division advanced to within six kilometers of Zaragoza. Lister's motorized troops made an attack on Fuentes de Ebro but were not able to get closer than 1.8 km. The XVth is being readied for another push where they will solidify the left flank and head to Belchite. From Quinto this means going through the already taken town of Codo, between Belchite and Quinto. A description of the order of battle is online.⁴¹⁴



A map of the Aragon region under attack. The northern salient has approached Zaragoza and Quinto is taken. The front needs to be pushed westward. Source: Google Maps.

Art Landis⁴¹⁵ makes the point that this whole offensive was designed to turn the Nationalist forces away from Bilbao, but on August 25, Bilbao and the Euskadi fell. Only parts of the Asturian region remained in Loyalist hands. And Franco had sufficient forces at this point to fight on several fronts so they were not diverted from the Basque region until they were no longer needed. Shortly hundreds of airplanes and thousands of Italians would be available to move south to counter the Loyalist push. The window of opportunity where the Fascist troops would not be reinforced was closing rapidly.

Merriman heads north to find the Dimitrov Battalion and realizes that the Brigade is outrunning its supply lines. They managed to bring up a hospital train to remove the wounded, but they were without food and without trucks to move. The whole Brigade had only 20 trucks. Merriman went with Bill Skinner, Sid Shostek and "Morry". Morry could be Maurice Stamm^P or Maury Colow or any

^P Morris Stamm was born September 22, 1904, in the Ukraine. He lived in Canada from 1912-16, 5 ½ yrs. in Washington D. C. And 4 years in Ohio. He arrived in Spain on May 5, 1937, and served with Company 1 of the Lincoln-

one of a number of Morris's or Maurices. It likely could be Maurice Constant who was on staff and who was slightly injured in Quinto. They come under attack by artillery and machine guns and then they come under bombardment by brand new shiny Italian Caproni bombers. Merriman returns to Quinto and ends up taking a bath in a ditch filled with "very fine water". The Brigade Headquarters are in a culvert under the road. This position was just south of the crossroad leading to the Piña del Ebro bridge. Merriman has trouble keeping people out of the HQ because it probably is one of the safer places to be. In a curious sentence, Merriman combines "Much food and fear" with what looks to be "spoon bent". One wonders if Merriman had an engraved spoon from Marion Greenspan with this phrase. We may never know what this is about.

The next day does not bring better news about food. While the Brigade is resting and not moving, they are not eating either. Merriman says this has to be cured or there will be a riot. Lou Secundy moves up to the front from the Autopark to help with logistics. Secundy promises another 30 trucks for the Brigade. Logistics are costing the Brigade the element of momentum. They have the concentration of troops for attacks (Merriman says "several") but they are not fed and cannot move, except on foot.

Merriman and Copic are busy with some administrivia on nominations for promotions. Copic makes decisions on the grades leaders of various size groups should have. Merriman says that the 102^a Brigada Mixta, which was the XVth Brigade's side of the Ebro and ahead of them, is very inexperienced and that he appreciates the help of the 11th Brigade under Lister who are helping out in field movements and organization.

Washington BN,. Later he was in the Machine Gun Company and Post Office. He served at Quinto, Belchite, Teruel, Seguro de los Baños, Retreats and Ebro Offensive. Stamm would be wounded in action September 4, 1937, at Belchite. He returned to the US on December 31, 1938 aboard the *President Harding*. He died December 23, 2000.

August 29—30 ••• “After All, This is a War”

29 Agosto

Sta Sabina

Copic and Walter visited Belchite - almost killed in air raid. Shirt torn. Bob Thompson sick & Bill Lawrence, Paynter, Gallo on the ground. Greenspan left - sick. Had long session with boys from Albacete. Decision on Brigade Command. Copic unanimously. New men - Battalion - Marion OK - 3 trucks to come from Frame, etc. Talked about Dart and Dallet. Bob & I visited the positions we took in Quinto. High ground interesting - could roll hand grenade down with no trouble. Late in day order came to move and night was a hectic one since buses and trucks got mixed up - some lost - convoy work bad. Travelled all night and came before day light into dead smelling Codo. Went on foot ahead to positions. Hard to recognize terrain on map. Houses etc Headquarters crude - men moved toward Mediana-Belchite Road. 32 burned Moors buried. Transport picking up. Many battalions left material. Back behind - planned to send 24th up ahead near 11th Brigade but plan changed at last minute and it was decided to move to a position 1/2 way between 2 & 3 kilometre facing Belchite - fine groves, etc. Moved out after long delays and concentrations which were unforgivable. Remained night and first thing in morning moved down - lost on way but

30 Agosto

Sta. Rosa de Lima

finally came through. Kisch visited today and then ran off. At daylight Americans who wanted 2 move earlier were moved out toward front. Took up position behind Spanish and moved damned slowly and weakly lead. Uncertain air of Amlie - called the "старик". I went up to get them to move closer. Did so and finally after a long delay, set down a fine barrage of artillery which caused enemy more trouble and finally after Amlie refused to advance I

went forward and told him either to go in or to be removed. Division threatened to arrest him and called him many names. Evening attack - he led off once and returned. Leaves weak attitude. More men eventually lost because decisive step was not taken. After all this is a war. Bitter complaints about food and water and rebellion, etc. Worked all night to get guard and set up supply system. Robbie sick and many things did not get all the way through. Situation difficult - next {day.....}

§ § §

The next battle is only a day away and the International Brigades are moving from Quinto to Belchite down the Codo Road. Belchite had been under assault by Spanish troops for several days at this point. Cecil Eby¹ says there were 18 assaults on Belchite before the Americans arrive at the end of August. Eby⁴¹⁶ also asserts that Belchite was an unnecessary target as the Republican forces had moved several miles west of Belchite already and had it surrounded. With a garrison originally of 2500 and at the time of the Battle of Belchite down to 534⁴³⁰, Belchite still remained a usable outpost for the Fascists and they had promised the garrison that relief was being sent from Zaragoza to rescue the troops there. The Brigades were not going to leave an outpost which could have numbered thousands of men behind their moving front lines. Belchite had to be taken.



Luigi Longo, RGASPI Archives, Moscow Fond 545 Op 6 Delo 129

Colonel Vladimir Copic, General Walter visited Belchite (or as close as they could get since it was still in Fascist control). They are nearly killed by an aviation attack and apparently one of them came back with a torn shirt. Merriman is visited at the Estado Mayor by Bob Thompson, Briton Will Paynter and Bill Lawrence from Albacete and Tarazona. They bring up the payroll money which should be paid to the troops on August 31. Luigi Longo (Gallo), from

Madrid, is also in the region, as is Marion Greenspan and Will Paynter, also from the Madrid IB Headquarters. When critical moments happened for the IB, Gallo would show up to help direct traffic. Merriman discusses with the Albacete base visitors about the decisions made about the Brigade command and Copic is the unanimous choice to lead the Brigade. Clearly, Copic's politicking has solidified his support. It should be noted that it would be unlikely that the Brigades would change leadership during an offensive, unless absolutely necessary.

Merriman is told about new men arriving at Albacete and the status of his previous battalion (the Mac-Paps). He finds out that Marion Merriman is also ok. Marion makes a notation in her own memoir:

On August 29 I received a note from Bob, assuring me all was well. Despite his confidence, however, I found little comfort in the assurance; there was also word that the Americans would get no real rest after the fighting at Quinto. They were to move on to an even harder fight. In the push to secure the vast Aragon and eventually Saragossa, the Americans were being put to the task of taking Belchite, a city that even Napoleon could not conquer.⁴¹⁷

Merriman finds that he will get three new trucks from Bill Frame in the Intendencia. He gets the scuttlebutt on how Rollin Dart and Joe Dallet are doing back in training at Tarazona.

Merriman takes a break with Bob Thompson and goes to the top of Purburell Hill to show him the fortifications. The visitors probably all went onto Purburell Hill at Quinto to see the fortifications taken during the Quinto offensive. As the first battle decisively won since Guadalajara, Quinto clearly improved the morale of the Brigades who thought they now had the Fascists on the run.

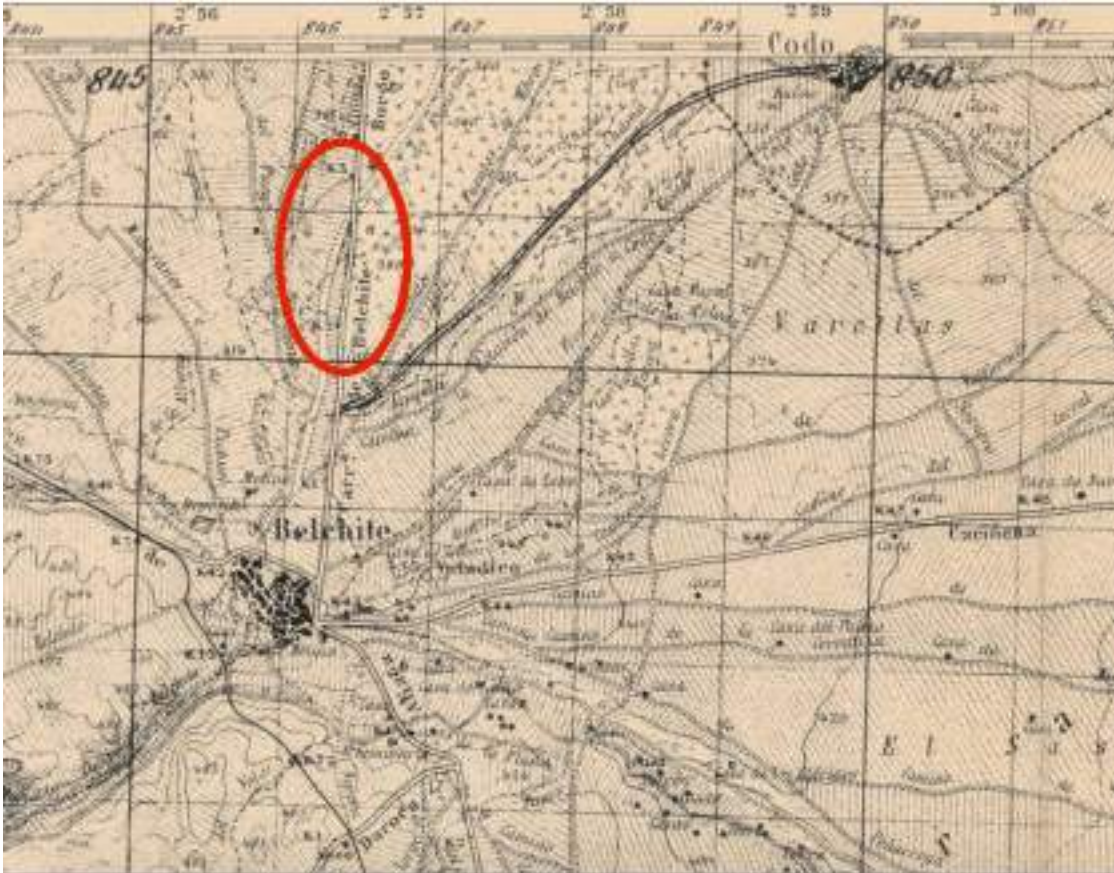


Fascist Fortifications on Purburell Hill, ALBA Photo 11_1221, Tamiment Library, NYU.

Towards the end of the day, people start loading into trucks and move forward to Codo, which smelled unpleasantly of death. The Spanish forces of Juan Modesto had gone through Codo in the previous week and bombing of the town was furious. "R.F." reported:

Seated on the floor were three men. Not a scratch on any of them. A dried up trickle of blood from the nose and ears of one. All killed by concussion. Back on the street again, we signaled to the Sanitarios.

We enter house after house. These have not been hit by bomb or shell. Yet they are in terrible disorder.... The occupants of these houses, forced to evacuate with the retreating Fascists, had just a few minutes to take any valuables.⁴¹⁸



Civil War edition of Spanish cartographic map of 1927. The red circle shows the location of the Brigade Headquarters mentioned by Merriman

From Codo, Merriman walked to their new position, which was between 2 and 3 kilometers from Belchite on the highway. This location was in an area of olive groves, which would provide significant cover from being seen from Belchite and from aircraft. Spanish troops had been bivouacked here for nearly a week as they attacked Belchite. The Lincolns will reinforce them. The Codo Road comes out north of Belchite on the road that runs to Mediana to the north. The British Battalion at this point has gone north to Mediana and will hold off the Fascist reinforcements moving down from Zaragoza. Some men moved south onto that road on the 29-30 evening. At this point, they would be only a kilometer outside Belchite.

On this road, Merriman says they found the burnt bodies of 32 Moorish soldiers and they buried them. Transport began catching up with the Brigade movement. Merriman brought up the Spanish 24th Battalion (and recall that nearly 64 Americans were in the 2nd Company of the 24th and led by Hans Amlie) and tried

to attach them to the 11th Brigade. The concentration of troops was too large and would provide a considerable target for aircraft. As the night of the 29th ends, the Brigade moves down towards Belchite. Merriman appears to have difficulty managing the attack since they plan to follow the 24th into Belchite.



Hans Amlie (left) and Vladimir Copic (right), attributed to being at Quinto or Codo, ALBA PHOTO 177-175016, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman clearly is dismissive of Amlie here since movement into Belchite was slow. He uses the derisive Russian word "старик" (the cursive Russian looks different than the printed version) which literally translated means "old man" but is also more derogatorily translated as "graybeard" or "old fogey". Amlie's courage is now under question. Merriman orders him to move or be removed. Amlie is under threat of being arrested for not following the orders to attack. He finally moves the Lincolns but they are repulsed. Over the next six days, the Lincolns will fight their way into Belchite, street by street and even ditch by ditch. The machine gun fire from the Church in Belchite again is withering and causes many casualties. Merriman suggests that many of these casualties were caused by not keeping close contact with the 24th Battalion and making the decision to move into Belchite. He says "After all this is a war".

There are dozens of stories on this first attack on Belchite. Eby places the date as September 1⁴¹⁰, but clearly Merriman has written about Amlie's weakness in forcing the attack on the August 30 page. The initial attack by 22 Americans was into withering machine gun fire and only 2 Americans survived it. Over the next week, many assaults would be made on Belchite and Merriman will relate those stories in upcoming diary pages.

Hans Amlie's notebooks (Hoover Institution, Milly Bennett collection) also place the first movement on Belchite on the morning of September 1. Merriman is clearly using his diary after the fact and the dates cannot be trusted. While Merriman accuses Amlie of dallying, Amlie says this (transcription of the free hand by the author):

About 2 {probably August 31} Estado put a Span. company in charge of the city. Quinto. Moved on to Pina stat. At five we again found 24th Batt. waiting for further orders. Our trucks moved to Codo. In afternoon went about 2 kms. Evening aero came over and observed. Men slept in Belchite about one km. That nite about 1 am batt. commander sent runner ask for volunteers for special bombing squad. Our comp. needed an example. We don't know what's up. Must be like Quinto. Charlie Regan, former soldier American army got up first - (4 also volunteered but turned down one because he machine gunner).

Batt Commander Aguila "Have you got volunteers?"

"Yes, four." Towards Spaniards, "took four American Volunteers" - Then some of Spanish stepped up.

Bombers never called down & we 1 1/2 kms from Belchite. — established crude French position on right hand side road. Avion came up with dawn & dropped bombs all around us. Several hours later batt. ordered to take another flank. While in movement enemy machine gun fire. That morning we had us breakfast! 300-400 meters from walls of

Belchite. Artillery and tanks gave fire. Was there enough? What is enough?

Busied ourselves whole day playing lite machine guns. Putting up observations posts. Studied terrain. Distributed our section in organized manner. Noisy day. Machine gun - felt like a war was going on. Avion sunup & sundown where shadow on terrain and able to detect our positions. Haze - from heat. Obvious that in attacks from across they had free rein. No ... air craft of ours. At Mediana, we told comrades high command must have had more serious position.

Our men for 1st time subjected strain fire without sufficient protection. Enemy machine guns and snipers.



Photograph 177_191110 (reverse of 11_0731): Captain Abad Garcia, Commissars Phil Detro, Bob Thompson, Captains Aguila (Commander of the 24th Battalion) and Paddy O'Daire (Commander of the 57th Battalion), probably late fall 1937, Tamiment Library ALBA collections, NYU Bobst Library, New York.

Amlie, of course, never mentions the questioning of his courage or leadership of the men. In his view, his Company went as far as they could with the support they had. Logistically, keeping close contact between the front line troops and supplies is impossible

and food and water again become an issue for the troops. Merriman suggests that there is discussion of rebellion. Merriman sets up a guard for the night of the 30th and works on getting a supply line forward. John Quigley "Robbie" Robertson, the Lincoln Commissar, is out sick at this point and was unable to coordinate these needs.

August 31 ••• “A Really Tough Day”

{flows through 31 Agosto

S. Ramón Nonato}

day orders to attack but didn't do it but fussed around. Occupied building across road retreated etc. Dimitrov in or out of church. Partisans tactics of Chapayev etc. weak attitude taken - Nyburg killed - Burton killed. Smith, Hoshooley wounded. Many out - Amlie played up losses couldn't get men to move demanded things which they thought Brigade should bring right up to the front lines. 25 men all that could be mustered. Much time spent on Artillery - tanks sent up but acted poorly and always returned soon etc. Really a tough day and spent the whole time in the trenches. Early I asked for a concentrated attack at a special time but nothing came of it. Water acute. Moved 24th Battalion and had trouble keeping contact etc. Phone bad. Finally returned late in day. Commanders called in - Chapayev didn't come. Amlie criticized and demand made for immediate fall of Belchite so we come help Mediana which is point of counter attack. English placed on road & only guard it. Bourne now political commissar - O'Daire weak and 18 men expect to go home soon and are watching themselves.

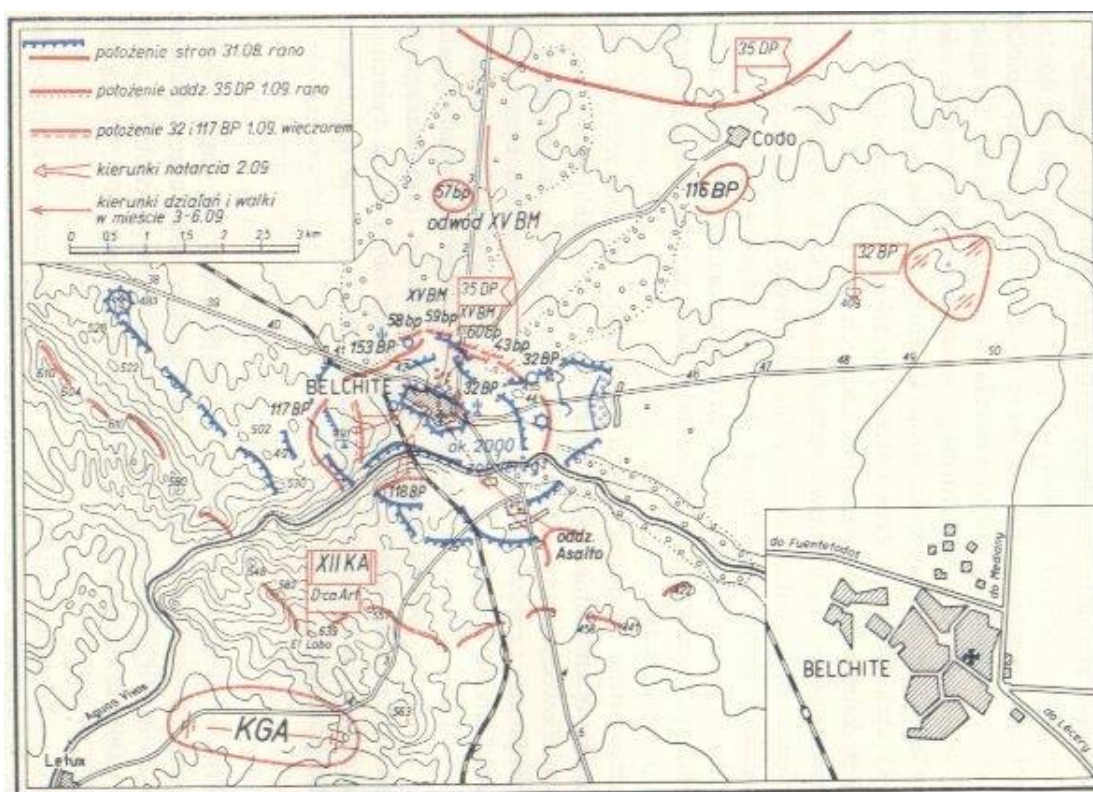
§ § §

Given that Belchite would be one of the toughest assignments that the XVth Brigade would face in 1937, Merriman did not write much over the next two days. This indicates that he was very busy without much down time to put down his notes. Merriman carries over his sentence from August 30, saying that the "next day" orders came to attack but did not do it. So while the Americans were in position to assault Belchite, all that happened were small probes by some units, artillery assaults, tank approaches, and some "partisan tactics" employed by Chapayev and the Dimitrov Battalion. Remember on the previous day, we

questioned Merriman's timeline and the initial assaults probably were on September 1.

Merriman may be reflecting the wishes of the Army Corps command that the action proceed with haste, but Belchite was a densely occupied town with only a few routes of access in. The town was interweaved with above ground and below ground passageways within the houses. An attack on a house would just have the defenders move to the next house down the street.

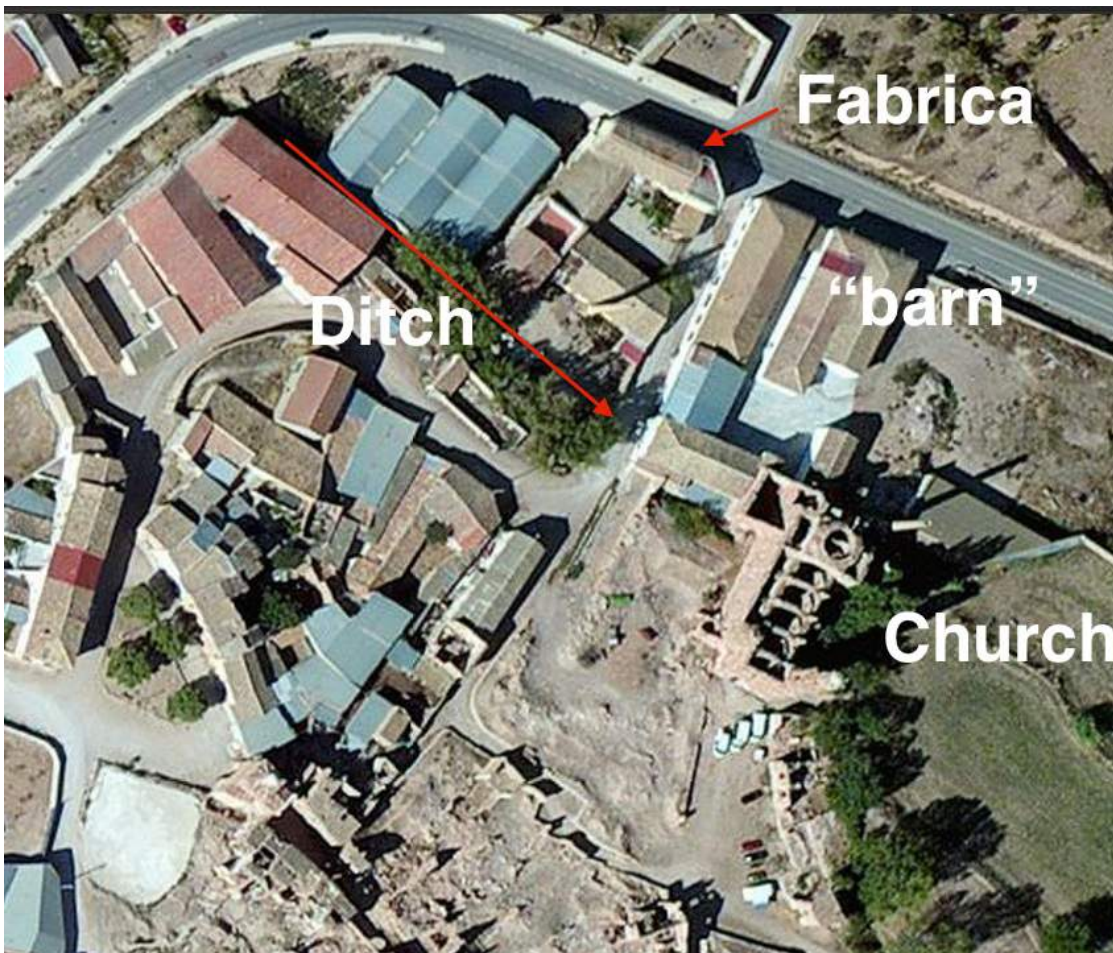
From the northern side of the town where the Americans were lined up, a road leading from between brick building (a "barn") and a factory channelled into a square in front of the San Agustin Church. Fascists had machine guns in each of the churches in town and it was nearly impossible to get into Belchite.



Szkic nr 11. Walki o Belchite (31.08—6.09.1937 r.)

A map of Belchite from a Polish edition of "El General Walter. Sirvio a tres Banderas: Republica Espanola, Polonia y la URSS. 35 división" by Fernando Martinez de Banos Carrillo and Agnieszka Szafran. editors. Delsan Libros, 2011. DP is Divisional Estado Mayor, BM is Mixed Brigade and BP is battalion for their relevant positions.

In the above map of Belchite, the 58th Battalion is the position of the Lincolns, the 59th is the 24th Spanish Battalion and the 60th would later become the Mac-Pap Battalion in the XVth Brigade, but here is likely to be Chapayev's Dimitrov Battalion. The 57th is the British position up the Mediana Road protecting from reinforcements for the Fascists. Getting an airborne image of the current Belchite is difficult as Google Maps is intentionally blurred. Fortunately, Michelin provides maps and air photos of the current destroyed Belchite. Much of the initial action of which Merriman speaks are in the small area below:



Air Photo of the current Belchite. The historical town of Belchite is in the destroyed area at the bottom right of the image. The Church is San Agustin where the initial XVth Brigade battles occurred (photo courtesy Michelin Maps)

Merriman does not really know whether the Dimitrov Battalion has taken the Church (they had not). When Merriman says "Occupied building across road" it is believed that he is referring to the Fabrica opposite the church, which could not be held

because grenades kept getting lobbed into this building from the stronghold across the street. Some Americans made it into Belchite early, including John Cookson, who set up transmissions from inside the city until Robbie Robinson ordered him out since he "was surrounded".⁴¹⁹



Current day view of the Fabrica (yellow building) and San Agustin Church, Belchite. Photo taken from approximate position of the American assault trenches (author's photo).



The road leading to the Fabrica with San Agustin on the left. The same position with the photo taken in 1937. ALBA PHOTO 11_1229, Tamiment Library, NYU

Dave Engels described some of the fighting around San Agustin and uses the term "barn" others have called these buildings a "mill" or a "Fabrica". Engels says that when the Americans tried to go into the alley between what is labelled "Fabrica" and "Barn" above, Fascists came pouring at them from the buildings behind the church. The thick walls protected the Fascists from grenades, even though they were only a few meters from the alley.⁴²⁰

Again, the timeline on the attack on Belchite is clouded here. Most historians place the American attack on Belchite as starting on the afternoon of September 1. Yet here Merriman has already noted that Eric Nyberg and Wallace Burton had been killed on the August 31 diary pages (again, investigation by Milly Bennett on the death of Burton, her lover, places the date of his death as September 2 from a sniper who hit him between the eyes). Merriman notes that Owen Smith and Canadian Jock Hoshoooley had been wounded. Merriman again chides Amlie for making up excuses that the losses were high. Contemporary accounts say that of the "25" men who were mustered (the number was actually 22), only two made it back out uninjured when the retreat was ordered. Some according to Landis (Gabby Klein and Saul Birnbaum in particular) were stuck near the ditch and could not get out until a tank approached the Church, took a couple of shots and while it was the target of the fire, the Americans backed out.⁴²¹ Not to get too far ahead in the story of Belchite, Amlie places the main part of the action of his company on the 2nd and 3rd of September and we will include a transcript from his diary on the next Merriman diary page.

Merriman says that the tank actions were not effective, but maneuvering a tank into narrow alleys with no room to turn was suicidal for the tankers. Merriman says that he spent his day in the trenches and when he called for a concentrated attack, nothing happened. Merriman tried to move the 24th Battalion but communication was poor and contact was lost with them. Amlie will note in his diary that they had no idea where the Lincolns were.

At the end of the day, Copic and Merriman call in the Brigade commanders but not all of them come in. Chapayev, for one, did

not show up. Hans Amlie takes the brunt of the criticism and the commanders are reminded that a counterattack by the 150th Division of the Fascists is expected at Mediana. It is important that the resources being expended at Belchite move north. Merriman says that James Bourne is now the Political Commissar so Robbie Robinson was replaced during the battle. Merriman says that he was sick. Merriman says that "O'Daire {is} weak". Paddy O'Daire took over the British Battalion upon the death of Peter Daly. "18 men expect to go home soon and are watching themselves". If you thought that you soon would be out, it is possible that they would not put themselves on the line. It is likely that these men are in the 57th Battalion and have seen many leading British comrades repatriated and may have inferred that this is now Brigade policy. They did not realize that these men were removed for coming into conflict with Copic and the Brigade leadership.

SEPTEMBER 1937

picked up some bags dropped from plane.
 rocks - great pleasure + here some letters etc
 Septemb^{re} ^{S. Justiniano} 5th bright all day with best
 breeze found that my ledger page - no one helped
 and no Holmes did - with I did much work.
 Put out house cleared out house - supper and
 three grenades. set fire and etc. on one street
 corner - grenade thrown from window out as.
 and several places - Holmes badly wounded by into
 with the same in another place I made - suitable
 work for night on a saddle and directed to little
 contact with Copie etc. greeted fire in Spain the
 finally stopped by Holmes and hole in wall in which
 one man had a long gun the fire 243 refused to
 move. finally stopped dead. Copie advised me to
 report - reach hell and no more it said other
 all aware Tom did he looks over situation - safe
 crossing. chimney point on - good show. find long
 and - night? at. frame with holes etc. dead pulled
 up in several rooms. Anger death - women
 church etc. etc. for planned immediate advance
 American three barrels across the street
 and one wounded going across. Planned to cut thro
 lly during the night. bit it right some needed several
 then border by wounded - crossed on Spain
 set up guard around town - I left great
 excitement surrounded the whole town occupied
 morning after ^{S. Faust} ~~Septemb^{re}~~ ^{S. Faust} took on tall
 mine in attiller. When come over and said many
 wanted to come but couldn't find way. Day 13
 went back to buy on some things.
 of to next and returned with gun and then
 started the whole narrative. thought came
 one I left the village immediately and sent
 and I went into square - passed by the city
 town avoided. was I friendly to get the report
 out before 153d took to order. ^{S. Faust}
 soon took over town. sent some trucks etc
 but got some stuff on by organized manner.
 all ordered out with ^{S. Faust} about
 had great pleasure wandering thru town and
 my church etc. some good specimens taken
 station flag - another etc. no person
 slaying here. no person messenger etc
 modest garden for corner - (suburban)
 don't flit, no mudren no short dress etc
 very religious town many churches. from
 itosa and shop and one town a very
 rich and beautiful place now ruins. before
 you a great one and persistent night
 last. badly disappointed some yesterday
 somehow moved - no more.

OCT NOV DIC

September 1—2 “БЫТЬ СВОЙЮ МАТЬ”

1 September

S Arturo

General Comment

Van den Berghe working quietly but well. Slater does a nice job. Secundy picking up and Indendencia not so hot. Much expected of us after Quinto and I felt it would not be so easy. 5 brigades here now and not able to cut the bull. Even now the job is far from done. Artillery point blank with sandbags only. Don't know why fascists don't give us the works here. Several good bombings. Pete Hampkins came - don't know how to use him until after action is over. Volunteers for raiding parties promised 2 weeks in Valencia. Copic works well “БЫТЬ СВОЙЮ МАТЬ” but has no concept of the time it takes to move troops and plan an action. Expects troops to march and strike in rapid speed time. More deliberate plans would result in doing things in a shorter time. Idea of Brigade kitchen - given up as impractical and now only Anglo-American kitchen exists. 24th & Dimitrov have their own. Steve getting along - sound truck needed here to get village to surrender but it did not come. Plan to use prisoners, etc. Olive orchards are wonderful. Some of the finest in Spain.

2 Septiembre

S. Antolín

{mostly blank}

First thing – unexpected order from General Pozas. All attack it & without any preparation. It could upset plans - some moved - some did not Americans moved - 153rd circle in on left.

§ § §



Bill Alexander, Hugh Slater, and Jeff Mildwater, British Antitankers. ALBA Photo 11-1318, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman did not record events of September 1 and 2 and later wrote in the diary under the heading "General Comments". He was busy in the trenches and streets of Belchite trying to work their way into the city. Instead it appears that Merriman is rating his commanders for future promotions. He says Van den Berghe and Hugh Slater are working well. Slater was the head of the British Anti-tank company. He again complements Lou Secundy on his work in Transports/Auto-Park but says that the Intendencia is not working well. Water and food will become a serious issue for troops on the front lines in Belchite.

Merriman notes that there are five whole Brigades (perhaps 8000 men) attacking Belchite and coordination is not easy. He says it is hard to cut the bull. Merriman wonders why the Fascists have not attacked this concentration of men, although he notes that there have been several good bombing runs on the Loyalist troops. He notes that Peter Hampkins has come up from the Pozo Rubio Officer Training School but Merriman doesn't know where to put him at this point. Merriman is told to offer people who volunteer for raiding parties into Belchite that they will get two

weeks leave in Valencia. He will shortly be offered control on promotions as a motivational tool to get people to move quickly.

In the Hoover Archives at Stanford University, Mildred Bennett's memoirs hold a notebook which is the account of Hans Amlie, the 2nd Company Commander in the 24th Battalion, of the attack on Belchite. Too long to fully reproduce here in one segment, it give a timeline of the events of September 2 and 3 which were two very busy days for the Brigades and adds to what Merriman can only briefly tell us in his diary. I believe from the handwriting that the diary was written by Milly Bennett when she interviewed the injured Hans Amlie in hospital in the second week of September, 1937. She mixes her voice between his and her reporting of it. And the notes are just that, notes of a newspaper reporter, cryptic with misspellings and abbreviations:⁴²²

Sept 2nd - American unit assigned storm city & 1st few comrades who went forward - leader Henry Eaton, 27, Los Angeles, fell in rain machine-gun fire (polit com). Mother joined party last month. Loved by all comrades. Named co. after him. Real soldier. Never knew what fear was. Any dangerous mission he was 1st to volunteer — (son former Mayor Los Angeles) said wanted to be active internat. labor defense. Another good trait - kept diary. In forward gave his convictions; not a day or event that he missed. While he carried on. Obvious Mission couldn't be carried out. About 11 am. Pulled back his body in the evening and dug a grave - wrote up a slab "Henry Eaton, a member of the Comm. party of the United States died, Sept 2nd 1937. He was a comm. A brave soldier and a comrade. He was the type of comm. that only the full knowledge of what Communism is could have created and it is clear also that his mother had a great influence in making him what he was long before he every heard of Communism and Spain. Soil will become enriched with his blood. The Spanish people will build a new society the type that Henry Eaton dreamt of and fought for. We name our Co. the Henry Eaton Co. and pledge to carry on". Board from top ammunition box. On other side translation in Spanish.

3rd - whole batt called back behind lines & our co. instructed go other point - Copic gave em "pep" talk - Resumed old positions at 11am. Instructed to advance up hill and begin to carry out attack in broad daylight - while Span. comrades to advance simultaneously about 100 meters to right. At 11 all three sections in battle order ready to advance 350 meters up a hill and we were to receive as cover machinegun & artillery fire. We started. With enemy sniper & machine gun fire we very ably used the gullies natural contour of country & made a spectacular dash (with Span with you) No - they weren't there. The rest of batt staying in posit. without moving. Gained our objective.

In a "I come not to praise Caesar" moment, Merriman admits that Copic works well and then follows it with a Russian phrase in quotations. I have to thank a relative of mine who dug down into the dirt of our proletarian roots to give me a literal translation of "БЫТЬ СВОЮ МАТЬ" as well as the idiomatic working-class epithet. It literally means "he would fuck own mother". That would fit into the context here that Copic works hard but would not hesitate to screw his own people. The less kind idiomatic interpretation is "fucking moron". In either case, Merriman doesn't hesitate to criticize Copic for throwing people into the breach without properly preparing a strategy for the attack.

Amlie, above, also notes the Copic "pep talk" that hauled the men out of the lines on September 3. Again it looks like Merriman has gotten a day or so ahead in his diary of events. Another interesting note in the Amlie statement "With Span with you" in parentheses is probably Milly asking that of Amlie and getting his response "No, they weren't there".

Merriman notes that the kitchen situation is difficult with the five brigades wanting a unified kitchen but in reality the Americans and English have one and the Spanish 24th Brigade and Dimitrov Battalion having their own. Merriman says that Steve Nelson is getting on ok in the battle at this point and that they want a sound truck to try to convince the villagers and fascist troops to surrender. A truck would come by the 5th of September.

On the 2nd of September (outside the notes section), Merriman says that General Sebastian Pozas Perea, head of the Army of the East, ordered an immediate attack with no preparation. This must have echoed in Merriman's head. Pozas had a track record of some famous failures. He created and was in charge of the Arganda Military Group organized at Jarama.⁴²³ He later led an action at Huesca that failed.⁴²⁴ Now at Belchite, he again is moving chess pieces without feedback from his on-the-ground commanders. In his other excellent book on the development of the Spanish Civil War, Art Landis calls Pozas "incompetent". During the November 6, 1936, initial assaults on Madrid, Pozas and General Miaja were given mixed up orders by Largo Caballero on whether or not to defend Madrid or passively wait for negotiation... all this as General Yaguë's armor was rolling towards the bridges over the Manzanares. In the midst of the battle, Pozas retired to his base at Tarancón, turning over his command to Miaja.⁴²⁴ Pozas would continue to be in charge of the Army of the East until after the Retreats in the Spring of 1938 where he would be replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Juan Perea.⁴²³

Some units responded to the order given by Pozas to attack (the Americans and the 153rd Anarchist Battalion) and others did not. Hans Amlie notes above that the Spanish did not move from their positions. The 153rd Battalion will move around the XVth to the northeast and to try to get into town from that direction.

September 3—4 ••• “Great Sport”

3 Septiembre

S Nonito

Early in the morning our men occupied positions close to road and Dimitrov held the fabrica. In general the fighting tough and our men are tired since they had practically no food and little water for some time. Spent some time in the lines – checking and directing artillery fire from the observation post. Amlie wounded, also Halliwell – Lamb now Commander and Thayer now Adjutant - Robbie still carrying on. Saw Chapayev - some disagreement concerning church. Bombs fly - they hold back and anarcho front. Today was a spectacle - a city gradually smashed to bits by persistent artillery. They hide in underground passages and only in this way does the place hold so many. 153rd grouped behind hill and large building. Called in Commander couldn't get him to budge. Also 24th refused and refused to attack - Lamb tried to force him and pulled to left. Political commissar killed. Letter stating attack even if alone. At 1 o'clock Wattis took up group to work from fabrica. Grenades thrown 50 or 60 houses occupied. Visited lines - Pete {Hampkins} & Skinner and Sid went along. Aviation came close to observations post today, Copic really scared. In night came some men for information - acted funny maybe bad eggs - careful. Firing during nite near Hdqtrs. Some Staff sent today to Mediana- English hold position at kilo 8 on Mediana road. Wide sector - 46 planes at us once today. 4 prisoners. Food & ammo dropped in Belchite.

4 Septiembre

Sta. Cándida

Today was a long day. Spirit of all was low and people wandered around and talked but little action resulted. Hard time finding men & officers. Late in day and Americans had not taken the church. Finally after a long talk & some wise cracks, Walter sent me to do something -

Promising the whole world - Make soldiers Lieutenants etc. Order of party because we have almost taken the village and now the fascists want to take it over and get the credit. We must work fast. I went. Wattis had been there and figured out things well. Lanser awful - figured out situation - and talked to men and said necessary to talk - Wattis said a few words and attack planned. 3 groups - on three sides - got artillery fire and went to work. Chapayev always opposed to artillery. Wattis, Skinner and I went around to bomb the barricade. Great sport and put them out of commission. Took church out found little - decisive action needed. Skinner and I cleaned a few houses to show how and

§ § §



Donald Thayer, new Adjutant of the Lincoln Battalion, Belchite. ALBA Photo 177-188045, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman gets his diary back on the correct date and updates the assault on Belchite. Early on September 3, the Lincolns and 59th Spanish Battalion moved up to the road on the outskirts of Belchite and he says that the Dimitrov Battalion was inside the Fabrica. Men are in a pretty desperate state, having not been fed for several days and having little drinking water. Merriman reveals that Hans Amlie had been wounded and was out of action (Amlie's notes agree that he was shot during the assault on Belchite, but Amlie appears to tell Milly Bennett that he carried on). Canadian Bill Halliwell, who along with Amlie was a Lincoln Company commander at Brunete, was also wounded in Belchite. Leonard Lamb was now Commander of the Lincolns and Donald Thayer had become the Adjutant. Steve Nelson, the Brigade Commissar, had led men through the ditch into the Fabrica. The assault on the church with men throwing Mill's

Bombs (grenades) continued but many men would be shot trying to get into the church and break down a barricade across the square. Merriman says that Robbie Robinson is still carrying on (and we are left to wonder if that is a positive or negative comment).

Artillery continues to pound the city and the Fascists are holed up in underground passages. Merriman says that that must be how there are so many troops there. Merriman tries to prod the 153rd Brigade into the city but they are hunkered down behind a hill and a large building. The 24th Spanish Battalion also would not attack. Amlie's Company 2 of the 24th was in Belchite on the 2nd and involved in street-to-street fighting. Merriman says Lamb tried to force them to move by pulling to the left, which would have opened a flank against the 24th. Merriman says that their political commissar was killed. This would be Henry Eaton of Los Angeles (discussed in the posting of September 1 and 2). In a curious sentence in discussing Chapayev he says "They hold back" and what looks like "anarcho front". That probably means that the Dimitrovs were not "holding back" in the assault but rather controlling the back of the church and the 153 Anarchist battalion holding the front. This may be reversed since the front of the church is in the city on the square next to the Fabrica (where the Dimitrovs were) and the rear faces the hill from which the 153rd were approaching.

Merriman gets a letter passed to him that he has to attack even if the Americans have to go it alone. George Wattis works his way up to the Fabrica and using grenades moves a group of men into town where they clear 50 or sixty houses. From the current ruins in Belchite, this is likely to be the buildings south and west of the Fabrica, or the very westernmost buildings in town. A significant part of the town lay eastward of the square in front of San Agustin church, running down the Calle Mayor towards San Martin de Tours Church.

Merriman, Sid Shostek, and Bill Skinner go into the lines to see what is happening first hand. Merriman says that Copic was really scared on the 3rd by bombing which came close to the observation post. On the night of 3-4 September, several men

came asking for information and Merriman is suspicious of their motives. He calls them "maybe bad eggs". Merriman splits his staff and sends some up the Mediana road eight kilometers to where the 57th British Battalion is dug in. Merriman is uncomfortable about how spread out his Brigade has become. He says that 46 airplanes attacked the Brigade on the 3rd.

On the 4th of September, the attack is not moving forward. People were exhausted, and motivating them difficult. By the end of this, the sixth day at Belchite, the Church was still in the hands of the Fascists and at most the brigades had only moved a few blocks. General Walter comes to the Brigade and tries to motivate Copic and Merriman. He tells them that he should make everyone Lieutenants if they attack. Finally, Walter and Copic pull out their trump card and says that they have an "Order of the Party" to attack. For the Internationals, this is serious business because ignoring a Party order meant termination of any support that one would have from its political arm. Walter says that if the Fascists hold the town, they would play this up as a major political victory. What is not said is that the Republican Government has already published stories saying that Belchite is theirs.

San Agustin Church, Belchite (photo taken by author in 2013). The photo is taken from the main plaza and the fabrica is to the left and the open field is to the right.

Merriman goes back in and, with Wattis's help, figures a plan of attack. A name which may be "Lanser" (i.e. Manny Lanser) is said to be "awful". The plan is to attack the Church from 3 sides (with the Dimitrovs and the 153rd/24th battalions supporting the Americans.) Merriman calls in artillery fire to soften the town more before the attack. Chapayev of the Dimitrovs was opposed to artillery but



perhaps hoped to save civilians. Skinner, Shostek and Merriman go in to throw grenades at the barricades and he says they took the Church out, with little found.

Manny Lanser tells the story somewhat differently:⁴²⁵

We made a couple of attempts to storm the Church but they were unsuccessful. Whenever our artillery shelled the Church, the Fascists ran out and took refuge in the town. But whenever we attacked, the Fascists took advantage of the pause in the shelling to run back into the Church through the main door (on the opposite side from us) and again get behind the parapets they had built in the windows and doorways. Their machine-guns could then easily repel our attacks.

Unable to make headway, we sent out scouting patrols to observe just where the Fascists used to dodge and find the best route for attack. One of these reconnoitering parties led Dan Hutner^a, was observed by the Fascists. In the exchange of fire, Hutner was killed.

In one of these charges we succeeded in taking a prisoner who gave us information on the layout of the streets and pointed out to us the Fascist strongholds in the vicinity of the Church. We made our plans accordingly.

The Church had three entrances; our plan called for a rush on all three of them simultaneously. Our artillery and tanks were to shell the Church to drive the Fascists out. While the shelling was going on our storming parties were to approach as close as possible to the Church. The shelling was to cease at a fixed moment and our men were to dash into the Church before the Fascists had a chance to get back.

^a Daniel Hutner was 29 years old when he died. He had attended New York University and was a well known college track champion. He arrived in Spain in May 1937 and was attached to the Washington Battalion and was wounded at Brunete. He was in the Lincoln-Washington Battalion when he was killed while leading a reconnaissance patrol in Belchite.

We collected most of the Lincoln-Washington men inside the factory where our Battalion Headquarters were. A few machine-guns with a crew of two men each were left in our trenches to fire at the houses around the Church to keep the Fascists from shooting at our advancing men. A machine-gun was set up in a window in the factory, trained on the Church. The rest of the Machine-Gun Company was assigned to participate in the attack.

The attackers were divided into three groups: one to attack along the road to the left, the other across a field to the right, the third to act as reserve.

The artillery started as per plan. Our tanks came up also and shelled the Church from a distance of about 500 yards while our machine-guns opened up heavy covering fire.

When the advance started, the men on the left ran into heavy machine-gun barrage and suffered many casualties without being able to make much progress.

The group on the right, only a couple of dozen men, charged from the trenches about forty yards from the Church. They were led by Dave Engels, Commissar of No. 1 Company of the Lincoln-Washingtons. They had to cross a deep gully that ran the length of the Church-wall. Once across they knocked down the Fascist parapets built on the further side of the gully (now abandoned owing to the shelling) and advance on the Church. Just as they entered from the rear the Fascists began to come back through the front door which faced the interior of the town. There was a battle of hand-grenades and the Fascists ran out.

Several men led by {Lionel} Levick ran up to the front door and standing in the open doorway started shooting at the Fascists. Levick's squad in turn was being fired at from all sides by the Fascists who had positions in the



*Lionel Levick, ALBA PHOTO
11-1275, Tamiment Library,
NYU*

houses surrounding the Plaza in front of the Church. One after the other was hit, but they hung on since this was the only entrance through which the Fascists could rush the Church and regain control.

The fire was becoming more and more deadly but the boys held on grimly until the others succeeded in bringing up a machine-gun which, placed in the doorway, gave us definite control. Some of the men ran back to the trenches, brought back sandbags and built a barricade at the front door to protect the machine-gun and the men behind it. The Church was definitely ours.⁴¹⁹



Dr. Mark Straus and Saul Wellman, ALBA PHOTO 11-0444, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman continues his narrative by saying that he and Skinner bombed a few houses to show the troops how to fight in the

city. They then stopped, gathered up some bags of supplies dropped from airplanes and left the men to carry on. Landis quotes Dr. Mark Straus as having flashed his flashlight at airplanes and bags of supplies of ham, bread, letters were dropped on his location. The bags included instruction to the Fascists to hold on, that the Fascists had retaken Quinto and were on the way. All untrue. The Lincolns were now being resupplied by the Fascists from the air.⁴²⁶

Another story by S. F. said:

We organized into groups to clean up the town street by street, house by house. Each group had grenadiers, riflemen, and men carrying dry twigs and gasoline to set fire to houses where they encountered resistance. When a house was occupied we would put a red blanket, mattress or bunting in the window to show the house was ours. Major Merriman and Captain Phil Detro^b, both good pitchers, could be seen all over the place handgrenading the Fascists.⁴²⁷

Milly Bennett's notes of her interview with Hans Amlie continued on Sept 4:

4th Sept (his notes)

Certain wall that had been broken thru earlier in day - Every man got his objectives - only 6 or 7 feet from enemy staring us in the face from behind walls. We were able to develop the "fist punch" put quotes - they had machine-guns on us all the way & we gave them bombs & rifle fire (35 of us). Rite in front of this wall 3 of our comrades killed & 7 wounded falling all around of us - right in our very midst.

^b Philip Lucas Detro was born in 1911, in Conroe, Texas. He attended Rice Institute and the University of Missouri. His mother described him politically as a Democrat. Detro would serve with the Washington Battalion as Adjutant in Company 1, and then command the company at Brunete. He was wounded and returned to the XVth Brigade at Belchite as a Staff officer. He became the Commander of the Lincoln-Washington Battalion at Teruel whee he was wounded by a sniper in January 1938 and die of complications in hospital.

*Uliser Bauza, 20, Puerto Rican
 Steve Cojeran, 40, old soldier, Detroit machinist
 Boris Oretchkin, 40, New York, rr worker Old Soldier*

Couldn't see Dmit{roff} Couldn't see Wash.-Lincoln. We charged up that hill alone! Ten down. Enemy behind walls throwing bombs and shouting. Picked up wounded hauled them back to a little wall. I dragged Sonchek - Just a regular bloody mess. Shot twice. While had him in arms - shot again killed. One valuable thing - Bolstered up rest of the batt. Cojeran crawled back. Got behind knoll. Said no further. They on wall. We under it. Wounded. Here is chance for life. Get up & run like a s.o.b. With a bullet in his left ran. Another bullet hit Cojeran & he went down yelling "Why don't you go up & help your comrades" — He yelled it in English but Span understood - Span came up & began attack 3 hrs later & we helped by using knoll we'd held. Bombs thrown - Bldgs fired - Most occupied until nightlight. Little plaza. About 9 or 10 o'clock at nite, we got into 1st few houses. We chewed our way in. Prof. bombers brought in. Has firing cap that throws bomb into the air. We were 1st batt. in - we penetrated first plaza de la franco —

My men were terribly tired (this is a little bit of war strategy; please let my men have four hours sleep.) went to They took 2 hours, but after that could hardly keep up with them.⁴²⁸

There is a website maintained by Jaime Cinca of Lecera, Spain, which explains the Battle of Belchite.⁴²⁹

September 5—6 ••• “Greatest Fun in Spain”

5 Septiembre

S. Justiniano

picked up some bags dropped from planes. Sacks – bread – medicine & ham. Some letters etc. Left men to continue. 5th worked all day with Battalion because found that no leadership - no one helped and so Skinner, Sid & Wattis and I did much work. Broke into houses, cleaned out houses - snipers and threw grenades. Set fires and etc. on one street corner - grenade thrown from window into us. Cut several places - Skinner badly wounded by cuts. Wattis the same in another place. I made a mistake. Worked too much as a soldier and directed too little. No contact with Copic etc. Greatest fun in Spain though finally stopped by a barricade and hole in wall in which one man had a bomb in the face. 24th refused to move. Finally stopped dead. Copic ordered me to report – raised hell and we swore at each other all around town which he looked over situation – rather amusing. Chapayev put on a good show. Had hospital and in midst of it nuns, with robes, etc. Dead piled up in several rooms. Sniper holes - women carried stuff etc. Then planned immediate advance Americans threw barricade across the street and one wounded going across. Planned to cut thru building during the nite. Late at night - some rushed barricade threw bombs Hyde wounded - escaped some officers set up guard around town. I slept great excitement sounded like whole town escaped.

6 Septiembre

S. Fausio

Early in morning after sound truck one tall runner for Artillery officer came over and said many wanted to come but couldn't find way. Dave Doran sent him back to bring over some. Dangerous job he went and returned with many and this started the whole surrender. Hundreds came over. I left for village immediately and Lamb and I

went into square - fascist Headquarters, etc. Town crowded. Tried feverishly to get transport out before 153rd took it over. Anarchist soon took over town. Lost some trucks etc. but got some stuff in an organized manner. All ordered out onto Mediana road. Had great pleasure wandering thru town and saw church etc. Some good souvenirs taken Italian flags - swastikas etc. No pasaran slogan now. No Pasaran Marxists etc. Modesty question for women - (religious) don't flirt, no nudeness - no short dresses etc. Very religious town many churches. Fine stores and shops and one time a very rich and beautiful place now ruins. Defensive war a great one and persistent until last. Sidney disappeared since yesterday. Promotions proposed - now Major.

§ § §

Merriman is pretty reserved in letting us have insight into his real feelings. Today we get a peek into Bob Merriman's psyche and why he joined the ROTC in school and the Lincolns in Spain. On the 5th of September, mopping up of Belchite continues after the Church and barricade has fallen. Merriman says that he cannot find any of the leaders of the Lincoln Battalion so he, Sidney Shostek and George Wattis took initiative in working like soldiers. Merriman says that this is the greatest "fun" he had in Spain. After nine months in Spain and only a few hours truly on the line before being shot at Jarama, Merriman's interest in fighting shows through. The Dave Engels' article in the Book of the XVth Brigade said that Merriman was everywhere throwing grenades and fire bombs. The "fun" ended when a grenade dropped out of a building injuring George Wattis with about fifty pieces of shrapnel and Merriman was cut as well.

Merriman admits that he worked too much as a soldier and too little as a commander. Remember that Merriman is Chief of Staff of the Brigade and not just in the Lincoln Battalion. His responsibilities for coordination are much wider. Copic sends out orders for him to report to the Estado Mayor and Copic and Merriman yell at each other for much of the day as they tour Belchite. Merriman says that their advance in town is stopped at a

barricade where a man got a bomb in the face. That man is believed to be James Woulfe of Canada. Hans Amlie's account for September 5 is in the endnotes.⁴³⁰



View down the Calle Mayor towards the Plaza Republica, Belchite. Soldiers hold masks because of the smell of death. ALBA Photo 11_1226, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman says that Chapayev performed well and must have captured the Fascist hospital, staffed with nuns in their robes. Merriman says that the dead were stacked like cordwood. He said that there were sniper holes in the hospital and that women in the hospital served to bring supplies, apparently, to the soldiers. The barricade at the end of town was in the vicinity of San Martin de Tours Church. Like the San Agustin church, many fascist soldiers had holed up there and another standoff occurred with many injuries. Merriman planned to flank the barricade overnight by breaking through the neighboring buildings. Overnight, however, a grenade attack over the

barricade injured Tom Hyde, who got shrapnel in his ankle. Hyde's son said that this injury effectively ended his father's front line service and he was repatriated on the Ausonia in December 1938 (Richard Hyde, personal communication). Overnight, guard was set up around the town although Merriman infers that some of the Fascists actually managed to escape.



International Brigade Sound Truck at Codo. ALBA PHOTO 11-1335, Tamiment Library, NYU

On the morning of the sixth, the Republican sound truck arrived and David Doran (Assistant Brigade Commissar) and a Spanish soldier made an announcement to the troops on the other side of the barricade.

Steve Nelson recalls the events of the day:



Dave Doran, who was my assistant up to this time, got hold of a propaganda truck, fitted with a phonograph, microphone, and loudspeaker. Never mind how he got it. He brought it up to the church, where the fascist resistance was centered. Hastily, he wrote out a speech. A Spanish boy read it into the microphone; the words went

Dave Doran (near Huesca), ALBA Photo 177-177009, Tamiment Library, NYU

bellowing across the fascist lines. "Fascist soldiers, those of you who are Spaniards, listen!" the loudspeaker thundered. "Your leaders are lying to you. Quinto is in Republican hands. You will get no reinforcements. The relief column sent from Saragossa has been smashed at Mediana. There is no relief for you in Belchite, there is only death!" "Come over to us and live. If you don't you will all be wiped out in our first assault. We have you surrounded on all sides, so none of you can escape. Our guns are trained on you this minute, to blow you to a million pieces. Drop your arms and come over the barricades one by one. All who come over will live."

Then silence. Doran's emphasis on death brought the first soldier over the barricade.

"What's the morale like?" Dave demanded.

Not good. That speech on the loudspeaker -- they are talking it over. The men are desperate, and only fear of the officers holds them; the officers are shooting them on the least provocation. But many have been killed or wounded. and the church and basement are nearly full of wounded. Many have had tourniquets on their arms or legs for three or four days, so gangrene has set in. No operations are possible. Ah, things are bad in there!"

If this is true, could you go back and bring a group of them to our lines?"

The prisoner didn't like the idea at all. It was a risky business, going back. "If your men don't shoot me, the others will. And if the officers find out--"

"I know all that, but it's the only choice we're giving you. Come back by way of this building, and slip your rifles across the sandbags".⁴³¹



Fascists taken prisoner at Belchite, ALBA PHOTO 11-1146, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman says that this single artillery soldier started an avalanche of soldiers pushing their rifles over the barricade. Amlie (notes below) tells an identical story. The assault on Belchite was over and the town that would not surrender to Napoleon surrendered to Doran.

Not all of the Fascists surrender peaceably. Two or three hundred of the garrison tried to make a break for the fascist lines. The story told by Lieutenant Hernández y Alcalá:

Afraid of the soldiers (those who wished to surrender) the officers stole away by one of the underground passages and took refuge in another strongly fortified building. We realized that there was more hard fighting in front of us.... Acting on orders, we moved closer to the building. Suddenly a few yards in front of us, we heard voices and distinguished a mass of people coming toward us. Some were women. There were shouts of "Camaradas!" We thought they were more of the people that had been liberated. But we always had orders to challenge all people coming from town and establish their identity before we let them pass. Then one commander shouted, and we realized what was happening. These were

fascists who had escaped through one of the underground passages with which the town was honeycombed, and they were driving civilians before them in order to prevent us firing effectively.

Our commander called on them to halt. The answer was a shower of grenades. Women, children, men and Fascists were so mixed up and running in all directions that it was impossible in the bad light to distinguish anything clearly. We noticed that some of the civilians were firing at us. They were officers in disguise, and we found them out afterwards. It was terrible for the time it lasted. But every one of the officers met his fate."⁴³²

Dave Doran would become Commissar of the Brigade shortly. Nelson tells why:

"Belchite was ours. I went back to the factory. I was feeling good. I hadn't slept for a hell of a while but I felt good. Everything was going fine.

Inside the mill, I saw Dave Doran. Dave shouted something and I started towards him.

'Steve, look out for Cris'ake!'. From the corner of my eye, I saw the window high in the factory wall and the church tower above the window, and at the same instant, something hit me hard on the cheek, and a terrible, fiery pain struck inside my thigh, and ran up into my stomach, a pain so fierce that I doubled up on the floor; in spite of the pain I rolled toward the brick walls to keep from being hit again".⁴²⁵

Steve Nelson would survive, but never again see action. Nelson would shortly be sent to Valencia to meet visitors and then ordered back to the US where he would go on a fund raising effort in speaking about Spain.

Merriman went into town after hearing of the surrender. His first thoughts were to get his transportation out of town before it was grabbed by the 153rd Anarchist Battalion. Merriman says that he

"organized" some good stuff and later Karl Sverchevsky (General "Walter") would complain that the 153rd Battalion sabotaged the reputation of the XVth Brigade:

17. During the siege of Belchite, the fascist like command of the 12th Corps deluged the eastern front with lying and slanderous telegrams about the robbery and shootings that, supposedly the 15th International Brigade was engaged in, and about the impossibility of "bringing it up to the front line." At the same time, they provoked clashes between the anarchist elements and the internationalists and advised the commander of the 153rd Spanish Brigade to sabotage my orders. This lie was so insolent and obvious that it even drove the command of the 5th Corps, which is not usually prone to put itself out for us, crazy, and Modesto then started a real row with Gen. Pozas, the front commander, over this and sent a very sharply worded telegram to Gen. Rojo demanding that the culprits be called to account.⁴³³



Fascist posters on the square in Belchite, September 1937. ALBA PHOTO 11-0596, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman says that he lost some trucks in the confusion over who "owned" the town and that he wanted to get his troops out as soon as possible onto the Mediana Road to move north, presumably to move to support the 57th British Battalion against an expected counterattack. But the Brigade had time to collect souvenirs and Merriman appears to warn the troops that this is a religious town and the women are conservative so restraint is necessary.

Merriman says "Defensive war a great one". It seems that he is showing admiration for his enemy. He says they were persistent until the end. Merriman cannot find Sidney Shostek (more on this on the next page). Merriman thinks that he gets promoted to Major for taking Belchite and the award was for his personal intervention on September 3rd which got the Americans moving into Belchite. Recall, however, that he was under a "Party Order" and had little choice. He also will find that promotions are not official until they are on paper.

September 7—8 Merriman's Adjutant Was Killed

7 Septiembre

Sta Regina

Late in the evening found out definitely that Sidney was killed behind the tank while directing it behind a prisoner. I was hoping he was only wounded. I have not been able to find his body. Shame. Wattis wounded - Skinner - Sidney lost while I slept or tried Russian songs.

7th Sept. Lazy day. Got off last of recommendations for promotions - reports of wounded & killed. Check on arms - everyone slept for the most part - Spanish Battalion missing many rifles. Talk about 12th Army Corps bulletin which announced the fall of Belchite on the 3rd when we took it on the 6th and are not the 12th Army Corps at all. Heard that Constanca {de la Mora} and Milly were here with {unreadable name... Bonzer?} correspondent but didn't see them. Reason probably late in day I drove to Azaila intending to go to Hajar. On way visited hospital, saw Steve - Paul Block died. Steve OK. While here in came Bill Lawrence, Bender, Joe North, Bob Minor - Dr. Busch, Bob Kerr & others. Went into field had long talk - Busch examined Steve all ok. Some problems in Valencia which Bill, Steve & Minor must settle. Steve to go several days. Steve & I bawled out for front line work. I told about situation in the Brigade. Returned to Brigade. Copic gone & came late - long discussion between {unreadable name}, Minor, Steve & I went to sleep. Wisely because they talked all night.

8 Septiembre

Natividad de Ntra. Sra.

This morning visited Belchite and went over the action with Kerr, North and Bender. Looting was still going on in great fashion and I even picked up a nice present for Marion which I sent back with the things to Albacete. They are two beautiful red bedspreads or something similar. During

the period more fights with Kaye & Martinez. The theory of Intendencia just seems to differ. Discussion with Copic in which he claimed they had not worked badly, etc. Disagreed. Political work also poor but men must not go without when we can get the stuff just because we are in war conditions. Kaye left to get stuff from Perales after long discussion with Political Commissar Milman sometimes a pain. Spent one late evening checking over the Our Fight edition. Frank {Ryan} going to Barcelona to have it printed. Good evening in a dirty place. Snipers killed two cavalry men of ours today.

§ § §

Merriman finds out on September 6 that his adjutant Sidney Shostek was shot. Shostek was walking with a prisoner behind a tank and was killed by a sniper. Marion Merriman fills in some details:

Only the square admitted enough light for Bob and me to read the Fascist posters still stuck to broken walls, posters depicting the horrors of Marxism rather than the horrors of the war that a small group of Fascists had started. I noticed there were posted rules for the modesty of young women, rules requiring long skirts and long sleeves, saying sin is woman's because she tempts man. There were no posters promising a government for all of the people.

As we walked, the thought of Sidney Shostek, so young and sincere and intelligent, who should have walked beside us, heightened my sense of tragedy of the ruined city. Bob told me again how he had sent Sid into Belchite on a mission after most of the fighting was over, not believing his aide to be in any real danger.

"Sidney was killed outright," Bob said. "I feel his loss more than any other person I've known here." Bob had kept Sid out of the street fighting as much as possible. Then, in a crucial moment, he had sent him to direct a tank with a prisoner to

show them where the military headquarters of the Fascists were. The prisoner went to the front of the tank and Sidney behind. But a second-story sniper shot Sid in the forehead. He never knew what hit him, Bob, said shaking his head as we walked. He added, quietly, "Sidney's loss here is great. It will be felt by all of us."

As Bob talked, I held his arm. I felt I had to support him.... Suddenly we heard piano music. "Look," Bob said, quietly, hushing me before I could respond. There, across a street in half a house, the front walls blown away, the inside looking like a stage, sat a Spanish soldier at a grand piano, playing Beethoven.⁴³⁴

Merriman is sorry that he cannot find the body but otherwise doesn't reveal his true feelings. It may be noted that Hans Amlie described the shooting of a "Sonchek" in his September 4 notes, and it is possible this was Sidney Shostek as there is no Sonchek in the Lincolns. While Marion reveals that he was crushed by Shostek's death, he just says "Shame" in his diary. Merriman says that Wattis was injured as was Bill Skinner and Sidney was killed "while I sang Russian songs". One wonders if Merriman was feeling guilt because he was with Copic instead of his men. He and Steve Nelson will soon face criticism for having been with the men during the battle. Merriman works on administrative duties on the 7th and hears the story about the 12th Army Corps (in which the Spanish 153rd Brigade resides) making claims of having taken Belchite on September 3. This story is documented in General Walter's exit document in November 1938. This story will ripple for days.

Constancia de la Mora, of the Foreign Press Office, and Milly Bennett are in Belchite but Merriman misses them. Milly mentions in a letter to Kate Mangan that she was in town but did not see Bob Merriman. At that time Bennett was leading the Press Office and "working 16 hour days". They are with a reporter from what appears to be a Russian wire service or newspaper. Merriman was in Azaila on the road to Hajar where there was a field hospital. The injured Steve Nelson was there and Merriman talks to him and signs him up for more political duties. Paul Block, who

was the Commissar of Company 3, died in the hospital. It appears that Dr. Irving Busch was the head of the hospital and looked in on Nelson.



Joe North, Bob Merriman, Lou Secundy, Earl Browder, Vladimir Copic, Bob Minor, David Doran and Briton David Kamy, Teruel, January 1938. ALBA Photo, 11_1865, Tamiment Library, NYU

The political staff from Albacete arrives: Joe North of the Daily Worker, Bill Lawrence, Ed Bender, Bob Minor and Bob Kerr who was the Canadian responsible. Merriman returns to the Brigade Headquarters north of Belchite. He says that Minor and Steve Nelson discussed things with a person (with an unreadable name) late into the night but Merriman went to sleep. The order here is jumbled because it would have been impossible for Nelson to move with his injury. This would have to have been in Azaila hospital.

On the morning of the 8th, North and Bender go into Belchite with Merriman. Merriman sees looting going on and apparently does not try to stop it. He, himself, picks up two bedspreads for Marion. While the Americans might think this is the "spoils of war", the conflict between the Spanish and Internationals over integration of the Brigades into the Spanish Army would be aggravated if the Spanish believed that the Americans were stealing from the people.

Merriman fights with Conrad Kaye and Ernesto Martinez over the operation of the Intendencia. Ernesto Martinez and Frederick Lutz would lead the Intendencia into April, 1938⁴³⁵. Food was missing for several days in Belchite and even water was in short supply at the beginning of the assault. Copic thinks the Intendencia did ok, but Merriman disagrees and had to deal with the risk of rebellion in the ranks because supplies were slow to follow the troops in. Merriman sends Conrad Kaye back to Perales to get more supplies. Merriman says that he has a tiff with British Political Commissar Mark Milman.

Merriman sees a copy of "Our Fight", the newspaper published by the Brigades and talks to Frank Ryan who was the editor of the paper. Merriman finishes the day noting that snipers are still around and killed two of the Brigade cavalry.

September 9—10 XVth Brigade Goes into Reserve

9 Septiembre

S. Pedro Claver

Copic left for a discussion in the Division. Protest against a statement made in Army of the East Staff that 15th Brigade was withdrawn before the action finished because we started to loot. Actually, we acted damn well I watched it and this is a political move which I don't like. Chief of Staff of 12th Army Corps removed for claiming taking of Belchite on the third. Copic returned and orders received to move to Vinaceite. Copic left to pick spot and since we had trucks we pulled out quickly – almost too quickly since nothing really prepared. Finally found men beyond next village after guard gave opposite instructions. Little done – Van den Berghe apathetic. Bad wind came up - real storm. Copic & I drove 3 km trying to find road coming into camp and finally gave up. My car ditched and finally met Dart who came ahead of Mac-Paps and had wreck on the way. We expected Battalion before I considered it possible - he left to direct train to Azaila.

10 Septiembre

S. Nicolás de Tolentino

Early in morning Dart back. Our men moved toward Azaila. Found road we looked for crossed river. Copic left again and I went up to direct in new Battalion. Boys tired and cold wind unpleasant - had hot meals cooked on a flat car. Good to see them - many messages from Marion - Marched over with boys and placed them in position - some small problem - arms promised which are not possible, etc. but in general OK. Joe and Bob came to discuss Dart and I am also convinced he is too weak. Much work preparing for sleeping and for rest. Weather awful - dust storms, etc. Nominations needed etc. Late in day received word that it is necessary to move to Albalate next day. Basha Van den Berghe came to see place. Attitude toward local property & population discussed

clearly. Men to go at 7 next morning to arrange for each Battalion housing.

§ § §

Merriman holds the fort while Copic goes to the Division Staff meeting, probably at Alcañiz, debriefing the battle of Belchite. At that meeting, General Walter and Lieutenant Colonel Copic are faced with the claim that the XII Division of the Army of the East (which contained the 24th Brigade which contained the 153rd Battalion) entered Belchite on the 3rd of September and took the city. They claimed that the XVth Brigade was pulled out of the battle because of looting. This infuriated Walter and he made it one of his 30 traitorous actions that he documented in his departure assessments.⁴³⁶ As a result of the meeting, the Chief of Staff of the XIIth Division was removed for claiming the victory in Belchite. On September 7, Colonel Sanchez Plaza of the XII Division claimed the victory in La Vanguardia newspaper in Barcelona.⁴³⁷ On the 5th of September, however, La Vanguardia had a banner headline that Belchite had fallen, quoting General Pozas who held a press conference on the 4th of September. President Companys of Barcelona released a press release for the September 5th edition congratulating the Army of the East and General Pozas on his victory. Given the timing of the Propaganda War versus the actual war, Merriman and Copic's "Party Order" reveals the urgency: Pozas and Companys had claimed a victory that had not yet occurred. While the "Party Order" did force the taking of the town, it did so at the expense of many deaths and as we will see shortly, considerable loss of respect amongst the XVth Brigade troops.

Merriman moves the Brigade to Vinaceite, which is on a parallel road from Belchite to Azaila. A number of small villages are in this area including Almochuel where the Americans will ultimately end up. Merriman runs into a severe dust storm on the way and puts his car into the ditch. He finds Rollin Dart who is there to place the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, which has moved up from the training base in Tarazona. Merriman is surprised that they are at the front already as he was not sure they were ready. He would have also received the Order of the Day from Commander Bielov at

Albacete ordering the move. In French, it says he is sending up the Mac-Paps on September 5 and they should be kept behind the lines because they were not ready.⁴³⁸ In an additional document (Command Order 156), Bielov informs the Intendencia that 100 members of the Mac-Paps don't have shoes on their feet. He says "It is mandatory that soldiers take shoes to the front".⁴³⁹

The 700 men of the Mac-Paps actually got out of Tarazona de la Mancha at noon on September 8 by train. On the 10th, the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion arrives by rail to Azaila and they are met by the Lincoln and British Battalions who have marched back to Azaila. The men were promised to get new arms. Merriman gets the men placed, but is ordered to move to Albalate the next day. Merriman expects "Basha" Van Den Berghe to have done some of the preparatory work but he is "apathetic". This is the first time we have seen this name attributed to Amandus or Armand Van Den Berghe. Van Den Berghe is worried about the appropriation of land and buildings for billets. They work on a policy on how to deal with the locals. Merriman discusses the ability of Rollin Dart to lead the Mac-Paps and he, Joe Dallet and Bob Thompson believe he is not a strong enough leader. The Mac-Pap command will change again before the next battle in October.

September 11—12 ••• Rehashing Belchite

11 Septiembre

S. Jacino

Men from Battallion left - order came to stand by. Kitchen being separated again and all trucks still moving then finally came a note from Walter to move on foot. A real howl came, some weather. Biting. The worst I have seen in Spain. Men ate along the way some damned late. Left last after approaching 24th Division for loan of trucks all busy. Finally drove on and found great confusion 900 places room only for 250, etc. Thälmann took some, etc. Went to {A.} Denis, weak attitude. 5 million litres of gas destroyed no transportation. Maybe should stay where we are etc. Bad impression. Obvious that sufficient housing not to be had. Found nearest place in field for Mac-Pap since they had not yet been in action. Late in day boys came dragging in - cold & damned tired. Kleber came with Markovich - shining & bright to take away the Dimitrov Battalion in his pocket. Copic disappeared all day with the Czech delegation. Kleber smooth and asked Chapayev if they wanted to change. Copic refused to talk on road. Traffic jam stopped him and he refused to give them up now. Past revelations, charges of Kleber etc. Next day Kleber

{flows over 12 September S. Leoncio}

removed as Divisional Commander. Good action but failed - 4 kilometers from Zaragosa. Led Lincoln boys at night into country on Lamb's decision not to spend too much time in placing them in tents etc. Refused and group returned and Detro housed them. Rebellion on road - part slept in field. Macpap OK and slow trip better than rest (That fucker Merriman). Next day hell to pay - Lamb not able to get men in control. Everyone criticized Doran - Copic - Me Lamb - led to slaughter etc. Why deceive us? Demands made - argument in street- town a mad wild

place as it is and this made it worse. Men said I quit - refuse to serve. Give me leave after one battle - Flam, Oliver others raising hell and held secret meeting by the bridge and demands made. Currents against C. I. etc. Demand for Batt. Meeting. Food not good, etc. Much of what men said correct. I had long serious talk with Copic.

§ § §

Merriman is told to move the men to Albalate and they move out in a howling windstorm. The weather is the worst Merriman has seen in Spain. Rain and wind will make the new camp into a swamp. Merriman tries to borrow more trucks from the 24th Battalion but is told that they are busy so these worn out troops will be marched miles to get to new quarters. Merriman needs spots for 900 men and only finds room for 250. He meets with a "Dennis" who we interpret to be André Denis who worked as an adjutant to the Chief of the 35th Division under General Walter. He learns that 5 million litres of gasoline have been destroyed in the rear. No petrol is available for the trucks. Discussions are held where it is suggested that maybe they should just stay put in Azaila. Merriman finds out that at Albalate there is no room for all the troops so the Mac-Pap Battalion is put into the field. The Mac-Paps have not been in battle so they pull the short straw for accommodation. The orders of the 35th Battalion reveal that the 11th Brigade (Thaelmans) have been given accommodation in Albalate proper.

It was late on the afternoon of the 11th that the men had moved from Azaila. If the men went to Albalate, that would be about another 12 mile march, through Hajar. If they went to Almochuel, that was a 3 mile march west. Marion Merriman will note that she and Bob toured Albalate together, so it is probable that Merriman drove that far south to check out accommodations. The orders of the 35th note that the XVth Brigade was in Almochuel and Vinaceite on the 12th of September.

In the midst of the cold, rain and mud, General Kleber (Manfred Stern) rolled in with Mirko Markovich and again made his claim

for the Dimitrov Battalion to be pulled out of the XVth and sent to the 45th Division. Kleber was stalled in his assault on Zaragosa and probably needed more troops to force his way into the City. Copic is not at the Brigade Headquarters as he is touring around with a Czech delegation (and perhaps with his own wife in tow from the photo below). Kleber asks Chapayev for his opinion on moving out of the XVth. The indication here is that Chapayev may have wanted to move but Copic counters by giving Chapayev leave to go to Valencia so that he cannot sway the decision. Copic will not give the Dimitrovs up easily.



Vladimir Copic and Sonia Copic with officers touring Belchite, ALBA PHOTO 177_177045, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman says that there are previous issues with Kleber and that there have been charges made against him. At this point, General Walter starts to coin the epithet "Kleberism" which will be equated with Fascism by the end of the war. Kleber wrote a long epistle on his time in Spain and his judgment of this situation is certainly biased and verges on paranoia about how he continually was defeated in his decisions in Spain. Kleber describes the attack on Zaragoza which was under the supervision of Comrade Leonidov, a senior Russian advisor. Kleber's proposed attack on Zaragoza went through Villamayor de Gallego and Kleber maintained his 13th Brigade made it to that location (although he said Villamayor

de Gelaro). The 12th Brigade of the 45th led by Italian Penchienati went in the opposite direction, turning right, away from the approach to Zaragoza, instead of left and approaching the city from the east. The 45th Division, thus split, and an open middle with two unprotected flanks put them in a very bad position which stopped their attack. Kleber maintained that he had gotten to Villamayor when a counterattack of Fascist tanks pushed the Polish troops back out of the town. At the staff meeting with Walter present, Kleber was told by General Rojo that they never got near Villamayor. Kleber said that his Dzhuro Dzhakovich Battalion had captured five forts but had to give them up in the counteroffensive. Kleber said:

Not wanting to belittle the accomplishments of the division that General Walter commanded, I must say that in taking Quinto and Belchite, about fifty guns and an entire group of tanks participated, under cover of our entire air force. If my group had had even one-third of those forces, we would have held onto the forts that we had captured and Villamayor de Galero [sic]. By the way, we must offer thanks for the taking of Quinto and Belchite primarily to the Dimitrov Battalion, that very battalion which in fact had belonged to my Division.⁴⁴⁰

Luigi Longo, "El Gallo" (the Rooster), came from Madrid and heard the accusations against Kleber. Gallo ensured Penchienati that Kleber would soon be removed. Kleber's days were numbered, not because he made enemies of Copic and Walter over the Dimitrov Battalion, but because he disagreed with General Rojo over the dissolution of the XIIIth Dombrowski Brigade and the loss of his battalions to other units.⁴³⁴

Copic has relayed back to Merriman that Kleber has been removed and they will keep the Dimitrovs. He tells Merriman that Kleber got to 4km from Zaragoza (the Villamayor de Gallego claim).

With the men marched out of Azaila, Leonard Lamb wants to get them down and placed and doesn't want to waste time looking for locations. The men are put in tents in the field in terrible weather and later pouring rain. Philip Detro coordinated their placement. A rebellion amongst the Americans starts over the

bivouac, many men just sleep in the field. An epithet is tossed at Merriman. Men are revolting against him, Copic, Lamb, and Doran. Merriman makes a pun "Lamb to the Slaughter" describing the rebellion. The leaders are accused of sending them into the meat grinder of Belchite. They feel deceived about their orders. The town is a "mad wild place" and the revolt makes things worse. Men say they will take no more orders and fight no more. Men who have been in battle only at Belchite are asking to be let go home.



Rain in Camp, Almochuel ALBA PHOTO 11_0831, Tamiment Library, NYU

Two men, Emyl Flam and Seaman Louis Oliver, are again leading the revolt. They hold a secret meeting without the officers. Flam will not survive the war and Oliver will be pulled out of the Lincolns by November, ending his tour as the thorn in Merriman's side. Ben Findlay's review of Seaman Oliver says "Political record is worse. Organized a rump meeting in Albalate to try and force the removal of battalion leadership. Admits to organizing of meeting and makes it look like someone else did it".⁴⁴¹ Louis Oliver will continue to drink and while being dried out in Albacete, he fell off the wagon again. He would end up being assigned to the Labor Battalion of the 45th Division and finally, imprisoned in Casteldefels near Barcelona. He would come out of Spain, however, with the group on the Ausonia in December 1938. The main complaints of the men are poor food and the leadership of the Comintern. Merriman has to agree with the complaints of the men about the food.

September 13—14 Moises Sapir Settles Down Men

{flows over 13 Septiembre

S. Amado}

and told him of our mistakes. He didn't like it and had to take it. Meeting of protest held & Sapir looking into ring leaders. Visited Mac-Pap and had long session with Bob later and had to visit Walter. Told him of mood and raised question of care for men. He told me and I told him. Special reports demanded. Question of arms for new Battalion. Bob & I walked and talked good once again. Company meeting held after Dave rallied forces against outbreaks. Went early in morning to Mac-Pap – Copic talked - welcome and history of 15th Brigade Dave & I made short talk. Cuban question discussed after. M.G. Company had meeting to hold for Battalion meeting. Robbie feeling better I held up transfer of men to Lincoln-Washington until tomorrow when Battalion meeting will be held. Fight with political commissar of Intendencia future vs present. Don't destroy livestock of country like Soviet Union. Transmissions to be reorganized. Basha complained about secrets and Sapir. Georgeovitch - Charley & Basha go to Albacete. Clearer air - Chapayev on vacation planned in case Dimitrov must be given up. At 3 held meeting at which Walter spoke - sharply and clearly

{flows over 14 Septiembre

Exalt. de la Sta. Cruz}

men took it. Altho ran up with requests later. Talks on street after comments by Copic on action. Mike Pappas objects. Word from Marion. Chief of Operations of Division Butkovsky (Capt) died. Funeral in Valencia. Political work discussed when Copic heard of Am. Meeting. Much work to be done. Guard sent to funeral. Money given out today - even though Goodman has not returned. Bob & Joe came in late just when I wanted to swim in moonlight. Time in Albalate interesting although hectic many meetings took place - English got excited about promises

to go home and said they would not go any further. In later P. W. meetings, Flam & others calmed down. Oliver & Co. even refused to come to meetings - food increased although I still struggle with Intendencia about giving out so much. Next day after talk of Walter, we received the order to move back where we came from. Luckily it came after the storm had passed and so it was not too

§ § §



Moise Sapir, John Gerlach, Bob Merriman, Rollin Dart, David Doran and Robbie Robinson, Almocheuel, September 1937. ALBA PHOTO 11-0755, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman starts flowing his diary from page to page. His last comment on September 12 was that he sat down to talk to Copic and he told him of our mistakes... emphasis "our". Copic doesn't want to hear it. Merriman repeats that the Americans held a protest meeting and Moise Micha Sapir (aka Majjesz Moshe "Michel" Safir/Sapir) will look into it. Sapir was described as an Albacete paymaster, but here it looks as if he may be on the Division Staff in a more serious role. Sapir will become a member of the Botwin Battalion in 1938 and be killed in the retreats.

Ivan Rujevcic (John Gerlach, photo above) was busy taking a census of all the men in the Lincoln and Washington Battalions. Edwin Bee would be working on a similar list for the British. Merriman has gotten far behind on his paperwork and the run made to Valencia by Kibby Goodman is clear now. It was a run to pick up the cash that was to be paid to the men on September 10 in their first pay of September. The men are not getting paid and this is adding to displeasure. Merriman is partially responsible since with two actions, one at the end of August and one at the start of August, the paylists are woefully out of date. And the Albacete paymasters don't give out money without a payroll with an accurate number of men. Merriman will shortly ask Marion to help him straighten the lists out.

Merriman meets with Bob Thompson who has come up with the Mac-Paps. They have decided that Rollin Dart (also in the photo above) can't do the job of leading the Mac-Paps and Merriman goes to Walter, presumably to get his agreement to replace Dart with Thompson. Thompson will become Commander of the Mac-Paps and Joe Dallet will be his commissar. Robbie Robinson is back from a severe illness and will be helping out in rebuilding the morale of the men. Recall that Robinson was in the Maritime Sailors Union and would be of help against the railing of Seaman Oliver.

Merriman tells Walter that the Commanders need to think more about the care and feeding of the men. Walter gave it back to Merriman. Merriman is also angry that his promotion and the promotions he has put forward have not been acted on. Walter had promised a lot at Belchite in the heat of battle and seems to have forgotten his promises. Merriman comes back to tell Thompson what he heard. The Mac-Paps are underarmed and it doesn't appear that weapons are coming.



David Doran, kneeling, Robbie Robinson, to Doran's right, and Harry Poll, sitting in white camisa, hold a meeting with the Americans of the 24th Battalion in Almochuel in September 1937. ALBA Photo 11_0718 of the Harry Randall Collection, Tamiment Library, NYU.

Merriman gets Dave Doran to rally the troops against the disgruntled elements. They hold a company meeting to discuss the grievances. More meetings are held at the company and battalion level. Merriman is still fighting with the Intendencia and this time it is about the taking of livestock to feed the troops. Merriman doesn't want the war to leave the peasants without their stock.

Basha Van Den Berghe complained about "secrets" and Sapir. Merriman says that Georgeovitch, "Charley" and Van Den Berghe are to go to Albacete to resolve the issue over the Dimitrovs going to the 45th Division. While Copic says no, Albacete says yes and it will take a Party decision to resolve this. Georgeovitch and a Comrade Yanakiev, possibly called "Charley" by Merriman, were both assigned to the XVth Brigade at the beginning of September. On September 10, they were ordered back to Albacete where General Gal had complained that neither of

them were entitled to wear the Captain's stripes which were on their hats.⁴⁴² Yanakiev was stripped back down to a Lieutenant and Georgeovich was confirmed to have no rank in the International Brigades. By October 5, Yanakiev was arrested and sent to jail for 12 hours. Commandant Bielov was incensed and ordered him released to the Base saying that the Commission of Control did not have the authority to arrest an officer.⁴⁴³

General Walter comes to talk to the Brigade and lays down a firm talk. In photographs of Walter with the troops he is shown inspecting rifles and training soldiers. Walter will write in his debrief at the end of the war that the Brigade could not keep their weapons clean, that men just tossed their cleaning rods, that there was only one rag in the whole Brigade and that the weapons were so worn the rifling was gone. After Walter laid down the law, men still approached him with requests.

On the street, Copic argues with people about Belchite. Mike Pappas apparently objected to Copic. Merriman has to arrange an honor guard to go to a funeral in Valencia. He also is supposed to pay the men but Carroll (Kibby) Goodman of the Regiment du Tren) has not returned with the payroll.

Merriman says that the time in Albalate was interesting but short. After only a couple of days there, the Brigade was moved back to near Almochuel. Landis⁴⁴⁴ says that this was part of training for the combined brigade but it seems that the Brigade needed rest more than training. The issues with the British continue to revolve around their promised repatriation and with their previous commanders Aitken and Cunningham going back to England, others must have thought that this was policy. They refuse to move further. In a "P.W." meeting, Emil Flam and others calmed down. Within the Lincolns, Seaman Oliver has backed off his protests and this may have been helped by better food. Merriman feels that the Intendencia is now overfeeding the men.

September 15—16 Rain and Mud and Now Sick

{flows over 15 Septiembre

S. Nicomides}

difficult. In meeting of Commanders explained to them - political and military need of such a move and urged them to explain more. O'Daire late. In afternoon I gave a long talk about the action and explained many things - poured it into some of the chronic beefers & Hecht blinked. One asked "Couldn't you have done better, etc." Stooge and didn't know what he was talking about. Later men put on guard about being ready to move. 18 English refused and I had to threaten them with arrest and next morning Copic decided to have a meeting - held & he discussed the future & past of the English Battallion and what it would mean to allow these men to disobey or pull out now. Arrest & sent to front with Spanish Brigade. No discussion after meeting some still held out. Help from Division with trucks did not materialize and Lou Secundy did a good job of transportation with our own stock altho it took three whole days to do the job. Feny{?} came from Army Corps and gave us an insight into politics here and stressed need for party work - secretaries etc. in all units. Speed necessary also special work. Garcia from Division to be consulted often. Late at night went swimming in river in the moonlight. Fine stuff. Bill Wimmer came in with

{flows over 16 Septiembre

S. Cipriano}

rather hysterical letter from Steve. About crime against Party and taking of Americans from 24th & English & hopes that this would cut down losses, etc. I do not agree. Party Decision & must be so reversed. Sick a good part of the day. Goodman returned without money because no list of effectives and red tape which had its roots in the Dimitrov Battalion affair. Doesn't pay to be stubborn about orders. Although Base made a mistake also since we have been busy fighting not keeping books.

Markovich has been here for them – even went to Battalion. Copic wants him arrested if he does it again. Lack of money now serious and all hands are working on the pay lists. Some job. Expected Marion tonight - although without luck. Still rather sick and eating very little - promotion lists still a worry old and new etc. Quite a mess. And result same as originally suggested. Litwin & Wimmer went to change money. New car overheated and left. Still in discussion about who will go to Albacete I stall. Copic wrote a letter to ЦИКА Party & Sapir in to take it to Valencia.

§ § §

Merriman is flowing the diary from page to page at this point as he knows he needs to stop by 21 September and move to another empty diary book. The end of the previous page said "Next day the order came from Walter to move back where we came from. Luckily it came after the storm had passed and so it was not too" difficult.

Merriman is listening to the troops (and perhaps to Dave Doran who has been speaking with the men) and more meetings are held where he explained the decisions about Belchite. Merriman gave it to the "chronic beefers". He mentions either Leo (of the Mac-Paps) or Joe (Chauffer in the Brigade Commissariat) Hecht. He does not name Louis Oliver, with whom he has been fighting since spring. The men were put on notice that they may have to move again.

Merriman meets with the British as well and there is a core group of 18 Britons who still refuse to take orders. Copic is forced to come and speak with them and he explains how bad it would be for the Brigades if this early volunteer unit now quits. He leaves open the option that he will just transfer them to Spanish Battalions. Fred Copeman, in an oral history interview with the Imperial War Museum mentions this discussion with Copic.⁴⁴⁵

Merriman mentions a "Feny" or possibly "Ferry" from Army Corps who comes to explain the political situation. There are no Feny's or Ferry's amongst the known British, Canadians or Americans. There were four or five Ferry's in the French contingent including a Jeanne Ferry who was a cultural commissar for the French Medical Bureau and was attached to the 35th Division. But this message and discussion is at the highest level of decision making and Merriman mentions the moving of the Dimitrovs is a Party decision. A possible name for this visitor is Gustave Fein⁴⁴⁶, the Serbian Communist Central Committee responsible in Albacete. But, finally, there was also a Polish officer who was the 5th Army Commissar in February 1938 named Alexandre Ferry.⁴⁴⁷ Ferry had been a Commissar in the XIIIth Brigade and would be able to explain this adjustment which was caused by the termination of the XIIIth Brigade and reassignment of units to fill the hole it left.



"Lieutenant Commander Abad Garcia on left José_María Varela Political_Commissar of the 24th Battalion on right of the 24th Battalion", ALBA Photo 11-1787 and ALBA Caption, Tamiment Library, NYU

The incorporation of secretaries in each unit is required and Captain Luis Garcia Marquez of the division staff⁴⁴⁸ needs to be

consulted frequently. This is a different Garcia than identified in the photo to the above from Tamiment who is identified as Lieutenant Abad Garcia. This needs resolution. In the photo above, he is badged as a Captain, not a Lieutenant. At the point of the dispute with the troops, this same Captain is shown intervening with Doran and the Seaman's Company.



Enlargement of photo 11-0723 in the Randall Collection in Tamiment Library. The officer in the cap on the right is Juan Garcia Marquez and he was clearly involved deeply in the dealing with the rebellion of the American troops in the 24th Battalion.

It is believed that the man in the image above has been misidentified as Juan Abad Garcia (who will not reach the rank of Captain) but is rather Juan Garcia Marquez of the Division Staff. This demand for consultation reflects the control being exercised by the Spanish 5th Army Corps. Juan Abad Garcia will stay with the Lincoln-Washington Brigade until the Battle of the Ebro.

Merriman finishes his day with his second favorite sport... swimming in the moonlight. His favorite sport involved tossing grenades.



Bela Wimmer, WWII photo, Ancestry.com

Bill Wimmer^c from Transports arrives and brings a letter from Steve Nelson who is in Valencia. Nelson is irate about the treatment of the Americans who are in the 24th Battalion and English Battalion and wants them returned to their traditional English speaking units. Merriman says that the decision to have Americans and English embedded into Spanish Battalions is a party decision and only the party can reverse it, not the command structure.

Kibby Goodman returned from Albacete or Valencia without the payroll. The issue was that the paylists were not correct. This is probably the reason that Merriman was left waiting for Goodman's return, since coming back empty handed without the money would really irritate Merriman. Merriman says that this is related to the Dimitrov affair where Albacete wanted to move the Dimitrovs to the 45th Brigade and Copic wanted to keep them in the XVth Brigade. Albacete was sending Copic a message. Every two weeks the paylists had to have each soldier listed by rank (since the pay was related to rank) and each soldier must sign for their pay. The Brigade, being in battle, did not spend any time keeping the paylists current and might not have put that little "x" next to those soldiers who would no longer be drawing pay. Merriman knows that they need to fix this but he has worn down and is now sick. It appears that he has intestinal problems since he is not eating and can't keep food down. Typhoid became

^c Bela William Wimmer (William Wolfe Willer) was born January 18, 1911, in Fibert, WV. He was a steel worker who arrived in Spain on April 24, 1937. He served Washington Battalion and was assigned to the Albacete Auto Park in XVth Brigade Transports. He fought at Brunete, Belchite, Fuentes del Ebro, Teruel, Seguro de los Baños, and the Ebro Offensive. Wimmer returned to the US on December 15, 1938 aboard the *Paris*. Wimmer would make Staff Sergeant in WWII serving in the Pacific Theater and gain three battle stars and a good conduct medal. Bela Wimmer passed away June 1984 in Plainview, TX.

epidemic in the Brigades during October 1937. General Walter later said 1000 men in two Brigades got typhoid. Other diseases such as "dirt fever", a bacterial infection of the lungs which is common in agricultural regions, and yellow jaundice (hepatitis) were widespread amongst the troops. Merriman realizes that the paylists are problem but he says the {Albacete} Base is wrong not to send the money since they were in combat for this pay period (Sept 1 - Sept 10).

Mirko Markovich is in camp and is lobbying for movement of the Dimitrovs to the 45th. Copic is infuriated by this and orders Markovich not to talk to troops in the XVth. He says he will have him arrested.



Harvey Litwin, RGASPI photo Fond 545/Opis6/Delo935

Merriman also is supposed to have completed the promotion lists to fill in behind those injured at Belchite. His original suggestions appear to pass. Alfred Litwin and Wimmer spend the day exchanging money. This would indicate that the Brigade had resources in American dollars and needed to convert them to pesetas so that Merriman would not default on payroll for September 10.

Copic and Merriman are still deciding who should go to Albacete to make the case for keeping the Dimitrov Battalion. Merriman stalls on the decision. Copic writes a letter to "цика Party" and Moise Sapir will be the courier of the letter. цика is the name of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party in Moscow. Copic is taking this question all the way to Stalin.

September 17—18 “Copic No Help to English Party”

17 Septiembre

S. Pedro de Arbués

Since 16 - had discussion with Litwin about way party works - inspired by overlooking in which letter read - Litwin thought Copic was demanding a new Chief of Staff. Talked with Copic who denied such a statement altho feebly in my estimation. Moving dragged out - atmosphere not good & I didn't feel too hot. English finally left- tomorrow problem should be settled. Last one to leave and on the way with Secundy met Marion on the road. Went back to visit Albalate and saw it from the high ground. Returned later to Almochuel where pay lists were not yet ready and much confusion existed - found room and rambled around in general getting straightened up. List of effectives first problem and went to work immediately getting it fixed up. Eider working poorly. Many boys still in Barcelona who were sent there and have not returned with stuff. {Abe} Harris to Albacete to bring supplies

Reorganization of staff was main

{flows over 18 Septiembre

S. Tomás de Villaneuva}

problem altho no staff officers exist - Van den Berghe away etc. Just before Sapir finally left English Battalion problem came up again. Bourne spoke with Copic & I've decided to send Jim to Albacete to protest against Paynter, Aitken & Cunningham. Men refused to be satisfied so Dave & I also agreed on Lt. Richardson - only room for one since Dashev{sky} left and Bourne to wait until next morning. Next morning Copic saw Bourne - blew his top and called me in. Complete disagreement on problem of English showed itself - Copic no help to English party - showed lack of political outlook. I shall ask Division to

§ § §

Robert Merriman or Alfred Harvey Litwin read a letter that should probably have been kept private. In it, Litwin interpreted Copic as saying that Merriman would be removed as Chief of Staff. Merriman had not read the memo carefully enough and saw that this could be a conclusion from the memo. Merriman confronted Copic with this and Copic denied it, but not to Merriman's satisfaction. Copic's willingness to chew through his staff continues.



Herman (Gabby) Klein (left) and Louis Eider (right) in Ambite in November 1937. ALBA Photo 11_0988, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman is moving the men back from Albalate to Almochuel. As he said on the 16th, this would be a three-day operation by truck since Lou Secundy could only muster a few trucks. The English are gone and Merriman finally moves up in the last truck. He meets Marion Merriman on the road and they have a reunion. Presumably with Marion, he returns to sightsee Albalate. When the Merrimans make it to Almochuel he finds out the paylists are still not straight and he needs to fix them up. Merriman accuses Louis Eider of not working out well. Merriman sends Abe Harris of the Intendencia back to Albacete to bring up supplies. Marion Merriman recalls:⁴⁴⁹

Exhausted after the ten full days of fighting at Quinto and Belchite, the brigade was allowed to rest at Azaila. Bob dispatched an urgent note to me: "Dear Girl: I am sending the car and you are to return with it. Our bureau of records work is awful and must be straightened out. You must come

immediately, without delay. The car cannot wait. I need it and you. Love, Bob."

I was assigned as a passenger in a special headquarters car. As we motored north, I passed the hours savoring the thought that soon I would be with Bob again. Eventually we saw signs of the brigade, familiar vehicles, and suddenly we passed Bob's own car. Each driver recognized what had happened and screeched to a halt on the dusty road.

Bob and I ran to each other. We hugged for a long moment. We couldn't just stand there in the road, so I joined him in his car. Despite others being with us, I pulled myself close to Bob. As we drove to Azaila and the brigade at rest, I thought: so sweet, so satisfying just to be able to touch my darling again.

Merriman is reorganizing the Brigade Staff but everyone is on leave. The books are a mess. Albacete is refusing to send the payroll until Merriman can get the paylists in order. Merriman pleads that they were just in a battle and he couldn't have been expected to do paperwork, but Albacete is putting the squeeze in any way they can to force Copic to give up the Dimitrovs and Merriman is the man in the middle. Van den Berghe is away (being sent to Albacete to deal with the Dimitrov Battalion placement) and Sapir is in Valencia dealing with Copic's letter to the Party.

Jim Bourne is in Almochuel and it falls to him to go back to Albacete to state the Brigade position on repatriation of the British Battalion. At this point, the British thought they would be following Wally Paynter, George Aitken and Jock Cunningham home. In tapes at the International War Museum in London, Fred Copeman, Bob Cooney and Peter Kerrigan also discuss the British recall to London.⁴⁵⁰ A Central Committee meeting of the Party is held to discuss who should return to England and who should stay in Spain. Merriman implies that Harry Pollitt, head of the British Communist Party, needs help at this point in settling down the British Battalion and supporting his decisions about who will stay and who will go, but instead Copic deals with the issue as he

normally does, without tact. Both Pollitt and Bill Rust from England will arrive in late 1937 to deal with the morale issues amongst the Britons. In the London meeting, Aitken and Cunningham are told they won't return to Spain. There are accusations of some of the British leaders trying to make names for themselves in Spain and in Copeman's words, "Jock just came apart. He broke down". Kerrigan would later say that, within a year, Cunningham took to the road, tramping, and many years later he met him and he had been in and out of mental institutions. Copeman and Tapsell would return to Spain along with Cooney and a contingent of about 400 new recruits. This would be the nearly last supply of Britons to Spain as recruitment in England was stopped because of the cost of lives to the British Party. The rebellion in the British ranks was as (or more) severe than it was for the Americans after Belchite. Copic had no sympathy for the problem of the English-speaking Brigade and probably made Merriman's job more difficult in settling down the troops.



Two names arise here... Lieutenant Richardson and a "Dasheff". Dasheff can't be Morris Dashevsky^d, who was wounded in Brunete on July 24 and returned home in August, but more likely is Gilberto Racheff of the Mac-Paps. We are not sure of the relationship of these men to the discussion of the British Battalion. Richardson may have been promoted within the 57th Battalion. The first two would return home, Richardson in the fall of 1937 and Dashevsky in the fall of 1938. Perhaps they were two who were chosen for repatriation in order to

provide some relief in the pressure Merriman was facing.

^d Morris Dashevsky was born September 7, 1904. He lived in Springfield, MA. He arrived in Spain on May 12, 1937. He served with the Lincoln-Washington Battalion and was wounded at Brunete. He returned to the US on August 28, 1937 aboard the *President Harding*.

September 19—20 Merriman's First Diary Ends

{flows over from 19 Septiembre

S. Jenero}

remove you as Chief of Staff if this happens again. Part of Span. Army etc. hot words and finally cooled down – ends unpleasant just the same - Sent Bourne off in morning. My girl Milly arrived in the evening with KoKo and nothing but Burton on her lips. Tale became more romantic day by day. She talked with Amlie & Halliwell about the death. She is here to gather material for Hemingway for small book on Quinto & Belchite. She interviewed Copic, Smrcka - Bradley - Detro and others. Also on one occasion we drove over with Stepanovitch to Belchite - he left for 11 Brigade and we walked thru the town - step by step deserted now except for cats and mice. Effect late in day not good. Smell lingers although place looked better. Fortification on edge of town splendid with rails & cement. Milly left after successful stay – Slater to Lerida - forgot to interview me. Told about arrest in Moscow - foreign department.

20 Septiembre

S. Eustaquio

{blank}

§ § §

Merriman finishes his thought from the previous page. He and Copic have words over Merriman's plan to send James Bourne to Albacete to deal with the British unrest. Richard Baxell says "On September 4, 1937, Will Paynter wrote Harry Pollitt, advising him that yet again the battalion was in a perilous state, with only sixty active volunteers, and complaining that 'for the last three months there has only been a trickle of volunteers coming in'".⁴⁵¹ A major policy shakeup will occur on 23 September where the International Brigades are formally integrated into the Spanish Army and where 50% of the soldiers in each Battalion should be Spaniards. Much of the unrest revolves around the XVth Brigade

losing its identity as an English speaking and Anglo-American led unit. Steve Nelson's angry letter back to Merriman can also be viewed in that light. Antony Beevor asserts that volunteers who arrive in Albacete during September could be literally shanghaied into other units.⁴⁵² The conspiracy theory of how the Brigades were integrated into the Spanish Army, however, is contradicted by the reality that after September 1, 1937, 320 more Americans would arrive in Spain (including the writer's father) and would end up in the XVth Brigade. Merriman sends Bourne off to Albacete to argue the case for the XVth.



Chapayev (Yugoslav Commander) and Fred Copeman of the British Battalion. Source: Moscow Archive Photo 177_177024. Tamiment Library, NYU

Fred Copeman was quoted by Richard Baxell as actually being in favor of strict militarization of the XVth Brigade. Copeman said:

I was determined that in future an advance would be under the strict discipline of capable officers. An officers' mess was organized, with its own cookhouse and other amenities. All men, from section leader upwards, had meals with the battalion commander. Men were expected to salute all officers. This at first was a knotty problem. I decided the best way to overcome it was to start saluting every man myself,

irrespective of rank, whom I met in the village. It was surprising how quickly the lads took this up and, with few exceptions, came to make a point of getting their salute in first".⁴⁴²



David Doran, Marion Merriman, Bob Merriman, John Gerlach (Comrade Ivan), and unnamed soldier, ALBA PHOTO 177-177027, Tamiment Library, NYU

Both Merrimans are still in Almochuel and Milly Bennett arrives with "KoKo". The letters between Milly Bennett and Marion Merriman mention Koko and this would be another person who is at the Valencia Propaganda Office. A letter mentions "bright young Koko" as a writer so it is probably not Constanca de la Mora. Merriman says that Bennett has been talking with Hans Amlie and Bill Halliwell about the death of her erstwhile lover, Wallace Burton, at Belchite. Milly Bennett will marry Hans Amlie in December.

Milly is working for Ernest Hemingway, getting material on the battles of Quinto and Belchite. She has interviewed most of the

senior staff including Copic, Radomir Smrcka, Carl Bradley, Phil Detro and others. Merriman says that they drove over to Belchite to see the city and this could be the point described by Marion Merriman (and quoted previously here). Stepanovich goes along.

Merriman notes that Hugh Slater and the British are going to Lerida. Lerida was the base of the Fifth Army Corps. There is significant political and military maneuvering going on within the Brigade during this rest period.

Merriman finishes with the news from Bennett that there was an arrest in Moscow in the Foreign Department. No details are forthcoming, but this was the period of the Show Trials in Moscow and many people were being purged from positions of power. It would likely be an acquaintance of the Merrimans and Bennett.

September 29 Merriman Starts His Second Diary

29th of Sept.

Almochuel

When Marion left last time I also sent my diary with her. Now it is necessary to start a new one and I have put it off until now. We are ready to move to a sector between Huesca and Zaragoza and while preparations are under way I shall attempt to summarize the stay here in Almochuel.

During the stay Bill S. we had several sessions on the establishing of party work etc. Dave and I insisted we had anticipated it and already had started it etc. Organisation to be based on cos {sic} with Battalion sec{'y}s and also one for the Brigade. Later decided this was to be Jim Bourne. All to be members of Spanish party and dues paid from Jan. of this year. Limit on discussions in meetings and open to all who want to come. Purpose to strengthen discipline in army and to openly fight Trotskyite and bad elements from among the anarchists. Many other details such as non-participation of officers etc.

Bill & I had discussion with Copic about our disagreements on English question and story retold by Copic differed at least in tone and intensity from original incident.

Policy of taking out old comrades long in the line & good records discussed and many comrades taken out. Steve had to make a talk against Amlie in Benicassim (shooting off his mouth). Steve to go. Copic doesn't like it. Robbie to be saved. Bradley to go etc. Makes quite a change but necessary. Marion left. It was understood that I was to attend a special party meeting of Americans (mostly) in Valencia on the following Sunday along with six or seven others from the Brigade. Copic given special invitation. At last moment because of stand by order no one went

except Jim Bourne, who has not yet returned with either Pete, the pay money or the car.

After some days Sapir & Bourne came from Albacete. Sapir had 500,000 advance because lists are still not straight. Found out dope about Schmidt in Madrid etc. General meeting on subject and such orders which no one seemed to hurry about. On the way here Paynter, Kerr, Dunbar had a bad wreck in *camionette*. Luckily all only scratched. Discussions with Paynter were mild and he joined in accusation of Cunningham and Aitken (had done best he could). Blamed Tapsell and told about line he took against SU etc. 42 new English comrades arrived and 20 planned to be sent home. After all the fighting and all of the talk about working by official government order etc. Copic let them go on Paynter's word didn't even know who left and the much disputed problem was finally solved in the way Dave and I suggested from the start. It was foolish to try and keep them in the face of the situation which had been created. As on the case of the promotion lists in which Copic ordered them done & redone - they finally came out after no less than 6 full days of wasted work the same way we wanted to do them at first. But he objected.

The English comrades left tonight, the Americans several days ago. Some who have had the chance to do don't choose to run. Situation generally eased by sending some out all of the time.

2% of our people are allowed to be on leave all the time by law so we are now taking advantage of this and sending out Spanish comrades who are long in the line with no leave, etc. Jose Amano {Maria Sastre?} made adjutant and is handling this and it helped his prestige immediately. Must build up more Spanish comrades.

We have waited all their time and could have sent many men on leaves. We always hesitate too long on these matters.

Many times lately Copic blows his top. I give him a report he fails to read, loses it and then raises hell about it later. Someday I'll blow my top in a big way. I'll take this dirt so long and no longer.

Walter promised many things during the fight which he changed radically after. Too many rash promises in this army.

Dart finally brought to staff along with {Radomir} Smrcka and the work as operations officer only started when Dunbar came with a demand from the English for an important post. Political necessity of change explained to Dart who took it well. Dunbar starting ok. Dart a special staff officer.

Eleventh and 32 Brigade moved into second line, we remained here. Information department did good observation work on both sectors. Fascist planes still in evidence and caused one Battalion in 32 Brigade to give up an advance they made.

Once a Yugoslav delegation came which took Copic out of circulation another day and a half. They came just at the time we received the order for the Dimitrov Battalion to go to the 45th Division. Not a word from Copic. No arms first rule and second give them some. Let's not send them away totally unarmed etc. One Yugoslav from base bawled hell out of him for his order on holding all arms. Held farewell formation in which everyone spoke and many languages used. Generally I felt that most did not want to leave. Chapayev notwithstanding. Schuster really made commander the day they left. Sign that Copic is mad at Chapayev. Kagan political commissar.

Order issued today for good action in Belchite and Quinto.
Copic is to receive a valuable gift.

Teniente Carl Bradley to Capt.
Teniente Detro to Cap.
Sgt Skinner to Teniente
John Tsanakas to Teniente

Recommended for great valor in action.
Teniente Coronel Steve Nelson

Cpt Andre Kobal
J.C. Wattis
David Kamy
and other sargentos etc.
== == === === === ===

Personal gripe and also angle on Copic.

All during the action he asked me to do jobs when the going was tough or he was getting uneasy. When moving etc comes up, he sleeps while I work. He dines with delegates while I sweat off my balls and then has the guts to deny my statement that he does not take enough interest in the welfare of the men. War-discomforts are a part etc.

At Belchite sent me into front line with orders which I couldn't repeat to Americans and even the softened ones put me in a tough position.

Walter & Copic were sweating blood when Walter ordered me to take the church and clear the way to the town. Gave me a party order to do it. In addition and against my protest - promised me a Major's rating as soon as the church fell etc. Made excessive promises again to the men which I dare not repeat.

After the action was over, Copic put my name on a list for promotion without comment. Although the others had definite comments on their actions.

By his conversation with Walter succeeded in getting all Estado Mayor recommendations thrown out and mumbled some unclear word about trying people out longer etc. So because of open promise of Walter many people took the promotion for granted and now its refusal makes me look like an ass. In addition not even to be mentioned on a list of those wounded when Wattis, Kobal & Kamy appear on it. Is the last insult and damned insolence on the part of Copic -- who by studied work did not want to take a picture of me during the whole action. Never mentions that I had any part in it even tho I did most of his work. He was actually scared stiff during air raid and the time we went in to the town - but he slanders Americans that day to make it out he was the hero who started them moving. I am plenty sore and shall tell him and Walter too.

Today Burt & Vorhees? came told about meeting in Valencia and said they were disappointed because I didn't come. Heard some summaries and Dave & I decided they get along nicely without us. Only English off the track. Still expect Jim & Pete {Hampkins} back and I need the car badly.

Reported that fascists freed the road between} Huesca & Zaragosa and we must launch a counterattack. Move tonight or in the morning to La Zaida-Sastago Bujaraloz-Pallamelo de Monegros Lanaja-Alcubierre-Robres Torralba.

§ § §

The first date in the new diary is September 29th in Almochuel and Merriman has a lot to get off his chest. The second diary does not have date indications but is just a notebook so one has to use

Merriman's notations for the time period he is writing about. We add to the fragment for September 19 above with a group of 12 pages from the second diary that cover the September 19-20 period.

Merriman starts his replay of the days since September 19 in rather routine order and most of it is self-explanatory. But as he writes he gets more and more worked up about the events in Belchite and how he did not get the respect that he felt he deserved for that Battle. He and Bill Skinner discuss the need expressed by Division for more Party work within the Brigade. Merriman says that he and Dave Doran were already started on that. He mentions that Company secretaries are to be appointed and that a Brigade Secretary would also be appointed. The latter role was assigned to Jim Bourne.

Merriman revisits the "English question" which revolved around repatriation of the longest serving comrades. Vladimir Copic has a different recollection of previous decisions than does Merriman. Merriman says that many good comrades are being removed for repatriation. Steve Nelson was one of them. On the way out, Nelson made a speech in Valencia where he took Hans Amlie to task for his behavior at Belchite and comments he made to the wounded at Benicassim. It is likely Amlie spoke on repatriation and it did not reflect the current party line. Robbie Robinson will stay with the Brigade and Merriman says that Carl Bradley is to go. Bradley returns to the US in November 1937. Copic does not agree with the repatriation of Nelson but is obviously overruled by Valencia.

Marion Merriman's short visit to the Brigade ends and she went back to Albacete (with Merriman's first diary). She had news that they were invited to go to Valencia but because of orders, they deferred the visit and sent Jim Bourne instead. Bourne was to get the pay money for the end of September but by the 29th, he had not returned with the money or Pete Hampkins or the car. Merriman's irritation shows through. Finally, Moises Sapir shows up with 500,000 pesetas to pay the Brigade. This is clearly the point where the smiling Merriman is seen with Sapir in Almochuel (photograph on previous pages).

Sapir tells Merriman "the dope about Schmidt in Madrid". Egon Schmidt and a Yugoslavian comrade were picked up in Valencia, not Madrid, and were on leave without permission. Interestingly, below is a photo of Hans Kaltschmidt (not Egon Schmidt) who is listed as being the Adjutant to the Chief of the Brigade (Merriman). There also will be an upcoming discussion on "Hans" who promotes himself without permission.



Hans Kaltschmidt, Adjutant to the Chief of Brigade (Merriman), September 1937, Almocheuel. ALBA PHOTO 11-0643, Tamiment Library, NYU

Will Paynter, Bob Kerr, and Malcolm Dunbar wrecked their Camionette (small van). A memo from this period chastises Ben Barsky for crashing a car.⁴⁵³ It is possible that he was the driver of the van. Paynter discusses the Aitken/Cunningham affair where they were removed and sent back to England. Paynter seems to now criticize Cunningham, but perhaps because he is in Merriman and Copic's camp at this point. Paynter felt that George Aitken did the best he could. Wally Tapsell, however, has burned his bridges with criticism of the Soviet Union. Paynter brings in 42 new British comrades and takes out 20. Vladimir Copic apparently makes no objection now and Merriman and Doran feel that this is the solution that they had originally suggested... just let them

go. Merriman suggests that this rotation out of troops has greatly helped morale.

Merriman has been slaving over the paylists and the promotion lists and Copic keeps bouncing the suggestions back. The RGASPI Archives hold a marked up list of promotions with scratches through all the suggestions.⁴⁵⁴ The handwriting on the memo is that of André Denis of the Division Staff. Merriman blames Copic for not getting the promotions approved. Merriman's irritation was heightened when Major Merriman Chief of Staff was crossed out and it said "Capitan" next to his name. Merriman would rightly have felt betrayed, both by Copic and by General Walter. Copic had a long history of pushing rising young officers back down in order to protect his own position and fight off threats to his own leadership.

According to Merriman, after six days, Copic agreed with Merriman and Doran's original suggestions. Merriman's blood begins to start boiling at this point and he will work himself up over the next few pages. He mentions that the policy that 2% of the Battalion should be on leave at any one time has been put into effect and that Jose Amano (or so Merriman writes) has been made Copic's Adjutant. Merriman says that Amano's prestige has been lifted and this should have been done for more Spanish colleagues. It is likely that this is José María Sastre, who will just sign many documents José María. Merriman says that in the paper shuffling, many opportunities to send the Brigaders on leave were lost.

One wonders about Copic's leadership style throughout these diaries. One pictures a manipulative leader who will play groups of his staff off against one another. He doesn't seem to concentrate on the day-to-day issues but rather creates make-work while he himself entertains guests and travels about. During this period, Copic's wife was seen with him in photos of Codo and Belchite and Copic spent considerable time in his Benicassim villa. Merriman says that one of these days he will blow his top and tell Copic and Walter what he thinks. But he doesn't. Up until his death in April, 1938, Merriman continued to serve these men. He mentions again that Walter promised promotions during the fight if Merriman

could get people moving, which he did. The promises of new ratings are not forthcoming.

Dart, as a special operations officer, Malcolm Dunbar and Radomir Smrcka are mentioned as coming to the staff of the Brigade. These men will be with the Brigade leadership until the end of the war. Two of the three are seen on the right of the photo below. This photo is believed to have been taken in Ambite.

In a small section of the diary, we realize that the war continues on the Aragon front. The 11th and 32nd Brigades move up to the second lines, probably in the area of Mediana. Copic is off showing a Yugoslav delegation the sites and the XVth Brigade is caught with the order that the 11th Dimitrov Battalion is now to move over to the 45th Brigade. Copic has fought this and he has even written letters to the party central committee to protest, but while he is away, they are moved. Copic left orders that they have to leave their weapons with the XVth. Merriman implies here that they cannot be just left defenseless and the weapons will go with them, on the order of the Albacete Base who bawls out Copic. Merriman



Brigade Officers: Ambite June 1937: L-R Elias Begelman, Dave Doran, Vladimir Copic, "Max" (Russian, probably Maximoff who was in Ambite), Humberto Galliani, Radomir Smrcka, Malcolm Dunbar, ALBA PHOTO 177-177028, Tamiment Library, NYU

says that the men of the 11th don't want to leave the XVth, except for Chapayev (seen below, who Copic sent off to Valencia to get out of the decision-making process for the Dimitrovs). Given Merriman's displeasure with Copic, it would be very interesting to find Chapayev's views on this move and his relationship with Copic. Copic replaces Chapayev with a Schuster and Vasily Kagan of XIII Brigade as political commissar. Paul Schuster was listed as an Australian comrade by Martin Sugarman⁴⁵⁵ but this is incorrect. Schuster was a member of the British Communist party and was born French but lived in South Africa. He has been a captain in the French Foreign Legion for 3 years prior to Spain.



"Four soldiers in combat gear" - (l-r) Unk, Radomir Smrcka, Chapayev and unknown. ALBA PHOTO 177-178022, Tamiment Library, NYU

Orders come down for promotions of the heroes of Quinto and Belchite and Carl Bradley and Phil Detoro make Captain, Canadian Bill Skinner makes Lieutenant, John Tsanakas makes Lieutenant. Steve Nelson is singled out for great valor and made Lieutenant Colonel. This would make Nelson equal in rank to Copic and jump him over Merriman who is a Major. Three more brigadistas make Captain, an André Kobal, J. C. Wattis, and David Kamy.

The next pages are self-explanatory. Merriman says that a "Burt" (likely to be Briton Bert Williams) and what looks like "Vorhees" came to talk with Merriman and Doran about what happened in Valencia. Merriman seems to think the last two work well together.



Vasily Kagan, Commissar of the XIII Brigade, RGASPI 545/6/708, p13.

September 30 The XVth Brigade Moves to Huesca

Sept. 30} A dirty old stinking old poker game

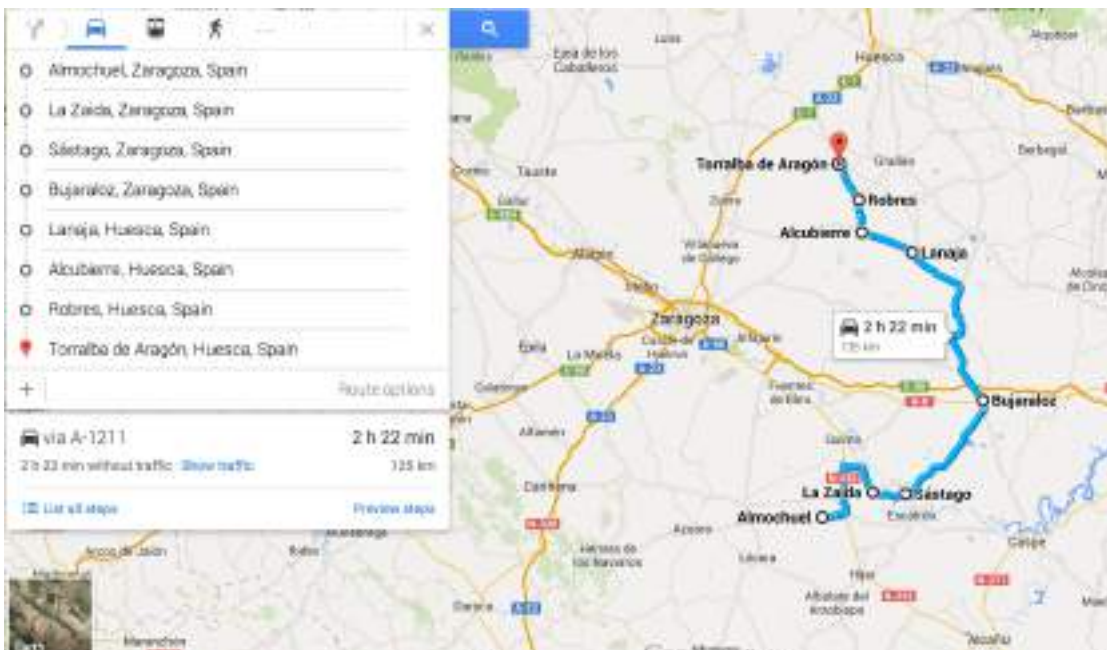
Left Almochuel after along wait of 1½ days in which time trucks finally came - 32 large ones. Men exhausted and needed sleep and food. Slept and in morning moved off and found they had no gasoline, no mechanics - no nothing. Left in morning in Dave's car and we tried to drive straight through but had much difficulty since gas trouble stopped us often. Route changed at last minute and we went thru Sariñena, Huerto, Sesa and Grañén to Robres. Other road shorter but easily seen by fascists. Came into Grañén saw Denis who informed me that trucks would be sent soon. Wondered how we got these. Instructed about night driving and told to hold trucks at all costs.

Arrived in Senes, new home on afternoon of 30th. English battalion arrived before us. Had been attempted air raid during the day but our Czech anti aircraft battery had driven them off. Copic was sick and asleep. Found room on second floor FAI and all other organisations marked up the walls. One old woman said all had been quiet and now we had come planes were coming and people would be killed etc. Base hospital now in Grañén - Dr. Busch is here in the Division and it helps quite a bit to have him around. The long move hard on trucks - a jump of over 170 kilometers. Roads are solid but bad.

§ § §

Merriman finished his thoughts on September 29 by saying that the Lincolns and the Mac-Paps were coming along nicely now but that the British still remained a problem. Jim Bourne and Pete Hampkins were still in Valencia at the gathering there and Merriman was worried about when they would get back. He had noticed that the Fascists had broken the hold of the Brigades on the road between Huesca and Zaragosa and that they would soon

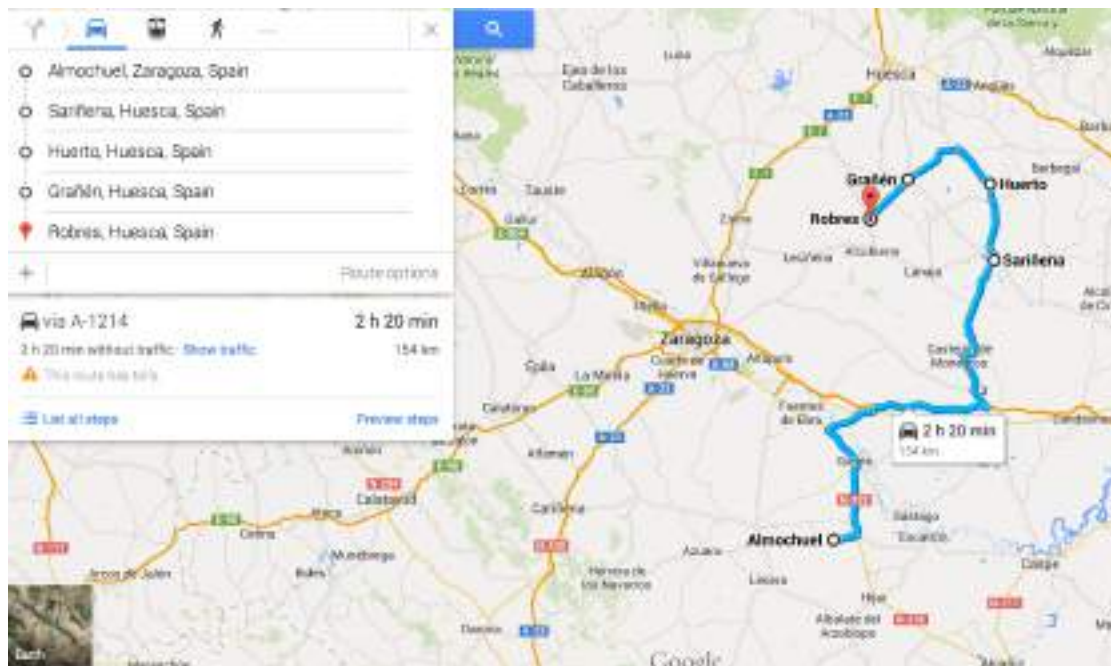
move up to counterattack and try to take back the road. He gives us the route that they would take from Almocheuel to Torralba de Aragón which was a distance of 135 kilometers (See the map below).



The planned move of the XVth Brigade to Robres as mentioned by Merriman in his September 30, 1937, diary entry (Map created with Google Maps®)

The plan was to move in 32 trucks on this route which circled the Aragon front at the end of September. Merriman says that the drivers took a day and a half to get to them and when they arrived, the drivers were beat. They wanted to start out but the trucks were out of gas and the ones that had mechanical problems had no mechanics to fix them. "No nothing".

On the 30th of September, they started out with Merriman in Dave Doran's car. Because the Fascists had counterattacked north of Zaragoza, they had to swing further east and the actual route they followed is shown in the next Google Maps® image.



The actual route followed by the XVth International Brigade on September 30.

Merriman meets with, we believe, André (Arturo) Denis, the Chief of Staff of the 35th Division, who explained the transportation situation to him. They were waiting on more trucks and Denis wondered where the trucks that Merriman had come from. It should be noted that in the last two weeks in September, the Ministry of Defense was critically reviewing the number of cars in the field and reassigning vehicles to the officers who needed them. When the Dimitrov Battalion was separated from the XVth, Copic demanded that they be stripped of their weapons and Merriman fought that decision as he did not want to leave them defenseless. However, there is a command order of the 35th Division in late September that removed 14 vehicles from the Dimitrovs. This is probably the source of Merriman's trucks. Denis told him to hold the trucks and don't give them up because the XVth Brigade was going into reserve positions and might have to run back to Mediana (retracing the steps they just took) if the fighting there degraded.

Merriman places the men in Senes, which is a few kilometers southwest of Robres and awaits orders. He finds a headquarters on the second floor of a building. There are not many homes in Senes and fewer with two floors. It is likely that it was one of the ones on the right in the photo below. Copic is sick and is out of

action. The Brigade was bombed on the 30th but had support from a Czechoslovakian anti-aircraft battery (probably the Gottwald battery which had been based in Caspe).



Plaza Monegros, Senes de Alcubierre, Spain. It is likely that one of these homes on the main square housed Merriman. (Google Streetview)

Art Landis gives an overview of the next week:

On September 24, while Modesto fought before Fuentes and Sillero, the mixed Italian-Spanish Flechas (Arrows) Division, under the Italian colonel Isasi, attacked strongly in the direction of Zuera. Isasi had the use of five squadrons of planes, many artillery batteries, and a complete company of tanks. His objective was the Republican bridgehead across the Gallego River, which had severed the rail and road connections between Zaragoza and Huesca. By September 29, since no attempt was made to re-enforce the exhausted men of Trueba's 27th Division, most of Isasi's objectives were realized.

At the same time, a sweeping Republican victory was in the act of being won by a well-coordinated Catalan effort in the vicinity of the border city of Jaca. But the Catalans not only held; they also began additional attacks to the south of Jaca and above Huesca.

It was at this time that the 15th Brigade was rushed to Grañen, in the area below Huesca. It was supposed that it would be

*used either to implement and further the advance of the Catalans or to aid the troops of Trueba against the mixed Spanish-Italian division pushing from recaptured Zuera.*⁴⁵⁶



Dr. Irving Busch, Volunteer for Liberty, Vol 1, No. 11, pg 5

Merriman finishes off the entry for September 30 with the note that the old woman whose house they were using in Senes complained that things were quiet there and now that the Brigade has arrived, they will be bombed and killed. Fred Keller would repeat this story in an oral history made for the Manny Harriman Oral History project (<https://vimeo.com/246813529>). Merriman confirms that the 35th Division hospital is now in Grañén and that Doctor Irving Busch is in charge of that hospital. Busch, a long timer now in Spain, was influential in the International Brigades and could get things done politically as well. He will help Merriman substantially over the next few weeks.

OCTOBER 1937

45

airplane cut across the trench
 line - dropped on in a trench -
 cared in dugouts and buried 18.
 Two of whom were killed - Gulleton
 McChure and Snow. Day out mucky
 and much work in repairing the
 trenches. Of wounded 5 sent to the
 hospital. Tough bit of luck down
 it. We must cover more of our
 trench.

Camps went wild one night
 called in and asked where we were.
 Names of Lopez and if we were militia.
 refused to accept phone orders.
 and after sending Capt of Engineers to
 tell us how to fight by - completely
 changed the rules and put them and
 our men at our disposition. Made
 them sore and men in general
 didn't want to work (11th Beth / Stone)
 that very night 2 killed and 2 wounded

October 1 Attack towards Huesca Planned

Oct. 1. Now opposite Zuera a point where our forces had taken possession of the Zaragoza Huesca road and dominated the R.R. which is even more important since the highway is cut by us up ahead anyway. Tanks appeared a couple of days ago and our troops retreated since they had no anti tank equipment of any kind. Some of our tanks used along with the Italians by the fascists. We lost some important heights and although we thought a concentration had been here we actually found very few troops. We must retake this territory. New Corps is formed now with Walter in charge. Oppman in Dept of Operations in Division.

Plans made for attack on morning of second both here and at Belchite and Mediana. We are to be in reserve but to rush back to Mediana & Fuentes if necessary. Smrcka doing good work. Dave & I had a long talk concerning attitude of Copic towards certain depts and towards Dave and me. He raves at Lutz, at Secundy at Martinez, at no. of leaves, lack of 3 pesetas a day from Albacete and many things he doesn't know a damned thing about.

§ § §



Repairing a bombed out roadway ALBA Photo 177_180007, Tamiment Library, NYU



Google Maps topographic display of the area between Senes and Zuera covered by the Brigade on October 1

In a short episode not remembered well in the oral histories of many of the Lincolns, on October 1, the men move up from Senes to a point near Zuera where the road from Huesca to Zaragoza was cut by the Fascists. Merriman says that this position is important to retake since they can dominate the Zaragoza railroad from this position and they can stop reinforcements coming up the highway from Zaragoza. He mentions that they lost the heights above Zuera and that is on the north side of town so it is likely that of the two routes to get from Senes to Zuera, the Brigade may have just gotten to the top of the ridge overlooking Zuera on the north or approached the town from the south having gone through Alcubierre. Merriman mentions that the road is cut south of them (perhaps the first photo above). Merriman says that the ground was lost in a tank assault by the Fascists that even used some Republican tanks (along with Italian tanks) against them.

Organizationally, the new 5th Army Corps has been reformed and General Walter is now in charge of a Corps and not just the 35th Division. This means that General Pozas would have been moved out. Merriman notes that Tedeusz (a.k.a. Thaddée and

François) Oppman is now the Chief of Operations for the Army Corps. Merriman gives the strategy of the operation being planned for October 2: they are to be in reserve on the attack on Zuera and if necessary run back to Mediana and Fuentes if a counterattack ensues there.

Merriman says that Radomir Smrcka is performing well. He reveals that Copic is ranting about everyone, including Fred Lutz and Ernesto Martinez of the Intendencia and Lou Secundy of the Autopark. Copic is perpetually mad at Merriman and is bitching because it is now October 1 and he has missed another payday. Merriman says he is bitching about 3 pesetas a day from Albacete, but Copic would have been getting 30 pesetas a day as a Lieutenant Colonel. Merriman is less than sympathetic and the hostility between these men continues to fester.

October 2 A Bad Mood with a Good Reason

Sept (**Oct**) 2. Day when action supposed to start. We were ready to move up closer to the line during the early morning but rain ruined all plans. Even on the first then we planned to visit the lookout point, it failed to work out. Rain put many of our boys in a bad condition. Mac Paps failed to bring tents and luckily found houses in which to place them. Bourne returned from Valencia with a new attitude (hard to figure it out) Non interference in party work. Fields(?) bought much fine stuff in Valencia and canteen came in at the right time. Copic & Jim close. Jim unfortunately is a baby politically. Paynter expected. Bert and Pete finally returned - 600,000{pesetas}. Marion sick but sent along a few things. Had late meeting Robbie, Dave, Copic, Jim & myself. Next day planned for large meeting with comrades from all Battalions and then to deal in detail with Minor's Report. Report poorly presented but interesting material. Discussion concerning Wally Sabatini as secretary for Mac Paps. I have been in a bad mood because of the narrow deliberate mean approach of Copic to the whole question of promotions on Estado Mayor list. Hans put on spot because he finally received some word and put on his extra stripe on payroll list - I called the whole issue. I hated to do because it means fighting petty actions with petty actions which I don't like. I shouldn't have let myself go tho because I know better than to get down in the dumps. I almost blew my top. On very verge. 13 deserters returned with Ehrlich - Fishnelson and ambulance stealers among them. Talked with them individually. Sad bunch in general. Decided to have a tough trial and hard sentences. Probably lines and then jail when out of lines. Up to six months.

§ § §

When the Brigade was to move up to the line on the Huesca Front, the rains come again. September and October 1937 saw some

terrific rainstorms which drenched the Brigade in Almocheuel and the rains continue. The Mac-Paps are not prepared for field bivouacking and they have no tents. Merriman gets them housed indoors. Art Landis finishes his story of the offensive:

The torrential rains that began at this point proved disastrous; whatever the intent of the Republican army of the east concerning the disposition of the 15th Brigade, it was automatically cancelled. Instead the battle for Zaragoza was renewed. Manuel Aznar, the Franco historian, remarks upon the Republican intentions and the Insurgent countermoves:

"The attacks against Jaca beginning on the 24th of September and continuing through the 10th of October were a part of the general attacks unleashed all along the Aragon front to both bring to a halt the advance against Asturias, and to activate this front for further battles of either defense or offense. Simultaneously with the attacks on Jaca the 5th Army Corps of Modesto and Pozas attacked strongly again in the direction of Sillero on October 10th. But now, not only was the full strength of the Barrón and Buruaga divisions committed to battle in the same area, but heavy re-enforcements had joined them. These included, for the area of Fuentes del Ebro alone, the Mobile column of Zaragoza; a tabor of Tiradores de Ifni, and the 4th Bandera of the Tercios ... There was one instance in which the Red forces in the line of attack were confronted by no less than the effectives of three Army Corps of the Nationalist Army."⁴⁶⁶

The Aragon offensive around Zuera has been almost totally ignored by historians since little action was seen for the XVth Brigade. The Book of the XVth Brigade only said "At the end of September, the Brigade was in reserve positions north of Saragossa. The front was quiet; beyond occasion aviation raids, there was little activity."⁴⁶⁷

Interesting sidelight here was that Leonard Lamb was said to be in charge of the Lincoln-Washington Battalion in the Huesca period. This is from a tape made by Milton Wolff under questioning from Art Landis.⁴⁶⁸ Wolff recalls that Lamb shot

himself in the leg in Huesca while cleaning his weapon and that Philip Detro took over as the Commander of the Lincoln Battalion.

Jim Bourne returns from the trip to Valencia and Merriman says he is a changed man. Something significant happened in Valencia at this Party meeting in late September and Bourne has become a good party man. Perhaps he has become too good a party man. He tells Merriman that decisions of the Party cannot be challenged. This is likely regarding the decision to move the Dimitrovs out into the 45th Division and the decision to repatriate so many English comrades. Merriman says that after he comes back Bourne and Copic become buddies. That would have made Merriman very suspicious of him since there were rumors that Merriman was to be removed as Chief of Staff and Merriman may be suspicious that Bourne will replace him. Merriman calls Bourne a political babe.

Supplies begin to come in. A name we interpret as "Fields" brings up things from Valencia and the intendencia starts to work. This could be either 59 year old Ralph Field^a or his son, John, at this point. Since John Field^b was with the Mac-Paps, it may be that the senior Field was allowed to come up to be close to his son.

Merriman expects "Bert" {Williams} and Pete Hampkins to return with 600,000 pesetas for the payroll which is late. Merriman says that Marion Merriman is sick in Albacete but he received goods from her. Merriman says that the staff holds a meeting and discusses getting the Brigade together to present a report from Bob Minor, but no details of that report are discussed in the diary. Merriman says that Wally Sabatini is under discussion to be Mac-Pap Battalion secretary.

^a Ralph H. Field was born July 16, 1879, in Leon, Iowa. A civil engineer and Instructor at Commonwealth College, he arrived Spain on June 18, 1937. He returned July 20, 1938 aboard the *Champlain*. His son John Field was killed in Spain.

^b John Field was born March 3, 1913, Paraguay, IA. He graduated from the University of Rochester with a BA in 1935. He arrived in Spain on June 18, 1937 just ahead of his father. He was assigned to the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion and would be killed on January 19, 1938, in Teruel. Field was a well known track star in college.

Merriman lets his hair down again to reveal how irritated he is with Copic about the way promotions are being handed out. "Hans", probably Merriman's adjutant Hans Kalbschmidt, got a stripe added (i.e. moved up in rank and pay to Captain) on the Paylists, even though there are no orders from the Army Corps approving the promotions. Since at this point Merriman is also still a Captain, waiting on his promised Major's stripes, Merriman goes nuts over this and calls them on the promotions. One feels that Merriman is far more irate in his diary than he was in Copic's quarters. "I should have told him....."

At the end of October 2nd's diary entry we see that Merriman has another issue arising. 14 deserters are returned to the front and they need to deal with them. Among them is Nelson Fishnelson, William McCarthy, Otto Lemke, Benjamin Kasinap, Seaman William Cantor, Henry Plotnick, John Hunter, Murray Krangel, Sol Feldman, Richard Brown, Robert Isenberg, Henry Shapiro, Ben Lasher and Gene Augustin.⁴⁶⁹ Of these men, the disciplinary action of the Brigade was leveled at Shapiro, Isenberg and Fishnelson.

October 3 “Shooting a Few if Necessary”

Oct. 3rd Row with Copic on third because of suggestion of Walter about even shooting a few if necessary or conditional death sentences. Political preparation started and finally resolution passed by the units demanding tough sentence even death. General reaction in favour of fighter policy in this regard. In evening some drinking took place & helped myself heavily. Talked freely with Sapir and said I would leave if work with Copic didn't go better and cried on his shoulder. He was also drunk. New m.g. instruction going along fine. In general a good guy. I must snap out of it. Inaction hard on everyone and weather as well. I usually like difficulties and must like these. The tougher the better.

§ § §

The October 2 discussion carries over to the following days. The return of the 13 deserters, including five who stole an ambulance and 4000 pesetas to make a break for the French border, forced the Command to put a stop to desertions. Merriman assesses the morale of these men and realizes that there is little he can do to return them to action and that examples needed to be made. Details on these trials will come out over the next few diary pages and must have had a hard impact on Merriman.

General Walter suggested shooting some of the deserters. Copic and Merriman disagree (which is no surprise). It is quite likely that Copic agreed with Walter. Merriman puts it to a trial and each will be brought up in front of the men. After politically setting the stage for the fact that this will be a decision of the men, the vote goes for stern discipline and potentially death sentences. Conditional death sentences are mentioned and these would probably have been delayed punishment based on future actions. Some of the 14 men on the list from October 2's posting do get killed, either at Fuentes del Ebro (an upcoming battle) or Teruel (two battles in the future).

Merriman rides out the day by drinking overnight with Moise Sapir who also gets heavily drunk. Like two morose comrades, they literally cry on each other's shoulders. Merriman reveals to Sapir his feelings about Copic and the next day brings back more sober reflection of their situation. Merriman lectures himself about being able to respond to these depressing situations and to fight his way out of it. But since he got paid as a Captain although General Walter promised promotion for him to Major, his depression about being misled by his senior officers is evident.

October 4 “Our Beloved Fascist Advances”

4th. During night – Gottwald battery had tractor borrowed and it got stuck. Scandal raised. I was not so well and actually disappeared for a half hour. Almost scandal. Crespo today made 2nd Chief of Brigade. Our beloved fascist advances even in a Communist brigade. Funny things these. Carrying out the letter of a political idea but disregarding the purpose and content of the same idea. No discussion on this point with anyone. Told Copic yesterday that I wanted to talk to Walter about his promise. Told that I must not talk with him without permission of Copic and must tell him all about it. He promises to take it up.

Trial started in afternoon. First six cases handled. Browne opened up and others exposed in a fine manner. Death penalties suggested. Dart weak but Dave was good. Spent quiet evening. Tomorrow Sapir to go to Albacete to take letter to Marion. Schmidt here from Madrid to be relieved of heavy responsibility. Still raining and in general bad situation here.

§ § §

We can see on the last few lines of the October 3 entry that Merriman realizes he needs to suck it up. Usually he thrives on conflict but the psychological struggle with Copic, losing Sidney Shostek at Belchite, the British rebellion, the disappointment in General Walter's promise that he would become a Major, and now the men who need to be court martialled is putting Merriman near his limits. It is not surprising that he loses his cool demeanor in his diary. And Merriman is not well. He says he disappears for a half an hour and, looking ahead a few days, Merriman may have had dysentery at this point. His health will worsen rapidly.

Overnight, the Gottwald Artillery Battery got a tractor for their artillery piece stuck in the mud and the tractor didn't belong to them. This "borrowed" tractor caused a scandal. Merriman,

however, was sick and his inability to deal with the issue almost caused another "scandal" (Merriman's word for embarrassment or something that would lead to a reprimand for his command). The Gottwald battery was likely the Czech anti-aircraft battery that Merriman spoke of previously. Klement Gottwald, for whom the battery was named, was President of Czechoslovakia and had been in the Artillery in WWI.



Major Crespo (near Huesca), ALBA PHOTO 177 - 188063, Tamiment Library, NYU

Major Luis Crespo was made Second Chief of Staff for the Brigade. His photo from this time is shown here. Crespo is called "our beloved Fascist". Merriman understands that Crespo has arisen quickly because of the need to share command with the Spanish and that Crespo was an officer in the Spanish Army before the uprising. As an officer from the old Spanish Army, he would be suspected if he did not have a political background that explained his staying with the Republican Army. He is not a Communist and Merriman notes that he is in "a Communist Army". Copic apparently did not discuss this appointment with Merriman. Again Merriman would feel threatened that he is being replaced.

Merriman goes to Copic and requests permission to go to General Walter to face him off on Walter's promise of grades for everyone who moved up to attack Belchite on the 3rd of September. Merriman feels they stepped up and Walter forgot about his promise. Copic says he, not Merriman, will speak to Walter about this gripe. From the document mentioned on the October 3 diary discussion, A. Denis and Copic are holding back the promotions. Merriman was not a communist when he came to Spain. While he joined the Spanish Communist Party, he (and Allan Johnson who was commanding Tarazona's training base at this point) were treated with suspicion by because of their lack of political background in the US. Soon, the US Military Attaché in Spain will arrive and this, too, will put Merriman and Johnson onto a watchlist.

Merriman says that the trials of the 13 deserters starts. Six cases are prosecuted quickly with Richard deWitt Brown one of the first, who confessed freely. Brown had deserted with Ralph Isenberg, and Henry Shapiro in an ambulance with Shapiro as the ambulance driver. Rollin Dart started the prosecution but could not do it and David Doran stepped in and carried out the trial.

Death penalties were suggested, but parallel documents reveal that only two men were sentenced to be shot. None were. Other reports in the command documents of the 15th Brigade reveal that after the trial the two who were sentenced to death were taken out and "talked to" by Doran. It is likely that he followed the line of commuting the sentences with a later threat that an execution would occur if behavior were repeated. Merriman only finds out the result on October 5.

Fishnelson and Shapiro died at Teruel, so they were not executed. The other three returned to the US, although Brown was captured at Belchite during the Retreats in March 1938 and returned after time in a prisoner-of-war camp. Apparently none of these four of the first six tried were given a death sentence. Only Murray Krangel of the 14 listed on the October 2, 1937, report was killed at Fuentes del Ebro and that was reportedly October 13, 1937. While it is possible that Krangel, Fishnelson and Shapiro were put in work details on the front lines (tantamount to a

sentence of death), there is no evidence that the sentences were carried out while the Battalion was in Senes.



Egon Schmidt, ALBA PHOTO 177-188016, Tamiment Library, NYU

At the end of the day, Merriman relaxes and gives a letter for Marion Merriman to Moise Sapir who will go back to Albacete. "Schmidt" is in from Madrid where there was a scandal over him. Schmidt's real name was Misha/Michael Schwartz who was born in Minsk⁴⁷⁰. Erich {sic} Schmidt and Milan Jeroncic were found by SIM in Valencia and Comrade Stepanovich was asked to vouch for him.⁴⁷¹ Schmidt would be with the Brigade until August 1938 when he was killed climbing Hill 666 in the Battle of

the Ebro.

Merriman says it is still raining and that the physical situation in Senes is bad.

October 5 Merriman is Has Delirium and Fever

5th.

Early in the morning on the 5th I woke cold - but full of enthusiasm - kidded the boys about their trip the night before to Grañen and then talked about how they tried to make the grade. Kidded Dart about Patience. Ordered a clean up campaign and in the midst of it fell sick and had chill and fever. Talked with Bob and then went delirious. Heard Copic and Hans discuss with Crespo about nothing (Crespo now demands a car). Heard thru my delirium discussion on the trial. Slater prosecutor 2nd day. Decision heard later - two sentenced to death - others to live in and out of the lines. Down to 1 month for the 20yr old. Shapiro the worst. Cantor had to beat hell etc. Fishnelson disgusting. In evening they took me to the hospital in Torralba where I did nothing but sleep

§ § §



*Patience Darton,
photo courtesy
Sparticus
International.*

Merriman awakes on the 5th of October in a much better mood and reveals that the boys were out "dating" in Grañen at the Brigade hospital the previous night. Hospitals and nurses were favorites of these men who had been without women for many months. Merriman kids Rollin Dart about British Nurse Patience Darton.⁴⁷²

Like so many others in October 1937, Merriman gets the fever. Typhoid was rampant in the camps and General Walter reported in his memoirs that nearly 2000 men had typhoid in the Brigades in October 1937. Merriman gets delirious. Delirium is one side affect of typhoid fever, which can reach 104°F. While he is drifting, he includes snippets of conversations that he may actually have overheard or perhaps some that were dreams. He hears Copic and Crespo talking about "nothing" and then he hears that Crespo is asking for his own

vehicle. Merriman has been waiting weeks for a vehicle of his own. Merriman also is still waiting on his promotion.



Photograph of the trial of deserters in Senes in October 1937. Man at the desk may be Slater, acting as prosecutor. The Sam Browne belt says that this is an officer. ALBA PHOTO 11-0819, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman hears the results of the trials in which Hugh Slater presided. Two of the 13 deserters were sentenced to death. The majority will get front line duty during upcoming battles and then be taken out of the line (so as not to serve as "bad elements" in disgruntling the other men). Merriman says that Henry Shapiro (since he was the driver of an ambulance that was stolen in the desertion attempt) was the worst and (as mentioned on yesterday's page) he will die in action at Teruel. A 20 year old got the least sentence, 1 month presumably at labor. William Cantor's

(he was 21 at the time) sentence is curious. He will be recognized in a few days for valor at Quinto, but deserts again later in the war. Nathan Fishnelson is singled out for rebuke. Cantor was a Seaman and had been very difficult to command. Men who went into the Seaman's Machine Gun company later admitted that they were more committed to the IWW (the Wobblies) and were largely not Communists. Only Robbie Robinson was trusted as a communist amongst the Seaman's Company.

Cantor, too, will die at Teruel. Fishnelson and Shapiro were sentenced to death.⁴⁷³ The man Fishnelson deserted with, Benzion Lasher, went missing in action during the retreats in the Spring of 1938.



Abraham Eisenberg and Henry Shapiro, photographed in November 1937, ALBA PHOTO 11 - 0979, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman is removed to a hospital in Torralba where he gets better over the next few days.

October 6 “Should Not Take So Much Crap

6th. Felt better- Dave came with Joe and Wally when I wanted to talk with him alone. Lou came with Dart so no chance to talk. Had session with Busch about work with middle & professional classes in the States. Approach cadre etc. In evening walked around a bit. Talked, listened to radio and found book by A.J. Cronin “Citadel” which I spent all my time on until I left at 4 o’clock on the seventh. Voros had session with me. Raved about Dave in the trial which pleased Dave. He wanted part from my diary for book on Americans in Spain. Wrote note to Marion to select a few short bits for him. Busch left on Inspection tour – to return later. I left to Senes just in time to hear discussion about plantilla and leave for meeting in Grañen (Left hospital with the idea of cleaning up relation with Copic by talking with two comrades. Either of the choices as I posed them not good. First as Copic was working - impossible to work with him further I should not shield him longer and take so much crap from him. Either open the matter up - or fight him back in his own petty way or leave or let myself be his damned dirty doormat. Mood now slightly better because I succeeded in going over Copic's head to Walter. This makes me feel better in a subjective way but does not change the matter from the point of view of working relationship with Copic.

Meeting about having to stay here. Training – fortify second lines against our own troops (not our friend). Possibility of long stay-talk on political meaning of shooting, spirit of competition etc. Usual kind of talk- followed by fine dinner. After dinner Copic & I had private session. All is not well. Albacete {unreadable} International Brigade split all over Spain. 45th Division to South. Prieto against IB and possibility that government may move to Barcelona and close to border and that sneaking fear that we may lose war. Our boss will return and things will be known clearer.

Walter to go to Albacete and other places. Rumored Gall may come- help us over something or other.

Copic said he couldn't do it. Copic played up as usual. I said little even surly - had sore jaw and wanted to sleep. Just as leaving - spoke to Walter about the promise at Belchite. He said right-he would fix it right up. Copic trotted up then and said to change list etc. Purred in his ear. Left and although boys at home wanted to talk I climbed on to sleep. Party organization still being rehashed. To meet in morning with Denis. Christ knows when.

§ § §

Bob Merriman is nothing if not resilient. He recovers from his bout of fever in a single day and is up and about on October 6. He wants to meet with his comrades but they all come at once: Joe Dallet, Bob Thompson, Wally Sabatini, Lou Secundy and Rollin Dart. Merriman really wanted to have a one-on-one with Dallet but it did not happen. He did speak to Dr. Irving Busch about politics and the middle class in the US. Merriman is trying to figure out what should be the approach for a cadre of the party if they were not working class or union men. Busch, being a professional, would have a different experience than other comrades. Merriman read for much of the day and departed on the 7th to Senes. Merriman grabbed a copy of A. J. Cronin's "The Citadel" which was a 1937 critique of medical ethics in hospitals and would have been interesting reading in the Grañen hospital.

Merriman meets Sandor Voros (not Voresh) who was collecting stories for the Book of the XVth Brigade. Voros said that Dave Doran did great in the trial of the deserters and Doran was pleased with the complement. Merriman tells Voros to contact Marion in Albacete to get stories from his first diary. Some letters from the first diary were transcribed for the Book of the XVth Brigade. Merriman say that he heard the discussion about the "plantilla" in Senes. This is likely a discussion over the staff lists.

On the way to Senes, Merriman goes to Grañen and wants to have it out with Copic over their working relationship. In a bit of a temporal mashup, Merriman says that his attitude is better since he spoke with General Walter. This comes a few pages later in the diary again. Merriman apparently met with two of his comrades about what to tell Copic ... lay down the law or leave (or be a doormat), none being pleasant options. A meeting is held at dinner in Grañen and there is the possibility that they will stay in these positions for some time. Merriman discusses digging in deeper and in a cryptic sentence, says that they need to fortify their second lines on being attacked from the rear. The Huesca sector was originally held by Anarchist and POUM units out of Barcelona. Perhaps Merriman thinks that these troops might turn on them from the rear.

Merriman and Copic discussed morale issues at dinner, "the politics of shooting competitions" etc. In another example of punctuation matters, this can be read to say they discussed the politics of the shootings, meaning the execution of the deserters. It also can be read to be the politics of shooting competitions, etc. Since it looks like none of the deserters were actually shot, we might safely take the latter interpretation of the sentence.

After dinner, Copic and Merriman have their one-on-one. Copic grouses about the situation in Albacete and a word here is unreadable (it looks like dynalite, but that makes little sense). Copic tells Merriman that Indalecio Prieto, Minister of War, is against the International Brigades. There are rumors of the government leaving Valencia and moving to Barcelona or, worse, to the French border so that escape would be possible. Copic relays his fears that the war is being lost. General Walter has lost a battalion to the 45th Division (the Dimitroffs), which is being split off and moved to the southern fronts. Copic notes that the International Brigades are all over Spain and would benefit from being combined into a single Army Corps under General Walter. Copic says that General Gal may come up to help the XVth Brigade. In reality, Gal had already been removed from the Army Corps. Regarding speaking to Walter, Copic didn't actually talk to him for Merriman and said he couldn't do it. He made excuses, which clearly Merriman did not want to hear. Merriman says he

spoke little and verged on being surly. But as he left, Merriman got his chance to speak to Walter and remind him about his promise at Belchite. To Merriman's pleasure, Walter said he would fix it right away. He must have spoken to Copic and Copic responded like it should have happened already. Copic tells Merriman to change the lists of promotions. Merriman is tired but says that he will speak to Arturo {the Polish comrade, Adrienne or André} Denis. It looks like he says "Christ knows when" but the hope for Merriman is that he will find out when the promotions are made.

October 7 Merriman Is Almost Late for Fuentes

6th{sic 7th 8th or 9th} Today went to visit positions which we were to fortify – planes came up for first time. Found positions and planned to settle down. Showed Batt. Commanders and I held meeting when Copic was anxious to leave planes. In afternoon I became slightly tired and rode on horseback up into the hills to visit Santa Elena. Dart was with me. Nice ride up but only one way down and got lost after dark and led horses for miles until found place where we came up. Got back late and tired. Dart slipped. Came in to find that order had come to move at 10 that night to Quinto. Rest of Brigade to remain. Trucks. figured meeting called and then commenced the wait. Discussion between Dave, Bob & Dallet concerning fact that men do not like Joe.

Copic sore and wanted to be called in. Felt we didn't want him to go to Valencia to conference etc. In general he picked up small points to criticize me on (1) on trial (2) on 7 litres of gas (3) failed to notice when he left when planes came. Bourne ran to inform him about several things and did not help in general.

Not sufficient trucks to leave with all men. Waited until mid-day (in early morning Copic mad because no one woke him. Hans down in the mouth)

Grañen perfectly bombed. Garage burned. RR car. 3 killed 9 wounded. We lost one motorcycle. Flew over us but empty.

§ § §

Merriman loses count of his days and enters "6th" for the second time. We will assume it is the seventh or eighth but must have been before the 9th as he says that they will be moving out on a

following day. The XVth Brigade moved to Quinto on the 10th of October.

Merriman begins setting up positions for a long stay in Senes and on the Huesca Front. He meets with his Battalion commanders to lay out the lines. Assuming that he has gone back to Senes on the 7th as he said on a prior page, it is likely that these positions are in the hills to the west of Senes and towards Zuera. Ironically, this on the Sierra du Alcubierre where George Orwell was first posted in the Fall on 1936 and were lines held by the POUM and Anarchist Divisions.⁴⁷⁴ Merriman does mention seeing FAI symbols written on the walls of his HQ in Senes. If one looks carefully at the photograph of the trial held in Senes on previous days, one can see slogans painted on the walls of that room and painted over later, presumably by the Republicans.



Location of Ermita Santa Elena (41.913°N, 0.5416°W), 603m altitude, Google Maps®

Merriman says that the HQ was bombed during the meeting and Copic cut it short because he was afraid of the planes. Copic repeatedly shows fear of being killed in air strikes. Merriman and Dart get horses and ride out to look at "Santa Elena". Ermita Santa

Elena has been located on a Google Earth map. It is 4.3 kilometers from Senes as the crow flies and on high ground. As the sun goes down, Merriman and Dart get lost and have to lead their horses out on foot as they make their way down the hills in the dark. Should one want to find Santa Elena, it is on a mountain biking route now through the wind power generators of Aragon.⁴⁷⁵

When they get back they find that orders have come for the Brigade to move out to Quinto, in preparation for the offensive that will come in a few days at Fuentes del Ebro. All the planning of positions in the Huesca Front have come to naught. Merriman says "Rest of Brigade to remain" so only part of the Brigade is to move although the Americans, British, Spanish and Canadians all were on the front lines of Fuentes del Ebro. He may have meant that other Brigades are staying at Huesca.



Joseph Dallet, Quinto, September 1937. ALBA Photo 11_0629, Tamiment Library, NYU

They don't move (and this could be as late as October 9) because the trucks don't come. Overnight, Merriman has a discussion with Bob Thompson, Dave Doran and Joe Dallet about Joe Dallet and the dissatisfaction of the men for his leadership. Dallet will become a controversial figure about this time because of the continued questions on his leadership style. Born to a middle class family

(his father owned a lumber mill in New England) and raised in a non-proletarian setting, Dallet developed a working class manner in his union organizing in Chicago. Many, including Merriman, found his style forced. Steve Nelson recalled that when Dallet was in jail in Perpignan in Spain waiting to get over the Pyrenees, he charmed his captors by playing classical piano (Chopin) extremely well.

Copic left the meeting when the planes came over but Merriman also must have continued the meeting. Copic was furious. He gave trivial reasons for being mad. Bourne is solicitous to Copic, which again irritates Merriman. And follows him out to relate what was happening at the meeting.

Trucks show up on the following morning (9th or 10th; Landis places it as the 10th⁴⁷⁶). Copic is not woken and starts the day irritated. His adjutant, Hans Kaltschmidt, takes the brunt of that irritation, apparently.

Criminal bombardeo por la aviación facciosa

Grañén, 11.—Una vez más se ha manifestado el espíritu criminal de los aviadores facciosos, que acuden a los procedimientos más repulsivos para justificar el sueldo que perciben. El bombardeo realizado ayer tarde no tuvo otra finalidad que la de destruir el hospital, sin tener en cuenta que esta acción no podía facilitarles beneficio de ninguna clase. Desde los primeros momentos se vió que la finalidad no era otra que arrasar la casa donde por igual militares y paisanos, leales y facciosos, reciben los bienhechores auxilios de la ciencia.

Afortunadamente, tan pronto fué advertida la finalidad de la baja maniobra se evacuó el local, llevando a los pacientes a lugar más seguro. Breves momentos después, sobre el citado

hospital caían varias bombas, que lo destruyeron por completo.

Por la tarde intentaron repetir sus incursiones, pero fueron alejados por los antiaéreos.

The town of Grañen was bombed with a railroad car destroyed, several dead and injured. The October 11th issue of LaVanguardia in Barcelona makes the damage more deliberate: the hospital was destroyed. The planes were empty when they flew back over the XVth Brigade. Merriman admires their accuracy.

Article in La Vanguardia, Barcelona, on October 12 describing the bombing of Grañen.

October 10 Minor and Lawrence Tour Quinto

{prob 10th} Finally left and drove to Quinto. Troops moving up and cavalry. On arrival in Quinto Dave said Minor & Bill Lawrence here and they had talked over our matter which we discussed earlier concerning Copic etc. Air in staff tense- forced laughter etc. Picture shown to Minor. Crespo sore slept on chair. Minor asked if Copic had picture of me. Copic refused to answer. Meeting to be called tomorrow for leading party people. Late at night Bill & Robbie, Dave & I talked. Before this Bourne talked with me on order of Bill. Dave surprised at question put by Bourne before Bill. Showed ignorance etc.

Discussion interesting. Bill told about longtime perspective for brigade leadership. Bill & Steve maybe Robbie to go to Moscow. Dave will be one of the three leading comrades (Politburo) etc.

§ § §



Lieutenant Colonel Vladimir Copic, Robert Minor and a woman visitor at Quinto during the Fuentes del Ebro Operations, October 1937 ALBA PHOTO 11-0848, Tamiment Library, NYU

The XVth Brigade arrives back in Quinto. Accompanying them is Bill Lawrence from Albacete and Bob Minor from Valencia. Many,

many photographs are available from this visit and Bob Minor is widely photographed in the area. The visitors with Minor include a young woman and man who have yet to be identified in Tamiment Photos.

Merriman says that the staff meeting they held with Bill Lawrence and Bob Minor was tense. The staff were trying to remove Copic from command and have him replaced. Copic showed a picture, presumably one of the many of himself, to Minor and Lawrence. The air was frozen. Minor asked if Copic had one of Merriman (knowing full well that Copic did not allow photographs of Merriman to be taken at Belchite). Copic did not answer as he knew that he had blocked photos to be taken of Merriman. It is probable that Sandor Voros discovered the lack of photos of Merriman when he was attempting to put an article together on him for the Volunteer. On the 24th of September orders were given to photograph all the heroes of the Belchite battle and the fact that no photo was taken of Merriman would be extremely galling to the Americans. Merriman has said repeatedly in his diary that he was going to have it out with Copic but he obviously waited until he had the two biggest guns in the American arsenal with him to have this fight out in the open.

After the meeting the Americans talked. Bill Lawrence, Robbie Robinson and Dave Doran met with Merriman. Jim Bourne had been ordered by Minor to talk to Merriman. Some question that Bourne had asked of Lawrence was inappropriate and he was apprised of that later. Merriman's opinion of Bourne as a political neophyte is reinforced. It appears that Steve Nelson, Bill Lawrence, Dave Doran and Robbie Robinson may be sent to Moscow for upcoming Party meetings. The 12th Plenary Session of the 17th Congress of the Communist Party was being held in Moscow on October 11th and 12th. For them to make it to Moscow for this plenum would have meant flying there. There is no evidence that Steve Nelson, who was wounded in Belchite, went on this trip and Bill Lawrence did not leave Spain until November of 1937. It is possible that this talk was meant to be a morale booster for the Americans in Spain and that they had access to political power that they were not finding in Prieto's Spanish Military Command.

October 11 Preparing for Fuentes de Ebro

{prob 11th} Next morning series of discussions. Bill with Copic. Minor with Dave. Bill with me - Copic later with me. Planes thick in air. Party meeting held in afternoon. Minor gave good report. October plan of landing troops in Castellon etc. Reaction of France and Roosevelt's speech. Amlie here and talking too much. Minor report fine and Copic followed too much at length. Discussion followed. Rep of Spanish & Cuban parties. In general, a fine meeting. Much information and inside dope. Ate later upstairs. Weisenfeld directing the cleaning of quarters where fire can be built etc. Hearth again. Copic & I talked thru other people and air seemed cleared. Bill talked fairly straight to him and told him he was going to Moscow. Scares them all.

§ § §

Merriman will only make a short entry for the 11th of October before he takes nearly a week off from writing in his diary. October 13 was the first day of the battle for Fuentes de Ebro, a small town about half way between Quinto, which the Brigades took at the end of August and the ultimate target of Zaragoza, which was another 44 kilometers further northwest. Since mid-August, the Republican Armies had made an intense push on Zaragoza but never got closer than about 3 km. The Mediana and Fuentes de Ebro front lines of the Fascists were holding up any significant push on Zaragoza from the south. The International Brigades were recalled back to the Fuentes front on October 10 from their bivouac in Senes, northeast of Zaragoza (and 160 km by road back to Quinto) to try to finally break this impasse. Over the next week's diaries, Merriman's descriptions of the fighting at Fuentes that were entered in the diary on October 19 will be reproduced by placing the descriptions on the correct days. They are not noted in the diary and are approximate reconstructions from historical accounts of the fighting.

On the morning of the 11th, a Party meeting was held in Quinto. Bill Lawrence met with Copic and Bob Minor spoke with Dave Doran. Later Bill Lawrence met with Merriman and finally Copic and Merriman met. This ambassadorial negotiation clearly was designed to gain a workable compromise between Merriman and Copic. Merriman says later in the day that much of the air was cleared between Copic and him. Bill Lawrence scared Copic by saying that he was going to Moscow and Copic obviously read this as a threat to him if he did not work out his differences with the Americans.

The air, however, was thick with airplanes. Merriman doesn't say if these planes are Republican or Fascist airplanes but it is apparent that preparations for the upcoming battle are being made.

Milton Wolff told Art Landis in his oral interview³⁶⁸ that he was at this Party meeting on the 11th. He said that the plan of attack was laid out for everyone and he found the upcoming use of tanks and men going in with the tanks to be odd.

Wolff: "Now, this is the meeting you're talking about. We went to this meeting and at this meeting they told us, that these guys were going to go in with these bloody tanks, these troops, and they were going to go in and they were going to go all the way to Zaragoza and all we had to do is to follow them and clean up. They weren't going to stop."

Landis: "If they had only known that right across the way, {General} Sáenz de Buruaga had moved the entire 150th Division, the entire Guadarama Division, right on the path." He chuckles. "They were the finest fucking troops that Franco had. And they met those tanks and they did it classically. They let the tanks go through and then they had them."³⁶⁸

Later we will see that this is a singular characteristic of the battle of Fuentes that will remain in the minds of the Brigadistas many years later. In Wolff's words "Ah, this was a screwed up operation from the word 'go'".³⁶⁸

Merriman's description of the meeting is antiseptic and he only mentions a potential opening of a front in Castillon by landing troops from the Mediterranean. This offensive never occurred. He listens to a report from Robert Minor and finds the meeting informative.



Nathan Weisenfeld (Neil Wesson, left), Robert Merriman and Alfredo Balsa, ALBA PHOTO 11-1328, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman says that Nathan Weisenfeld^c will clean up the barracks in Quinto so that the men can build fires in the hearths in the homes where they were billeted.

^c Nathan Weisenfeld (Neil Wesson) was born April 4, 1906 in Detroit. He had 2 years of High school ROTC and worked as a mechanic and factory worker. He arrived in Spain on February 12, 1937, and served with the Lincoln Battalion, went to OTS, returned to the Machine Gun Company of the Lincoln-Washington Battalion. By October he was in the Brigade Estado Mayor. He returned to the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. Wesson will become Chief of Runners for the Brigade in the Spring of 1938. He served at every battle the Americans had: Jarama, Brunete, Belchite, Fuentes del Ebro, Teruel, Retreats, and the Ebro Offensive. He returned to the US on December 15, 1938 aboard the *Paris*. Wesson had WWII Service in the Army and he passed away on June 9, 1974 in Royal Oak, MI.

October 12 Brigades Move to 3km from Fuentes

{Written on} Oct 19th. Two months ago today we left Ambite. Yesterday the International Brigades had their first birthday. In the meantime much has happened since I last wrote and it will take a long summary.

After Bill and the others left Minor & Amlie remained. Minor visited the Mac Paps during the early part of an eight hour session about Joe Dallet's work. Turned out to be like a last confession. Joe took it well. Party meeting to help Joe. Minor talked with Copic. Military attaché to visit us by Party decision. Amlie sent to talk to him 8 hrs and in general I am dubious about the things he may have said. I have lost all respect for Amlie. Here he engaged again in talking against the leadership encouraging the men to protest - against saluting, for vacations etc. etc. Minor surprised. Copic wanted to arrest. Minor only reason he didn't remove Amlie was because he was wounded. Minor first wanted to call in Amlie then softened and in the end told Dave and me about poor sanitary condition and possibility of basis for not being satisfied since contact between men and officers could be better etc. On basis of this discussion called on {Dr. Mark} Straus - whose work has not been too good and had a long session with Dunbar, Dart & Straus. Long discussion with Sapir about Crespo and office in general and need for determination of spheres etc.

Had to agree with him but a few moments later in walked a Major with the order to move up during the night to occupy the trenches between kilometre 28 & 29 and to prepare for attack in the morning. One batt. to left of road. Two to the right and the third to ride on tanks. 45 new larger Russian one {BT5} - first time used in Spain in addition to 25 older models on hand already. Attack to be next day at 12 o'clock. Later the Colonel in charge of tanks

Regiment Kondratyev came in. Session lasted all night. 24th Battalion to ride on the tanks which were to cross the enemy line and even to pass Fuentes and to hold the road beyond. 6 men on a tank and to be unloaded at the proper time in many cases behind the enemy lines. Felt badly about using the 24th in such a dangerous and complicated undertaking. Tanks rolled by - glorious things and riding proud. All batts.

§ § §

Merriman starts in again entering information in his diary on October 19. The first lines describe the long meeting held with Bob Minor and Hans Amlie with other officers and non-coms where they discussed Joe Dallet's leadership as Commissar of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. This meeting was rough and Edward Lending would later say that he dumped on Dallet with complaints from the men about his officious leadership style.⁴⁷⁷ Merriman says that Bill Lawrence and others who were visiting the Brigade have left for their trip to Moscow. Merriman is reviewing history here so he makes the sad comment that the admissions of Dallet were like a "last confession". On October 13th, Joe Dallet would be killed in action. Minor spoke with Dallet who appeared to take the criticism well. Minor also spoke with Vladimir Copic but the details of that discussion are not given.

A representative of the US Army is at Quinto to visit. This visit is approved by the Party and this means he will be shown everything. This is Colonel Stephen Fuqua and he was seen in many photos reviewing positions and being shepherded around by Hans Amlie. Fuqua was a military attaché in the US Embassy and Claude Bowers, the US Ambassador, was getting situation reports from him.⁴⁷⁸ Steven Fuqua's obituary reveals some of the concern about Fuqua.⁴⁷⁹ As head of Infantry for the US Army, Fuqua would have been very close to US Military Intelligence. Both Amlie and Vincent Usera had worked for Fuqua as subordinates. Merriman believes that Amlie has loose lips and is likely to tell Fuqua too much. Amlie was openly criticizing the Communist leadership of the International Brigades and did not agree with the increased

military protocols adopted by the Lincolns since Belchite (saluting, etc.). Amlie had come to Spain representing the American Socialist Party, not the Communist Party, and he was still not trusted by Merriman. Bob Minor refused to remove Amlie since he had been injured in Belchite but Vladimir Copic was disposed to having him arrested (which did not happen). The schism between the ranks and the officers was as wide as it would get in Spain at this point and Amlie was seen as siding with the more libertarian and anarchistic thinkers amongst the Americans.

Bob Minor was going to speak to Amlie about his dissatisfaction but the unsanitary conditions of the camps led Minor to agree that the men had legitimate gripes and that perhaps instead they should try to clean up the camps. As we saw in Senes, even Merriman got the "fever" (possibly typhoid) and the condition of the troops may have been discussed between Doran, Fuqua, Minor and Amlie.



Dr Mark Straus and Robert Merriman at the Estado Mayor of the Brigade at Fuentes de Ebro, probably on October 12, 1937. Merriman still shows the effects of his fever of the previous week. ALBA Photo 11-0766, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman calls in Dr. Mark Straus for a discussion of this health problem and Merriman blames Straus for "poor work". This discussion with Straus spread to include Malcolm Dunbar, Battalion Commander of the British Battalion and Rollin Dart, who was with the Lincolns.



Moise Sapir and David Doran at the Estado Mayor, Fuentes de Ebro, October 1937. ALBA Photo 11-0764, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman meets with Moise Sapir again and discusses how to deal with the Second Chief of Staff Major Crespo. Sapir wants to set boundaries (spheres) of who will be responsible for what. Sapir is likely to be Merriman's go-between with the Base at Albacete to better define these staff roles.

Merriman doesn't sound like he is willing to share any responsibility with Crespo but, before this is resolved, they get orders to move up at 10 pm. They are to be in the trenches at a point between Kilometer 28 and 29 on the Fuentes-Quinto road by morning. The location of Kilometer 28 and 29 is seen on a

contemporary map of Fuentes from 1937 below. Also included is an image from Google Earth showing these positions today which parallel the industrial zone of Fuentes southwest of the town. This area is on a broad flat plain that drops off rapidly on the north and east as Fuentes de Ebro is below the level of the plain and in the broad fertile Ebro valley.



Location of the positions to be occupied by the International Brigades on the early morning of October 13, 1937. The top image is from Instituto de Cartografía y Geología de Cataluña. The bottom is from Google Earth. The red line on the road is the approximate locations of Kilometer 28 and 29.

Merriman reveals that one Battalion (the Mac-Paps) would be left of the highway on the high flat ground and two on the right (the Lincoln's between the highway and the railroad tracks) and the British to their right along the railroad tracks and in the agricultural area. The British would bog down in the soggy ground of these fields.

In the planning for the next day, the extensive use of the new BT5 tanks from Russia were discussed with Colonel Pavel Kondratyev (aka Pablo Otez) who would command the tank battalion. 25 new tanks and 15 older smaller ones (T26) would be used.⁴⁸⁰ The Spanish 24th Battalion was to ride into battle on the back of these tanks and drop off into action after the tanks had smashed the wires and breached the trenches of the front line Fascist defenders of the town. If the plan went ahead, the tanks would continue through to take the road to the north of Fuentes and keep moving towards Zaragoza. The plan was ambitious if not downright foolhardy.

Merriman says that the tanks rolled by and they were marvelous things. In 24 hours, his opinion of them might have changed some in real life, but on October 19, 1937, as he wrote this in retrospect, he was still impressed with them. Perhaps he meant to emphasize the word “were” in “they were glorious things”.

October 13 The Brigades Attack Fuentes de Ebro

All battallions moved into line and Mac-Paps late and as a result a few wounded before we started. Delayed in going out to observe since artillery men didn't come. Intended to return to Quinto before the action but never got to do it. Tanks came late – artillery in general weak - altho they fired quite well. Tanks visible for miles and beautiful but came close and then stopped and waited. We delayed and finally the tanks advanced over our trenches and our men advanced. Mac Paps went well. Walter showed up in his undershirt. Congratulated the MacPaps and condemned the English. Jumps to conclusion about numbers remaining in trenches. Airplanes here early & late. Tanks advanced but fired little into the positions. Things happened fast. Tanks dropped out of site. Some fascists remained in position although some ran. Covered positions of fascists well done and stopped our advance. Mac Paps did well. Losses not too great although some fine people lost. Joe Dallet killed. Dougher, Neure, Kaufman others wounded. Reports came in that losses were tremendous which later proved to be as stretched as usual.

§ § §

Merriman doesn't write much about the initial assault of the 13th of October at Fuentes. He says that the Lincolns and Mac-Paps moved into line late and were held up. The attack of the Tanks stalled and was not effective. The reasons for the failure is discussed below. The Mac-Paps were congratulated by Walter for making the assault on Fuentes and the British were chastised for not advancing on the town. Merriman says the losses were not too great although Commissar Joe Dallet was killed, Bill Neure, Joe Dougher and Rubin Kaufman were injured. He doesn't mention other leading comrades such as Milton Herndon^d who also fell. He

^d Milton Herndon (Braxton) was born March 9, 1908, Wyoming, OH. An African American, he had prior military service in the National Guard for 1.5 years and worked as a steel worker and laborer. He served with the Machine Gun

then starts to talk about the evening of the first day when the British and Americans returned to the jump off positions and Merriman says he had to send them back to the lines.



Joe Dougher and Carl Bradley, 24th Battalion American Company, October 1937, ALBA PHOTO 11-0726, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman's diary really should be read with the American aphorism "Putting lipstick on a pig". The day was a total disaster and nothing worked as planned. There are hundreds of pages written in Brigade literature about this day and a few excerpts give a more realistic appraisal of the Fuentes attack. In a favorite photo from the Tamiment Library, the body language of Vladimir Copic and Bob Merriman make you wonder who would take the blame for this mess.

Company of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion as a section leader. He was killed in action October 13, 1937 at Fuentes de Ebro trying to rescue one of his men.

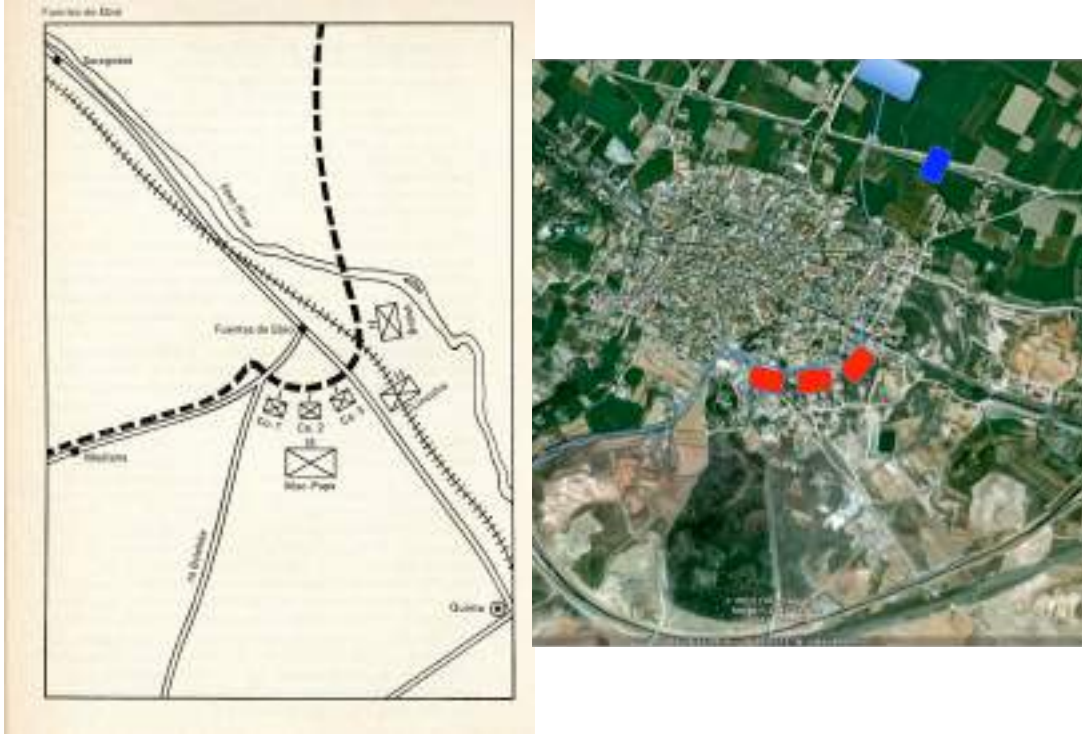


Vladimir Copic (left) and Robert Merriman (right) at the Estado Mayor viewing post, Fuentes de Ebro, ALBA PHOTO 11-0258, Tamiment Library, NYU

Richard Baxell relates the morning from the British viewpoint:

Hugh Sloan, Bill Alexander's runner, saw the disaster unfold. When the operation was launched in the early morning of 13 October, he counted forty-seven Republican tanks and watched as they sped forward full tilt, throwing off the troops who were trying to cling on and leaving them far behind to be shot to pieces. The tanks themselves fared little better, for 'the Fascists were ready for them -- they'd got bottles of petrol and a number of the Russian tanks were set alight'. Timing was vital, but 'the Fascists were alerted, the planes bombed too early, the artillery bombed too early and the tanks were late'. Insufficient Republican artillery and air support made matters immeasurably worse. It was, thought Sloan, '[a] ridiculous charge like the charge of the Light Brigade -- a gallant effort but a stupid effort'.⁴⁸¹

The British Battalion was on the very right flank. An image of the positions from Landis is shown below.⁴⁸² The current approximate positions are superimposed on a Google Earth image.



Left: Positions at Fuentes de Ebro, Source: Landis. Right: Current GoogleEarth image with positions of the Mac-Paps in Red, Lincolns in dark blue and British in light blue.

While the British reached their trenches before dawn on the 13th, a massive traffic jam on the Quinto - Fuentes road kept the Americans and Canadians from getting into position before daylight. Many Americans were pinned down immediately after leaving the staging positions at Km 28-29 on the road. Company 3 (in which the author's father, Harold Hoff, had just been assigned four days previously) was pinned down by machine gun fire and those who were not shot spent much of the day face down short of the trenches. Milt Wolff recalled³⁶⁸ that his machine gun company (#4) did set up enfilading and supporting fire for the Mac-Paps, but most of the guys were just cut up trying to make the trenches. Philip Detro showed significant bravery going back and guiding the Lincolns into their position on the railway line.

The British were in soft soil in the fields and with heavy rain on the night of October 11-12, movement was difficult. Wolff³⁶⁸ said at

least 10 of the tanks went over the top of the Lincoln trenches, nearly crushing the men under them. Many of the 24th Battalion, riding on the tanks, saw the Lincolns in the trenches and thinking they were Fascists, fired on them.

Niilo Makela (listed incorrectly as Milo in this excerpt from the Book of the XVth Brigade), commander of the Mac-Pap machine gun company, wrote of the Mac-Pap experience that day:

We received our first taste of fire at dawn, while entering a shallow communication trench leading us to our position. The enemy machine gunners spotted our movements, and in the fire one man was killed and a few wounded, including our comrade Hitchcock {Robert Colver} ^e, our Battalion Secretary. He was hit in the leg while cutting a strand of barbed wire at the mouth of the communication trench....

The attack started at 1:40 pm. When our tanks went over and the order was given to advance, the Battalion, including its Staff, went over the top like one man. Joe Dallet, Battalion Commissar went over with No. 1 Company on the left flank, where the fire was heaviest. He was leading the advance when he fell, mortally wounded. He behaved heroically until the very end, refusing to permit the First Aid men to come over to him in his exposed position. {Dallet was killed while on the ground wounded, when a machine gun opened up on him}.

Volumes could be written about acts of individual heroism, acts performed by men in the ranks as well by men high in leadership. Space will not allow for that. I want to mention,

^e Robert Coughlin Colver (Douglas Hitchcock) was born August 7, 1912, in NYC. Another of the City College of New York graduates (BA), he attended Georgetown Law for 1 year. He had 6 months prior military service in the Coastal Artillery of the National Guard. He was a clerk and fingerprint expert. He arrived in Spain on June 1, 1937, and was assigned as Battalion Secretary of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion and was wounded Fuentes de Ebro. He went back to OTS and graduated January 1938. He would be killed in action April 1, 1938, Gandesa, during the Retreats.

however, comrades like Bill Neure, Commander of No. 1 Company, who was fatally wounded; "Izzie" Schrenzel, who was seriously wounded, died later; that outstanding Negro comrade, Milton Herndon, leader of the Third Section of the Machine Gun Company who was killed together with Ben Smith, when they were trying to assist the wounded on the field.⁴⁸³

Dr. Julius Hene later called out for valor Sergeant James V. Black and Earl Rose, two First Aid men in No. 1 company.⁴⁶⁵

Ron Liversedge of Vancouver was there that day:

... But our journey to Fuentes was behind schedule. The road seemed to be clogged with traffic, and there was some confusion. It was already daylight as we started to file into a series of very narrow, very dirty, and not overly deep trenches, leading off from each side of the road. It seemed uncanny that we were being allowed to file into the trenches unmolested. I had a mental picture of the enemy unhurriedly finishing their coffee and then flexing their muscles.

I think that more than three-quarters of the Brigade were off the road, and sidling up the narrow trenches to their positions, when the fascists opened up. There was no warming up, but in a split second, dozens of machine-guns started a terrific crescendo of firing. We received our first casualties amongst the men who were still on the road.

... Our Company commander (I've forgotten his name {Neure}) was a young German American. The second in command was Bill Whitehead {Whitehead does not appear on the Canadian muster roles and his editor David Yorke thinks Liversedge's memory is at fault here.}, a Canadian, and Joe Dallet, the Battalion's political commissar was going over with our company. With our Company also were Ed Rolfe, the American writer who was our historian, and Irving Weissmann, another American. The rest of our company were Canadians.

... At one thirty we heard the tanks roaring towards us from behind; they were coming at a good lick, seventy-five of them {actually, 42 tanks took the field that day}. They roared over the top of our trenches, nearly crushing one of our men who, thinking the tanks would break down the trench walls and bury us, jumped out onto the parapet and was pulled back in, just a split second before the tanks rolled over.

We were amazed to see twelve men of the 24th Spanish Battalion riding on the top of each tank. It was said afterwards that somebody on Brigade staff had seen this stunt in a film, but unfortunately this wasn't Hollywood. There were very very few of the 24th who came back.

The Mac-Paps scrambled out of the trenches to follow behind the tanks. The Lincoln were on our right, and the British on their right: the whole Brigade spread in a long line right across the plain. The tanks spread out in line and started for the town at about forty miles an hour; at the same time, the fascists opened up with hundreds of machine-guns and mortars and artillery.

Of course we could not keep up with the tanks, and immediately we ran into murderous fire. There was no cover. Men started to drop all around. In less than fifteen minutes our company strength was reduced by half. Our company commander was down. Just to my right, Joe Dallet, walking along, smoking his curved pipe, a little smile on his face, was hit. I heard the bullet smack into him; he gave a little grunt and I knew he was dead before he hit the ground. Then three of the ammunition carriers in my machine-gun squad went down. To the right and ahead a little I saw Milt Herndon, a negro and his pal Smithy {Ben Smith}, both of the second company, go down. One of our stretcher bearers, Issac Schatz {Izzie Shrenzel} from Toronto, crawled over to see if he could help, and as he rolled Herndon over, Schatz got one through the shoulder.

... Ahead of us we saw our tanks grinding to a halt close to the ravine in front of the town. Twenty-five of them on fire; we

could see the tank men jumping out of the burning tanks and being shot as they jumped out Bill Kardash from Winnipeg was one of them, and he received the wound there that cost him one leg. We could also see what men were left of the 24th, trying to hide behind the burning tanks.⁴⁸⁴

Bill Kardash⁴⁸⁵ of Winnipeg, mentioned above, was quoted by Michael Petrou:

"Things did not go as planned," Kardash recalled years later. They received orders to attack late in the morning and knew nothing about the terrain the tanks were expected to cross. Some got stuck in gullies on the approach to Fuentes de Ebro. Kardash's tank rolled towards the nationalist trenches very slowly. Any Spaniards clinging to the sides of his tank were shot and fell to the ground. They cross the first line of nationalist trenches and almost immediately Kardash and his crew were hit by a Molotov cocktail. "The first thing, the motor stopped. The wires burnt ... So we couldn't move. So long as we had ammunition, we kept firing," Kardash said "I gave orders for the driver to get out because the fire began to get closer to the turret".

Kardash watched as his driver and gunner fled the burning tank and were gunned down. Kardash looked certain to meet the same fate if he ran, but flames inside the tank were spreading and left him with little choice. He bolted from the tank while shots rang out all around him. As he ran towards a highway that linked Quinto and Fuentes de Ebro, a grenade knocked him down and filled his legs with shrapnel. He looked up and saw that another tank had broken through the nationalist defenses and was still operational. Kardash waved the tank over to where he lay and climbed on top. Somehow he managed to cling to the tank while it sped back over the nationalist lines to the safety of republican positions.

Kardash would spend until May 1938 in a Madrid hospital with gangrene in both legs. One was amputated right away. The thigh of his other leg was almost blown off and the pain was so bad that Kardash begged doctors to remove it as

well. His remaining limb was saved, however, and Kardash eventually made it safely back home to Canada.⁴⁸⁶

Ed Lending in his oral history interview quoted above would call Joe Dallet's actions "his Don Quixote tilting at windmills" moment. Lending would tear up thinking perhaps the eight hour meeting where Lending had torn into Joe Dallet over his leadership might have caused Commissar Dallet to foolishly try to prove himself in front of his men. Dallet, however, had Steve Nelson as his role model as Commissar and Nelson was in the midst of Brunete and Belchite fighting with his men. Dallet's actions were sad but heroic.

October 14 Russians Invade the Estado Mayor

In evening {13th} English returned and so did Americans. Sent them back. In general, advanced on left but little permanent advance on the right flank. Fry and Whalley of English killed. Argites also. Dozens of our best comrades wounded.

For the next day or two we fortified-improving the positions using 500 genie men from Cuerpo. Kondratyev one sad man because 25 tanks failed to return. Complete failure. Many went past Fuentes – many from 24th Battalion missing. Aguila ~~killed~~ wounded. General feeling of great disappointment although they tried to keep up their spirits. Some few of the men escaped from the fascist lines and either ran back or came over at night. Laputin, Kruschen among them. In meantime held 12 hour political meeting in Azaila with all Battalion political Commissars. Cuerpo polkom Vidal - good guy. Our brigade only one complemented both for action and attitude. General attack a failure and a bitter one. What was wrong. Strange meeting.

Copic and I visited Casada Army Corps commander who is not worth much and talked about positions etc. Not much received some telephone equipment. Segundo Jefe Crespo finds little time to come to the front. Very busy in the rear. After a short time new plan of attack made in order to rescue tanks behind enemy lines. To start at twelve o'clock. 20 tanks to pull up on this sector to fire into first line and with two battalions from the 6th Brigade (ran at Mediana) to take two houses on right and front line trenches ahead. Finally got ready by four o'clock and infantry late - tanks started too soon and ran out of ammo before infantry batt into our Lincoln-Washington trenches. Tanks went back for ammo already 4:50 and battalion went over. Marvellous attack but this time the tanks went

to the other extreme and didn't break down the barbed wire. Advance stopped. Darkness came Russian invasion into our Estado Major and place left a wreck. Tried to order us over and did all sorts of shouting etc. Our scouts went out to find out situation on line and went to direct tanks to rip up wire. Sent back

Kondratyev helpless except for talking. His commanding post was not supposed to be here at all but he couldn't get back in time. I laid down and let them shout. In the end they admitted defeat quietly and called in Battalion and left without saying a word to me.

§ § §

Merriman continues his description of the evening of the first day of Fuentes de Ebro and the second day. Merriman said that the Americans and British returned overnight in the dark to the staging position which was a couple of kilometers south of Fuentes de Ebro. The Fascist troops were heard that evening celebrating what they believed was a victory over the Republican tanks and given the number killed in the first assault, one can accept their assessment of the day. The fact that the Americans and British left the lines indicates that they believed the assault was done. Merriman sent them back to their positions. Merriman continues here by saying that the Mac-Paps were successful in advancing on the left flank. On the right flank, however, British Captain Harold Fry⁴⁸⁷ was killed. Fry had been injured and captured in an assault on the British machine gun company in February. He returned to the Brigade and led the British again at Fuentes. He would not survive this time.

Merriman says that "Wally" was also killed. This is believed to be Eric Whalley of Edinburgh who was killed on October 13 at Fuentes de Ebro. The third man listed as killed was Louis Argites.^f

^f Louis Elias Argites (ΑΡΓΙΤΗΣ, ΗΛΙΑΣ [ΛΟΥΗΣ]) was born in Spetsis, Greece. He had 3 months prior military service and worked as a truck driver and mechanic.

Merriman says that 500 men of the engineering ("genie") battalion were thrown into the trenches at the front to improve the protection of the troops in at the front. This would have carried them up to October 15 with minimal action. Merriman says that



Commander Aguila of the 24th Battalion, ALBA PHOTO 177_183039, Tamiment Library, NYU

Kondratyev, the armored Battalion commander, was distraught about losing 25 tanks. Given that 25 new BT5 Russian tanks were used in this action for the first time, this loss was devastating for the tank corps. Merriman says that some of the tanks bypassed Fuentes but still did not return. The 24th Battalion which had ridden in on the tanks was also wiped out with its commander Aguila wounded.

Merriman mentions two Russian names, "Laputin" and "Kruschen", who were likely to be tank commanders. The Brigade political commissars held a 12-hour meeting to discuss what to tell the men. It was led by the chief political commissar of the 5th Army Corps, a Spaniard named Vidal, not to be confused with Lucien Vidal (Vital Gayman), who had been commander of the Albacete Base in the Spring of 1937. Merriman thinks highly of Commissar Vidal. Scapegoats for the failure were being sought that night.

He was part of the first group of Americans in the Lincoln Battalion. He was wounded in the head and foot at Jarama. He joined the Lincoln-Washington Battalion at Belchite. He was offered a chance to be repatriated but refuses. A platoon leader in Company 1, he was killed in action October 13, 1937, at Fuentes de Ebro.

Merriman says that he and Copic went to visit Casada Army Corps. He probably meant Segismundo Casado⁴⁸⁸ who was the head of one of the five army corps and was a chief strategist in the Aragon Battles. Merriman does not get much out of the meeting, even in the way of supplies. He again comments negatively about Major Crespo who was the 2nd Chief of Staff of the Brigade and Merriman says that Crespo just stays in the rear.

Merriman says that another plan of attack is made designed to go rescue the stranded tanks. This could be read that it would be on October 15 at noon. The plan was to take 25 of the remaining tanks to fire into the front lines of the Fascists. The 6th Brigade, led by Miguel Gallo Martínez, would assault the lines.⁴⁸⁹ The 6th Brigade was in reserve at Belchite supporting Modesto. Merriman says they “ran away at Mediana”. Again, everything was delayed and the tanks ran out of ammunition before the troops were ready to go over. The tanks had to return to reload and the assault started at 4:50 in the afternoon. The tanks never got back in position to take down the wire and the assault stopped. Another poorly coordinated action and light failed before anything could be achieved.

Milt Wolff continued his recall of the Fuentes de Ebro action:

And I remember one other attack at Fuentes de Ebro that Danny Groden^g was involved in. Another attack, an infantry attack and this is the only attack that the Lincoln-Washingtons participated in. We had found, right off the Machine-Gun Company right flank, a gully going down into that valley where the fascists were. And they went down into this gully, they went all the way down, maybe 4 or 500 yards without being seen. And, ah, at some prearranged signal we

^g Daniel Samuel Groden was born March 15, 1908, in Russia. A Radio Engineer, he arrived in Spain on May 18, 1937. He served with Company 3 of Washington Battalion and then the Lincoln-Washington Battalion at Brunete, Quinto and Belchite and apparently Fuentes de Ebro. His last unit was the Plaza Mayor of the Lincoln-Washington Battalion. He returned to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. He served in the Army in WWII and passed away in January 1982.

were supposed to open up with our guns, the artillery and planes were supposed to come over and all that stuff. Fuentes de Ebro. And nothing happened. These guys went over out of the gully and they got caught. And as a matter of fact, this is where Danny got hit. Yeah, you might want to talk to Danny about that. And I think that is where Harold Smith got hit, too. Do you remember that?"³⁶⁸



Dan Groden (left), Lionel Levick and Tom McNulty, Officers, Lincoln-Washington Battalion, Company 1, ALBA PHOTO 11-0748, Tamiment Library, NYU

This assault did not recover the tanks and overnight the Estado Mayor of the Brigade was overrun with irate Russian tankers who expected to get their tanks back, with the help of the XVth Brigade infantry. Merriman lets the scouts go forward to have the 25 tanks help take down the wire and he just goes to bed and lets them shout. The Russians retreat from the Estado Mayor as well as from the field at Fuentes de Ebro. The ground battle is nearly over at Fuentes. The air war, unfortunately, continues.

October 15 Major Crespo Gets A Promotion

Copic had heard that Walter had gone to Albacete. This queered his plan to go but he decided to go anyway. He wanted to go for the celebration on the 17th but permission refused. Copic heard Yugoslav party reps there also ComIntern rep and Prieto and others. Suddenly lost interest in Brigade and raised series of problems which should be raised. I agree on the solution of these problems but Copic revealed worry about personal problems and future. Question being discussed about rest of brigade in 1 month moving back to Center Front. English battalion, leadership question of IB army corp and Copic feels he must push Walter because Walter might not do it himself. David Lasser, correspondent WAA, came here with Banner during evening of fight - Copic remained in Quinto during fight. Lasser wanted to visit me and did it for about two minutes. I told him about being busy and possibility of counter attack and invited him to stay. He realized important work we are doing and didn't want to be in the way. Had to leave for Soviet Union. Ivan {Rujevcic} used the blue banner for a pillow.

Copic and I called to subsector meeting - discussed permanent entrenchments on sector etc. Nothing much said. Copic in meantime received permission to go to Albacete. Crespo left in charge of rearguard. Figurehead as Copic said. Hans also went. Copic drove all night in Petrusha{?} car. Army Corps command replaced. Dave attended meeting in which it was stated that offensive here is over. New political work etc. After Copic left Crespo made and found friends here in Army Corps and one sweet night he announced that he had been made Jefe del Sector 4 brigades, Tanks, artillery etc. Surprise. In meantime he received personal letter for Copic from Denis which said may move to Center Front and gave name of Russian advisor whose presence is supposed to

be secret. Give Crespo a chance and he will go far. I hope he goes out of sight. A splendid example of what a really bad element can do and how the oldest of Bolsheviks may help such as him along. In general I do not like the smell of this sector or corps.

Garens{Givins?} left for Valencia for 510 new recruits. They later arrived and he was not with them. Something happened.

§ § §

Merriman caught up his diary by October 19 at the end of the Fuentes de Ebro action. We place the remaining pages on the 15th although they could have been days later.

Merriman catches wind of Vladimir Copic wanting to leave for Albacete to take part in a party meeting and celebration of the first anniversary of the founding of the International Brigades, in which Yugoslavian delegates would be present.⁴⁹⁰ Indalecio Prieto, the Minister of War, would also be present at this high level meeting. The meeting was a veritable "Who's Who" of the important people in Spain.⁴⁹¹ Merriman says Copic lost interest in the action at Fuentes and just wanted to leave. Copic wanted to push General Walter into claiming the need for a new Army Corps (which Walter would lead) that would contain all the International Brigades. Copic feared that Walter would never make such a demand at a high level meeting and Copic wanted to go push him. Copic reveals that the XVth International Brigade's time on the Aragon front is coming to an end and that in a month they would return to the Center Front near Madrid. Copic, as we will see wanted to distance himself from the disaster of Fuentes de Ebro, and feared that he would be cashiered for that failure. The quicker he could pin this on his subordinates, the better.

Merriman says that David Lasser⁴⁹², head of the Workers Alliance of America, is in Quinto and Fuentes to interview the troops. Copic is said to have remained in Quinto throughout the whole Fuentes de Ebro fight. Lasser came with a blue banner which must have been awarded to the Brigade. They were, in fact,

preoccupied with fighting a war at the point of his visit and Lasser had the sense to know that he was in the way. He left and Comrade Ivan (Ivan Rujevic or John Gerlach) slept overnight using the blue banner for a pillow.



David Lasser and Sander Feinberg, Photo Courtesy of the Louis Weinstock Collection, Tamiment Library, NYU

Again, Copic and Merriman were called to a meeting to talk strategy of their "sub sector". These meetings don't impress Robert Merriman. Copic, however, used the meeting to gain permission to go to Albacete. Quinto is left in charge of 2nd Chief of Staff Luis Crespo Torres. Both Copic and Merriman now call him a "Figurehead". Copic left for Albacete in something that looks like "Petrusha" or "Petruska", which could be a Soviet automobile. Also possible as a transcription would be "Patrulla" which would be a police car.

Merriman relates that the Army Corp command has been replaced. At the start of the Aragon offensive, the Army Corps was led by General Pozas and it soon will be official that he is out. Merriman is told by Dave Doran who was at the meeting that the Aragon offensive is now over. The Euskadi campaign also was winding down with the fall of most of the major cities in the

Basque Region, so any diversionary value of the Zaragoza offensive was now over. Consolidation of the held territory around Madrid was now imperative.

While Copic was away, Major Crespo was at play. Crespo got himself appointed to Chief of Staff of the Army Corps jumping over the Brigade. He will lead four brigades and the supporting artillery and armor. Merriman is taken by surprise but not by Crespo's careerism. Merriman says Crespo will always find a way up and Merriman hopes it is up and out. Merriman says that a letter arrives for Copic from André Denis and gives the name of the replacement "advisor". Merriman is surprised that the name would be put down on paper. The letter has not been found in the RGASPI archives.



John Givulinovic (John Givins), ALBA PHOTO 11-0936, Tamiment Library, NYU

A name transcribed as "Garens" left for Valencia to bring up 510 new recruits. It is more likely that this is "Givens" or John Givinovitch, who was in Transports. Milt Wolff says that he doesn't recall any replacements coming up but Art Landis clearly was interested in this large increase in the Brigades.³⁶⁸ On October 6, a series of telegrams from Albacete let the commanders know that nearly 3000 new recruits had been drafted in

Draft #25. It is likely that these new recruits are Spanish and will be the fresh faces seen in Quinto over the next few weeks.

October 19 Fascist Artillery and Air Get the Range

On the 19th new men from Tarazona entered the Brigade. E. C. Smith to go to Mac Paps. Plans being made for the training of new recruits in Quinto. Many problems. All 19 yrs old.

143rd Brigade on our left all 26 year old from Figueras, fine bunch and visit paid us by Teniente and two sergeants - one of whom knows some good dirty jokes. Fine guys despite anarchist influence.

Problem now of moving Brigade hdqtr since fascists have located this spot with a fast firing battery, pound this place badly. We are too close to the front line for an Estado Mayor anyway so shall move today (**20th**). Yesterday such a battery wounded Hene - killed one or two and wounded two right here beyond hdqtrs. Two days ago {18th}, airplane cut across the Lincoln line - dropped on in a trench - caved in dugouts and buried 18. Four of whom were killed - Appleton, McClure and Snow. Dug out many and much work in repairing the trenches. Of wounded 5 went to the hospital. Tough bit of luck damn it. We must cover more of our trenches.

Cuerpo went wild one night. Called us and asked where we were. Name of Copic and if we were militia. Refused to accept phone answer and after sending Captain of Engineers to tell us how to fortify - completely changes the order and put him and his men at our disposition. Made him sore and men in general didn't want to work (11th battalion/Genie) that very night 2 killed and 2 wounded in front of Mac-Pap position. Schmidt talked with them the next day and tended to feel for them. Next night (19th) let them work on trenches to RR since this gave them the feeling that they were engaging in general work and not for our Battalion alone.

Men are getting showered slowly. Chess being played - lists of effectives coming in. Now is time to crack down on office and make some change. New recruits without blankets and Political dept is worrying about it. Makela has jaundice. Thompson sick. Singer returned. Wait until we see him! Sabatini didn't work out well at all and has the jitters of a type. Sol Wellman political commissar Mac Paps. Fight every night for genie but they are doing well. Dart almost hit yesterday and there seems to be some difference between him and Dunbar.

(Will) Paynter was here one night to introduce the man who is to work in his place. Left quickly - great confusion here. Moonlight nite and went to trenches. Everything clean and possible to use glasses at night. Jim Bourne and group went to Albacete for celebration of 1 year of IB. Haven't returned yet. Party work going very slowly. In general a feeling of let-down and after two months on Aragon hope to be pulled out for reorganisation.

Negro author (Western Writers' Congress) forget his name came in from 13th Brigade - Complained about language. Told he was made Lieutenant. Drove ambulance and then drove for Command of Brigade. Kids wouldn't let him sleep. He hasn't written much. Told about 12 men left in Lincoln - he met 150 at least of such. Full of bull - wants to transfer to our EM as a first Teniente. Harris is in command of Dombrowsky Battalion (first) of 13 brigade. Still captain (ranking one, though). I should like to see him. The Negro chap told about him having another chill - interesting? Begelman not acting too well - like Wattis on occasion. Sent Wattis bn bag and he told someone it had been rifled. Must find out more about this.

(Backwards). Copic told Lasser he was a citizen of no country - wanted Lasser to speak to Negrin about our Brigade etc. Very foolish since Lasser is not ours and he

was baffled at a commander treating him so and asking such favors.

§ § §



Photo entitled "David Doran addressing troops at Fuentes de Ebro". Men standing in the photo from right to left are: Edward Cecil-Smith, Ivan Rukevcic and Tom Mallon. ALBA PHOTO 11-1778, Tamiment Library, NYU

The last words on page 43 of Merriman's second diary say "On the 19th ..." and we find out that new men are up at Quinto arriving from Tarazona de la Mancha. These 510 new recruits will help bring the four battalions back to strength after the losses of Fuentes de Ebro. This was draft #25 of the Spanish Army, which dipped down into young men who just turned 19 (and some who were older than 35). Merriman will say that all the new recruits are 19 but some were older.

The command of the battalions is fluid and Bob Thompson will step back from the command of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion and Edward Cecil-Smith (see photo above) would move into the

position he would occupy until October 1938 as head of the Mac-Paps. For the Lincolns, Milt Wolff told Art Landis in the ALBA audiotapes that Wolff became commander of the Lincoln Brigade temporarily when they returned to Quinto.

Merriman notes that the 143rd Brigada Mixta joined the XVth Brigade. The Brigade from Figueras was led by Marine Captain Nicanor Fernandez. It is not known if Fernandez had his Captain's stripes by this time, but Merriman was impressed by their ability in telling dirty jokes.



An airplane bombardment of the positions at Fuentes de Ebro, ALBA Photo 11-1237, Tamiment Library, NYU

The Nationalist forces in Fuentes de Ebro got the range of the trenches of the XVth Brigade and were effective at pounding the trenches including the Estado Mayor where the Brigade Staff were based. Dr. Julius Hene was injured in one such attack by artillery. On October 18, in a bombing run on the trenches, 18 men were buried under the debris from the bomb blasts killing Owen Appleton, the Brigade secretary, Canadian Alexander

McClure and Vernon Snow. All in all, six were killed in the Estado Mayor in a few days. Merriman simply says that they need to do a better job at protecting their trenches. On the 20th, Merriman will note that the Estado Mayor would be moved further back, behind a hill and closer to Quinto. This gives us one date to divide the stories being told in the diary.



*Owen Appleton, Brigade Secretary, killed at Fuentes de Ebro, October 1937.
ALBA Photo 11-0607, Tamiment Library, NYU*

Some of these diary pages are particularly opaque to understanding. The XVth Brigade battalions got the use of the 11th Battalion of Engineers from the Cuerpo (Army Corps) but there must have been the feeling that they were being abused (not to mention in the line of fire at an active front). Cuerpo called down and wanted to speak to Copic who was not there as he had gone to Albacete for the big fiesta there on October 17 for the first Anniversary of the Brigades. They apparently would not talk to Merriman on the phone and sent down an Engineer to talk to them. At the start of the discussion the commander of the Engineers lectured the XVth like they were militiamen and new at the front. Remember that the XVth was just adsorbed into the command of the Spanish Army structure. Merriman must have set this officer straight quickly. At the end, the Engineers were put at



Egan Schmidt on hill in Fuentes (standing right center). Malcolm Dunbar is on the periscope, Copic in front of him, Rollin Dart with field glasses, Edwin Bee (topography) sitting behind Merriman and Merriman. ALBA PHOTO 177-177030, Tamiment Library, NYU

the disposal of the Brigades to help fortify the trenches. But the first night out, 2 were killed and 2 were wounded in the Engineers when they were out front of Mac-Paps on the left of the Fuentes front. Tough duty for these men and little chance to fight back. Merriman sent Schmidt (believed to be Egan Schmidt, above right, who was attached to the Brigade at this point) to speak to them and he was sympathetic to their risks. Merriman says that

he gave them duty on the 19th to make trenches which ran to the railway tracks and they were happier because they then believed they were doing general work for Cuerpo and not just for the International Brigades.

Merriman relates the tedium of life at the front. Men get a chance to get a hot shower. Men are getting some recreation by playing chess. But the paperwork suffered during the active fighting and now Merriman says that office work has suffered. Appleton has been killed so at his level, he has lost a secretary. On the 21st of October, the author's father, Harold Hoff, became clerk of Company 3 of the Lincolns. Clearly, this comment by Merriman indicates that men who were literate were pulled out to help get caught up on the effectives list. These lists were important to get the head count up so that the October 30 payroll would be complete.

168

LINCOLN - WASHINGTON BATTALION
COMPANY EFFECTIVES
DAILY REPORT No. _____

Co. No. **3** Date **10/21/37**

Unit	Roll	Dead	Wounded	Sick	Missing	Permission	Detention	Replacements	Present
Sec. 1	31								31
Sec. 2	34							1	35
Sec. 3	5								5
Sec. 4									
Staff	3								3
Total	73							1	74

Explanations:

Page - Returned from Hospital

Officer of Day - 10/21/37 ^{Frank} Bonelli 2nd Secd. leader

" " 10/22/37 ^{Bill} Tibbels 1st Secd. leader

Rifles 77... rounds of amo 16,800

Machine Guns ... rounds of amo

Light 2 light Maxim - 1 light - Dis. off

Grenades 150 (approximate)

Company 3 Effectives List from Fuentes, October 21, 1937. Tom Page had been the Clerk in the Company but was replaced by Harold Hoff. The company complement was up to 74 from a minimum of 28.



Saul Wellman, Robert Thompson, and Dave Doran, trenches at Fuentes de Ebro, October 1937. ALBA PHOTO 11-0582, Tamiment Library, NYU

The Mac-Paps are struggling with illness. Niilo Makela has jaundice (hepatitis) which was rampant in the Brigades and Bob Thompson is sick. The senior leadership of the Mac-Paps were out of action since Joe Dallet had been killed in the previous week and Doug Hitchcock wounded. Merriman says that Bernard Singer is returning to the brigade and "Wait until we see him". This story will develop in a few days. Wally Sabatini, who was the Adjutant Commissar of the Mac-Paps, got the jitters and had to be removed. In his place, the more solid Saul Wellman would take over as Commissar for the Mac-Paps.

Merriman makes a comparison between Rollin Dart and Malcolm Dunbar. We can't determine which of them he is criticizing. Merriman says Will Paynter will be leaving and he introduced his replacement from Valencia, but Merriman does not give the name. It has been suggested that this could be Bill Rust who took over for Paynter as the representative of British Communist Party to the Partido Comunista de Espana (Barry McLoughlin, private communication).



Malcolm Dunbar, Bill Rust of the Daily Worker, Vladimir Copic, and Hugh Slater, ALBA PHOTO 177-177065, undated. Tamiment Library, NYU.



Eluard Luchell McDaniels, May 1938. ALBA Photo 11-0127, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman also is sketchy on a visitor from the US who was a writer with the Western Writer's Conference. Merriman mentions that he is a negro and said he had been a Lieutenant in the XIIth Brigade on another front. He was on tour with the Brigades and had heard that the Lincolns were down to 12 effectives. Chris Brooks (private communication) has suggested that this is likely to be Eluard Luchell McDaniels, who had a history of conflating his stories. McDaniels would become known as "El Fantastico" since he had the ability to throw grenades ambidextrously. Merriman told him that there were 150 American effectives in the

Lincolns at this point at Fuentes. (Still, the Lincoln-Washington complement should have been around 600-800 men.) McDaniel complains about being placed in a non-English speaking battalion and asks for a transfer to the Lincolns. He wants to keep his Lieutenant stripes as a driver, however, and that will not happen.

McDaniel brought news of the first Lincoln Commander James Harris who was now in the 13th Brigade Dombrowski battalion. Harris apparently had suffered another round of "chills" and Merriman is intrigued. He says he would have liked to talk to Harris. Unfortunately, without knowing this, Harris had deserted his unit on October 14 and was caught leaving the lines. He was summarily shot by the command of the XIIIth Brigade, ending a troubled career for James Harris in Spain.¹²⁵

Merriman finishes this paragraph by saying that Elias Begelman is not working too well in his current role on the staff. Merriman compares Begelman to Wattis and this comparison is also unclear. Merriman complimented Wattis for his good work at Belchite, but his manner was officious and this may be the basis of the comparison.

Merriman finishes this newsy section of his diary by doing a retrospective of some earlier thoughts. He reveals that Vladimir Copic told journalist David Lasser that he is stateless (and probably has no place to go after the war). He asks Lasser to intervene with President Juan Negrin for him and Merriman says that this was an unwise move since Lasser was not a member of the Communist Party and probably wondered what Copic was asking him to do.

October 20 Merriman Moves the Estado Mayor

Moved the Estado Mayor to a new place behind a hill - one officer always remained in observation post.

Life went on smoothly enough except for some trouble in fortifications. Langston Hughes and {Dewitt} Parker came. Had late session with them and they attended a meeting of political commissars which lasted quite late. Jim Bourne also returned with delegation from Albacete. Treated not well and some of the men felt badly. Notes came from Marion with letter from George & Red in which George has gone C.I.O. Interesting letter and interesting development. Jim had talked in Valencia and came with argument that he should not be sent on military duties etc.

Separation must be complete and example of two politburo members who couldn't understand!

§ § §



Estado Mayor at Fuentes de Ebro, ALBA PHOTO 11-1234, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman removed the Estado Mayor from the range of the artillery by moving it behind a hill. This is probably the position shown in the photograph on the above. He mentioned that the previous exposed position (“the observation post”) would continue to be manned by an officer but he clearly was trying to lower the exposure of his command staff to artillery by getting it out of range. The site above would be no less vulnerable to aircraft, however.



James Bourne, Langston Hughes, and Eric DeWitt Parker at the Estado Mayor, Fuentes de Ebro, ALBA PHOTO 11-0800, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman reveals that Eric DeWitt Parker and the writer and poet Langston Hughes arrived at Fuentes de Ebro. There are a number of photos with Hughes and various Brigadistas (including the one with Eric Parker and James Bourne here).

Bourne had just returned from Albacete and was not treated well there so the men were upset about how they were being viewed in the Spanish Army. Bourne brought back a letter from Marion

Merriman which related that George and "Red" had gone to the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). There was a letter to Merriman listed in his diary as being from Solly Greenstein, John P. Miler, James Georgen, and George Utter.

Bourne comes back with a decision from the political office in Valencia that he should not be given any active military assignments. Jim Bourne has gone from being a political neophyte to someone who can muster the protection of the CP. It appears that there are two people in the Politburo in Valencia who do not understand that it is necessary to separate the political arm of the army from the military one. Bourne is an example of this separation.

October 21--23 Rumors of Shakeup in Brigade

Next day an open argument developed with Dave over this matter and I was called in. Frank talk resulted and cleared the air. Still have the feeling that all is not settled and Jim seems to hold back a great deal. Feeling now that he may have to go eventually. Question centered around isolation - leading committee and being sent to different places by authorities higher.

Had clash with Crespo over moving up the office - he opposed it and in end Sapir spoke to him and he sort of came to apologize just as I was leaving. Much work done in the new E.M. behind the hill. Crespo talking bad again about the Internationals and especially to Schmidt about being tolerated only because no one else could be found at once. Damn him - he is nasty and clever. Cleaning of office next on the bill. Singer came back late and with a lot of crap - 800p. rings for people - a mass of stuff for Copic and a piece of candy for me. Bathtub for Copic. Really a double tub. Selling at high price & like a Country Boy turned loose. Much money wasted - he must also be liquidated - check on money needed - Sapir also suggests rank check in Albacete.

Found Gibbs a new cook for EM. Went well but refused to cook toast and chicken for Copic and refused to give him washing water. Was arrested. Later Dave released him and Copic gave Dave a bawling out. Correct on procedure. Took Langston & Parker up to show them the lines when a call came from Dave that Copic wanted us to come to Quinto at once. Jim also went. Had session with Copic in which he reported on CI report. Alfredo - André - others in Albacete. Not much settled as far as Eng. Question. Brigade rest, suggest IB Army Corps but time is not right. Walter couldn't even remain Corps commander on account of it. Corps to be liquidated. Copic's report not much except that new brigade may be formed. Too

many officers in the past must stop. Discipline etc. He returned to Valencia saw Maximoff and Minor & others who told him that his personal problem was solved. He didn't know what it meant but they told him he was removed as brigade commander because of the failure at Fuentes del Ebro. Bombshell. Politics against Copic and reflection against whole brigade. They suggested promoting him to division and may be as commander. Klaus suggested as one to take his place. But he suggested me instead and said Klaus would not do. Dave and I wrote protests which pleased Copic saying he had nothing to do with failure, etc. Copic's remark "It might break the heart of a professional soldier" in fact I feel Copic felt glad about the whole matter - relieved it seemed to me. New clothes - new stripes, etc. Had talk with Denis and arranged for salvo conducto to take report to Valencia. Maybe that order can still be stopped. Dave and I wondered how much a hand Bill Lawrence played in the whole affair.

Robbie left to meet gang in Valencia and then go to Moscow. Would have been fun to go.

§ § §

The discussion with James Bourne about his separation from the military aspects of the Brigade carried over onto October 21st and beyond and Dave Doran must have gotten into a fight with Bourne. Merriman was called in. Merriman feels that Bourne is not telling him everything and that he may have to be moved out. Bourne holds out for the isolation of the Party members from the Brigades and this will not set well with those on the front lines. Doran, who was a Commissar and a CP functionary would have been pulled out and away from the men. There was instruction from the National Parties to remove important cadres from the lines in order to protect leadership talent. Merriman said that Bourne is intimating that he is under orders from people who are much higher up.

Major Crespo, the 2nd Chief of Staff of the Brigade, did not agree with Merriman's request to move the Estado Mayor staff. Merriman appears to have moved the office staff up from Quinto to tents which were behind the hill south of Fuentes but still out of the range of the Nationalist Artillery. Merriman says that the move has been effective in getting work done. He gets Moises Sapir to intervene with Crespo. Crespo insults Egan Schmidt who would have been a Captain on the staff at that point. Crespo says Schmidt is only tolerated because they can't find anyone else to do his job. Schmidt is out favor since he was found in Valencia with a Yugoslav comrade and did not have permission to be there. Merriman is looking to "clean the office" which seems doubtful will be done with a broom.

Bernard Singer who has returned from Hospital was sent on errands by Copic and he returned with all types of loot. Merriman appears to be furious. Rings were purchased which cost 800 pesetas each and recall that this is a month of officer's pay. These rings were the 1st Anniversary rings of the founding of the International Brigades. Perhaps Merriman was worried that only officers would get them and the men would feel that spending nearly 3 months soldier's pay on a ring was excessive.

The Singer case raised a hornet's nest. Steve Nelson wrote a memo that said that Dr. Hene ordered Singer to hospital for "appendicitis".⁴⁹³ Singer would be back in hospital again for appendicitis in October. Nelson says there never was an operation for appendicitis. In May of 1938, Singer would desert and would be picked up trying to cross into France. He was in detention in Fall of 1938.

Copic gets himself a double sized bathtub, Merriman gets a piece of candy. Merriman says Singer^h will be liquidated. Sapir

^h Bernard Singer was born April 22, 1915, in Brockton, MA. He was a draftsman by trade and a Section Financial Secretary in the YCL. He arrived in Spain on July 3, 1937, and served with the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in training and later with Brigade Estado Mayor in Transmissions as a Soldado. On September 27, 1937 Singer deserted and called at Valencia embassy seeking aid to leave Spain. He was back with the Brigade by October 20, 1937 at Fuentes de Ebro. His family wrote that they last heard from son September 8, 1938. He was rumored

suggests that a check be done of Singer's rank to see whether he is holding himself out at a level above what was formally approved at Albacete. Merriman says he was like a "Country Boy being turned loose".

Merriman gets "Gibbs" a new cook for the Kitchen. This is possibly Theodore Gibbsⁱ, although he is not listed on the kitchen staff in the Brigades, he is listed as an ambulance driver. In any case, Gibbs crosses Copic by not getting him enough hot water so he can enjoy his large, new bathtub. Copic has him arrested. Later Dave Doran intervenes and has him released, but Merriman sides with Copic in that an order was given and not followed. The personal dynamics between Doran and Merriman are illuminating here.



Langston Hughes chatting with Crawford Morgan at Fuentes de Ebro front, October 1937. ALBA PHOTO 11-1347, Tamiment Library, NYU

to have been wounded in action on Sept 23, 1938 at Corbera and taken to a base hospital. He was officially reported KIA August 1938 in the Ebro Offensive.

ⁱ Theodore Gibbs was born February 12, 1906, in Fort Worth, TX. An African American, he was a driver by trade. He arrived in Spain on April 4, 1937, and served with the Service Sanidad, Benicassim Transport Service, Ambulance Group; Evacuation Group #1, Gibbs would return to the US on December 20, 1938 aboard the *Ausonia*. He had no military service in WWII and passed away March 12, 1962, in Chicago, Illinois.

Merriman takes Eric DeWitt Parker and Langston Hughes up to the lines but gets called back to Quinto to have a meeting with Copic and Jim Bourne. Copic explains what happened in Valencia at the Comintern meeting. "Alfredo" (likely a Russian advisor) and André Marty came to Albacete and apparently nothing was decided whether the British would get their six-month repatriation decision. Copic's suggestion that an army corp made up of the International Brigades was rejected. General Walter may not stay with them at all as the Army Corps that they are in at this point, the 12th, is being disbanded. Merriman says that Copic returned to Valencia and met with Comrade Maximoff and Bob Minor and others. He was informed that a new Battalion might be formed and that his own "personal problem" was solved. Copic had used terms like being stateless and having nowhere to go, it is possible that this personal problem was his future career in the Party.

Then Copic drops the bombshell that he himself has been removed as Commander of the XVth International Brigade for the failure at Fuentes de Ebro. Copic suggests that Hans Klaus will replace him and it is possible Copic will move up to command a Division. Copic says he suggested Merriman become commander of the XVth Brigade. Whether any of this story has real substance is hearsay, since none of it actually happened. Instead Dave Doran and Merriman write a letter to Valencia (presumably to Bob Minor) to object to this change and to see if they could stop it. Copic makes a remark that if he were a professional soldier, this would "break his heart" but Merriman doesn't buy it. He thinks Copic is actually relieved to be able to move out. Merriman talks to Denis, the Accidental Jefe of the Division, and gets himself a salvo conducto to go to Valencia and make the case to keep Copic. Merriman and Doran wonder if Bill Lawrence, the American responsible in Albacete, was behind the move to get rid of Copic. Lawrence might have seen enough of the friction when he was at the front just before the attack on Fuentes de Ebro. It is interesting that after all the attempts to move Copic out, now Merriman and Doran are loyally trying to save him. They may have been afraid of having Hans Klaus or Juan Crespo put in charge.

In a final note for this day, Merriman says that John Quigley Robinson would be leaving to go to Valencia and then on to Moscow as part of the delegation of American Communists attending a Politburo meeting there. Merriman would have liked to go. Robinson will leave for America not Moscow, in the end.

October 24 The XVth is Replaced by the 143rd

Just before Copic left - order came thru for us to withdraw from the line into Quinto to be replaced by the 143rd Brigade. Found out they planned to send over one company & one section. Protested but went on. During the evening Polit. Com. from Spanish Co. of L.W. went out with six men Spanish & Cuban and exchanged newspapers & presents with the fascists. We raised hell about it and had them arrested & held. Must raise campaign against such a thing.

Early in morning 143{rd} refused to occupy front line trenches. Phoned etc. 210 men came in, in all. 60 new recruits - only 2 m.g. light - no tank bombs. They took it as a joke since the Battalion now covers a 5 mile front and the Brigade 15 kilometers. Throw stones. I held 24th Batt. in second line because afraid of weakened position. No need to since the 143{rd} immediately fraternized with the fascists. 5 from from each side met in middle and talked and then all left trenches and walked around quite openly and it seems now that the Italians left their side and the Internationals our side - the front will settle down for the winter - they will make up and football will soon start again. Meeting to be held with Battalion and shower being given today (**Oct 24th**). Now waiting for orders to move out. Again artillery is doing the same thing. Probably back to center front but don't know when.

§ § §

The end of Merriman's October 22 diary page starts "Just before Copic left - order came thru for us to withdraw from the line into" and finishes "Quinto to be replaced by the 143rd Brigade". The 143rd Brigade was led by Captain Nicanor Felipe Martinez and is described on the "Guide to the Mixed Brigades".⁴⁹⁴ The Aragon Front was settling down and both sides seemed happy to leave

only minimal troops in the cold trenches. The 143rd was offering up one company and one section, probably 130 men, to man a ten kilometer wide front. Merriman thinks this is ridiculous and protests. He leaves the 24th Battalion (what is left of it after reinforcements were brought in) into a second line position, in case the 143rd is overrun. In an iconic story of the front, the Spanish Battalion's commissar, with some men from the 24th and 143rd, went over the trenches and met with the Spanish fascist troops and exchanged gifts.

Merriman finally got 210 troops of the 143rd to come into the trenches after they first refused to join. Merriman says that they only have two machine guns and some light weapons to guard the wide front that the Mac-Paps and Lincolns held. Merriman reveals that the contact with the enemy showed that the Italians were now gone from the front and since the Internationals were being pulled out, the front had only Spanish troops who had worked out a local cease fire and truce where the whole battalion went over and met with the enemy. One can imagine how frustrating this was for the International Brigades who were just decimated at Fuentes de Ebro. Art Landis points out the irony that on October 21, the Italians would lead an attack and take Gijon.⁴⁹⁵ It is not likely that these would be the same Italian divisions.

Merriman says that the short stay in Quinto is coming to an end and they are awaiting orders to pull out by train, back to the Center Front. During this period, from the Effectives List of Company 3 up to November 5, one can determine that many of the Lincolns were given leave to Madrid.

October 27 Fuqua Visits; Merriman Gets A Watch

Oct 27 1937

After coming out of line had discussions on party work. Finally held meeting to outline explanation of last military action. Kaufman and some raised a few beefs but in general the feeling was good and it will help the general attitude after the action. Had planned immediately to talk to each battalion on the same topic. Weather held us up and now it looks as if Copic will choose to make it.

Relations with Crespo still bad and in general the situation cannot go on in this way.

Denis came while I was at auto park and intendencia. He said to send two officers to Belmonte to select sights and Division will be in Quintenar de la Orden. After much discussion in which Sapir disagreed, decided to send Dart & Hernandez Anton - hope to pick up interpreter in Albacete. Sent car 123. They left early in the morning. Sapir tried to talk to me before but he couldn't get in a word because Col. Fuqua, military attaché of USA in Spain arrived with Capt. Amlie. Surprise. Went into long discussion in the evening and heard sing song of scouts of both American and Spanish.

Next day arranged for parade of Batt. They were in formation. We drove up and visited the Mac Paps and then Col. said a few words. "You are shock troops and I am glad Americans are among them. I came because of the kindness of the Spanish Gov. I represent also a democratic country." "I cannot speak officially - you must read between the lines to see how glad I am to be here with you." etc. etc. Visited L.W. and barracks then drove to the Fuentes front and showed Quinto fortifications-then ate and drove to Belchite. Fuqua surprised at the effect of artillery. Walked thru town and then drove back. Bender -

Bob Kerr and Johnny Gates arrived. Gates is taking place of Bill Lawrence. Tough bill to fill. Gates, Minor & Dave now form the Committee. Bill may not return much to my disappointment. Robbie was late and may not get to go now unless word comes thru from Paris that the visas were granted. Either Moscow or USA and quickly.

Comrade arrived from Central Comm. of Party to discuss party organisation. Speaks English and Spanish and Russian. Gathered meeting quickly of Jim, Gates, Ed Bender, Dave & I. He started to outline policy and told Jim to repeat a meeting where no Spanish were present. Dave said old party line. Wolinski became sick and it was decided to continue the next day. Copic arrived. No food. Military attaché in bed. David worried. Worst in relation to food. Formal discussion before bedtime.

Copic gave me a gold watch and said he could not find engraver. Beautiful watch with engraving to be done as follows:

“Al Jefe del Estado Mayor de la XV Brigada Internacional
Major Merriman Por Quinto – Belchite del 24/VIII – 6 IX 1937
del mando de la XV Brigada Internacional
Teniente Coronel Chopich”

Completely surprised. Maybe near the end. Bender said on the problem of removal of Copic that party opposed it since it didn't want anyone to get away with such a thing unnoticed. However, Wolinski says the party doesn't regard Copic too highly and is not fighting the issue for a personal reason but against slander and will not push it to the limits. Nor will it insist on a special person to take his place but will just make recommendation. Copic should not be the one to do it. Copic says he would like to stay for 1½ or 2 months more. Wants to settle the Spanish question etc. Copic says he has been suggested for Commandant of the Base. Bielov wants to go because he is sick “all the

old commanders are tired at a time when the I.B. must be given new life and impetus.”

During evening Fuqua insisted on asking questions. I refused to answer so he made up his own answers with Amlie helping.

I don't trust Amlie. Asked to see anti tank gun tomorrow. Agreed.

§ § §

The stories start to pour out of Merriman now. He has time to catch up on activities of the month and tell of the politics of the Brigade. About twenty pages are physically available in the second diary and Marion Merriman will soon come to meet the Brigade. Merriman will send both diaries back to the US with Marion Merriman. He is no longer conserving paper on putting down his thoughts.

On the 27th of October the XVth Brigade is withdrawn from the front lines and taken to Quinto. Meetings are held and Rubin Kaufman leads some of the griping at the first meeting. Merriman, however, is happy how the meeting went and plans meetings with each Battalion in turn. He says that Copic remains at Quinto and takes part in the meetings. Merriman still is fighting with Major Crespo.

Jefe of Staff of the Division A. Denis again came from Cuerpo and asked for two men to go ahead to the new Brigade positions near Quintanar de la Orden, where the Estado Mayor would go and the Battalions will be based in Belmonte, which is a few kilometers east of Quintanar. The Brigade never moved to these positions, but rather returned to positions near Ambite where they were based in June.

Merriman was visiting the Intendencia and Autopark so he was unable to comply with the order so Sapir decided to send Rollin Dart and Anton Hernandez to go on ahead to Quintanar. Before

Sapir could tell Merriman what had happened, Hans Amlie and Colonel Stephen Fuqua return and want to see the sites. We discussed Colonel Fuqua earlier in October.



Colonel Stephen Fuqua, David Doran and Hans Amlie in the trenches at Fuentes de Ebro, ALBA Photo 11-0843, Tamiment Library, NYU

Colonel Stephen Fuqua (right) addressing the Mac-Paps in Quinto. Others in the photo (r to l) William Digges (in beret), Dave Doran, Bob Thompson, Bob Merriman, and Hans Amlie, ALBA Photo 11-0811

Merriman says that the next day (probably October 26), they went up to Fuentes to see the Mac-Pap positions. There is a photo of Dave Doran and Amlie with Fuqua in a Fuentes trench (above left). Fuqua addressed the Mac-Paps in an impromptu parade (above right). Fuqua and the staff then visited Belchite where they inspected the ruins.

When Merriman gets back to Quinto, Edward Bender, Canadian Commissar Bob Kerr and John Gates arrived. John Gates will become the American responsible in Albacete, replacing Bill Lawrence who would return to the US. Merriman says he will miss Lawrence. John Gates, Dave Doran and Bob Minor represent the U.S. Communist Party Committee in Spain. John Robinson misses his opportunity to go to Moscow as his visa is not available. Robinson will stay in Spain. Merriman says that he should be sent out to the USA quickly but whether this is related to passport, visa or party issues, we cannot tell at this point.



John Gates, US Political Commissar at Albacete with Bob Thompson and Dave Doran, Ambite Spain, December 1937. ALBA PHOTO 11-0776, Tamiment Library, NYU

A comrade named "Wolinski" arrives who represents the Central Committee of the Communist Party. He asks the Staff in Quinto for a meeting where no Spanish would be present and where the political organization of the Brigade would be discussed. Dave Doran says that what is discussed is the "old Party line" where the involvement of Spanish in all activities would not be encouraged. This is later discussed as "The Spanish Problem". Clearly, the involvement of Spanish leaders in the Brigade, like Crespo, who were not Party men was a problem for the Internationals. Overnight, Fuqua was sick and confined to bed and Wolinski also got sick. Merriman and Doran are worried about how this will be reported back to their respective leaders.

In a surprise move, Vladimir Copic gives Merriman a gold watch and tells him how he would have engraved it if he could have

found an engraver. It was in recognition of Merriman's service at Quinto and Belchite. Perhaps it also was a thank you for Merriman's intervention in Valencia where they were talking seriously about pulling Copic out of the XVth Brigade. Marion Merriman Wachtel is less impressed with the watch:

In what I thought was a mockery, Copic had presented Bob with a gold watch as commendation for Bob's leadership at Quinto and Belchite. But it was a cheap watch. Copic said he planned to have it engraved but couldn't find an engraver. I didn't see how Bob could stand to work with a superior who cared so little about his men. Bob put up with Copic because he had to, but argued with all of his powers when he disagreed with Copic. As a commander in the European tradition, he didn't relish subordinates presenting contrary views. He frequently called the Americans "crybabies" because they challenged him so much.⁴⁹⁶

In a later page of the diary, there is a short paragraph where Merriman began to dictate his letter in support of Copic. The letter was not completed and he must have found a secretary to take the letter down. Merriman says it may be near the end for Copic, but also relates that Bender and Wolinski say that they are not in favor of removal of Copic because it reflects badly on the Brigades. Copic has few friends in leadership but his personal welfare is less important than how it would look to remove the Commander of the Brigade for failure. Copic, personally, has asked for a couple of more months in the Brigade and then perhaps to move up to command Albacete base. At the time Comrade Bielov was in command of the base and wanted to leave. In December General Gomez will take over as Commander of the Base at Albacete.

On the evening of the 27th, Merriman meets again with Colonel Fuqua but refuses to answer his questions. Fuqua, while ostensibly fact-finding for Claude Bowers at the US Embassy, was still not trusted and Merriman could not be sure where the information would go. Others noted that Fuqua was a US Army colleague of Major Allan Johnson, now the Tarazona training base commander. Amlie also is suspected of having been an

acquaintance of Fuqua in the US Army. André Marty did not agree with the government's approval of Fuqua's visit and held all involved (Merriman, Amlie and Johnson) in the highest suspicion.^{497,498,499} Merriman did agree to show Fuqua the Russian anti-tank guns on the 28th.

106
28

Quadros *Importante.*

THE FOLLOWING LISTED MEN HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE AMERICAN
MILITARY ATTACHE

SELBY	VERNON R.	reported wounded
HUTCHINS	LESLIE	NEW YORK CITY
MCCARTHY	WILLIAM P.	BROOKLYN N.Y.
COLODNY	ROBERT G.	LOS ANGELES CAL. (wounded)
SIELENSKI	STEPHEN	NEW YORK CITY
THRING (THRING)	ROBERT D.	
JOHNSON	LLOYD E.	WHITE BROTHERS MANHATTEN
BILLINGS	MARCUS JUDSON	
LANE	JAMES L.	BROOKLYN N Y
MATE	MORRIS	
MORRIS	VIRGIL LANNY ?	
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX		
CARTER	BARTON	BOSTON MASSACHUSETTES
RAMANOWSKIN	JOHN A.	
KROCKE (KURPIN)	MAX	
WILDMAN	EARL	
ARIELLO	THOMAS PETER	N.Y.C.
FLANNER	JOHN HOWARD	SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA
SERVICE	ELWIN	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX CALIFORNIA
HIRSCHMAN	LEON	NEW N.Y.C.
PARKER	DEWITT WEBSTER	REPORTED KILLED
MERRIMAN	ROBERT	BERRELY, CALIFORNIA

THE ABOVE LISTED MEN SHOULD HAVE THEIR RECORDS CLOSELY GONE OVER AND CHECKED/ HERE IN THE BRIGADE AND IN THE USA. SOME ARE KNOWN TO BE PROVACATORS AND OTHERS SPIES.

Centro de Administracion

Memo from the Administrative Center showing the list of men who met Fuqua, RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 103/p 106. A critical eye will reveal the names "Amlie" and "Doran" are missing from this list.

Merriman doesn't trust Fuqua who had been head of instruction in the US Army and a commander over Amlie, both in the States and in the far east. Apparently André Marty and Luigi Gallo also did not trust Fuqua and contact with Fuqua painted the Brigadista as someone also not to be trusted. The page from RGASPI on the above shows that Jim Bourne and SIM had been ordered to investigate a large number of people who had spoken with Fuqua.

October 28 Fuqua Refuses to Give up His Car

{October 28} In morning showed Co. Fuqua the gun. Much interest in everything here. Amlie "attack downstream - higher ground by definition and can float down in boats". Fuqua "certain disadvantages".

Long harangue over the question of a letter to Walter. Copic stalled and couldn't understand somehow. I called it by having a simple one done for him which Crespo and Copic signed. After real kidding (?) Fuqua left not leaving his machine for us. Milly and baseball bats - even for Yankee publicity, whether they were for us or not.

After he left we rushed into party session about what to be done in meetings etc. Wolinski has the line down fine. Many suggestions but few points of argument. Spanish problem.

Spanish Problem

and even larger. False popularity. Ended up by a short talk on fall of north, split UGT 9 + 36 9 close to CNT. Caballero and his shameless support for POUM and dynamite for C.P. kind words for CNT- real overall through etc.

Rest of day in discussion. Gates met batts. Copic decided to speak later- and after getting excited on question of Spanish who wanted to transfer to 15th Brigade. Diff{erent} ranks etc. "Arrest them. They are not material for officers."

Copic left for division to discuss ranks, movements and other things. Bob Thompson came in and had real bull session. Poll was in - gloves came from Barcelona with no coat but 300 pesetas I sent. Made advance to Crespo this

evening - and in turn he let me use his desk to write to Marion. High moving work. One dumb sargento in office changed to 21st Division and as a teniente. Strange, eh? and maybe Crespo will go after him. Reverse of usual order.

§ § §

On the morning of October 28, Merriman does show Colonel Fuqua the anti-tank guns. It seems that Fuqua is interested in getting all the information he can. He is especially interested in the Russian antitank gun, perhaps so the Americans can copy it.

Hans Amlie advances a theory that the Brigades can just put boats onto the Ebro River and float into action. His comment that this automatically gives you the high ground since water flows downhill is really very odd military theory. Fuqua is skeptical and given that the Fascists have all the artillery and all the airplanes, putting men into boats with nowhere to hide seems silly. That sounds like a 19th century solution in a 20th century war.



Dave Doran, Lieutenant Colonel Copic, Colonel Fuqua, Hans Amlie, and Bob Merriman joking over the US car. ALBA PHOTO 11-0824, Tamiment Library, NYU



(l-r) Amlie, behind Ed Bender, Dave Doran (with Fuqua's finger pointing at him), Copic, Fuqua, and Merriman. The US license plate on the car is visible. ALBA PHOTO 11-0825, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman says that they were kidding Colonel Fuqua that he should have left his "machine" (i.e. his car) for the American Brigaders. Two photos of this scene are above and you can see in the right image that the car has US Diplomatic Plates and a US flag on it. Fuqua (smiling) is pointing his finger at Doran who must have made the suggestion.

Merriman is still pushing Copic to support General Walter for leading a new Army Corps. Copic is not going to go there. Merriman drafts a letter for Copic and gets him and Crespo to sign off.

Merriman says that Milly Bennett is in town and has bought baseball bats for the Americans. Playing baseball was probably well down on Merriman's list of "needs". Milly Bennett was preparing to marry Hans Amlie (they would marry in Barcelona in January and return to the US together). This is not just a morale building visit for the Americans.

After Fuqua leaves, Merriman is rushed into a Party meeting where "Wolinski" (we believe he is a delegate of the American Communist Party) delivers the Party Line. Merriman capitalizes

"THE SPANISH PROBLEM" so the topic is pretty evident of how the Brigades are going to deal with the integrated Spanish officers. He says "False popularity" and we can only guess what he meant by this term. The meeting ended by a discussion of the 9th and 36th Brigades and their relationship to the Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT), the Communist party union, and the Confederación Nacional del Trabados, the anarchist-POUM led union. The 9th Brigada Mixta⁵⁰⁰ of the 2nd Division was originally led by General Lister and contained the Thälmann battalion. In the Aragon, it was led by José Martínez García and was based in Alcañiz. The 36th Battalion of the 4th Army was called the 2nd CNT Battalion⁵⁰¹. The discussion continued with Largo Caballero's purported support of the POUM and why he was removed.

John Gates spoke to the Battalions and Vladimir Copic choose to speak as well. Copic got excited about the proposal to include new Spanish comrades in the Brigades and the assumption that they would carry in ranks as officers. Copic says that that precluded them as officer material in his army.



Lieutenant Harry Poll, November 1937. ALBA PHOTO 11_0652, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman meets with Bob Thompson after Copic left for the Division for a meeting. Harry Poll returned with gloves for

Merriman. No coat was purchased and Poll returned Merriman's 300 pesetas.

Merriman tried to make up with Crespo since he wanted to write a letter to Marion Merriman and Crespo let Merriman use his desk. But the love doesn't last long. A Spanish sergeant in the Estado Mayor who Merriman describes as "dumb" was moved to the 21st Brigade as a Lieutenant. The freedom with which officer positions are handed out irks Merriman who recalls how the International Officers needed to be trained first at Pozo Rubio's Officer Training School. Merriman hopes that Crespo will follow this Lieutenant out of the Brigade. The earlier discussion that Crespo would go to the Army Corps as a Chief of Staff did not materialize as the Army Corps was dissolved.

October 29--30 Cartier-Bresson Films the Brigades

October 30, 1937 Copic returned but with little information. In the evening of 28th three birthdays were celebrated. Major Crespo, Capt. Garcia & Capt. Balsa {not Baltea}. Copic and I joined in. Dave came and the whole thing ended in a sing song flamenco yodels. Classical Spanish and darky songs. Copic did the hug act with Crespo when the presents were given out. Crespo made a slap in the face speech. He wanted Copic to tell Dave and me what fine work he had done and how helpful he had been in the Brigade etc. He wanted to be friends with Dave and me. No drinks and this slowed up work considerably.

Late in the evening some visitors came and Dave and I met Herb Kline, Cartier and his oriental wife who believes men like to destroy and that orientals have family classes and that communism will never take. Lamere also is along. Herb Kline speaking of Weisenfeld that he laughed while speaking of a man who was killed. "War is dehumanising".

{Herbert} Kline is here making a sanitary film - "That Spain May Live". Also one about L.W. Boys which has to be taken in one day's time. Talked over plan of bringing in wounded and sending them off to hospitals. Had taken last part of picture first. Cartier's wife looking all the time for amor. Dave had to give her the lesson about the class basis of war.

On the 29th they took the sanitary film. I was sick and stayed in although I did quite a lot of work. In evening the pretty Russian-speaking girl who came here to see Bob Minor came again with her Russian husband looking for the 45th Division. He does "Special work on the fronts." They waited for Copic.

Dave & I had a discussion on the question of Chauvinism and need for more political work on this and the problem

of keeping men who fought against white chauvinism in the States from showing national chauvinism here in Spain. Jim couldn't seem to find a place in the discussion. He tried tho. Kline listened but did not speak. Copic had another sing song which was filmed with aid of burning lye. Dave went. Ivan thought it was history and that I should be in also. I missed it all.

Now have Political Commissar of the EM and the kitchen is improving. Sent 11 men as a delegation to Madrid in response to a letter I made many maps & later Copic had a short meeting and told Crespo, Dave and me that he is going to Lerida to find out about movement etc. Must start something here to use all time possible.

Ivan talked with Dave. Problem not much and in many ways their dept. Knows less than Dave and I know. "Attitude towards Crespo". "Is Merriman doing work of Chief of Staff? I don't think so" - Ivan.

§ § §

From October 10 to 24, new arrivals show up at Quinto from Albacete to join the Lincoln-Washington Battalion. On the 29th, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Jacques Lemare and Herbert Kline are there to make a movie of the Brigades. Iconic pictures and movies of the men marching and training show the cemetery at Quinto just to the north of the Church.

Merriman mentions that Cartier-Bresson is making a "sanitary film". Two movies were being made at the same point one by Cartier-Bresson and Jacques Lemare and the second made by Herbert Kline and Geza Karpathi. Merriman says that Cartier-Bresson's film will be entitled "That Spain May Live". Cartier-Bresson did make a half-hour film entitled "L'Espagne Vivra"⁵⁰² ("Spain Will Live") but it included none of the clips from filming at Quinto. Instead, Kline's film "With the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain" includes the footage shot on October 28-29.⁵⁰³

Although this is not directly in Merriman's diary, the author has a personal interest in this visit. A single frame from the movie shows his father, circled, next to Battalion Commander Frank Rogers, looking at the camera. Harold Hoff came up to serve in the Lincoln_Washington Company 3 on October 10, 1937, and would be largely in a reserve position for much of October. Hoff



Henri Cartier-Bresson in Quinto in front of training Lincoln Brigaders, October 1937, ALBA Photo 11-0852, Tamiment Library, NYU



Harold Hoff in formation in Quinto during the filming of Kline's film, ALBA copyright, Tamiment Library, NYU

would become the Clerk in Company 3 of the Lincoln-Washington Battalion on October 19 and serve in that role until they were retired to Albares in November.

On the evening of the 28th of October, American photographer Herbert Kline, and Frenchmen Henri Cartier-Bresson and Jacques Lemere arrived to shoot the film. They would try to shoot the film in one day on October 29. Cartier-Bresson's film is copyrighted by the Abraham Lincoln Brigades Archives and clips have been shown variously on the web. Many of the scenes were staged on the parade grounds in Quinto and Merriman reveals here that he also staged some of the scenes, which involved medical units and ambulance evacuations.



A clip from Henri Cartier-Bresson's film "With the American Lincoln Brigade in Spain (1937-1938)"⁵⁰³. Quinto's church is in the background.



Milt Wolff calling out orders to the Spanish and Lincoln Battalions at Quinto in Cartier-Bresson's film.

Merriman is taken with Cartier-Bresson's wife, Ratna Mohini⁵⁰⁴, who was from Java. She is not impressed with war or soldiers and must have been quite outspoken. She claims that the Chinese will never accept communism because the family was more important in Chinese culture. Mohini may be read in retrospect as being astute on this issue on the Chinese. In a sentence that may or may not be transcribed correctly, Dave Doran acquainted her with the class basis of war. The diary is clear that the filming took place on October 29 and was completed in one day's filming.

Merriman continues with activities on the evening of October 28 when they had an impromptu fiesta with songs. Three birthdays were on this day, Crespo, Captain Juan Garcia Marquez, and a Captain "Baltea" who is Alfredo Captain Balsa. There was singing of flamenco, Classical Spanish and "darky" songs. This shows that even politically advanced and intelligent people would revert to anachronistic descriptions of negro music. While Copic tried to flatter Major Crespo, Crespo turned around and looked for Merriman and Doran to flatter him and say what a great job he had done in the rear at Quinto. Merriman is clearly never going to be friends with Crespo, even on his birthday.



Dave Doran, Jose Varela, Captain Alfredo Balsa, and John Gates, December 1937, ALBA PHOTO 11-0997, Tamiment Library, NYU

In the evening of the 29th, Copic held another sing along for the movie by Cartier-Bresson and two frames of the movie show American Joe Taylor singing with a guitar being played. Joe Taylor was presumably singing the "darky songs". It is ironic that Merriman chides Cartier-Bresson and Lemare about the Chauvinism of the Americans to the French and Spanish, when these comrades have dealt with the racism in the US. It is probable that they were prompted on this issue by André Marty who always felt the Americans could not rid themselves of their national identity.



Evening sing along with Joe Taylor, filmed with burning lye to get light. Henri Cartier-Bresson's "American Lincoln Brigade in Spain (1937-38)"

Copic liked to sing opera but in the movie, Crespo is on Copic's right and is also singing so it is likely they are singing patriotic songs. Dave Doran viewed the event as historical, which it certainly was. Ivan Rujevic (John Gerlach) agreed and thought it was unfortunate that Merriman was sick and was not available to be filmed. However, the final cut of the film has a significant section with Merriman in it and he is speaking to the troops in front of the baths in Quinto.



Juan Crespo and Vladimir Copic singing in the movie "With the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain"

On the 29th, Bob Minor shows up with a "pretty Russian woman" and her husband who was doing assignments for the Russians. The photograph above is of the three of them in Quinto. The name of the woman and her husband have not been determined.

In the rest of the 30 October pages, Merriman gets back into Brigade Politics and reveals that Comrade Ivan doesn't believe that Merriman is doing the work of a Chief of Staff. Ivan believes that his "department" (the Division commissariat) supports Crespo over Merriman. The vote of confidence must have disturbed Merriman.



Robert Minor and Russian Woman and her husband, ALBA PHOTO 11-0770, Tamiment Library, NYU



Jacques Lemare, Henri Cartier-Bresson and Herbert Kline, ALBA Photo 11-0818, Tamiment Library, NYU

November 1 The Last Post

November 1, 1937

Trip to Lerida by comrade Copic postponed until today. On the 30th Copic, Hans and I went horseback riding up to look over the positions of the various battalions at the time of the Quinto attack. Copic quite concerned because a field manual of Red Army was in the Brigade and he didn't know it. He now has it. In meantime I have been working in the office more with the idea of cementing the much ruptured feeling between Crespo and myself. In evening of 30th Copic after a talk with Petruskin got frightened about the weak condition on the front and ordered a company on duty with one section at kilometre 33.

Dave had another discussion about the Spanish problem and after this Detro walked in to say he wanted to go home in a couple of weeks. He said he feels his best times are already in the past. I said I didn't feel he should go and that we should discuss it later. Dave had it out with Singer and he wanted to die like a soldier- left the Brigade in disgrace with a threatening to degradation hanging over his head.

David also left today. Hans says he also wishes to leave. Soon no one will be here.

A Fiesta was held yesterday in the town square and we all attended along with the Municipal Council and songs were sung. Presents given. Anti tank flopped. And Joe Taylor voice cracked but outside of that, things went ok. Hymn of Valencia made great hit with the recruits who all came from Valencia. It rained but the square was crowded just the same. Later the children went to the former Republican Cafés to have cake and candy. Dave spoke. Five girls came from Hajar. One brought her fiancée with her and he slapped Naranjo on the wrist.

Argument and we are kidding Naranja now. 109 men and 1 woman killed here by Fascists. 32 killed in very café where we were when fascists won out.

Ivanov returned with car well repaired but not like new. Copic, Hans and Crespo went to Lerida to enquire. Copic had talk about report of Intendencia to Dave. Copic jumping as usual to hasty conclusions. Thought I was asking too much. Tomorrow discussion at ten o'clock. Dave to get copy of report "which argues". Dave says it is a clever attack on me. I shall welcome it.

Mappers and observers school started today. I spoke a few words. 11th Battalion of Engineers tried to walk out with tables and brass ware. Stopped.

Davoll came in and wants to go home because God has called on him to preach. "Thwarting the Will of God". Had a long discussion with him in which irrational arguments were put forward by him. Queer fellow. I told him to plan to stay here but to come in again to talk with me.

Detro sick in hospital - Soto says he needs 2 weeks rest. Secundy has grippe and in Alcaniz. Solly Wellman also going to Benicassim for rest and general overhauling.

Sent away two old sick people from Quinto to Hajar in one of the ambulances.

§ § §

As all good things must end, Merriman is running out of pages in his second diary and is wrapping it up. On November 1, he starts his last entry. He says that Copic left on November 1 to Lerida, but before he left Merriman, Hans and Copic went for a horseback ride. A photo of Hans Klaus and Copic exists in the ALBA PHOTO 177 collection. It is quite likely that this photo was taken by Merriman himself with the camera given him in September. We

would like to thank the Tamiment Library for their permission to include photos here (with attribution).



Colonel Vladimir Copic and Colonel Hans Klaus, ALBA PHOTO 177_177002, Tamiment Library, NYU



Kilometer 33 on the Quinto - Fuentes road. This position would guard the road across the Ebro to Pina. Map courtesy: <http://cartotecadigital.icc.cat/>

While the front appears to be stabilizing, Copic is still worried about the weak state of the Brigade. He orders a company to be put back on active duty and one company should be placed at Kilometer 33 on the Quinto-Fuentes de Ebro highway. This may have been the position with a viaduct under the road that was used as an Estado Mayor just after Quinto. The protection company, however, would be very exposed in this location.

Dave Doran is meting out discipline. Doran would get a reputation as a no nonsense Commissar and in this section, he is discussing "the Spanish Problem" with Merriman when he hears from Phil Detro that he wishes to go home. On the same night, he effectively cashiered Bernard Singer and Singer has to leave the Brigade. He doesn't know when he leaves if he will be demoted. Singer is willing to go to the front line to die and get it over with. Singer would be killed in action near Gandesa in August 1938.

Then Doran leaves as does Hans Klaus. Many of the Brigade took leave in Madrid during this quiet period and it is possible that was their destination. Milt Wolff is quoted in Eby as saying that during this time, Detro and Fred Keller practically set up a second residence in Hemingway's apartment in Madrid.⁵⁰⁵

Merriman talks of a fiesta held in Quinto on October 31 and speaks of Joe Taylor singing. Marion Merriman Wachtel places the fiesta at somewhat later in November² and it is possible that there were actually two events. The photograph below shows the fiesta with the staff on the balcony on the right. The photo below is a blowup of this Randall photograph. It appears that Marion Merriman is just behind Robert Merriman on the very right of the photograph.



Balcony with the Brigade Staff in Quinto, ALBA PHOTO 11_1780, Tamiment Library, NYU



Blowup of the photo on the left, tentative identifications: Standing and speaking: Vladimir Copic, against wall Hans Kaltschmidt, sitting Joe North, sitting unknown, Against wall David Kamy, John Gates, Standing rear Jim Bourne, seated front right unknown (Mayor?), Unknown, woman's face (Marion?), Bob Merriman. ALBA PHOTO 11-1780, Tamiment Library, NYU

In the second pair of photographs, Joe Taylor is singing under the portico on the left on the other side of the square.



Crowd listening to a singer and a piano player. ALBA PHOTO 11-1348, Tamiment Library, NYU.



Blowup of the photo on the above showing Joe Taylor singing. ALBA PHOTO 11-1348, Tamiment Library, NYU

Merriman is in trouble with Copic again because he wrote a report on the Intendencia which was critical. Copic is using the report to get at Merriman. This coincides with a quote from Marion Merriman that Copic did not want people to argue with him. Merriman has asked for a copy of the report to see what is "argumentative".

They are holding schools in Quinto and Merriman says that he has to stop the 11th Engineering Regiment from looting.

Merriman says that he spoke with Davoll who has gotten religion and feels that he needs to go back to the US and preach. This is Theodore Davoll who attended Eastern Navarene College and was a part time preacher. Davoll says Merriman is standing in the way of "God's Will". Merriman probably hopes he is standing in the way of Fascists getting to Madrid. Merriman tells him he will stay but that he should come back to talk to him. Davoll would be killed in the upcoming battle of Teruel in January 1938.

Detro got sick and is now in hospital as is Lou Secundy. In October and November, gripe and typhoid were rampant. The situation was so bad that on November 3, General Walter gave ranking command to Dr. Len Crome. Over Juan Bravo's signature for

Walter, he says that the primary order of the day is for the medical staff to hold meetings with the battalions to explain to them the causes of grippe and typhoid and to warn them that sickness and death is likely if they don't remediate the sanitary conditions. Dr. Soto was responsible of sending a number of men to hospital. Saul Wellman is also in Benicassim on rest and relaxation. Others (old men) are going off to hospital as well. On November 9, the writer's father, Harold Hoff, would go off to Castellejo for the first of his many hospital trips with grippe.



Dr. Luis Diaz Soto, December 1937, Ambite, ALBA PHOTO 11-0666, Tamiment Library, NYU

These are the last known words written by Robert Merriman in his diaries. On November 5, Bob Merriman would arrive for a visit in Albacete with Marion and Bob Merriman would inform her that she was going to have to go home to the US.⁵⁰⁶ He told her she was needed to campaign for funds for the Brigades. Marion believed that Robert had come to believe that the war was unwinnable and he wanted her out of Spain. Whatever the reason for Marion's departure, she was handed the two diaries to take back with her to the US. Their survival is truly remarkable given the frank talk in them and the likelihood that the censors would not have approved of all this information being released. Marion would meet again with Robert in Ambite on November 17 for one final goodbye and

then return to the US on December 22, 1937, on the Manhattan. 28 year old Frances M. (Stone) Merriman was listed as heading for 541 Delores Street in San Francisco.⁵⁰⁷ She would tour the US for the next year making calls for donations to the Brigades. A letter from Milly Bennett to Marion Merriman said that she and Amlie were hoping to sail with Marion, but Amlie did not get his release from duty in time. They would marry in Barcelona and follow Marion back to the US in January.

The XVth Brigade would remain in the lines for nearly eleven more months. They would fight:

In Teruel, January 1 to January 21, 1938

In Segura de los Banos , February 15-19, 1938

From Belchite to the Ebro in the "Retreats" from March 10 to April 4, 1938

and in the Battle of the Ebro from July 25, 1938 to September 23, 1938.

The Brigades would be near the French border by the end of October 1938 in a town called Ripoll and the majority would be pulled out of Spain by the end of December 1938. Some, however, would not leave until February 1939, especially if they had been based near Valencia, and some later still if they were captured in the Retreats.

Some, like Robert Merriman, would never leave. He was captured and killed on or about April 1, 1938, in the area between Corbera and Gandesa as they were trying to break out to the Ebro River. His body was never found but the search goes on. The "Last Post" has two meanings for this diary page.

References

January

-
- ¹http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/tamwag/alba_photo_011/index.html
 - ²<http://www.alba-valb.org/volunteers/browse> . Note that all mini-biographies in this work are adapted from the ALBA biographies, with permission.
 - ³ RGASPI, Fond 545 Opis 6 Delo 947, p. 31, personal biography by Robert Merriman. *Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI)*, B. Dmitrovka, 15, 125009, Moscow, Russia. (Subsequent references will be labeled RGASPI. Fond 545 is the holding on the documents of the International Brigades in Spain. All used Fond 545 materials are also at Tamiment Library, New York University, New York, New York)
 - ⁴ Arthur Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, Citadel Press, 1967.
 - ⁵ Edwin Rolfe, *The Lincoln Battalion*, Random House, 1939
 - ⁶ Cecil Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, Pennsylvania University Press, 2007.
 - ⁷ Barry McLoughlin, *Fighting for Republican Spain*, Lulu.com, ISBN 9781291968392
 - ⁸ Mildred Bennett, unpublished story, Mildred Bennett Archives (in file: carbons, drafts, notes Spain 1937), Hoover Institution Archives, Palo Alto CA
 - ⁹ Milly Bennett (Mildred Mitchell), *On Her Own: Journalistic Adventures from San Francisco to the Chinese Revolution, 1917-1927*, edited by Tom Grunfeld, M. E. Sharpe Publishers, Armonk, NY, 1993.
 - ¹⁰ Peter Carroll, *The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Americans in the Spanish Civil War*, Stanford University Press, 1994.
 - ¹¹ Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, Harper, New York, 1961
 - ¹² Anthony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, Orbis Publishing, London, 2006
 - ¹³ Paul Preston, *¡Comrades! Portraits from the Spanish Civil War*. London, UK: HarperCollins, 1999.
 - ¹⁴ Laia Balcells, "Death is in the Air: Bombings in Catalonia, 1936-1939", *Reis*, 136, Oct-Dic 2011, pp. 193-214
 - ¹⁵ *La Vanguardia*, Sunday Edition, January 10, 1937, p. 6.

-
- 16 Tom Wintringham, *English Captain*, Faber, 1939
- 17 <http://spartacus-educational.com/JbowleyK.htm>
- 18 http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1196180/?ref=nm_flmg_slf_1
- 19 Adrienne Clarkson, *Norman Bethune*, Penguin Canada, 2009.
- 20 Marion Merriman Wachtel and Warren Lerude, *American Commander in Spain*, University of Nevada Press, Reno, 1986.
- 21 Angela Jackson, *British Women and the Spanish Civil War*, Routledge/Cañada Blanch Studies on Contemporary Spain, London, 2002, p 40.
- 22 <http://spartacus-educational.com/TUkerrigan.htm>
- 23 Öedo Kapor, *Španija 1936-1939, Zbornik sećanja jugoslovenskih dobrovoljaca u španskom ratu*, Ratna prošlost naših naroda, knj. 130-134, Inicijativni odbor-Udruženje španskih boraca; Vojnoizdavački zavod, Beograd, 1971.
- 24 RGASPI, Fond 545 Opis 6 Delo 125 page 61,
- 25 Marion Merriman Wachtel and Warren Lerude, *American Commander in Spain*, *ibid*, p. 86.
- 26 Peter Carroll, *Odyssey*, *ibid*, p 97.
- 27 Arthur Landis, *ALB*, *ibid*, p. 33.
- 28 Cecil Eby, *Comrades*, *ibid*, p. 39.
- 29 Victor Hoar (Victor Howard in later editions) with Mac Reynolds, *The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion: Canadian Participation in the Spanish Civil War*, Copp Clark Publishing, 1969.
- 30 Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*, Penguin Putnam Inc., New York, 2006
- 31 Martin Sugarman, *Against Fascism - Jews who served in The International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War*, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/spanjews.pdf>, Sourced: January 21, 2014.
- 32 https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vital_Gayman
- 33 RGASPI, Fond 545 Opis 2 Delo 32.
- 34 McLaughlin, *Fighting*, *ibid*.
- 35 Kevin Buyers, <http://internationalbrigadesinspain.weebly.com>
- 36 Cadre List, Abraham Lincoln Brigade. RGASPI 545/6/845
- 37 Arthur Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*, p.31
- 38 <http://www.albavolunteer.org/2010/03/mystery-photo:-gift-to-obama-puts-alba-in-the-spotlight/>
- 39 https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/János_Gálicz

-
- 40 <http://www.anpi.it/donne-e-uomini/1702/felice-platone>
- 41 Carroll, *Odyssey*, *ibid.*, p 96-97.
- 42 Eby, *Comrades*, *ibid.*
- 43 Landis, *ALB*, *ibid*, pg 34.
- 44 Eby, *Comrades*, *ibid.*, p49
- 45 Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, *ibid.*, pp. 376-7.
- 46 Peter Kerrigan, Imperial War Museum Audio Archive, Holding 810, 1976.
<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80000804>
- 47 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UeV5WNku1Ps>
- 48 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8InZ3vfQ6Ag>
- 49 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._B._S._Haldane
- 50 Martin Sugarman, *Against Fascism*, *ibid.*

February

- 51 Fred Copeman, *Reason in Revolt*, Blandford Press, 1948, p. 81.
- 52 Barry McLoughlin, *Fighting for Republican Spain*, Lulu.com, ISBN 9781291968392, p. 58.
- 53 William Herrick, *Jumping the Line*, AK Press, 2001, p. 152.
- 54 John Tisa, *Recalling the Good Fight, An Autobiography of the Spanish Civil War*, Praeger Publishing, ISBN-13: 978-0897890793, 1985, p.25
- 55 William C. Beeching, *Canadian Volunteers, Spain, 1936-1939*, University of Regina, 1989.
- 56 Carroll, *Odyssey*, *ibid.*, p 96-97.
- 57 William Herrick, *Jumping the Line*, *ibid.*, p. 153.
- 58 John Tisa, *The Story of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion, written in the trenches of Spain*, 1937, pp. 9-10.
- 59 William Herrick, *Jumping the Line*, *ibid.*, p. 147.
- 60 Lucien Vidal, "The Base of the International Brigades in Albacete 1936-1937", RGASPI Archives Fond 545 Opis 2 Delo 32. {In hardcopy as Vital Gayman, *Vital Gayman et la Base des Brigades Internationales d'Albacete en 1936.1938*, Fond^o Δ rés 744/1, Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (BDIC), Nanterre Cedex F-92001, France.
- 61 Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1961, p 375.

-
- 62 Robert A. Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War*, Mandolin, Manchester University Press, 1999.
- 63 <http://spartacus-educational.com/SPnathanG.htm>
- 64 *Volunteer for Liberty*, Vol. 1, No. 28, p. 12.
- 65 Vidal, RGASPI Archives Fond 545 Opus 2 Delo 32, pg 14.
- 66 William Herrick, *Jumping the Line*, *ibid.*, p. 151.
- 67 Art Landis, *Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*, pg 38.
- 68 H. Galli, *Book of the XVth Brigade*, *ibid.*
- 69 <http://spartacus-educational.com/SPaitkinG.htm>
- 70 Richard Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors: The British in the Spanish Civil War and the Struggle Against Fascism*, Aurum Library, London, 2012. pp 149-150.
- 71 [http://www.albavolunteer.org/2011/02/spaniards-and-
latinos-in-the-international-brigades/](http://www.albavolunteer.org/2011/02/spaniards-and-latinos-in-the-international-brigades/)
- 72 Wachtel and Lerude, *An American Commander in Spain*, *ibid.* pg 91.
- 73 Richard Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors*, *ibid.*, pp 150-155.
- 74 Edwin Rolfe, *The Lincoln Battalion*, VALB, New York, NY, 1939.
- 75 James Prendergast, "How 'Kit' Conway Died", *The Book of the XVth International Brigade*, *ibid.*
- 76 Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*
- 77 Herrick, *Jumping the Line*, *ibid.*
- 78 Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander in Spain*, *ibid.*
- 79 Landis, *The American Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*
- 80 Peter Carroll, *The Odyssey*, *ibid.*
- 81 <http://irelandscw.com/top-Contents-OD.htm>
- 82 Robert A. Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War*, *ibid.*
- 83 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Brigade
- 84 Robert Colodny, *The Struggle for Madrid: The Central Epic of the Spanish Conflict, 1936-37*, Transaction Publishers, 2009.
- 85 Carroll, *Odyssey*, *ibid.*, pg 99.
- 86 Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik*, Liberator Press, Chicago, IL., 1978, pg 475.
- 87 *Volunteer for Liberty*, Vol 1, Number 17, November 27, 1937.
- 88 Robert Gladnick, *Memoir*, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California. Holding 96061 (unpublished material).
- 89 *Book of the XVth Brigade*, Warren and Pell Publishers, London. 2003 Edition, pg 69.

-
- ⁹⁰ Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Battalion*, *ibid.* pp 63-71.
- ⁹¹ Carroll, *Odyssey*, *ibid.*, pp 99-100.
- ⁹² *Book of the XVth International Brigade*, *ibid.*, p. 75.
- ⁹³ Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*, pp 71-90.
- ⁹⁴ <http://spartacus-educational.com/SPspringhill.htm>
- ⁹⁵ ALBA Audio 66, Box 1, 66-6, Sid Levine, George Foucek and Donald McLeod, 1962-5.
- ⁹⁶ Carroll, *Odyssey*, *ibid.*, pg 101.
- ⁹⁷ Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid.*, pg 128.

March

- ⁹⁸ Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, pp. 110-112.
- ⁹⁹ <http://juanrduran.en.eresmas.com/Convento.htm>
- ¹⁰⁰ Cecil Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid*, pg. 81-82.
- ¹⁰¹ Christopher Brooks, private communication, Sailing List of the Lincoln Battalion.
- ¹⁰² Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*
- ¹⁰³ Carroll, *Odyssey*, *ibid.*, p 102.
- ¹⁰⁴ Vladimir Copic, *Diary*, Comintern Archives, Fond 545, Opus 3, Delo 467, Tamiment Library, New York University Bobst Library.
- ¹⁰⁵ Cary Nelson and Jefferson Hendricks, *Madrid 1937: Letters of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade from the Spanish Civil War*, Jefferson Hendricks Routledge, Publishers, Feb 2014.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ted Allan and Sydney Gordon, *The Scalpel, the Sword: The Story of Dr. Norman Bethune*, Prometheus Books, New York, 1959.
- ¹⁰⁷ Letter from Mildred Rackley as quoted in Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*, pg 152.
- ¹⁰⁸ Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, p. 112.
- ¹⁰⁹ Translated Extract of Merriman's report on February 23 and 27, 1937, from the memoir of Vital Gayman (Vidal) Fond 545 Op 2 Delo 32, pp 426-431. BDIC University of Paris XI Library, Nanterre, France:

A large number of Americans arriving later were kept in Albacete for special qualifications (truck drivers, etc) nevertheless when our convoy left for Morata, all our drivers

were French and we have many difficulties (language, etc). 3 trucks with very important material and 20 men were lost.

At our arrival at Morata we dug ourselves in in a very strong position, but very vulnerable to air bombardment and artillery. After several bombardments, Colonel Claus, who had advised use to evacuate the Americans from this position before the next air bombardment. I did this, in one easy rapid movement but not well protected. Comrade Copic severely criticised me for this in pretending that I created confusion and panic.

One thought we had received the order to retreat this position to reinforce the rear of the "Dimitrov" Battalion. Colonel Claus had served as our guide, and the moment we were ready to leave, Comrade Harris, our previous commander, presented himself and started to give orders as well. He was given the order to advance and I was given the order to

p427

to stop, half the battalion was lost and there was great confusion, at this point the sector was quiet we were given the permission to return to our old positions. Following this experience, Colonel Claus reproached us for being slow in executing the maneuver.

Then, we had abandoned our reserve position to take a position in front of the Dimitrov Battalion where we stayed for 2 or 3 days. Following that we had received the order to take a position next to the 24th Brigade, who found themselves to the right of our XVth Brigade. The 24th Brigade had advanced weakly and we had waited for the order to follow them. We called several times on the telephone to explain the situation and that we were ready to attack. Then the order to advance came. We had passed the 24th Brigade and they were following us just as we arrived at the right flank of the trenches of the Dimitrovs, and at that moment they advanced with us. We had advanced, as were were ordered but the units on our flanks didn't budge, as a result we found ourselves well

in advance of the two positions and at the same time about 40 meters from the enemy trenches. 4 of our Comrades with grenades destroyed two machine guns, but our isolated position forced us to retreat.

I believe that it was during this attack that the English advanced, but the French-Belgian Battalion refused to move. Our losses were important enough in this first attack, but we could maintain this position if we had had support on the flanks. 2 Companies of Spanish troops came to relieve us in this position, when we then occupied the Dimitrov trenches on the edge of the road. These Spanish Companies hadn't all arrived and one never had occupied the positions that we had taken. Subsequently then we occupied the trenches

p428

of the Dimitrovs, the right flank of the 24th Brigade found itself about 100 meters in the rear of our position.

The Dimitrov trenches were very bad (very shallow) and protected the front for 400 meters for 2 or 3 days. One could not cross the trench in the road, it was nearly impossible to get food and provisions for the Battalion. The Dimitrovs had lost 30 men in trying to (do something) to the road. We immediately crossed a trench, but we lost five men in the same way.

We received sixty new men about 65% had never fired a single shot, and who were held in reserve. The plan to have 3-4 days of rest and to send each battalion to the Village of Morata for washing and shaving. But the second evening, on information that an old fascist in our ranks confirming that the Etat Mayor of the Brigade had decided to attack in the morning. It was well planned, the Lister Brigade which held the line on our left down to the river, had identified the enemy on three sides, depending on our side the attack would be concentrated in front of the 24th of the XIth Brigade. And in the 69th brigade. The Brigades found themselves immediately on our right. The

plan of attack counted on the arrival of 20 of our planes, artillery fire, with machine gun and two tanks (blindees) on the road to follow the 24th Brigade. The 24th Brigade was to advance at 10 in the morning and then wait for a short time in front of our trenches, we would then equally advance and with support from our right side, in the way of protecting the left flank of the 24th.

(something) had promised us a telephone, but this never arrived and the people responsible for the telephone of the Brigade didn't want to install it before the start

p429

of the attack because of intense fire. Colonel Claus came an hour before the attack to a position then repeating the order that our advance depended entirely on the advance of the 24th Brigade. A 10 o'clock the Brigade had not advanced. Having given that we had no telephone, the result was that the artillery fire that day did not reach the enemy trenches immediately in front of us and consequently we didn't follow either the 24th or ourselves.

I have held that Colonel Claus, with the 24th Brigade not advancing, and I sent messages to the 24th, asked why they did not advance. At each I received a promise. After an 1 3/4 hour the order arrived for us to advance, in the hope of inciting the Spanish to advance. The Lincoln Battalion advanced under a cross fire of rifles and machine guns extremely heavy, without the support of the 24th Brigade at our right having engaged the enemy. Later it was evident that the support of the left flank of the Americans was not reaching the enemy lines. We had advanced about 175 meters and 3 men had reached the enemy lines, but they were killed.

Our losses, in this isolated advance, were very important. The, two of our own comrades offered to lay telephone wire and we had for the first time communication with Comrade Copic. He told me that the American Battalion should be ashamed and

had spoiled the attack at 10 o'clock. Then I told him that the 24th had not budged. He said they were 700 meters ahead of us and the soldiers were could see on our right and in the rear were effectively the second line of the 24th Battalion. 10 minutes before this, I had again received the promise of the 24th Brigade that they were on the

p430

point of advancing. After this phone call I had gone myself to the place where the 24th Brigade had placed its white signal for the airplanes, signal that each battalion puts in advance of its position. That signal I found 100 meters in the rear of our position.

Comrade Copic gave me 15 minutes to start the movement to cross the gap that he thought existed. He had also sent Comrade Springhall with some information. He did not already account for the Americans having attacked for an hour, on the order of Colonel Claus, and it was impossible to continue to advance under this heavy fire.

All the runners had been wounded, and at that moment when Springhall approached, I had mounted the rampart to signal a more energetic advance. At the same instant Springhall and I were both wounded. I want to know at the same time as the Battalion had received the order to advance and then it was refused? I believe that the English Battalion received the order to advance and only 12 men followed that order, but they were immediately killed. At 12:30, a little late three planes arrived, but did not take up the attack. The tanks were kept in the rear in a gully.

¹¹⁰ Sandor Voros, *American Commissar*, Chilton Publishers, 1961, 477 pp.

¹¹¹ See diary entry of January 19-20 to see references to Alec Donaldson and Peter Kerrigan.

¹¹² Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid*, pg 86.

¹¹³ Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid*, pg 84.

-
- ¹¹⁴ Merriman Letter to Brodsky, RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 862/pg 112-113.
- ¹¹⁵ Bennett Letter to Brodsky, RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 862/pg 106..
- ¹¹⁶ Victor Hoar (Victor Howard) and Mac Reynolds, *The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion*, Copp Clark Publishing, 1969.
- ¹¹⁷ William C. Beeching, *Canadian Volunteers, Spain 1936-1939*, University of Regina, 1989
- ¹¹⁸ Mark Zuehlke, *The Gallant Cause*, Wiley, 2007
- ¹¹⁹ Michael Petrou, *Renegades: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War*, UBC Press, Vancouver, 2008.
- ¹²⁰ <http://www.grahamstevenson.me.uk/index.php> (search Geordie Dickie)
- ¹²¹ Stephen Norris, "Whithorn Gets Set to Honour Its Spanish Civil War Hero", *The Galloway Gazette*, Feb. 3, 2005, accessed online at <http://www.gallowaygazette.co.uk/news/local-headlines/whithorn-gets-set-to-honour-its-spanish-civil-war-hero-1-335142>.
- ¹²² Stanley Harrison, *Good to Be Alive: The Story of Jack Brent*, Dumfries & Galloway Council, 1949.
- ¹²³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38QhU-PDrIo>
- ¹²⁴ Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*, p 120.
- ¹²⁵ Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid*, pp 94-96.
- ¹²⁶ RGASPI Archives Fond 545/Opis3/Delo203 page 243.
- ¹²⁷ <http://www.spartacus-educational.com/SPoverton.htm>
- ¹²⁸ James Carmody, private communication, May 29, 2014.
- ¹²⁹ Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, p 119.
- ¹³⁰ Jan Kurske and Kate Foster Kurske Mangan, *The Jan Kurske Papers 1934, 1936-1937, 1998: The Good Comrade*, International Institute of Social History, Cruquiusweg 31 1019 AT Amsterdam The Netherlands, 2011.
- ¹³¹ Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*, p. 121.
- ¹³² Nicholas Coni, *Medicine and Warfare: Spain, 1936-1939*, Routledge, 2008.
- ¹³³ Barry McLoughlin, *Fighting for Republican Spain*, Lulu.com, ISBN 9781291968392, p. 223.
- ¹³⁴ <http://www.thejournal.ie/limerick-spanish-civil-war-1669851-Sep2014/>

-
- ¹³⁵ William Herrick, *Jumping the Line*, *ibid.*, location 2230/3294 e-book edition.
- ¹³⁶ Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, p 122.
- ¹³⁷ Richard Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors*, Routledge, London, 2004.
- ¹³⁸ R. A. Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39: Crusades in Conflict*, Mandolin: Manchester University Press, Manchester, UK, 1999.
- ¹³⁹ Landis, *Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*, pp. 138-143.
- ¹⁴⁰ Joe Monks, *With the Reds in Andalusia*, accessed online at <http://irelandscw.com/ibvol-Monks.htm>, 2015.
- ¹⁴¹ Herrick, *Jumping the Line*, *ibid.*
- ¹⁴² Nicholas Coni, *Medicine and warfare*, *ibid.*
- ¹⁴³ Eby, *Comrades*, *ibid.* pg 86.
- ¹⁴⁴ Carroll, *Odyssey*, *ibid.*, p. 114.

April

- ¹⁴⁵ Sugarman, *Against Fascism - Jews who served in The International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War*, *ibid.* at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/spa njews.pdf> Accessed January 2014.
- ¹⁴⁶ Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid.* pp. 204-206.
- ¹⁴⁷ Milly Bennett (Mildred Mitchell), *On Her Own: Journalistic Adventures from San Francisco to the Chinese Revolution, 1917-1927*, edited by Tom Grunfeld, M. E. Sharpe Publishers, Armonk, NY., 1993.
- ¹⁴⁸ RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 1127/pg 2.
- ¹⁴⁹ Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, pp 123-4.
- ¹⁵⁰ RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 1039/pg 86.
- ¹⁵¹ RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 48/pg 16.
- ¹⁵² <http://www.anpi.it/docne-e-uomini/felice-platone/>
- ¹⁵³ RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 48/pg 81.
- ¹⁵⁴ Petrou, *Renegades: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War*, *ibid.*, pp 166-167.
- ¹⁵⁵ RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 231, pp 231-2.
- ¹⁵⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jules_Dumont
- ¹⁵⁷ <http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/scw/knox.htm>
- ¹⁵⁸ <http://parcours.cinearchives.org/Les-films-731-91-0-0.html>
- ¹⁵⁹ *Our Fight/Notre Combat/Nuestro Combate*, No. 26, April 23, 1937, accessed at RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 3/Delo 513, p 23.
- ¹⁶⁰ RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 120, Moscow, Russia.
- ¹⁶¹ <http://www.davidcrook.net/simple/downloads.html>
- ¹⁶² <https://archive.org/details/musketry30322car00sola>
- ¹⁶³ Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, The Modern Library (paperback edition), pg 444.
- ¹⁶⁴ RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 6/ Delo 156. Moscow, Russia
- ¹⁶⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chauchat>
- ¹⁶⁶ Richard Slotkin, *The Lost Battalions: The Great War and the Crisis of American Nationality*, Henry Holt and Co., 2005.
- ¹⁶⁷ RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 184, Moscow, Russia.
- ¹⁶⁸ Carroll, *Odyssey*, *ibid*, p 112.
- ¹⁶⁹ Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid.*, pg 87, pg 394

-
- 170 Memorandum of the Base at Albacete, RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 48 pg 153-154, April 13, 1937. This was a report of the celebration of the founding of the Second Republic and luncheon speakers were provided to each of the training bases.
- 171 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willie_Gallacher
- 172 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 597/p 124.
- 173 Soviet Aces of the Spanish Civil War,
<http://jpleize.perso.neuf.fr/aces/espurs.htm>
- 174 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 48/p 265.
- 175 Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik, Autobiography of an African-American Communist*, Univ. Minnesota Press, 1978. ISBN-13: 978-0930720537
- 176 <http://irelandscw.com/ibvol-Monks.htm>
- 177 Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, *ibid.*, pp 399-459.
- 178 <http://spartacus-educational.com/ARTminor.htm>
- 179 Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid.*, pg 87, pg 160.
- 180 <http://www.spartacus-educational.com/SPaitkinG.htm>
- 181 Landis, *Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*, pg 161.
- 182 Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, pp 129-130.
- 183 RGASPI Font 545/Opis 6/Delo 495, page 4
- 184 Petrou, *Renegades*, *ibid.*, p. 12.
- 185 Herbert Kline, Obituary, *NY Times*, February 19, 1999, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/02/17/arts/herbert-kline-filmmaker-89-recorded-crises-in-30-s-europe.html>
- 186 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Josephson
- 187 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephine_Herbst
- 188 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernest_Hemingway
- 189 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Dos_Passos
- 190 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claud_Cockburn
- 191 Ernest Hemingway, "Spanish Fatalism Typified by Driver", *NY Times Book Section*, May 23, 1937, available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/books/99/07/04/specials/hemingway-fatalism.html>
- 192 Amanda Vaill, *Hotel Florida: Truth, Love, and Death in the Spanish Civil War*, Ferrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, New York, 2014.

- ¹⁹³ Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.* pp 130-139.
- ¹⁹⁴ Ted Allan, *This Time a Better Earth*, ed. Bart Vartour, University of Ottawa Press, 2015, ISBN 978-0-7766-2165-4.
- ¹⁹⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHmQc0akJ2c>
- ¹⁹⁶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibgvBxGiqp0>
- ¹⁹⁷ Peter Kemp, *Mine Were of Trouble*. Cassell & Company, 1957
- ¹⁹⁸ RGASPI Fond 545, Opis 2, Delo 231 pp 8-9, March 26, 1937.
- ¹⁹⁹ Richard Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors: The British in the Spanish Civil War and the Struggle Against Fascism*, Aurum Library, London, 2012. pp 171-2.
- ²⁰⁰ <http://www.spartacus-educational.com/FWWrenn.htm>
- ²⁰¹ http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Batalla_de_Guadarrama
- ²⁰² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/José_Miaja
- ²⁰³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enrique_Líster
- ²⁰⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manfred_Stern
- ²⁰⁵ Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain. The Spanish Civil War*. Penguin Books. London. 2006. Pages 347 and 429.
- ²⁰⁶ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/There's_a_Valley_in_Spain_called_Jarama_\(Song\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/There's_a_Valley_in_Spain_called_Jarama_(Song))
- ²⁰⁷ <http://www.g6csy.net/c96/>
- ²⁰⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis_gun
- ²⁰⁹ Carroll, *Odyssey*, *ibid.*

May

- ²¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_Days
- ²¹¹ George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, Harcourt Press, London, 1952.
- ²¹² Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors*, *ibid.*
- ²¹³ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsqDLKk7ilk>
- ²¹⁴ Carroll, *Odyssey*, *ibid.* pp 72-73.
- ²¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_Days
- ²¹⁶
- <http://www.marxisthistory.org/history/usa/parties/spusa/1937/0814-appealassoc-manifesto.pdf>
- ²¹⁷
- <http://www.marxists.org/history/usa/eam/spa/socialistparty.html>

-
- 218 Brooklyn Daily Eagle, "Red Terror in Spain Described by Newsman", November 23, 1938, p. 1
- 219 "Sam Baron Arrested in Spain", *Socialist Appeal*, Vol I, No. 14, p2
- 220 Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, pg 146-147.
- 221 RGASPI Fond 545 Opus 2 Delo 32
- 222 RGASPI Fond 545 Opus 3 Delo 467
- 223 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Scott_Haldane
- 224 J. B. S. Haldane, *Callinicus: A Defense of Chemical Warfare*. Kegan Paul, London, 1925.
- 225 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5tKjMmxwzk>
- 226 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_W._Ford
- 227 Hugh Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, *ibid.*, pg 324.
- 228 Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, *ibid.*, p 429.
- 229 Vladimir Copic, Diary, Fond 545 Opus 3 Delo 467, Tamiment Library Comintern Microfilm Archives, NYU.
- 230 Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors*, *ibid.*
- 231 Ronald Radosh (ed), Mary Habeck (ed) and Grigory Sevostianov (ed), *Spain Betrayed: The Soviet Union in the Spanish Civil War*, Yale University, 2001. pg 204.
- 232 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vittorio_Vidali
- 233 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Koltsov
- 234 Robert Colodny, "The International Brigades" in *Our Fight, Writings by the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Spain, 1936-1939*, Alvah Bessie and Albert Prago, eds., Abraham Lincoln Brigade and Monthly Review Press, New York, 1987, p. 31.
- 235 RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 37, pg 22 and pg 7
- 236 Richard Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors*, *ibid.*, pg 246. (from RGASPI 545/3/438/72)
- 237 <https://archive.org/details/LettersFromSpain>
- 238 Arthur Timpson, "An Encounter with the Anarchists in Figueras" in *Our Fight, Writings by Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, SPAIN, 1936-1939*, *ibid.*, p 90.
- 239 <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/04/give-ed-kennedy-the-posthumous-pulitzer-he-deserves/274766/>
- 240 <http://spartacus-educational.com/TUrusellD.htm>
- 241 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Kennedy_\(journalist\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Kennedy_(journalist))

<http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1035&context=russelljournal>

- 243 Mark Derby, ed., *Kiwi Compañeros: New Zealand and the Spanish Civil War*, Canterbury University Press, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140 New Zealand, 2009.
- 244 http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constancia_de_la_Mora
- 245 http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ignacio_Hidalgo_de_Cisneros
- 246 Jan Kurske and Kate Foster Kurske Mangan, *The Jan Kurske Papers 1934, 1936-1937, 1998 "The Good Comrade"*, International Institute of Social History, Cruquiusweg 31 1019 AT Amsterdam The Netherlands, 2011
- 247 <http://www.lamarcelina.com/historia.php>
- 248 http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Chaintron
- 249 Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*, *ibid.* p 376, p493. Note Thomas spells the nom-de-guerre as "Bethel" but this is incorrect.
- 250 Richard Baxell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War: The British Battalion in the International Brigades, 1936-1939*, Routledge/Canada Blanch Studies on Contemporary Spain, London, 2004, p. 66.
- 251 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Hunter_\(H35\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Hunter_(H35))
- 252 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonio_Mije
- 253 Amanda Vaill, *Hotel Florida, Truth, Love and Death in the Spanish Civil War*, Ferrar, Stratus and Giroux, New York, USA, 2014. pp 52-53.
- 254 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ted_Allan
- 255 <https://archon.brandeis.edu/?p=creators/creator&id=27>
- 256 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indalecio_Prieto
- 257 Shrinivas Tilak, *Understanding Karma: In Light of Paul Ricoeur's Philosophical Anthropology & Hermeneutics*, International Centre for Cultural Studies, 2006 - Hermeneutics - p329. (page read online, no guarantee of this reference).
- 258 Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, p140.
- 259 Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid.*, pg 158.
- 260 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 237, p5.
- 261 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Mooney

-
- 262 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francisco_Largo_Caballero
- 263 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juan_Negrín
- 264 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 50/Page 90.
- 265 Petrou, *Renegades*, *ibid.*, p 28
- 266 Ron Liversedge, *Map-Pap, Memoir of a Canadian in the Spanish Civil War*, ed. David Yorke, New Star Books, 2013, p110-111 and p. 176.
- 267 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 50/Page 136.
- 268 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 50/Page 127.
- 269 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 50/pp 109-111.
- 270 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indalecio_Prieto
- 271 Kowalsky, Stalin and the Spanish Civil War, accessed online at <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/kod01/kod01.html>, Project Gutenberg, May 18, 2014. (See Table V-3)
- 272 http://www.grahamstevenson.me.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=466:jim-prendergast&catid=16:p&Itemid=119
- 273 Ben Hughes, *They Shall Not Pass*, Osprey Publishing Co., p. 94
- 274 Petrou, *Renegades*, Table 1.
- 275 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis3/Delo426/pg25
- 276 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis2/Delo50/pp136-142
- 277 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis1/Delo37/pg16.
- 278 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis3/Delo 433/pg81.
- 279 Petrou, *Renegades*, *ibid.*, Table of Mac-Paps.
- 280 Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors*, *ibid.*, Chapter 20.
- 281 Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, p 146.
- 282 Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*, pp 161-162.
- 283 Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors*, *ibid.* pg 251 and reference 55, therein.
- 284 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 1/Delo 45/Pg 18 (May 14, 1937).
- 285 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 1194/pg 61.
- 286 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 3/Delo 725, pg 22.
- 287 Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, pg 147.
- 288 Steve Nelson, James R. Barrett, and Rob Ruck, *An American Radical*, University of Pittsburg Press, Pittsburgh, PA., 1981, pp 203-204.
- 289 Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, pp 147-149.

290

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Brigades_order_of_battle

291 Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, *ibid.*, pg 379.

292 Marx memorial Library.IB Archive.Box.21/C/1 & IBA.Box.D-7/A/2. Moscow. 545/6/102. pg. 48-55.

293 Ancestry.com (accessed May 25, 2014)

294 <http://spartacus-educational.com/SPopenheimer.htm>

295 <http://www.albavolunteer.org/2012/05/75th-anniversary-of-the-sinking-of-the-ciudad-de-barcelona/>

296 <http://ciudaddebarcelona1937.wordpress.com/>

297

http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/espada/spanish.htm

298 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 1/Delo 56, pg 57.

299 Nelson, *American Radical*, *ibid.*, pp 209-213.

300 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombardment_of_Almería

301 Petrou, *Renegades*, *ibid.*, Table of Mac-Paps.

302 Landis, *Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*

303 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 51, pg 205

304 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 103, pp 28-9

305 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 51, pg 402

306 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 376, pp 64-66.

307 Ancestry.com

308 José Alejandro Ortiz Carrión and Teresita Torres Rivera, *Voluntarios del la Libertad: Puertorriqueños en defense de la República Española 1936-1939*, Ediciones Callejón, San Juan, 2015, pp 224-236.

309 <http://sovmusic.ru/m/belarmia.mp3>

310 Alvah Bessie, *The Un-Americans*, Cameron Associates, New York, NY, 1957, p. 229

311 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_Zaisser

312 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 51, page 290.

313 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 1/Delo 45, pp 41-42.

314 Nelson, *American Radical*, *ibid.*

315 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 962, pg 42.

316

http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juventudes_Socialistas_Unificadas

317 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santiago_Carrillo

-
- 318 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 51, pg 402.
- 319 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 52, pg 187
- 320 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 51, pg 60.
- 321 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 51/pg 355.
- 322 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 51/pg 273.
- 323 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 547, pg 95.
- 324 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 3/Delo 467
- 325 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 51, p355.
- 326 Cecil Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid.*, pp 173-174.
- 327 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_P._Lash
- 328 Petrou, *Renegades*, Table 1 (Mac-Pap List).
- 329 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 51/pg 78
- 330 Constanca de la Mora, *In Place of Splendor*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939
- 331 Liston Oak, "Behind the Barricades" *The New Statesman and Nation*, pp 801-802. Online at:
http://radicalhistorynetwork.blogspot.com/2011/06/spain-and-world-aspects-of-spanish_25.html
- 332 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrés_Nin
- 333 Mark Zuehlke, *The Gallant Cause*, Wiley and Co., Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, 2007, p. 155.
- 334 Landis, *Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*, pg 176.
- 335 Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.* pg 153.
- 336 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 518, pg 156
- 337 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 543, pp 107-9.
- 338 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 518, p 158.
- 339 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 265, pg 35.
- 340 Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid.*, p. 174.
- 341 William Beeching, *Canadian Volunteers in Spain: 1936-1939*, U. Regina Press, 1989, pp 44-63.
- 342 Michael Petrou, *Renegades*, *ibid.* pg 65.
- 343 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 265, pg 13.
- 344 RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 52, pg 248.
- 345 RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 32, pg 57.
- 346 Ron Liversedge, *Mac-Pap: Memoir of a Canadian in the Spanish Civil War*, New Star Books, Toronto, 2013, p73-74.
- 347 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_emulation
- 348 RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 52, page 255.

July

- 349 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A. A. MacLeod](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._A._MacLeod)
- 350 Hoar, *The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion*, *ibid*, pg 110-114.
- 351 Liversedge, *Mac-Pap*, *ibid.*, pg 75-76.
- 352 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna Louise Strong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna_Louise_Strong)
- 353 Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, pg 150.
- 354 Michael Petrou, *Renegades*, *ibid.*
- 355 RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 265, p35.
- 356 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian Bell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_Bell)
- 357 <https://youtu.be/Tgfe32fkdGc>
- 358 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/ Delo 37, pg 22.
- 359 Maurice Levine, *From Cheetam to Cordova* "The first organised Manchester group to arrive in Albacete, November 1936."
- 360 Martin Sugarman, *Against Fascism – Jews who served in The International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War*, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/spanjews.pdf, Sourced: January 21, 2014.
- 361 RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 274, p 23-25.
- 362
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Brunete#July_10.E2.80.9311
- 363 D. R. Pat Stephens, *A Memoir of the Spanish Civil War An Armenian-Canadian in the Lincoln Battalion*, Canadian Committee on Labour History, 2000. pg. 65-66.
- 364 Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid*, pg 192.
- 365 Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik*, Univ. Of Minnesota Press, 1978, pg 482.
- 366 Landis, *Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid*, pp 206-207.
- 367 <http://www.albavolunteer.org/2010/06/anatomy-of-a-lie-the-death-of-oliver-law>
- 368 Harry Hakam, *Harriman Oral Histories*, Tamiment Library, <https://wp.nyu.edu/albaoh/harry-hakam/>
- 369 Richard Slotkin, *Lost Battalions: The Great War and the Crisis of American Nationality*, Holt Paperbacks, 2010.
- 370 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 265, pp 12-15
- 371 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 265, pg 22
- 372 Landis, *Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid*, p. 247.
- 373 <http://www.alba-valb.org/volunteers/paul-white>

-
- 374 Frank Chesler, Manny Harriman Oral History Project,
<https://wp.nyu.edu/albaoh/frank-chesler/>
- 375 Petrou, *Renegades*, *ibid*, p 18.
- 376 Steve Nelson, *The Volunteers, Masses and Mainstream*, New York, 1953, pp 166-168.
- 377 Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid.*, p 145.
- 378 Carroll, *Odyssey*, *ibid.*, p143-144.
- 379 Nelson, *The Volunteers*, *ibid*, p. 106.
- 380 Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*, pg 216 and 247.
- 381 Milton Wolff to Art Landis, The Art Landis Audio Collection, ALBA AUDIO 66, Tamiment Library, NYU
- 373 Petrou, *Renegades*, Table of Mac-Paps, *ibid*
- 374 RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 37, p29
- 375 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Bedacht
- 376 <http://whittakerchambers.org/2012/07/04/max-bedacht-rip>
- 377 Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid*, p. 246.
- 378 Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, *ibid*, p. 777.
- 379 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/D37, page 12
- 380 Landis, *ibid*, p. 402.
- 381 RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 32, pp 374-385, written on July 27, 1937.
- 382 RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 32, pp 388-389, written on August 11, 1937.
- 383 RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 32, pg 433.
- 384 Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, pp 156-7.
- 385 RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 299/pp 33-39.
- 386 Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*, pg 244
- 387 https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Dahlem
- 388 RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 32, p 454.
- 389 Stuart Walsh and Kevin Buyers, private communication.
- 390 Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors*, *ibid*, pp. 269-278.
- 391 Kevin Buyers,
<http://internationalbrigadesinspain.weebly.com/>
- 392 Richard Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors*, *ibid*.
- 393 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Horner_\(politician\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Horner_(politician))
- 394 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Will_Paynter
- 395 RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 37, pg 24.
- 396 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koča_Popović
- 397 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Popovics_\(diplomat\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Popovics_(diplomat))

-
- 398 RGASPI, Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 37, pg 19
- 399 <http://www.peterdaly.org/>
- 400 Milly Bennett, letter to Jenny Miller, September 18, 1937, Mildred Bennett Collection, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, University.
- 401 Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, *ibid.*, pp 473-474.
- 402 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 37, p 25.
- 403 Cecil Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid*, pg 214.
- 404 Weblink:
<https://docs.google.com/open?id=0B2UOgpvETJPCX3ZrWExwVVM4Y2c>
- 405 Victor (Hoar) Howard, *The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion*, *ibid*, p. 132.
- 406 Hans Amlie, his notes found in the Milly Bennett Collection in the Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.
- 407 Beeching, *The Canadian Volunteers*, *ibid*, pg 62.
- 408 Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors*, *ibid.*, pg 312.
- 409 *Book of the XVth Brigade*, Warren and Pell Publishing, London, p 246.
- 410 Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid*, pg. 272.
- 411 Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.* pp 272-273.
- 412 Steve Nelson, *The Volunteers*, *ibid*, p 179.
- 413 *Book of the XVth Brigade*, *ibid.*, pp 247-256.
- 414 http://www.quintodeebro.com/historia/historia_1938_2.htm
- 415 Art Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid*, pg. 275.
- 416 Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid.*, p 219-220.
- 417 Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, p. 166.
- 418 R. F., *Book of the XVth Brigade*, *ibid*, p 257.
- 419 Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid*, p 221.
- 420 Dave Engels, *Book of the XVth Brigade*, *ibid.* pg 262.
- 421 Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid*, pg 287

September

- 422 Mildred Bennett, Register of the Milly Bennett Papers, 1915-1960, <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf6n39n837>
- 423 Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*, p 53, 488.

⁴²⁴ Art Landis, *Spain: the Unfinished Revolution*, International Publishers, NY. p 260.

⁴²⁵ Morris Lanser, *Book of the XVth Brigade*, *ibid.*, p265-266.

⁴²⁶ Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*, pg. 298.

⁴²⁷ S. F., *Book of the XVth Brigade*, *ibid.*, p 269.

⁴²⁸ Milly Bennett, *ibid.* (Her notes on an interview with Hans Amlie)

⁴²⁹ <https://sites.google.com/site/gceformulario/batalla-de-belchite>

⁴³⁰ Milly Bennett's notes of her interview with Hans Amlie when he was in hospital. From Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California. Transcription by the author and admittedly there are many difficult and fuzzy sections in text:

Sept 5th

We'd went approx. one block together jointly with Span comrades. 5 or 6 men bust down door - Penetration every place. 9 am. Then Span one street & our little company with a few Spanish who wanted to be with us. Put up barricades. Parapets. Sandbags. Why did fascist concentrate main forces in plaza? Why not small details in outlying points? Our opinion was fascist officers saw that demoralization set in and didn't trust small groups! Thus able to maintain iron control over men. Officers knew their fate if caught. If us, we'd make them fight every step of way.

We penetrated (our company) to a point where small bend in the street - we called it "deadman's point" We were now about half a block from the fascists - Charlie Regan, 45, World War, Irish Catholic. Gave Regan instructions not to go down there - only about 10 feet away. Stick close to the wall. Fascists had a barricade just above the bend. He went down & was killed. Collected about 40 bags of grain. Most houses had animals - stretched em across with portholes. All of us were novices at street fighting. I had some general knowledge and some theories gathered from reading. Knew that barricade places at that posit. if properly manned & tenaciously held & an eternal

vigilance that fascists would never get beyond that point. An hour or so later we saw the possibility of taking the sacks on the extreme right side and advancing them piecemeal to a position that would give us a greater advantage over any advance that the fascists might dare to make.

Our men were designated for guard at the barricade with one relief guard retiring 15 feet in the rear. Relieved every half hr. Too much strain on these fellows. 6 on the barricades 6 with to go on watch. Remaining given instructions to go top floors of houses we'd cleaned and to 1- see what surroundings looked like 2- begin break through walls found picks & crowbars to houses forward of our position —

House on right hand side toward plaza - on lower floor needed that house badly than any on street. Busted hole made two sniper holes. Comrade Merriman had an opportune moment use his skill with the rifle - All afternoon our men sniped fascists. Ephraim Bartlett, 49, I think Denver Col. old soldier coal miner, party comrade; sergeant crack shot. Able to afford his Communist visit. Such as never had before. On left hand side of street 3 houses nearer plaza - got range on back part of plaza.

Houses between us and plaza. Watch enemy movements. It was nice weather. After we built barrier went another street & recommended batt. off. this barricade building be done on other streets.

Later on they placed five bags on street and men wounded & attempted project given up.

Only protection or fighting power they had was few soldiers who stood around the corner - 2 blocks from fasc. barric. which meant any time the fascists tried to break down - our resistance would have been reduced.

There was not a full use of the houses upper floors. During whole day our artillery & tanks with remarkable

precision exacting heavy tolls from the fascists at Commander's & plaza.

About four o'clock our comp given the assignment to leave our barricade to prepare for an attack on the fascist barricade went came into small alley. Where I came to that pt. question not standing but engaging immediate battle with fascists. Our plan was to assault their barricade and go into the plaza. Sent four men dash across. Four to advance up the str. with bombs in hands. Advanced from one door to another up towards barricades then our task to advance up the street door by door - old baseball technique - filling up street with smoke - well ahead of us. Covering screen for our advance. Most of our men advanced under cover of this. Lost no men. Louis Goslin killed before barricades.

7 killed 30. But after reaching the barricade, xxxx down several sacks began advancing down street toward plaza. Only few men of our company went along (10-12) beyond barricade led by Bradley. Met with serious fire working toward plaza. Without proper coordination in street

Has Sporty Sperry killed, 38, world war, killed 6 wounded - I dragged back — 2 killed, six seriously wounded. Wounded had all they could do to get back. Bombs revolve fire; Immediate task forced us was to hold this fascist barricade. Went 15-20 feet up street had to go back & hard task build out in a full barricade so have range up & down the street.

Other comrades threw up sacks of wheat and grain - we build up a regular fortress. Rest struggling to more bombs—

Camarada! {unreadable} on many occasions fascists st. formed!{unreadable}

Learned later had barricades midst important fascist positions, hospitals, etc. Worried about ... across fear they'd drop bombs. Threw bombs into windows houses across street. Had charlie horse for 2 days. Many times fasc. tried to get us from plaza

but they were at a decided disadvantage. Our bombs and rifles persistent vigil. Drove em back. Made every man stay awake. I was just demanding keep your eyes open. Our barricade separated fascists & they were hogtied in there.

Half hour later first noises from basement house right had side barricade. Hollered down from cellar window. Who is there? Soldiers and civilians. Went down & found about 150. We'd only investigated upper floors. Came up through front way of house. Ripped down few bags of our barricade to let them thru. All morning long hundreds of civilians and soldiers passed through our barricades

- ⁴³¹ Steve Nelson, *The Volunteers*, *ibid*, p 186-7.
- ⁴³² Lieutenant Hernández y Alcalá, *The Book of the XVth Brigade*, *ibid.*, pp 283-286.
- ⁴³³ Ronald Radosh, Mary R. Habeck, and Grigory Sevostianov, *Spain Betrayed: The Soviet Union in the Spanish Civil War*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 2001, p.481-2.
- ⁴³⁴ Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, pp 172-3.
- ⁴³⁵ RGASPI Fond 545/Opus2/Delo 118/p130
- ⁴³⁶ Radosh et al., *Spain Betrayed*, pp 481-482.
- ⁴³⁷ Article in *La Vanguardia*, Barcelona, from September 7, 1937.
Source: <http://http://hemeroteca-paginas.lavanguardia.com/>
- ⁴³⁸ RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 57/page 253.
- ⁴³⁹ RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 57/p255.
- ⁴⁴⁰ M. Fred (Manfred Stern or General Kleber) in Radosh et al., *Spain Betrayed*, *ibid*, p 357-8.
- ⁴⁴¹ RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 957/page 78.
- ⁴⁴² RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 57, p 433.
- ⁴⁴³ RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 59, p 147
- ⁴⁴⁴ Landis, *Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid*.
- ⁴⁴⁵ <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80000788>, accessed September 2015.
- ⁴⁴⁶ RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 33/ pg 2
- ⁴⁴⁷ RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 221 /pg 20
- ⁴⁴⁸ RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 3/Delo 499/pg 56
- ⁴⁴⁹ Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid*, pg 167.
- ⁴⁵⁰ Imperial War Museum, Audio Archives.
<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections>

- 451 Richard Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors*, *ibid.*, p 313-314.
 452 Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, *ibid.*
 453 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 57, p 453.
 454 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 3/ page 70.
 455 Martin Sugarman, *Against Fascism - Jews who served in The International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War*, *ibid.*, page 17.
 456 Landis, *The Abraham-Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.* pp 312-3

October

- 466 Landis, *The Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.* ,pp 313-314.
 467 *Book of the XVth Brigade*, *ibid.*, pg 289.
 468 Milton Wolff to Art Landis, ALBA AUDIO 66-14, Tamiment Library, NYU.
 469 RGASPI Fond 545 Opis 2 Delo 58 pg 561
 470 Sugarman, *Against Fascism*,
www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/spanjews.pdf,
 Sourced: January 21, 2014.
 471 RGASPI Archives, Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 145, pg 216, letter from Comrade "Willi" to Comrade "Kurt" at Albacete base, October 4, 1937.
 472 <http://spartacus-educational.com/SPdartonP.htm>
 473 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 3/Delo 435/pp81-82
 474 George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, Harcourt Press, 1980, 232pp.
 475
<http://www.senesdealcubierre.es/index.php/mod.pags/mem.detalle/idpag.30/idmenu.1054/chk.e060503ac64bffd5d29554125d27f95a.html>
 476 Landis, *Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.* pg 314.
 477 Edward Lending as told to Manny Harriman, Oral Interview,
<https://wp.nyu.edu/albaoh/edward-lending/> (Part 3)
 478 Claude Bowers, *My Mission to Spain*, *ibid.*, pg 399.
 479 <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/sofuqua.htm>
 480 <http://ftr.wot-news.com/2013/11/12/soviet-bt-tanks-in-combat-part-1/>
 481 Richard Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors*, *ibid.* , p 315-316.
 482 Landis, *Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*,

- 483 Niilo (Milo) Makela, *The Book of the XVth Brigade, "The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in Action"*, *ibid*, p. 291-2.
- 484 Ron Liversedge, *Mac-Pap: Memoirs of a Canadian in the Spanish Civil War*, *ibid.*, pp 88-92.
- 485 Bill Kardash can be heard speaking at the 1:15 mark of Part IV of the National Film Board Film, *La Canadienses*, <http://youtu.be/AO1gF1fkAt8>
- 486 Michael Petrou, *Renegades*, *ibid.*, pg 76
- 487 <http://spartacus-educational.com/SPfry.htm>
- 488 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Segismundo_Casado
- 489
<http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Fuerzas/EPR/EprL/BM006.htm>
- 490 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 36/Page 133
- 491 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 41, pp 90-94
- 492 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Lasser
- 493 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 6/Delo 989, p 54
- 494
<http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Fuerzas/EPR/EprL/BM143.htm>
- 495 Art Landis, *Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid*
- 496 Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*, pg 180.
- 497 Landis, *American Lincoln Brigade*, *ibid.*
- 498 Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid.*
- 499 RGASPI Fond 545/Opis 2/Delo 103, pg 106.
- 500
<http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Fuerzas/EPR/EprL/BM009.htm>
- 501 <http://www.cgsc.edu/CARL/nafziger/937SGGB.pdf>
- 502 <https://youtu.be/SdG8JiZ3-jM>
- 503 Herbert Kline and Geza Karpathi, *With the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain*, ©Abraham Lincoln Brigades Archives, New York, New York.
- 504 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratna_Mohini

November

- 505 Eby, *Comrades and Commissars*, *ibid.*

⁵⁰⁶ Wachtel and Lerude, *American Commander*, *ibid.*

⁵⁰⁷ Ancestry.com, *New York Immigration Records*

Name Index

(b) Indicates that a mini-biography is available on this page. Page numbers in italics indicate a photograph.

- A. E. 8-9
 A. W. 8-9
 Abramson, Rose 325
 Adolph, Dr. (see Adolf Ramek)
 Aguila, Captain 483, 486, 523-524, 649, 651
 Aitken, George 33, 64, 66, 183, 187, 257, 265-266, 268, 336, 346, 348, 355-356, 446, 448, 450, 453, 456, 461, 463, 465ff, 471, 483-485, 493, 573, 580, 582-583, 589, 594
 Alexander, Bill 224, 273-274, 534, 642
 Alexander, John 387
 Alfredo 315, 318, 671, 675
 Allan, Ted (Allan Herman) 195-196, 230, 234, 238, 339, 343
 Alloca, Captain 55
 Alexander, John 391
 Amatniek, Ernie 353, 358(b)-359, 361, 369-370, 374, 397-398, 404
 Amery, Al 412
 Amlie, Hans 148, 149, 150, 211, 218, 240, 242-244, 251, 254, 451, 453, 464, 469, 471, 474, 479, 498ff, 517-518, 521ff, 535ff, 545-546, 549, 552, 558, 584, 586, 588, 593, 631, 634-636, 679, 681-682, 684ff, 708
 Amlie, Congressman Tom 149, 211
 Anderson, Melvin 507(b)
 Angel 230, 232
 Appleton, Owen 658, 661-662
 Argites, Louis 649-650(b)
 Arnold Miss 151, 154
 Atal, Dr. Madan Mohan Lal 240, 243, 251, 256, 262ff, 271, 275
 Augustin, Gene 611
 Avgherinos, Constantino (Costas) 128-130(b), 291
 Avgherinos, Hercules 288, 291, 472, 475
 Azaña, Manuel 245
 Azar, Joe 182, 319, 322(b)
 Aznar, Manuel 609
 Balsa, Captain Alfredo 633, 691, 695-696
 Bard, Phil 22, 24(b), 34, 50, 428, 431, 438-439, 443
 Barea, Arturo 237
 Baron, Sam (Socialist Party Guild) 210, 212, 214-215, 218, 344, 353, 357
 Barsky, Ben 399 - 400, 401(b), 416-418, 420, 433, 437, 594
 Barsky, Dr. Edward 106, 306, 308-309, 310
 Barthel, Jean 168, 234-235, 266, 282, 286
 Bates, Ralph 240, 243, 414, 450, 453, 456-457, 459, 461ff, 481
 Bauza, Uliser 536
 Bebler, Adles 355
 Becker, Peter 33, 356
 Bedacht, Max 438-439
 Bee, Edwin 571, 663
 Beeching, William 48, 357
 Begelman, Elias 75, 151, 153(b), 199, 462, 464, 596, 659, 667
 Beimler, Hans 223
 Bell, Julian 387
 Bender, Ed 85, 202, 207-208(b), 307, 311, 323-324, 330, 332, 335, 338ff, 345, 353, 358, 375-377, 382, 384, 386, 397-398, 402, 409, 422-424, 425, 428, 431, 443-444, 450, 452, 476, 480, 556, 559-560, 679-680, 682, 684, 688
 Bergonzoli, General (Italian) 205
 Bennett, Milly (Mitchell, Mildred) 4, 5, 6, 8-10, 12-15, 113, 121, 149-150, 170, 212, 230ff, 240, 339, 341, 343-344, 371-372, 486-487, 523, 530, 535-536, 539, 545, 556, 558, 584, 586-587, 686, 688, 708
 Bennett, Thomas Edwin Browne 113(b)ff, 120-121
 Benson, William (Briton) 391-392
 Bernstein, Hilliard 212
 Barry, Griffin (Merriman spells the name Berry) 230, 232
 Bethune, Norman 14, 48-49, 106, 196
 Bielov, Commander ("Popov") 422-423, 438, 440, 442-444, 562-563, 573, 680-681, 684
 Birnbaum, Saul 530
 Black, Jack 172, 174

- Black, James V. 645
 Blanck, Dr. 278
 Block, Paul 556, 558
 Bloomfield 359
 Bonnar, Henry 103
 Bowers, Claude, U.S. Ambassador to Spain 635, 684
 Bourne, Jim 444, 471, 474, 476, 479, 531, 580, 582, 584-585, 588-589, 592-593, 599, 608, 610, 625, 628-630, 659, 668-669, 670-672, 670, 680, 685, 692, 704
 Bowler, Kitty 10, 12, 19-20, 331, 334
 Bradley, Carl (Raphael P. Bodkin, Merriman writes Bodholt) 166-167(b), 326, 328, 346-347, 406, 476, 478, 505, 584, 587, 588, 591, 593, 597, 641
 Bradley, William (Canadian) 335, 338, 347-348
 Bradsworth, Dr. Colin 375-377, 418-419
 Bradshaw, William 310
 Bravo, Juan 706
 Bremler, Mildred (see Milly Bennett)
 Brennan, Bill 357
 Brenner 392
 Brent, Jack (Dickie, George "Geordie", Canadian went to Scotland as child) 118-119, 120, 128-130
 Bridges, Robert 53, 57
 Bridon, José 72, 186
 Briskey, Bill 65
 Brodsky, George 108, 109(b), 110-111, 116-117, 146-147, 151-152, 158, 163-164, 240, 244ff, 276, 279, 282, 298, 306-308, 312, 330, 332, 335, 338, 375, 377, 402, 409, 428, 430
 Bromley 214-215
 Browder, Earl 404, 559
 Brown, Richard de Witt (Merriman writes Browne) 611, 616
 Brown, Tom 350-351(b)
 Burgess, Ronnie 39-40
 Burns, Paul 268, 405-406
 Burton, Wallace 149, 169-170, 172, 174, 210, 212, 257, 307, 446-447, 450, 453, 486-487, 526, 530, 584, 586
 Burton, Wilbur 150, 170
 Busch, Dr. Ernst 189, 193-194, 556, 559, 599, 603, 621-622
 Butkovsky (Chief of division operations) 569
 Caballero, Largo 240, 245 - 246, 342, 477, 480, 486, 537, 686, 689
 Cachin, Dr. 129, 132, 136, 259, 308
 Campesino (González, Valentín) 206
 Cantor, William Harris 375, 377(b), 397-398, 403, 412-413, 611, 618-620
 Capa, Robert 238
 "Carlos" (Vittorio Vidali) 214, 217, 221, 222, 223, 271, 274, 276, 279, 282, 286, 339-340
 Carrillo, Santiago 325
 Carroll, William Reed 246, 250(b)-253, 314-315, 323-324, 399, 401-402, 404
 Carson, Jack 359, 361, 393, 399, 401
 Cartier-Bresson, Henri 691-693, 694-696, 699
 Casado, Segismundo 652
 Catalette, Dr. 132, 142, 259, 278, 308
 Cavanaugh, Frederick 399, 401(b), 433, 435
 Cazan, Dr. (Cazin; possibly same man as Chrétien) 278, 342
 Chapayev (Miklos Szalway) 74, 124, 348, 355, 491, 493-494, 496, 499, 501, 526, 528, 530, 538-541, 547, 549, 564-566, 569, 585, 590, 597
 Chelibian, Misak 78-79
 Chesler, Hyman (Frank) 300, 402, 404, 418-419, 476, 478
 Chrétien, Dr. (possibly same man as Cazan) 132
 Cecil-Smith, Edward 149, 159, 162, 202, 214, 217, 251, 254, 256-257, 290, 380, 386-387, 658, 660
 Clark, Durward 211
 Clerc (also misspelled as Clare), Commandant André 148, 150, 214, 217, 258, 359-360, 365, 367
 Cleaver, Lewis 169, 171-172, 174-175, 221, 225, 240, 245
 Coapman, Arthur 346-347(b), 399, 401, 433, 435
 Cockburn, Claud (aka Frank Pitcairn, aka Cober) 13, 15, 184, 193
 Cojeran, Steve 546
 Coleman, Jud 392
 Collier, Lawrence 273-274
 Colodny, Robert 78, 88, 223
 Colow, Maury 141(b), 515
 Companys, President Lluís 562
 Constant, Maurice (Canadian) 501-502, 505, 516
 Conway, Kit 18, 65, 73, 253
 Cook, Abbie 455, 457

- Cookson, John 529
 Cooney, Bob 582-583
 Cooper, Jack (Isadore Levitt) 303, 332, 367
 Cooperman, Philip 57, 60-61, 76, 101-102, 124, 183, 187(b), 375-377, 450, 452-453, 462, 464, 464-465, 468
 Copeman, Fred 15, 43-44, 45, 59, 66, 123-124, 184, 257, 290, 355, 444, 468-469, 575, 582-583, 585-586
 Copic, Sonia 566
 Copic, Vladimir "Senjko" (Ćopić, pronounced Chopich) 20, 33, 72, 74, 79, 80, 81, 84, 92, 94, 96-97, 99, 101-103, 107, 112, 164, 183, 186-187, 190, 215, 217, 222, 226-227, 233, 265ff, 280, 288-290, 292-294, 330-331, 333-336, 346, 348-349, 354, 355-356, 363, 388, 402, 406-409, 426, 442, 450, 455, 459, 461, 463-464, 466-469, 476-477, 479-481, 483-485, 487, 489ff, 503, 514, 516-519, 522, 530, 534, 536, 538, 540-541, 547-548, 556ff, 566ff, 573-575, 578ff, 586, 588ff, 596ff, 601, 605, 607-608, 610ff, 618, 621ff, 628-629, 630-632, 634-636, 641-642, 652, 654-658, 662-663, 666-667, 671-675, 677, 679-681, 683-674, 684, 686, 687-688, 689, 691-692, 695-698, 700ff
 Coppi, General (Italian) 205
 Cordière, Dr. 132
 Corona, Lieutenant Arturo 67, 151, 154(b), 184, 189, 192, 306, 310, 319, 321
 Costelli, Major 466, 470
 Cox, Thomas 43, 45
 Coyle, George 471, 473
 Crespo Torres, Luis 194, 471, 473-474, 614-615, 618, 629, 634, 637, 649, 652, 654-657, 671, 673, 675, 679, 681, 683, 686-687, 690-692, 695-696, 697-698, 700
 Crook, David (Merriman writes Crooks) 159, 162, 166
 Croll, John Watson 413
 Crome, Dr. Len 706
 Cross, Christopher 306, 310, 321, 335, 338
 Cunningham, Jock 66, 70, 94, 101, 123-124, 151-153, 156, 158, 240, 242, 336, 339-342, 345, 346, 348, 359-361, 363, 365-366, 402, 406, 408-409, 428-429, 443-444, 446, 448, 450-452, 454, 456, 461-466, 468-469, 471, 473, 483-485, 493, 573, 580, 582-583, 589, 594
 Cyrano, Comrade 173
 Daduk, Steven 22, 24-25(b), 29-30, 32, 35-38, 39-41, 50, 67, 79, 246, 249, 251, 253, 271, 274, 288, 291, 298-299, 323
 Dahlem, Franz (Merriman writes Franz) 455-456
 Dallet, Joe 185(b), 226, 227, 228, 240, 244, 246-247, 249-251, 253, 262-263, 270-273, 295-296, 298-300, 302-303, 306-308, 313ff, 319-320, 323-324, 326-327, 329-330, 332, 339-340, 344, 346, 354, 357-359, 365-366, 369-370, 375-376, 379-380, 399-400, 402-403, 414-417, 420-422, 426, 428-429, 446, 448-450, 452, 455-456, 461, 471, 473, 476, 480-481, 517, 519, 561, 563, 569, 571, 621-622, 625, 627-628, 634-635, 640, 644-646, 648, 665
 Dallet, Kitty Puening 296
 Daly, Francis 413
 Daly, Peter 140, 476, 478, 507, 531
 Dart, Rollin 141(b), 142, 289, 294-295, 307, 311, 402, 403
 Darton, Patience 233, 274, 618
 Dashevsky (Merriman writes Dasheff) 580, 583(b)
 Davidow, Ruth 335, 337(b)-338
 Davis (US Consular Officer) 117
 Davoll, Theodore 701, 706
 Day 57
 De Armas, Rodolfo 31, 78, 87
 DeCisneros, Hildalgo 206
 De Dent, Joseph 115
 Degnan, Thomas "Tommy" 306, 310, 327
 Del Vayo, Antonio 153, 163, 233, 339, 342
 De la Mora, Constancia 230, 232ff, 238, 343, 556, 558, 586
 Delgado Mariano, Emilio 382-383
 DeLuca (Deluca), Samuel 433-434
 Denis, André (Arturo, Adrienne) 564-565, 595, 599, 601, 616, 621, 624, 654, 657, 672, 675, 681
 Dent, Walter (a Canadian) 116
 Detro, Philip 168, 524, 545(b), 564, 567, 584, 587, 591, 595, 597, 610, 643, 700-701, 703, 706
 Deutsch, Julius 182
 Diamant, André 66

- Digges, William 682
 Dion, Joseph 369, 373(b), 418-419
 Domínguez, Bienvenido (Victor) 182
 Domjonovic, Milo 504-505(b)
 Donaldson, Alec 19, 21-22, 57, 108, 111, 214-215, 386
 Donowa, Dr. Arnold 394
 Donda, Dora 136-137
 Donley 169, 171
 Donnelly, Charles 87
 Doran, Dave 335, 337-339, 355, 412, 420-423, 443-445, 547, 550-551, 553, 559, 564, 568-570, 572, 575, 580, 586, 588-589, 592ff, 596, 599-600, 605, 608, 614, 616, 621-622, 625, 627, 629-630, 632, 634, 636-637, 654, 657, 660, 665, 671-672, 674-675, 680, 682-683, 681-682, 685, 687, 691-692, 695-696, 697, 700-701, 703
 Dos Passos, John 184, 193-194, 238, 343
 Dougher, Joe "Jobey" 320, 324, 327, 359, 361, 365-366, 640-641
 Duguet, Captain 55
 Dukes, Larry 307, 312, 314-315
 Dumont, Col. Jules 156, 158
 Dumont, René 103
 Dunbar, Arthur 387, 589, 594
 Dunbar, Malcolm 194, 224, 590, 594, 596, 634, 637, 659, 663, 665, 666
 e. R. 16-17
 Eaton, Henry 535, 540
 Edo 179
 Edwards, Albert, J. Jr 159-161(b)
 Edwards, Charles Hamilton 78-79
 Edwards, Lionel 161
 Ehrlich, Rubin 116, 608
 Eider, Louis 580-581
 Eisenberg, Barbara R. 296
 Engels, David "Mooch" 148, 150(b), 189, 192, 509, 530, 543, 548
 Entin, Bernard 387
 Epstein, David 156, 158(b)-160
 Estevez, Manuel 446, 497, 504, 506(b)
 Ettelson, Dr. Abraham 308
 Ettelson, Dora 137
 Evans, Lloyd 330, 332, 335, 338
 Favette (Fevrier) 248, 264
 Fein, Arnold (Arturo) 221, 224(b), 276, 278, 281-282, 284, 386, 389, 398, 409
 Fein, Gustave 576
 Feinberg, Sander 656
 Feldman, Sol 230, 233, 611
 Feny (Alexandre Ferry?, Army corps), 574, 576
 Fernando 455, 460
 Ferrari, Angela 340
 Field, John 610(b)
 Field, Ralph 608, 610(b)
 Findlay, Ben 568
 Fisher, Harry 144, 182
 Fischer, Louis 365-367, 386-387
 Fishman, Morris 444-445
 Fishman, Mosess "Moe" 445
 Fishnelson, Nathan 608, 611, 616, 618-620
 Flaherty, Charles (O'Flaherty, Charles O.) 246, 249(b), 251-252, 256, 271, 274, 291, 298-299
 Flaherty, Edward 268, 288, 291, 330, 332
 Flaherty, Frank 288, 291
 Flam, Emyl 568, 570, 573
 Fletcher, George 460
 Fliegle (Bennett spells this Fliegel), Eddie 486(b)-487
 Fogarty, Eugene 151, 154, 379-381
 Ford, James 218, 217, 233-234, 237, 265, 268, 461
 Fort, Gabriel 55, 290, 355
 Frame, William 422-423, 517, 519
 Francisco 248, 264
 Franco, Francisco 11, 57, 78, 185, 205-206, 344, 515, 632
 Franklin, Sid 184, 193-194
 Fry, Harry 64-66, 69, 649-650
 Fuller, Hank 306
 Fuqua, U.S. Army Colonel Steven 211, 635-636, 679, 681-682, 683-684, 686-687, 688
 Gal, General (Galicz, Janos aka General Gall) 32-33, 54, 65-66, 71, 74, 77, 79, 91, 188-190, 201, 217, 257, 265-266, 288-289, 291-294, 295-296, 337, 350ff, 358, 433, 435, 440, 442, 452, 454, 461, 463ff, 476-478, 480-481, 494, 572, 622-623
 Gallacher, Willie (Merriman writes Gallagher) 169, 171
 Gallagher, Leo 466, 469
 Gallego, Angel Hernandez 167
 Galli, Honoré "Ernest" 63, 276-277, 298, 301-302, 305, 307, 312, 319, 339-340, 455-456
 Galliani, Humberto 194, 316-317, 596
 Gallo (Longo, Luigi) 184, 190, 195-196, 223, 257, 265, 271, 274, 301, 402,

- 451, 455-456, 459, 517-518, 519, 567, 685
- Gallo Martínez, Miguel 652
- Gannes, Harry 14
- Garcia, Juan Abad 472, 475, 524, 577
- Garcia Marquez, Captain Luis (from Division) 574, 576-577, 691, 695
- Garens (Givins? Givinovich?) 655, 657
- Garland, Walter 149, 156, 158, 169, 202, 214, 217-219, 240, 243, 251, 254, 256-257, 282, 287, 315, 318, 386-387, 408, 425-427, 428-429, 430-431, 446, 448, 450, 453-454, 469
- Gates, John (Israel Ragenstrich) 141(b), 142, 276-277, 295, 680, 682-683, 686, 689, 696, 704
- Gellhorn, Martha 14, 193-194
- Georgen, James 670
- Georgeovitch, Dimitrie ("Selka") 492, 495, 569, 572-573
- Gerlach, John (Ivan Rujevcic) 570-571, 586, 654, 656, 660, 692, 697
- Gibbs, Theodore 671, 674(b)
- Gibson, Patrick (Canadian) 504, 506
- Givney, John 39, 41, 43, 45, 252, 255, 306-308, 312, 324, 386-387
- Gladnick, Robert 30, 50, 62, 84-85, 134-135
- Gold, Irving 256, 260(b)
- Gomez, General (Wilhelm Zaisser) 289, 319, 321, 440, 684
- Gonshak, Samuel 299, 301(b), 446-448, 450, 453, 471, 473, 476, 478, 509
- Goodman, Caroll ("Kibby") 471-472(b), 569, 571, 573-574, 578
- Gordon, Joe (Joseph Mendelowitz) 74-75(b), 87
- Gordon, Leo (Leo Mendelowitz) 75
- Goryan, Dr. (Gorian, Gorgan) 258-259, 278, 328
- Gottwald, Klement 615
- Grant, Walter 77
- Grebenerrov, Captain 55
- Greenspan, Celia Seborer 14, 21, 115, 117
- Greenspan, Marion (George Marion) 13-14, 19-21, 23 128, 132-134, 184, 189, 193, 195, 282, 287, 369, 386-387, 443-444, 450-451, 453, 455-456, 505, 512-513, 516-517, 519
- Greenstein, Solly 670
- Grenier, Amédée "Frenchy" (Canadian) 370, 372
- Griffiths, Eric "Pinky" 13, 15, 230, 232-234, 237
- Groden, Daniel 652(b)- 653
- Grossner, Samuel 370, 374(b)
- Guerin (Gede? But more probably Constant) 504, 506-507
- Guest, Angela Haden 274
- Guiven? 156, 158
- Gundelack, Otto (Merriman writes Gunderlach) 314-315
- Gutensick, Captain 342
- Goutchkoff, Vera 140
- Hagileou (spelled variously), John 151, 153(b), 159-160, 199-200, 202, 312, 472, 474
- Hakam, Harry 408, 511
- Haldane, Charlotte 10 (as C.H.), 12, 40
- Haldane, J. B. S. 39, 218
- Haldane, John Scott 218
- Halliwell, William 251, 254, 256-257, 538-539, 584, 586
- Hampkins, Peter 149, 156, 158(b), 199-200, 246, 249, 257, 302, 304, 307, 313, 323-324, 339, 344-345, 534-535, 538, 589, 592-593, 599, 608, 610
- Hans, Dr. (possibly Dr. Hene) 402, 410
- Harbocian, Nicolas (Canadian) 391-392
- Harper, Wiley 403, 412
- Harris, Abe 306, 310, 312, 323-324, 326, 328-329, 339, 344, 399, 580-581
- Harris, James 21, 26-27, 29-30, 33, 39, 52, 62, 67-69, 71, 79-80, 82-85, 93, 108, 111, 125-126, 128, 136, 142, 146-147, 159, 161, 183, 210, 213, 240, 243, 659, 667
- Hathaway, William 46-47
- Hautala, John. P. (FWF) 439
- Haywood, Harry 46, 72, 81, 178-180(b), 183, 186-189, 193, 202, 204, 207-208, 262, 265-267, 271-272, 288-289, 292, 294, 333ff, 351, 354-355, 402, 405-408, 414-415, 422, 425-426, 428-430, 443-444, 464, 469
- Hecht, Joe (or Leo) 574-575
- Hedley 46-47
- Hemingway, Ernest 184, 189, 193-194, 584, 586, 703
- Hendrickson, George 46-47
- Hene, Dr. Julius 402, 410, 645, 658, 661, 673
- Henry, Bill (from Belfast) 83, 87, 97
- Herbst, Josephine 184, 189, 193-196, 230, 232
- Hernández y Alcalá, Lieutenant 552

- Hernandez Anton 679, 681
 Herndon, Milton 640(b), 645-646
 Herrick, William (Bill Harvey, William Horowitz) 46, 51(b), 53, 59, 62, 74-75, 85, 99, 116, 134-135, 142
 Hildalgo de Cisneros y López-Montenegro, Ignacio 232, 234, 238
 Hilton, Percy 325
 Hinks, Joe 471, 473
 Hitchcock, Douglas (Robert Colver) 644(b), 665
 Hochberg, Emanuel 386-387
 Hoff, Harold 304, 643, 664, 693, 707
 Hooker, Howard 403, 412, 420-421
 Hoshoooley, Jack 526, 530
 Horner, Arthur 471, 473
 Horowitz, Sidney 276, 280(b), 283
 Hourihan, Marty 97, 112, 130, 135, 188-190, 193, 265-266, 267-268, 270, 289-290, 294, 302-303, 336, 340, 350-353, 355, 356-358, 361, 365-366, 370, 382, 384, 386-387, 433, 435
 Howe, William Edward 369-370, 373(b), 418-419, 446, 449(b)
 Hughes, Langston 668-669, 671, 674-675
 Hunter, John 611
 Hurzig, Comrade 342
 Hutner, Daniel 542(b)
 Hyde, Thomas 306, 309(b), 310, 319, 326-327, 335, 338, 350, 354, 358, 375, 377, 386-387, 403, 413, 433-435, 446, 448-449, 497, 547, 550
 Isasi, Colonel (Italian Fascist) 602
 Isenberg, Robert 611, 616
 Ivanov 483-484, 701
 Jacobs, George Theodore 151, 153(b), 166-167
 Jackson, Burt 367
 Jensen, Bob 339, 343
 Jeroncic, Milan 617
 Johnson, Allan (McNeil, James Allan Donald) 40, 72, 122, 183, 186-190, 257, 265-268, 276-277, 288-289, 292-294, 296, 330, 333, 336, 346, 348, 350-351, 357, 402, 451, 462, 481, 616, 684-685
 Jones, David Everett 130, 190(b), 268, 402, 409
 Jordan, Dennis 402, 404(b)-405, 450, 452-453
 Josephson, Mathew 184, 193
 José (Soviet Aviator General Ivan Ivanovich Kopets) 172-173
 Justice, James Robinson (Merriman writes Justar and Justas) 163-165.
 Kagan (Political commissar) 590, 597-598
 Kahle, Col. Hans 33, 289, 356
 Kaltschmidt, Hans 594, 608, 611, 618, 628, 654, 700
 Kaminsky, Levie (Kaminski, Sunny; Edward Baker) 202, 207(b), 302, 304, 471
 Kamy, David 491, 493, 559, 591-593, 597, 704
 Kasinap, Benjamin 611
 Kardash, Bill 647-648
 Katine, Benjamin 403, 412
 Katzin, Harry 330, 332(b)
 Kaufman, Alfred 307, 313
 Kaufman, Leo 307, 313
 Kaufman, Ruben (Ruby) 307, 313, 315, 323, 325, 328, 353, 358, 375-376, 397, 402, 410, 640, 679, 681
 Kevorkian, Vahram (Kevorkian) 74(b)-75
 Kaye, Conrad 461, 464, 471-472, 557, 560
 Kaye, George 295-296(b), 298-299, 307, 311, 315-317
 Keller, Fred 603, 703
 Kelly, Michael 29-30
 Kelly, Thomas 29-30, 183, 186(b)-187
 Kemp, Peter 198, 261
 Kennedy, Ed 230, 232-233
 Kerr, Bob (Canadian) 189, 192, 246-247, 314, 316, 357, 359, 362-363, 386-387, 390, 420-421, 443-444, 556, 559, 589, 594, 680, 682
 Kerrigan, Peter 19, 21, 37, 57, 67-68, 108, 111, 116, 118-119, 146-147, 582-583
 Kirtchoff, Commissar (Merriman writes variously Kercher, Kirtschew in Mexican's List) 166, 168-170
 Kisch 517
 Klaus, Hans ("Colonel Hans") 20, 72, 74, 79, 81, 82, 85, 92-93, 96, 99, 101, 103, 183, 186-187, 235, 289, 335-336, 339-341, 346, 349-351, 354, 355, 363, 406, 423, 426-427, 429, 433, 437, 442, 453ff, 459, 464-467, 468-469, 483, 672, 675, 700-702, 703
 Klava 216-217
 Kleber, General (Manfred Stern) 203, 289, 493-494, 514, 564-567
 Klein, Gabby 530, 581

- Kline, Herbert 184, 193-194, 691-694, 699
- Klonsky, Robert 111
- Knight, Allan (Canadian) 256, 260, 271, 273, 302, 304, 315, 317, 346-349
- Knox, Bernard 158
- Kobal, Andre 591-592, 597
- KoKo 584, 586
- Kolowski, Walter (Merriman writes Koloski) 184, 192, 268, 291, 370, 374
- Koltsov, Mikhail (Mike) 13, 15, 146-147, 221, 222, 223
- Kondratyev, Colonel Pavel ("Pablo Otez") 634-635, 639, 649-651
- Korvin, Charles (Geza Karpathi) 238, 692
- Koslow, Al 141(b)
- Kosonatchev 446, 448
- Kozlowski, Ernie 367
- Krangel, Morris (Murray) 446, 448(b), 611, 616
- Kravchenko, Anna 6
- Krehm, William 343-344
- Kruschen 649, 651
- Kurske, Jan 117, 128-129, 230, 232-235, 240-241, 246, 248
- Kusman, Felix 510
- Lamb, Leonard 446, 471, 474, 538-540, 547, 564, 567-568, 609-610
- Lambert, John 159-160, 163, 175, 178, 221, 224
- Lamotte, Pierre (Commandante of Guard Nacional) 146-147(b), 151-152, 159-160, 210, 212-3, 246, 248-249, 256-257, 259-260, 262, 264, 271, 273, 281, 284, 307, 311, 314-315, 331, 334-337, 350-351, 365, 367, 424, 431
- Landeta, Juan 29, 31
- Lang, Dr. and Wife 142
- Landis, Art 31, 36, 41, 63(b), 74, 76, 78, 104, 268, 313, 405-406, 430, 439, 454, 500, 507, 514-515, 530, 537, 545, 573, 602, 609, 632, 643, 657, 661, 678
- Langer, Dr. 187
- Lanser, Manny 430(b), 539, 541-543
- Lane, Jack (John Allan Laine) 326, 328
- Laputin (Russian tanker) 649, 651
- Larmore (See Lamotte, Pierre)
- Lash, Joe (ASU President) 335, 338-341, 359, 361, 369, 371, 373, 375-376, 428-429, 450, 453
- Lasher, Ben 611 620
- Lasser, David 654-656, 659, 667
- Law, Oliver 265, 268-269, 290, 292, 294, 384, 386-387, 405-406, 408
- Lawrence, Bill (Albacete Commissar; William Lazar) 183, 186, 188-189, 193, 202, 204(b), 207-208, 214-215, 240ff, 246-247, 256-257, 262, 265-266, 271, 288-289, 292-295, 298-299, 306ff, 314-315, 319-322, 330, 332, 335, 339-340, 346, 350-351, 358-359, 361, 365-366, 369, 375-377, 382-384, 386-387, 390-382, 391-393, 402, 409, 422, 425, 428, 431, 438, 440, 443-444, 476-477, 480-481, 517-518, 556, 559, 629-632, 634-635, 672, 675, 680, 682
- Lemare, Jacques 691-692, 694, 703
- Lemke, Otto 611
- Lending, Ed 635, 648
- Lenoris, Jack 153
- Lenthier, John 97
- Leonidov, Comrade 566
- Lepo, Daniel 433, 437(b)
- Lerner, Murray 387, 390
- Levick, Lionel 543, 653
- Levine, Maurice 392
- Levine, Sidney 97, 302-303(b), 319f, 322, 406, 430
- Levy, Israel 326, 328
- Lewis, Abraham 168
- Lister, Gen. Enrique 202-3, 491, 494-495, 513-514, 516, 689
- Litwin, Alfred Harvey "Abe" 246, 248-249(b), 298, 301, 399, 401-402, 404, 575, 579-581
- Liversedge, Ron 247, 362, 369-371, 373-374, 377, 379-380, 397-398, 413, 420-421, 645
- Long, Patrick 183, 186(b), 281
- Loomis, Elliot 314, 316(b), 319, 321, 326, 329, 359, 361, 403, 412
- Lukacs, General Pavol (Mátá Zalka) 54, 289
- Lutz, Fred 471, 473, 560, 605, 607
- Lyons, Tommy 507
- Macartney, Wilfred 35, 37, 59
- MacDougal 476, 478
- Macrel, John 367
- Madden, Arthur 112, 151, 153(b), 166, 167(b), 168
- Makela, Niilo 346-347, 422, 426, 433, 437, 644, 659, 665
- Malone, Thomas 660
- Mancini, General Roatta (Italian) 205

- Mangan, Kate (Mrs. Kate Foster Mangan Kurske) 117, 128-129, 230, 232-233, 558
- Marceau (Captain Jan Marcev aka Nikola Ginkov) 476-477
- Marcy (Marsley, Morry?) 262, 282, 287, 365, 367, 382, 384
- Markovich, Mirko (Marcovicz, Marcovics, Markovics, he signed Markovich) 149, 214, 215, 216(b), 217, 221, 223, 226-227, 230-231, 240, 243-244, 246, 250-252, 254, 256-257, 276, 279-280, 288-290, 292-294, 298-299, 306-308, 311, 313-315, 317ff, 323-324, 335-336, 354-355, 402, 404, 423, 426-429, 433, 436-437, 443-447, 450-452, 454-456, 459ff, 469, 476, 480, 483, 486-487, 496, 499, 501, 564-565, 575, 578-579
- Marsaillaz, Paul 384
- Marty, André 17, 21-22, 25, 59, 61, 63, 67-68, 82, 108, 146-149, 154, 156-157, 163, 168, 178, 223, 284, 309, 360, 671, 675, 685, 696
- Marty, Pauline 164
- Martin, Frederika 106
- Martin, Rafael Fernandez (Merriman writes "Masten") 326, 329-331
- Martinez, Nicanor Felipe 661, 677
- Martineau, Robert 433-434
- Martinez, Ernesto 471, 473, 476, 480, 557, 560, 605, 607
- Martínez García, José 689
- Masters, Sam 387
- Mates, Dave (David Metropolitan) 72, 122, 183, 186-188(b), 214, 215, 216, 240, 243-244, 288, 292-295, 298-299, 306, 308, 314-317, 323, 327, 329, 336, 355,, 402, 409, 414-415, 428, 430, 443-444
- Matilda (innkeeper?) 326-327, 359-330
- Matthews, Herbert 194
- Maximov, Comrade "Max" 452, 596, 672, 675
- Mazzi, Lieutenant 274, 346, 348
- McCarthy, William 611
- McClure, Alexander 658, 661-662
- McDade, Alex 202, 204, 207, 387
- McDaniels, Eluard Luchel 666-667
- McDonald 46, 184
- McGregor, Hugh 362, 367
- McGuire, Patrick (Canadian) 256, 260, 446-447, 450, 453
- McLaughlin, Patrick (Merriman writes McCoughlin) 246, 249
- McLeod, Alexander (Canadian CP, called Allan Dowd by Hoar) 369-370
- McNulty, Tom 653
- Melnychenko, Alex 363
- Mera, Cipriano 206
- Meredith, William 44
- Merriman, Faye 2, 455, 456-459
- Merriman, Henry 2
- Merriman, Marion (Marion Wachtel) 3, 5-6, 17-18, 27, 32, 67-68, 71-72, 75, 103 - 104, 107, 121, 124, 126ff, 133, 137-138, 143, 146ff, 151-152, 156, 158-160, 163-165, 168-170, 175, 178, 183, 186, 191, 195, 197-198, 202, 210, 212, 216, 218-219, 224, 226-227 (wedding anniversary), 230-231, 236, 238, 241, 243-244, 246-247, 252, 256, 260, 262-263, 271-272, 276-278, 281-282, 284ff, 292, 296, 313ff, 319, 323-324, 326, 330, 332, 335-336, 339, 341, 344, 354, 358, 365-366, 371-372, 379, 381, 383-384, 400, 402, 409, 431, 433, 435, 446, 451-452, 457, 461-462, 477, 481, 497, 517, 519, 557-558, 560-561, 565, 569, 571, 575, 580-582, 586-588, 593, 608, 610, 614, 621-622, 668-670, 681, 684, 687, 703-704, 706-708
- Merriman, Robert H. 2 (Photo pages only; Subsequent references omitted as he is implicit on every page), 283, 389, 498, 559, 570, 586, 633, 636, 642, 663, 682, 687-688, 704
- Mertens, Frank (NMU) 439
- Miaja, General José 206, 320, 440-441, 537
- Mickenberg, Morris (Maken, Morris) 51, 135
- Mije, Antonio 237
- Mikalauskas, Wesley 413
- Mildwater, Jeff 534
- Miler, John P. 670
- Miller, Alec 254
- Miller, John (Canadian) 422, 425-426, 428-429, 438, 440, 443-445, 447
- Milutchevitch, Bogdan (Merriman writes Millikuch, Vidal writes Malychevich) 151, 153-154, 169-170, 178-179(b), 221, 224-225
- Milman, Max 355, 557, 560

- Minor, Robert 184-185, 219 - 220, 230, 233 - 234, 237, 244, 253, 262, 265, 268, 270-272, 292, 292-293, 295, 314, 321, 556, 559, 608, 610, 629ff, 672, 675, 680, 682, 691, 696, 699
Mitchell, Milly (See Milly Bennett)
- Mitterand, François 28
- Modesto, Gen. Juan 356, 388, 505, 511-512, 520, 554, 602, 609, 652
- Mohini, Ratna 691, 695
- Mola Vidal, Emilio 11, 57
- Monks, Joe 142, 181
- Moran, Marsden 350(b)-341
- Morandi, Captain Aldo (Merriman calls him Mirandez) 140, 276-277
- Moreno, Lt. Pedro 169-172, 174
- Morin, Francis Xavier 83, 87
- Morgan, Crawford 675
- Morrison, Irving 276, 280
- Morrison, Joe Henry 276, 280
- Morrison, William A. 276, 280(b)-281, 283, 288, 291, 472, 475
- Morse, Eugene 35-37(b), 39, 41, 105, 107
- Mueller, Dr. 184, 193
- Mullinger, Charles R. "Jack" (Cecil Merritt Cole) 302, 304(b), 326, 328, 350-354, 358, 379-380, 397, 412, 420-421
- Munday, Arthur 141(b)
- Murphy, Jack 17
Murphy, Molly (Mrs. Jack T.) 16, 17, 18
- Murra, John 168, 182
- Muso, John (as Muro in diary) 94, 98, 101
- Mussolini, Benito 204, 207, 407
- Nanetti, Nino 222
- Naranjo, Naranja 700-701
- Nathan, George 35, 37, 59, 70, 71, 79, 290, 336, 346, 348-349, 359, 361, 365, 387, 406, 422, 424
- Negrín, Juan 245, 252, 257, 262, 659, 667
- Nehru, Pandit 253, 263
- Nelson, Steve 105, 183, 185(b), 187-188, 202, 207, 226, 227, 228, 240ff, 246-247, 251-253, 256, 271-272, 276-277, 279-280, 281-284, 287, 295, 298-299, 302-304, 336, 353, 355, 357, 402, 404-406, 414-415, 421, 424-425, 426ff, 447, 450, 452-443, 455-456, 461-464, 468, 472, 475, 477, 479-481, 483-484, 486, 491, 508, 534, 536, 539, 550, 553, 556, 558-559, 574, 578, 585, 588, 591, 593, 597, 628-630, 648, 673
- Neumann, Dr. Rudolf (aka Newman) 32-34, 121, 125-126, 139, 146-147, 278, 484
- Neure, William 358, 403, 412, 420-421, 640, 645-646
- Nicoletti, Mario (Giuseppi di Vittorio) 223
- Nin, Andrés 343-344
- North, Joe 556, 559-560, 704
- Norwood, Robert 91
- Novalari, General 205
- Nusser, Charlie 268, 509
- Nyberg, Eric 526, 530
- O'Brien, T. T. 97
- O'Daire, Paddy 357, 476, 478, 507, 510, 524, 526, 531, 574
- O'Duffy, Eoin 77-78
- O'Neill, Paddy 357
- O'Shea, Pat 362
- O'Toole, Larry 507(b), 511
- Oak, Liston 10, 12-14, 339, 343
- Olorenshaw, Arthur 9, 159-160, 163, 165, 172, 174, 218, 226, 240, 245, 246, 250, 302, 304, 472, 474, 476, 478
- Oliver, Louis Anthony (Seaman) 402-404, 412, 420-421, 433, 437, 446, 449, 480-481, 568, 571, 573, 575
- Oppman, Tedeusz ("Teddy") 218, 220, 271, 274, 319, 321, 330-331, 355, 606-607
- Oretchkin, Boris 546
- Orgaz Yoldi, Gen. Luis 58, 205
- Orwell, George 211, 344, 626
- Otero 271, 274
- Overton, Bert 70, 125-127, 134, 201, 276, 279, 281-284, 326-327, 387
- Pahlev 103
- Page, Tom 664
- Pappas, Mike (Nick) 307, 311-312(b), 322, 472, 474, 569, 573
- Pappas, Phillip 312
- Parker, DeWitt Webster (Eric) 402, 409, 443, 668-669, 671, 675
- Parks, James (called Parker by Merriman) 29-30, 46-47
- Pasurman? 246, 248
- Paula, Aurelio 300
- Paula, Eladio 298-300(b), 301
- Payne, Melvin 616

- Paynter, Will 21, 221, 224, 386-387, 389-390, 461, 463, 471, 473, 517-519, 580, 582, 584, 587, 589, 594, 608, 659, 665
- Penchienati 566-567
- Perea, Lieutenant Colonel Juan 537
- Perrey, Raul? 330, 332
- Perry, Leslie 325(b)
- Peters, Raymond Lee 246, 249
- Petrie, Edward William 166-168
- Petruskin 700
- Picasso, Pablo 198
- Pick, Robert 83, 87-88(b), 89-90, 98, 101, 103, 236
- Pike, Dr. William Winston 77, 94, 101, 189, 192(b)-193, 353
- Pinson, Perry 323-324
- Pitcairn, Frank (See Cockburn)
- Pitts, Dr. Donald 306, 308
- Platone, Felice 32-33, 57, 108, 151-153, 156-157, 159, 163, 166, 168, 172, 175, 178, 210, 212, 214-215, 226-227, 229-231, 240, 242, 256-257, 260, 262, 269, 281-282, 286, 306, 311
- Plaza, Colonel Sanchez 562
- Plotnick, Henry 611
- Podelin, Isaiah "Si" 327
- Poll, Harry 572, 686, 689-690
- Pollitt, Harry 118-119, 227, 448, 469, 582-584
- Popovich (Kosha or Vladomir?) 472, 475
- Pozas Perea, General Sebastian 533, 537, 554, 562, 606, 609, 656
- Prendergast, James 73, 251-253, 386-387, 390-391, 393
- Prieto, Indalicio 234, 239, 251-252, 262, 265, 269, 429, 621, 623, 630, 655
- Putz, Colonel José (French, XIII Br) 290
- Racheff, Gilesco 399, 401(b), 433, 435, 583
- Rackley, Mildred 106-107, 272, 306, 308, 339
- Raddock, Michael 25
- Ramek, Dr. Adolf 163-164, 386, 389
- Ramón (Maj. General Ivan Trofimovich Eremenko) 375, 378, 379-380, 403, 412
- Randall, Harry 193, 703
- Rappaport, Milton 97
- Raven, Robert 124, 433
- Rawlings (see Al Robbins)
- Read 335
- Reeves, Otto 367
- Regan, Charles Joseph (KIA Belchite) 359-360, 523
- Reid, Arnold "Jack" (Arnold Reisky; Merriman spells Reed) 422, 425-426
- Renn, Ludwig (Arnold Vieth von Golssenau) 202-203, 207, 223, 289
- Rezac, Albert (Rejichek?) 433, 437(b)
- Richardson, Ben Lt. 580, 583
- Rinaldo, Robert (Robert Scholl) 471, 475, 491ff
- Roach, Doug 185
- Robbins, Al (Isadore Cohen) 159, 169, 171(b), 199-200, 240, 243, 251-252, 315, 318, 433, 435
- Robinson, John Quigley (Robbie) 161(b)-162, 353, 357, 359, 361, 369, 373, 416-419, 428, 433, 435, 443, 445, 447, 450, 453, 461, 464, 497, 517, 525, 529, 531, 538, 540, 569-570, 572, 588, 593, 608, 620, 629-630, 672, 676, 680, 682
- Roblet 214, 217-218, 220-221, 226-227, 230, 243, 251-252, 254, 256, 259-260, 271, 274-276, 298-299, 302, 304-306, 310, 330-331, 375, 378, 403, 414, 438-439
- Rochefort, René 151, 153, 221, 225, 247
- Rochester, Sterling 246, 248-249(b), 289, 291, 298-299
- Rodman 146-147
- Rodriguez, Julius 298, 300(b), 414
- Roffler (probably Ed Rolfe) 339, 343
- Rogers, Frank 335, 337-338, 339-340, 350-353, 357, 359, 365-367, 393, 420-421, 693
- Rojo, General 205, 483, 485, 494, 554, 567
- Rolfe, Edwin 72-73, 96, 343, 393, 403, 412, 450, 453, 455-456, 645
- Romer, Edna Drabkin 433, 435(b)-436
- Romer, Samuel 433, 435(b)-436
- Rose, Earl 645
- Rose, Solomon (Rosenblum) 159, 160(b), 455-456, 477, 481
- Rosenstein, Joseph (Rosy) 105, 107(b), 133, 199-200, 202, 204, 207, 210, 213, 491-493
- Rosenthal, Leon 370, 374(b)
- Rossi, General (Italian) 205
- Rothman, Al (see Robbins)
- Rowe, William 461, 463

- Royce, Andrew 32, 34(b), 112, 218-219, 246, 250, 307, 313
- Rubio Hidalgo, Luis 13, 15, 234, 237
- Rudolph (spy, perhaps Rudolph Franchini) 339, 341
- Ruiz Suarez, Luis 382-383
- Rushton, Harry 335, 338, 413, 420-421
- Ruskin, Jim (Dovmont Sergeevich Zubchaninov) 466, 470, 476
- Russell, Bertrand 232
- Russell, Dora 232
- Rust, Bill 583, 665-666
- Ryan, Frank 18, 35, 45, 59, 70, 133-134, 346, 446, 448, 451, 454, 472, 474-476, 478, 557, 560
- Ryan, Joe 133-134
- Ryan, Larry (Canadian) 119
- Ryant, Ruben "Ruby" 428, 430(b), 471, 474
- Sabatini, Wally 324, 359, 361, 608, 610, 621-622, 659, 665
- Sáenz de Buruaga, General (Fascist) 632
- Sanchez, Vincent 413
- Sands, Joe 300
- Sapir, Moises 569-570, 575, 580, 582, 589-570, 593-594, 612-614, 617, 634, 637, 671, 673-674, 679, 681-682
- Sastre, Jose Maria (Merriman calls him Jose Amano) 589, 595
- Schalbroeck, Jean (written Schallrock or Schallroch) 183-184, 240, 242, 306, 311, 314, 323-324, 326, 329-330, 332, 339, 360, 365-366, 382-383, 402, 411(b), 422, 424-425
- Schatz, Isaac (See Isador Schrenzel)
- Schmidt, Egan (also Erich) 194, 355, 589, 594, 614, 617, 658, 663, 671, 673
- Schneider, Murray (Merriman wrote Snyder) 288, 291(b), 319, 321, 414-415
- Schrenzel, Isador 307, 313-315, 319, 322, 326-327, 375-376, 412, 483, 645-646
- Schulman, Jack 182
- Schuster, Paul 590, 597
- Scott, John (Marlow, Invar) 25, 35, 37, 39, 46-47, 59, 61-62, 63, 83, 87
- Seacord, Douglas Earl 10-11(b), 25, 36, 46, 62, 79, 81, 83, 86, 91, 97, 101-102
- Secundy, Lou 169-170(b), 226, 326, 329ff, 339, 379, 381-382, 402, 404, 412, 414-417, 444-445, 450, 455, 460, 465, 468, 516, 534-535, 559, 574, 580-582, 605, 607, 621-622, 706
- Seegar 455, 460
- Seigel, Samuel 116
- Seminoff, Walter 436
- Sexton, Cyril 116
- Senzentel (Gengentel?) See Schrenzel
- Shapiro, Henry 611, 616, 618, 620
- Shimrak, Pete (Shimrack) 74(b)-75
- Shirai, Jack 220, 387
- Shostek, Sidney 461-462(b), 465, 468, 471-472, 491, 493, 513, 515, 538, 540-541, 547-548, 555-558, 614
- Simon, Dr. John 112
- Singer, Bernard (also listed as Bela) 659, 665, 671, 673(b)-674, 700, 703
- Skifstrom, John 367
- Skinner, Bill 346-347, 362-363, 367, 369, 371, 373, 379-381, 395, 399, 401, 403, 420-422, 426, 438, 461-462, 466, 470, 473, 513, 515, 538-541, 544, 547, 556, 558, 588, 591, 597
- Sonchek, Steve 546, 558
- Soto, Dr. Luis Diaz 707
- Slater, Hugh 504, 510, 534-535, 584, 587, 618-619, 666
- Sloan, Hugh 642
- Smith, Ben 645
- Smith, David 36
- Smith, EC (see Edward Cecil-Smith)
- Smith, Harold 653
- Smith, Owen 447, 461-462(b), 463, 526, 530
- Smrcka, Radomir 194, 584, 587, 590, 596-597, 605, 607
- Snow, Vernon 658, 661-662
- Springhall, Douglas (Dave) 35, 37, 70-71, 74, 94, 97, 101, 103, 105, 107, 117
- Staimer, Major Richard 289
- Stalin, Josef 465, 579
- Stamm, Morris 326, 329, 513, 515(b)
- Stanley (probably Fred Owen but could be Al) 271, 273
- Stanley, Sidney 310
- Steele, Ramond "Ray" 34, 53, 387
- Stepanovich (Begovic, Vlajko also Stefanovich or Stepanovic) 81, 183, 187, 231, 233-235, 433, 436, 450, 452, 584, 587
- Stember, Samuel 19, 21-22, 26, 29-30, 32, 34, 35, 50-54, 59, 61, 67-68-69, 71,

- 82, 85, 89, 91, 111-112, 118-119,
143-145, 146-148, 151-152, 159-160,
163-164, 168, 245
- Stephens, D. R. "Pat" 404
- Stern, Marvin 32, 34, 50-51, 101
- Stone, Al (Albert Gottlieb) 455-456
- Stone, Harold W. 181
- Stone, Hy (Herman Hershkowitz) 178,
181
- Stone, Joe (Sheer Isaac Hershkowitz)
178, 181-182, 199, 387
- Stone, Samuel Wesley 181
- Stone, Sam (Samuel Hershkowitz) 178,
181-182, 387
- Stone, William Carl 181
- Straus, Dr. Mark 315, 317(b)-318, 328,
544-545, 634, 636
- Streisand, Joseph 94, 98, 234, 236
- Strong, Anna Louise (writer) 5, 369ff,
384, 386-387, 389
- Suarez Pineiro, Luis 166-167(b), 382-
383
- Sukalkis, Dora 137
- Sundstrom, Johannes 405(b)
- Suzanne (erroneously Sizen, perhaps
Heck) 20, 33, 356
- Swindells, Eddie 392
- Swinnerton, Dennis (Briton) 298, 300,
386, 389, 391-392
- Tabakoff, Commissar 74
- Tanguy, Lieutenant Georges Henry
"Henri" 329, 334
- Tanz, Al 35, 37-38(b), 183, 186
- Tapsell, Wally 116, 146-148, 150, 221,
224, 465-466, 468-471, 473, 583,
589, 594
- Taro, Gerda 15, 196, 238
- Taylor, Dr. Clyde Donald 148
- Taylor, Joe 681, 696-697, 700, 703-706
- Teitelbaum, Mome "Mo" (Morris
Granat) 182, 405
- Telge, Dr. Otto (Kristanov, Tsvetan
Angelovich) 163-164, 259, 265, 269,
278, 306, 308-309, 310
- Tellier, Lucien (Canadian) 302, 304,
330, 332
- Thayer, Donald 538-539
- Theodoulou (Theodopolis), Anthony
246, 249, 392
- Thibault, Raymond (French) 365-366
- Thompsen, Karl 326, 329
- Thompson, Robert (Bob) 97, 101-102,
115, 117, 121-122, 128-129, 178,
180(b)-181, 195, 199-200, 202, 218-
219, 230-231, 233, 240, 243, 246,
250-252, 262-263, 270, 272, 279,
290, 302-304, 306-307, 311-315,
319-320, 326-327, 339-340, 342,
344-345, 350, 357, 359, 361, 365,
367, 379-382, 384-385, 391, 397-399,
402-403, 412, 416, 428-429, 443,
517-519, 524, 561, 563, 569, 571,
618, 622, 625, 627, 659-660, 665,
682-683, 686, 689
- Timpson, Arthur 228-229
- Tisa, John 47, 386, 389(b)
- Togliatti, Palmiro (Ercoli) 223
- Tough, Bill 362
- Traill, Robert 140, 276-277, 339-340,
382-384, 386-387, 402, 409
- Traynor, Tom 357
- Tsanakas, John 591, 597
- Usera, Vincent 315, 317(b), 402-403,
405-406, 409, 412, 414-415, 420-421,
444-445, 455, 460, 635
- Ustinov, Dimitri August 440
- Utter, George 668, 670
- Van Briggs (see Amandus Van Den
Berghe)
- Van den Berghe, Amandus ("Basha",
Armand) 83, 87, 112, 402, 404, 446,
448, 451, 453-454, 465, 468, 471-
472, 476, 480, 492, 495, 505, 510,
534-535, 561, 563, 569, 572, 580,
582
- Van den Berghe, Margarite 453-454,
468
- Varela, José María 576, 696
- Vidal, Corps Political Commissar 649,
651
- Vidal, Lucien (Gayman, Gaymann or
Gajman, Vital) 17, 19-20, 22, 24, 27-
28, 32-33, 34, 53-57, 59-60, 67-68,
105, 108, 146, 151, 153ff, 163-165,
175, 178-179, 184, 187, 189-190,
199, 210, 212, 218, 230-231, 240,
242, 247, 256-257, 259, 262, 264-
265, 269, 273, 278, 281-282, 288-
289, 293-295, 298, 303, 305-306,
308, 319, 321, 328, 331, 334, 337,
342, 346, 356, 359-362, 365-366,
379-380, 382, 384, 392, 397-398,
402, 411, 422-423, 440-442, 452,
459, 477, 481, 494, 651
- Vlasov 179
- Vogel, Otto 280
- Vorhees? 592, 598

- Voros, Sandor 30, 69(b), 109, 111, 341-342, 393, 621-622, 630
- Walker, Frederick (Dan Wilson) 335, 338
- Wallach, Albert 330-331(b), 332, 367, 404
- Wallach, Harry 330-331(b),
- Wallach, Jesse 346-347, 399, 401-402, 404, 409
- Walsh, William 151, 154, 156, 158-160
- Walter, General (Karol Swierczewski) 290, 356, 451, 453-454, 464, 484, 489, 491, 494-495, 496, 498, 517-518, 538-539, 541, 554, 558, 562, 564-565, 567, 569-571, 573, 579, 590-592, 595-596, 605-606, 612-616, 618, 621-624, 640, 654-655, 671, 675, 686, 688, 706-707
- Warren, Alan 9
- Watson, Alonso 91
- Watt, George (Israel Kwatt) 339, 341(b)
- Wattis, George 82, 85, 86, 93, 96-97, 123, 168, 183, 186-187, 359-361, 363, 365-366, 465, 467, 471-473, 475-476, 479-480, 483, 485, 491-492, 494, 538-540, 547-548, 556, 558, 591-593, 597, 659, 667
- Weinstein, Jack 387
- Weisenfeld, Nathan (Neil Wesson) 631, 633(b), 691
- Weissman, Irving 370, 373(b)-374, 446, 448, 645
- Weiss, Dr. 106
- Weldon, John 510
- Wellman, Saul 367, 544, 659, 665, 701, 707
- Westfield, George (Briton) 391-392
- Whalley, Eric (Merriman writes Wally) 649-650
- Wheeler, Bill 97, 134, 326, 329, 379, 381-383, 399-400, 403, 412-413, 420-422, 426, 433, 437, 477, 481
- White, Paul 240, 242, 418-419, 483, 486
- Whitehead, Bill 645
- Whitfield, Fred 420-421
- Wimmer, Bill (Bela) 574-575, 578(b)-579
- Wild, Sam 320
- Wiley, Samuel David 446, 448-449
- Williams, Bert 266, 355, 468-469, 592, 598, 608, 610
- Winkelman, Sam 146-147
- Winkler, Peter (Kazimierz Cichowski) 19-20, 151-152, 156-157, 282, 286, 303, 305, 323-324, 328, 342, 353, 356-357, 386, 389, 422, 425, 467
- Wintringham, Tom 10, 12, 35, 59-60, 64-65, 69, 233, 295-296, 331, 334, 339-340, 346, 348-351, 366-367, 392-393, 446, 448, 455, 460, 477, 481, 491, 493, 507
- Wolf, Lou 61, 63, 105, 151, 154
- Wolff, Milton 312, 405, 430, 609-610, 632, 643, 652, 657, 661, 695, 703
- Woulfe, James (Canadian) 256, 260, 549
- Wolk, Robert 128-130(b)-131
- Wolinski 680, 683-684, 686, 688
- Wovicky, Laza 64
- Yägue, General 537
- Yanakeiv, Lieutenant ("Charley") 567, 572-573
- Zaret, Daniel (Daniel Abraham Zaresky, Jarrett, David) 33, 188-189(b)-190, 288, 291-293, 355-356, 466, 470
- Zaydorf, Dora 137
- Zeintz, Max (Zaionz) 366-367
- Zimmer, Robert 182
- Zjubimovich, Petar 436

